

Quill and Quire (August, 1975)

OTTAWA WATERWAY: Gateway to a Continent, Robert Legget, University of Toronto Press, \$15.00 cloth ISBN 0 8020 2189 1, 291 pp., illus.

Before his retirement Dr. Legget was an engineer with the National Research Council in Ottawa. He is the author of several books and articles dealing with Canadian rivers, canals and railways. This book will appeal particularly to those interested in the geography, settlement and development of the Ottawa Waterway which served as a gateway to the continent from the time of Champlain until well into the 19th century.

Although his book is not an academic treatise, Dr. Legget possesses a fine sense of history. In addition to providing interesting information about a particular transportation network his work serves to remind us that the dominant struggle in Canadian history was not class versus class or French versus English but rather man against nature. In fact, one should not read this book indoors but rather take it along to one of the historic and scenic points along the Ottawa river. Sit under a tree, read, and decide who better understands what this country is really all about — Dr. Legget or various writers busily trying to reinterpret Canadian history in terms of ideological or racial struggle.

Dr. Legget includes as an appendix Sir George Simpson's stirring account of the Ottawa Waterway published in 1847 which can be compared to the author's final chapter on "The River Today" to support his contention that the river should be conserved and restored insofar as is compatible with hydro requirements of modern society. *Gary Levy*