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Review of *Aboriginal Law: Cases, Materials and Commentary* by Thomas Isaac

John R. Wunder

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, jwunder1@unl.edu

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Aboriginal Law: Cases, Materials and Commentary. Thomas Isaac, with forewords by Graydon Nicholas and Strater J. Crowfoot. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1995. xxv + 442 pp. Contents, table of cases, table of authorities, maps, and bibliography. \$26.50 paper.

Aboriginal law is one of the most dynamic fields of law in modern Canada. This book helps to clarify and identify a number of legal nuances that are currently being debated by providing selected passages from legislation, treaties, court cases and claims agreements along with author commentary and introductions.

Thomas Isaac defines Aboriginal law under the 1982 *Constitution Act* to include law as it relates to Indians, Inuit, and Métis in Canada. He adds that materials referring to Indians only mean Indians as defined under Canadian federal law, specifically the *Indian Act*. Isaac, who has taught Aboriginal law and resides in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, explains that most Aboriginal law has come from Indian litigation, and consequently existing legal precedents primarily cover Indians and Inuit. One of the most active current areas of Aboriginal law involves its application to Métis.

The book begins with forewords by two Indigenous Canadian legal authorities. Graydon Nicholas, New Brunswick Provincial Court Judge and member of the Maliseet Nation, explains how important it is for an understanding of Aboriginal issues of the day, notably in land rights, treaty interpretations, self-government and leadership, and Aboriginal women's rights. Then Strater J. Crowfoot, Chief of the Siksika Nation offers his views. He sees this book as a reaffirmation of the "right and need for self-government with recognition of land title" for his people (ix). "Freedom" and "land" are the central features of the Siksika Nation's spirit today, according to Chief Crowfoot.

The book itself is divided into nine chapters. They cover land title, treaty rights, and federal-provincial-territorial legislative authority. There are specific chapters on the Métis and Inuit legal relationships to Canadian governments, Aboriginal self-governments, and Aboriginal Rights as defined by the 1982 *Constitution Act*. Finally, there are chapters on individual and collective rights in hunting, fishing, and trapping; rights of Aboriginal governments and individuals to tax or be taxed; and Aboriginal women's rights.

Although the book disclaims any comprehensive nature, indeed the editor notes that justice reform and Aboriginal customary law are not covered, the latter an important omission he promises to correct, this is a very thoughtful and useful work for those interested in the subject. It is easily understood by lawyer and non-lawyer alike, and it represents an effective instructional tool for courses on Aboriginal government, law, or culture. It is also of value to Native Americans and Indian scholars who wish to consider a comparative perspective. **John R. Wunder**, *Department of History, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*