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## Review of Winter Sports in the West.

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*Winter Sports in the West*. Edited by E. A. Corbet and A. W. Rasporich. Calgary: The Historical Society of Alberta, 1990. Introduction, illustrations, photographs, selected bibliography, index. 148 pp. \$11.95.

A product of a conference sponsored by the history department of the University of Calgary and the Historical Society of Alberta in 1987, this set of ten papers treats aspects of the history of winter pastimes in western Canada. No single theme binds the collection together, though several authors try to assay the importance of the harsh climate and the rugged prairie/mountain terrain to western Canada's winter recreations. Their conclusions are not surprising. Climate and terrain prevented white settlers from replicating the rich village-centered pastimes of Europe. Instead, the settlers either had to abandon or adapt the traditional games or invent new ones. Such a process helps to explain both the relative impoverishment—a conclusion denied by most of the authors of this volume—of western Canada's recreational life as well as the relative popularity of such sports as basketball, speed skating, hockey, curling, and skiing in western Canada.

The most interesting essays in this volume treat not climate and terrain but rather the relationship between pastimes and gender, ethnicity, social class, and entrepreneurship. For example, Elaine Chalus finds in her study of the phenomenally successful Edmonton Commercial Graduates women's basketball team that a "feminist approach is less suitable than an

“integrationist” interpretation. Interviews of the participating athletes many years later by Chalus reveal that the women were not only “able to live with the concept of womanhood that was present in Alberta prior to World War II, but that they actually feel women have lost a sense of respect and uniqueness through women’s liberation.” Unfortunately, apart from Chalus’s paper, Jorgen Dahlie’s study of Scandinavian skiing in the Pacific Northwest, and Morris Mott’s essay on hockey professionalism in Manitoba, the other six papers tend to substitute description for interpretation and analysis. These include such diverse topics as pastimes in fur trading society, Indian winter games, winter sports in early urban Alberta, the making of Banff into a year-round park, the development of curling in western Canada, and a personal account of a western Canadian speed skater.

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