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## Review of *Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada*

By J. R. Miller

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*Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada.* By J. R. Miller. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2004. xi + 299 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, Index. C\$34.99 cloth, C\$24.99 paper.

Apart from being from Western Canada, what do Louis Riel and Peter Lougheed have in common? According to J. R. Miller, the two have a shared heritage: both are Métis. Yet, in the eyes of Canadians, one is always identified as Métis while the other is not. This interesting parallel helps the author grapple with the complicated question of Native identity in the first chapter of *Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada*.

The reasons for writing a book with such a title are clearly indicated in the preface. Miller—professor of history and Canada Research Chair in Native-newcomer Relations at the University of Saskatchewan and the author of *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (1996)—hopes to help Canadians “understand more fully the issues and the ramifications of Native-newcomers relations.” His account provides numerous examples going well back in history to make its points and to unravel the roots of contemporary conflicts or questions that still baffle the majority of Canadians.

Miller covers topics such as Native identity, self-government, treaties, attitudes to land and ownership, and assimilation. For each of these sections he offers a concise but precise account of Canadian Aboriginal history. He touches on many sensitive issues such as Residential schools, the work of the missionaries, and Native claims, to name a few. Aboriginal women and contemporary Métis issues are noted as well. Each chapter is accompanied by a short bibliography. Pictures, drawings, and an index are also included.

While the author acknowledges the fact that there are no easy solutions to current Native-newcomer

problems, he nevertheless proposes one. According to Miller, three options have emerged in Canada: the two-row wampum (that is, parallel development between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples); assimilation; and “Citizen Plus,” a middle-ground option that combines “a respect for difference with an appeal for unity based on a shared citizenship” (Andrew Parkin, in Centre for Research and Information on Canada, *Bridging the Divide Between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* [2001], 4). While he has doubts about the “parallel sovereignties of the two-row wampum,” he rejects the second option, for reasons he clearly exposes throughout the book, and favors the last. Political scientist Alan Cairns, in his *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (2000), has extensively debated the benefits of “Citizen Plus.” At the time, Aboriginal scholars clearly indicated that they were not in favor of “Citizen Plus” due in part to the fact that “a renewed ‘citizens plus’ rhetoric does not easily fit into the legal dialogue that has emerged over the past 20 years” (Patricia Monture-Angus, “Citizens Plus: Sensitivities versus Solutions,” in *Bridging the Divide*, 10). Six years later, it is doubtful that Aboriginal people would be any more in favor of such an alternative. While Miller is entitled to his opinion, the last chapter is therefore the weak link in an otherwise well-researched and fascinating book.

*Lethal Legacy* will be highly appreciated by undergraduate students and ordinary citizens interested in Canadian Aboriginal history. It should serve as an excellent textbook in history, Native studies, and Canadian studies courses and a quick reference for scholars and students alike.

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