



Letters

Dear CFMS,

Thank you very much for your letter informing me that I have been designated an honorary member of CFMS. I really appreciate this honour for I did put a lot of work into the Society in the early days. I used to travel from Regina to Ottawa in order to attend Board meetings in the days when Marius Barbeau was still our president. I think over the years we have certainly helped to put Canadian folk music on the map, although we never managed to get a Barbeau House (a centre, not unlike Cecil Sharp House in Britain). Perhaps this will come some day. My best wishes and thanks to the society for thinking of me.

Barbara Cass-Beggs

Editor,

I'm afraid the "Lukey's Boat" controversy in not finished, despite your "reprise" — or rather, because of it. I kept out of the controversy previously because I considered it a tempest in a teapot stirred up by a person who did not understand the first thing about folksongs — namely, that they exist in more than one form. However, I can't let your statement stand that "Clearly a scholarly mistake was made" (CFMB, 1984, 18(4), p.10) in "Folk

Songs of Canada." What was this "scholarly mistake" that you see so clearly? And how can you assume that I concur in Richard's unnecessary apology without consulting me? I don't know what Richard (Johnston) was pleading guilty to, but I do seem to have been condemned in absentia, without even knowing what the charge is. As far as I can see, the crime we are being condemned for is printing the NOva Scotia tune rather than the Newfoundland one. The only way that could be considered a "scholarly mistake" is if we had said it was from Newfoundland. However, my note stated that it was a song popular in both Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and went on to quote both Greenleaf and Creighton. The fact that we used the Nova Scotia tune rather than the Newfoundland one can hardly be termed a "scholarly mistake" by anyone who knows that folksongs exist in many forms, as the earlier part of your article seems to recognize. Indeed, as Murray Shoolbraid points out (in the only sensible article in the whole silly series), one of these tunes is no more authentic than the other. So, as the saying goes, where's the beef? The fact that other publishers reprinted the tune we used is hardly our fault, any more than Dr. Creighton can be blamed for collecting a tune that differs from the Newfoundland one. I am sorry to revive what I considered a completely stupid

and unnecessary argument, but I can't accept your sweeping claim that to print one version of a folksong rather than another is "clearly a scholarly mistake." Yours in Scholarly rage,

Edith Fowke

Editor's Reply: The error to which I was referring was not Fowke and Johnston's decision to publish the Nova Scotia version of "Lukey's Boat," as is suggested. Rather, I was referring to the failure to indicate, anywhere in the book, that it was the Nova Scotia tune that was printed. This minor omission, most unfortunately, led to several text books reprinting the tune and suggesting that it was from Newfoundland. The real scholarly mistake was the text book authors' failure to go to primary documents in their research. I apologize for not making this clear in my article and certainly retract any implied statement that Fowke and Johnston claimed the tune in their book was from Newfoundland — they didn't. **TBR**

Editor,

I read with interest your editorial and article on the CFMS Mail Order Service. We have experienced some difficulty with locating recordings of traditional Canadian folk music for our library — if indeed we are aware of the recording in the first place. Best wishes for a successful venture in promoting Canadian materials.

Jane Pearce Baldwin,
Music Library,
University of Western Ontario

Editor,

On August 29, 1982 there was a TV production called "The Promised Land." It was filmed by the National Film Board and was about our blacks. It began with one of my slavery songs collected in 1944 and this was repeated several times. There were other of my songs as well as some recorded for the CFMS from a grant I received so Marvin Burke in Halifax could do some later recording. It is a fine ethnic film with excellent singing. It makes you understand the trials they endured, but all done in a most dignified way. You might like to keep this film in mind — it was on the National Heritage Series.

Helen Creighton,
Halifax