

Correspondence

To the Editor of the Journal of British Studies:

We wish to reply to one aspect of Professor's Lower's review article of Professor Lawrence H. Gipson's *The British Empire before the American Revolution*. Whatever one's agreement or disagreement with Lower's judgements, one is pleased to say that, in general, he attempted a fairminded and scholarly analysis of the ten volumes. This makes his departure from this judicious tone in the closing paragraph even more puzzling. There he indulges in an unrestrained attack upon Professor Gipson's literary style. Yet an examination of Professor Gipson's career indicates that an overwhelming body of educated opinion runs contrary to Professor Lower's view. It would, first of all, be inexplicable that any reputable publisher should have accepted this series, were Professor Gipson's style so downright atrocious. In fact, the series is published by the most exacting American publisher of our time, Mr. Alfred A. Knopf, among his works of special distinction designated as the Borzoi Books.

The tributes to Professor Gipson's work began early and have continued to the present. His *Jared Ingersoll* was recommended for publication by Professor Charles M. Andrews, who had strong strictures against shoddy writing. The same book was awarded the Porter Prize, by the Yale University faculty, as the best piece of work presented in literary form in any division of the university. According the same book further praise, the American Historical Association awarded it the Justin Winsor Prize as the best work on American history of the preceding year. In 1948 the committee on the Loubat Prize honored Gipson's first six volumes as the best work published in a five year period. Volume Seven of the series was awarded the Bancroft Prize; the Athenaeum of Philadelphia presented its "Literary Award" to Gipson in 1953; and finally the Pulitzer Prize of 1962 was presented to the author for his tenth volume. There have been other tributes from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and from north of the border as well. Professor Lower's fellow Canadians, the late Professor J. B. Brebner, who read the manuscript of successive volumes of the series for Mr. Knopf, and Professor A. L. Burt, who called the work "the most distinguished multi-volume work by any living American historian,"

were of a different mind. In view of this history of honors and awards, Professor Lower's last paragraph appears to be an attempt to scratch his name on a monument rather than to give his readers a perceptive esthetic judgment of it.

JOHN CARY
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