

The book, in fact, is not a history of the Canadian North from a northern point of view, nor does it claim to be. It does not examine the history of the region from the perspective of its people — certainly not its Native people. Though the photographs that illustrate the book mention some Natives by name, the text hardly deals with them as individuals at all. Rather, the book fulfils the promise of its title. It is a chronicle of the northward expansion of the power and sovereignty of this country, expressing itself in economic development, in the growth of political institutions, and in the effect of these on the region. Perhaps the curious, almost surreal photograph on the dust jacket is meant to symbolize this approach: the man, identified on the cover but not mentioned in the text, stands dressed in a business suit in front of a large airplane, the *Eldorado Radium Silver Express*, which was used in the late 1930s to fly radium concentrates from Great Bear Lake to the nearest railhead. Whether the photograph was taken in the North or South is not clear, and perhaps does not matter. The plane is a powerful symbol of new forces at work in the North and of Canada's determination to develop the region's resources. Northerners are noticeably absent from the picture.

The Northward Expansion of Canada, both by what it includes and by what it omits, will, like the rest of Morris Zaslow's work, no doubt exert a strong influence over the future direction of northern scholarship. It is to be hoped that it will have a similar effect on Canadian historical scholarship generally, drawing the attention of Canada's regional and economic historians to the important issues of northern development and northern life. Zaslow has devoted his career to ensuring that the vast reaches of the Canadian North are given fair treatment by the profession. This book is a strong, convincing statement of that conviction, and a challenge to Canadian historians to give the North its due.

William R. Morrison
Brandon University
Brandon, Manitoba, Canada
R7A 2N9

ALASKA STATE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS. Edited by GERALD A. McBEATH and THOMAS A. MOREHOUSE. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1987. 339 p.

On 3 January 1959 Alaska became the first state outside the continental United States. Coming into statehood, Alaska brought its own distinguishing features: an extreme northern climate, an area one-fifth the size of the contiguous states (twice the size of Texas), a small population (just over 500 000 people), strong regional loyalties, an influential Native population and valuable oil reserves at Prudhoe Bay. Thus the question: did these features nurture a government and politics different from that of the other 48 states?

McBeath and Morehouse present interesting original essays addressing the problem of distinctiveness and raise other questions about a state that is relatively unknown to most North Americans. The contributors include one historian and eleven political scientists, all of whom have taught in colleges and universities in Alaska; and at the time of publication two were public administrators and one a politician. The book is essentially a text on Alaskan government and politics. It opens with an historical account of the evolution of statehood, going back from Russian interest in the 1700s to struggles with Congress in the 1950s. Chapters then cover the culture of Alaskans and political institutions, such as elections, political parties, interest groups and the press. It culminates with articles on the institutions of government — the governor, the legislature, the administration and the courts. Canadians in particular will be interested in how a federal territory is transformed into a state and how oil revenues influence politics.

Two themes emerge in the book. The first is that Alaska has indeed nurtured a certain distinctiveness with its politics. The geography and climate have engendered a frontier mentality with a strong sense

of rugged individualism. At the same time, however, as the state matures, individual attitudes and institutional procedures seem to become more like those in other states. Electoral behaviour and the role of political parties tend to follow patterns developed in states to the south. Thus, while there are Alaskan features that are distinct, nevertheless, even in the far north characteristics of the governmental process seem to have a certain universality.

A second theme, and perhaps a more interesting one, is that Alaskan society remains very fragmented and polarized on key political issues. One cause of this is linked to the fact that Alaskan culture is dichotomized between a sense of individualism and populism on the one hand and a sense of the collective on the other. For example, Alaskans developed a constitution in which the separation of powers worked: a strong governor checks the legislature and an equally strong legislature can check the executive. At the same time, the people expect powerful legislation on the environment, for instance, which calls for concerted action rather than divided powers.

The fragmentation is also manifested in the urban-rural divisions, as well as in strong ethnic differences. Naturally one would look for a significant centripetal force, a power to counter fragmentation: an individual or institutions to provide an integrative mechanism. The contrary seems to be the case. Societal divisions are reinforced by the instruments of politics. In the federal system, for example, local governments have significant powers and weak political parties enable powerful interest groups to have their way.

According to the authors, governing institutions also offer little to counter the centrifugal forces of faction. With weak political parties the legislature lacks coherence and direction (p. 259). A "sunshine" movement was developed as one way of overcoming the influence of factions in an attempt to open the legislative process. While political campaign funding must now be revealed, little else has happened to make the legislative process more effective.

An especially interesting chapter covers the Alaska courts. The judicial process emerged in the 1950s when two important reforms were being called for: a unified court system and a merit system for selecting judges. Both ideas were incorporated into the Alaska constitution.

Another interesting feature of the court system has been the adoption of the Missouri plan, whereby voters decide on the retention of a judge in office. The process is not an election and does not involve partisan activity on the part of competing judges. But voters do decide if in fact a judge should be retained for an additional term of office.

One criticism of the book may be suggested. As there are distinctive features to the system in Alaska, features such as resource politics or Native politics, why not depart from a textbook approach and include chapters on these topics? In fairness, it should be noted that in chapter 3, on federalism, a great deal of the content is on Native governing powers, and resource politics are touched upon in a number of places. But these issues are not found in the politics of most states and would appear to warrant special coverage.

The book is an excellent work on the Alaskan political process. It is informative, comparative and the right place to start for anyone interested in investigating government and politics in the 49th state.

Mark O. Dickerson
Department of Political Science
The University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2N 1N4

ARCTIC AIR POLLUTION. Edited by B. STONEHOUSE. London: Cambridge University Press, 1987. 328 p. Hardbound. £30.00; US\$49.50.

The Arctic has been both romanticized and feared in poems and storybooks. It stirs both strong empathy and negative feelings in