

Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn, and Robert Menzies, eds. — *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002. Pp. 429.

In their introduction, the editors note the diverse experiences of citizenship in Canada; the 17 articles here certainly support that assertion. Though concentrated on the first half of the twentieth century, the subjects extend chronologically from an examination of the 1885 *Franchise Act* to an overview of recent court cases concerning indigenous rights; geographically, they span the struggle of Nova Scotia's Black women for schooling to British Columbia's Royal Commission on Mental Hygiene; and thematically they range from Quebec historiography to sex education for teenagers. They are as broad as a history of citizenship in Canada and as specific as an examination of Ontario's 1916 Unemployment Commission.

The editors, British Columbia criminologists, invited authors from many parts of Canada and rightfully argue that "history is, quite simply indispensable" for "an understanding of modern citizenship" (pp. 14–15). Thus historians are prominent contributors, but the essayists also include a sociologist, a political scientist, and professors of education, physical education, and social work. Despite this diversity, or perhaps because of it, this multidisciplinary collection is a fine addition to Canadian social history. With "citizenship" as a unifying concept, it also contributes to studies of race, gender, and class.

In reviewing the literature on citizenship mainly from American, British, and Canadian sources, the editors eschew the arguments of British theorist T. H. Marshall about social citizenship; they argue that citizenship is finite but lacks a fixed meaning. The empirical evidence confirms this and illustrates the central theme of a contest between inclusion and exclusion.

Those who were most "included", federal politicians, have a minor role. Only a few essays are traditional political studies. While cynics may question the sincerity of Throne speeches, Janine Brodie uses them to illustrate changes over time of "state discourses about the Canadian character and the ideal Canadian citizen" (p. 44). In the mid-twentieth century, as Shirley Tillotson shows, Members of Parliament discussed whether leisure should be a universal right as they debated legislating shorter

hours of work. The idea of universality carried over into policies for paid vacations and public recreation and fitness programmes but was not always fulfilled. Earlier, Members of Parliament consciously excluded certain Canadians. In a detailed analysis of an 1885 debate, Veronica Strong-Boag relates how Parliament considered, but rejected, the enfranchisement of Natives, Chinese, and White women.

Despite limited access to citizenship, women had voices. In Nova Scotia, Blacks only gained full access to educational facilities and hence “full social citizenship” (p. 309) in the 1950s; yet, as Bernice Moreau demonstrates, Black women resisted social oppression. Denyse Baillargeon argues persuasively that the energy and ingenuity of Montreal housewives in the 1930s extended family financial resources and must be considered in any explanation of “the weakness of social protest” (p. 180).

In other instances, experts viewed women as agents of the state. In English Canada, health professionals and other child-care experts believed that women’s citizenship “was grounded in their role as mothers” (p. 251). Hence, as Katherine Arnup shows, they “bombarded” women, including immigrants, with information designed to help them “produce healthy, well-disciplined children, future citizens for the modern, scientific age” (p. 247). In a similar vein, as Mary Louise Adams documents, following World War II “experts” gave teenagers bountiful advice on preparing to become “responsible citizens” who would practise “normal sexuality”, “the preserve of married, monogamous, adult heterosexual couples who produced children” (p. 289).

As the previous examples suggest, an important secondary theme is the move away from compulsion towards self-regulation, assisted by “professional knowledges” (p. 32), as a means of creating a Canadian state and “good” citizenship. These “knowledges” inspired many calls for state intervention as “professionals” had specific proposals for developing “good” citizenship. Sean Purdy describes how reformers saw better family housing as a way to “Canadianize” the working class and so create better citizens but excluded non-British subjects from their housing schemes. Lorna R. McLean’s “professionals” were volunteer Frontier College teachers who promoted literacy in isolated work camps while attaching “particular forms of masculinity to early twentieth-century ideals of citizenship among a select immigrant population” (p. 227).

The material from which good citizens could be made was important. In her paper on the Ontario Unemployment Commission of 1916, Jennifer Stephens notes the link made between industrial inefficiency and mental deficiency. Drawing on 455 criminal cases relating to sexual offences in British Columbia, Dorothy Chunn concludes that women’s “citizenship status was inextricably linked to their (re)productive ‘fitness’ ”(p. 380). The Vancouver Children’s Aid Society, studied by Robert Adamoski, espoused clear ideas of how gender, race, and class “affected ‘the most desirable material out of which to manufacture the best Canadian citizenship’ ”(p. 316). Although most of her evidence comes from Ontario, those themes are also prominent in Joan Sangster’s study of how courts and social agencies treated delinquent boys and girls. In British Columbia in the 1920s, eugenicists and mental hygienists inspired the establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate “the problem of mental abnormality” (p. 391). Building his essay around British Columbia’s Royal Commission on Mental Hygiene in the late 1920s, Robert Menzies cites

the consignment of individuals who failed to meet “capricious citizenship standards” to institutions and “surgical slabs” as a demonstration of the fragility of Canadian citizenship (p. 405).

While complete in itself, this volume elicits the observation that we need to know more about many aspects of Canadian citizenship. For example, Ronald Rudin’s tantalizing aperitif summarizes and updates his *Making History in Twentieth Century Quebec* but notes that, despite an extensive literature by sovereignists, little has been written about the concept of citizenship in the *Province* of Quebec. Claude Denis’s sketch of recent issues concerning indigenous citizenship also only explores a complex subject and deliberately raises more questions than it answers. One would also like to know something of what immigrants think about Canadian citizenship. Some essays deal broadly with education for citizenship, but none examines what the nation’s schools taught about citizenship or analyses any variations over time and place. Case studies invite comparisons from other eras and regions. As well, the 1946 *Citizenship Act*, the first statutory definition of Canadian citizenship, merits a study in depth. Nevertheless, the fact that a volume of over 400 pages scarcely mentions the legal definition of citizenship underscores the success of the editors in showing that citizenship is a superb prism through which to examine Canadian society.

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Jane Adams, ed. — *Fighting for the Farm: Rural America Transformed*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. Pp. vi, 338.

It is difficult to think of a time when North American rural areas have not been in one form of crisis or another. Falling commodity prices, rural depopulation, indifference of urban-oriented politicians, suburban growth, technological changes, and many other factors have all contributed to a sense of rural instability. As Jane Adams argues in *Fighting for the Farm*, the crises have intensified in the past two decades. In fact, she claims that over this period a rural transformation has occurred. Depopulation has accelerated, and much of the agricultural labour has been replaced with mechanical, chemical, and biological technologies. Adams’s collection shows the many ways in which the current crises are being contested. In fact, one of the book’s strengths is the attention paid to the role of agency on the part of those at the wrong end of this transformation.

Throughout *Fighting for the Farm*, the themes of history, state, territory, class, and actors recur and are, in the main, ably handled by the contributors. Moreover, many of the authors show how these forces intersect and create complex and often contradictory behaviour on the part of the actors. To highlight a few of the 14 articles, Douglas H. Constance, Anna M. Kleiner, and J. Sanford Rikoon provide an excellent overview of the growth of concentrated animal feeding operations (commonly known as feedlots) in their examination of corporate farming laws in Missouri. They show how competing interests seek resolution through state intermediaries, the