

of the external pressures which shaped the institution. The authors do not ignore the external environment but the complexity of identifying, to say nothing of weighing, political pressures, bureaucratic pressures, regional and cultural pressures and the changing intellectual and social milieu, often has forced them to ignore the problem or to rely on over-simple generalisations. It is not a serious fault, however. Few biographies of individuals have a satisfactory balance between character and circumstance, and it is surely more difficult to write the biography of an institution.

Occasionally, however, the reader is sorry that the authors take themselves so seriously. Here was a magnificent opportunity for satire. They are describing a Commission whose independence is carefully safeguarded so that it can protect the government against the temptations of patronage, only to find that the major concern of many of the Commissioners was to divine and then to recommend what the politicians wanted. It was an institution to which civil servants looked for support in their struggle against Treasury Board at a time when the Commission was little more than an agency of the Treasury Board. The Commissioners always appealed to some high principle, whether it was the undefinable but virtuous principle of merit or the latest fad in management relations, but the Commission itself stayed safely mired in the quicksand of deadening routine. The Commission was a fraud for the very good reason that the government was the employer and could not be expected to allow an independent Commission to define merit or efficiency or to act as an arbiter in disputes with government employees. And so the charade continued until the Civil Service Commission gave way to the Public Service Commission in 1968. There are lessons to be learned from this study but satire might have highlighted these lessons more effectively.

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HOWARD PALMER. — *Land of the Second Chance. A History of Ethnic Groups in Southern Alberta*, Lethbridge, The Lethbridge Herald, 1972.

Mr. Palmer has given us a very useful and timely history of ethnic groups in Southern Alberta: useful because it is a sensitive as well as informative study, and timely because it sheds light on the nature of the presently much-discussed multiculturalism or cultural pluralism of a region of Western Canada which has been characterized by a large influx of Americanized minorities as well as of European and Asiatic groups. The book is rather uneven because, as the author admits, it is an amalgam of journalistic pieces about distinctive communities, research papers, and the author's theses on nativism and ethnic tolerance in Alberta. Nevertheless, it has the singular distinction of employing what is relevant and meaningful from sociological conceptualization without capitulating on its jargon or sterile rigidity. Much of the work is compilation, to be sure, but this too

is not without great utility because so little information, whether the narratives be familial, communal or institutional, has been available to either the general reader or the scholar.

Although the author captions his conclusion "Impact of Immigration on Alberta," his assessment of the process of culture contact and of social evolution is sufficiently sensitive to have justified a caption such as "Impact of Alberta on the Immigrants." There can be no doubt that Palmer knows Southern Alberta well, that he is conversant with the cultural communities which comprise this western society, that he is cognizant of the historical and economic background of the social experiences he describes, and that he is sensitive to the issues involved in ethnic studies. Many sections tend to read like local histories, but this is the essential source material for the larger sweep of regional social history. In the attempt to include a multitude of cross-currents, movements, processes, reactions, social trends, behavioural patterns, beliefs, motivations, transitional stages, prejudices, economic considerations, etc., the net has been spread so wide that the harvest reaped is not always sufficiently identified. The author had a difficult task and he seems to have decided to provide the reader with as informative and comprehensive an account of each group as sources available would permit, leaving the synthesis to the concluding chapter. A careful perusal of the annotated bibliography should convince any reader of the paucity and the disparity of sources the author could rely upon. The primary sources appear only through the various theses and research papers, including no fewer than five by Palmer himself, which were judiciously utilized.

This study indicates the breadth of the inter-disciplinary field of ethnic studies, ranging from immigration history and the consideration of particular cultural communities to inter-groups relations, race relations, human rights and civil liberties. The range of groups studied is admirably comprehensive. Significantly, the Indians and *Métis* have been omitted from this study because for them the creation of Alberta represented not a "second chance" but an extinction of aboriginal rights, a relegation to reserves and ghettos, and police and government protection of the settlers, land speculators and railway companies. It is not without significance to those interested in Canadian identity that the "second chance" for some of the immigrant or migrant groups was in fact a third, if not fourth, re-settlement in search of a better life.

Palmer's study illustrates very aptly that the models sociologists have constructed to explain the immigrant experience in North America — e.g. melting-pot, Anglo-conformity, cultural pluralism or the mosaic — do not adequately explain either the experience of the immigrants to Canada or the experience of all members of any particular ethnic community. His study shows no tendency to disregard the facts in order to fit events and personalities into a preconceived model or theory. He defines ethnic group and minority group in his Introduction, but one may well wonder if the Mormons, for example, meet the criteria for classification as an ethnic group in the same way as do the Jews, Doukhobors and Mennonites because the latter also

display non-host society "racial," linguistic and national characteristics. Mormonism would seem rather to be a religious phenomenon within the pattern of American immigration, although the author does make strong claims for their ethnicity on grounds of group settlement, exclusivity, etc. Being an identifiable social group gives them no particular claim to being ethnic. One might also take exception to the definition of minority groups as necessarily subservient to a dominant group. Some minorities were, and are, elitist minorities and dominant minorities — perhaps this is more apparent in the history of Eastern Canada than in the Western provinces, although social and economic mobility, which the author considers, are moving some minorities in Alberta, as elsewhere in Western Canada, to new power status.

This book is a valuable introduction to ethnic studies in Western Canada and should awaken interest in this area of Canadian Studies; its publication causes us to await with anticipation the author's doctoral dissertation.

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LIONEL GROULX. — *Mes Mémoires*, tome III, 1926-1939, Montréal, Fides, 1972.

Le tome III¹ nous livre l'homme dans la cinquantaine, au moment où son influence sera des plus fortes sur le projet nationaliste. C'est l'époque d'*Orientations* et de *Directives*; c'est également celle d'un charisme bien nourri auprès d'une jeunesse qui le porte volontiers sur le pavois.

La période couvre en première partie (V^e volume) son séjour en Europe et plus particulièrement à Paris, où le professeur d'histoire dispense son enseignement à la Sorbonne et à l'Institut catholique. La seconde partie (VI^e volume) nous révèle le maître en pleine fécondité alors que sa plume ne connaît plus de cesse pour des écrits de tout genre: la conférence, le roman, la grande et la moins grande histoire...

Groulx se présente dans ces pages comme l'homme d'une seule cause, d'une passion unique, pour ne pas dire d'une obsession. Il se définit comme l'émissaire d'un Canada français en détresse, fonction qu'il assume pleinement. A la manière d'un général qui succéda à un maréchal aux prétentions comparables, Groulx s'inscrit dans une lignée très française à cet égard, de sauveurs à l'esprit parfois un peu bergsonnien qui se veulent les incarnations vivantes d'une idée ou encore d'une mystique nationale. Ces mémoires se cristallisent, en cette troisième tranche, autour d'une double fidélité: fidélité à la « race » (entendue dans le sens large que l'auteur lui confère) et fidélité à un personnage. Et plus le lecteur avance dans le texte, plus la seconde paraît vouloir prendre le pas sur la première.

¹ Les comptes rendus des deux premiers tomes étaient publiés au numéro 7 (avril 1971), pp. 104-112.