

## **Martin Robin, ed., Canadian Provincial Politics: Party Systems of the Ten Provinces**

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the narrative without introduction. The biography contains relatively little analysis and since Fergusson makes little attempt to place Fielding's career in the context of his times, the significance of Fielding's words and actions, which often receive very detailed attention, are completely lost. The author seems to have made relatively little use of the available recent secondary literature, particularly in the economic field. Not all Canadian historians would agree that there was a Great Depression in Canada from 1873 until 1896, nor would all American historians agree that by 1893 "The American West has filled up." The biography also lacks an index. A bibliography, with a brief description of the Fielding papers, would have been extremely helpful. Canadian scholars have awaited this biography, sometimes impatiently, since Fielding's papers, located in the Provincial Archives of Nova Scotia, have been almost totally closed pending its completion. Professor C. Bruce Fergusson's two volume study will undoubtedly stimulate further interest and study of W. S. Fielding.

CARMAN MILLER

*Canadian Provincial Politics: Party Systems of the Ten Provinces.* Edited by Martin Robin. Scarborough, Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1972.

There are two ways of producing a book of readings: to commission a group of authors each to write on a part of the subject in question, or to excerpt and edit from already written materials a selection of articles. The former produces original material prepared specifically for the book in question, so the pieces can be planned to form an integrated whole. However, this assumes that the editor has selected his authors wisely, and is prepared to insist that they follow a carefully elaborated and integrated schema, that they produce their work on time, and that they maintain a high standard of writing and scholarship. Even then he must be prepared to use his editorial pencil severely and reject material that is sub-standard. These are conditions so demanding that few authors would tolerate them, and virtually no editor would take the trouble. It would be easier to write the book himself — or edit existing material with a free hand — nobody's feelings are hurt since he doesn't know he is being judged.

This book shows up clearly the problems of the first method, despite the fact that the authors are, in most cases, the most suitable people to write about their particular province. However, each appears to have been turned loose to do his own thing without instructions or specific requirements. The result is an uneven collection that does not permit the reader to make any kind of significant comparison between provinces — because the methods used and the aspects dealt with vary so greatly. And the whole simply does not hang together.

If these strictures are too hard on the editor because his authors were too independent and strong willed, he can still not be forgiven for not seeing that some overall analysis of the provincial party systems was included. The whole

would have become a real book if he had supplied such material — and had edited what he was given more severely. Certainly the Manitoba and Newfoundland pieces are too long. The astonishing decision simply to present the provinces in alphabetical order without a word of editorial commentary is quite unjustifiable. A book on provincial party systems is a comparative one (even if the editor does all he can to prevent it from being so). The reader inevitably thinks of the other provinces when reading about one. It would have helped to integrate these disparate essays into a whole if a statistical appendix were added to supplement or replace the tables supplied by each author. Then comparisons on a common basis could be made. Also one could discern regional differences — which are now obscured by the alphabetical presentation of the provinces and the total absence of integrating editorial commentary.

The essays themselves vary greatly in method of analysis, aspects of the problem dealt with, and in quality. Even the length of the essays is strangely disparate. (Manitoba rates forty-seven pages, and Quebec twenty-eight!) Some are fresh journalistic overviews (New Brunswick), some historical narratives (Manitoba), others voting studies (Ontario). Others are mixtures. Some are vivid, engaging and highly informative analyses (P.E.I., Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec), others full of pretty heavy-going statistics (Newfoundland). While most inevitably were written to fit into this book, some bring very valuable analyses of their provinces that stimulate thought and discussion.

The analysis by Wilson and Hoffman of Ontario (even without the brilliant analysis of the dominance of the province by the Liberals at the federal level and the Conservatives at the provincial, which can be found in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*) is especially noteworthy. They see the province with a three-party system at the provincial level giving way to a new system. The analysis was written before the 1971 election, but would not be greatly changed by the results. The historical development of the party system is followed by an analysis of the supporters, candidates and structures of the parties, that would have served as a model for all essays. Equally good is Vincent Lemieux's piece on Quebec, although, given the importance of the province, the complexity of its politics and how little known they are to English-speaking readers, more descriptive background would be valuable. The discussion of the voting pattern is clear and competent. It is probably the best short analysis in English of Quebec politics. Another excellent piece is the one by Courtney and Smith on Saskatchewan. While it is overly detailed on the Haultain period and skimpy on the C.C.F. period of office, it provides model analyses of the party system and political culture of the province. Similar praise should go to Murray Beck for a careful, sound, and well-written essay on the Nova Scotia party system, using David Easton's analytical framework. He gives a full picture of the two old parties, but this reader would have liked to see more on the N.D.P., which does play a role in Cape Breton.

The above are exercises in contemporary political science. Also valuable are the less structured and quantitative efforts by Frank MacKinnon on Prince Edward Island, Martin Robin on British Columbia, and T. Peterson on Manitoba. MacKinnon shows a sure-footedness and vividness that both entertains and enlightens, and Robin's lurid picture of British Columbia is detailed and lively. The essay by Long and Quo on Alberta is sound and well presented, McCorquodale's on Newfoundland is crammed full of detailed information, some of doubtful importance, and Fitzpatrick's on New Brunswick somewhat of a journalistic over-simplification.

This volume will serve as a useful teaching instrument for courses on Canadian provincial politics. Apart from the aging studies of individual provinces in the Government of Canada Series and the Social Credit Series, it stands virtually alone in the field — an amazing situation considering the enormous proliferation of students and courses touching on provincial politics that have appeared at both the post-secondary and secondary levels. It is there that the book will find most of its readers. Robin has rendered a service in fashioning a needed teaching instrument that covers all the provinces in an up-to-date collection.

H. G. THORBURN