

REVIEWS

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF W.A.C. BENNETT

R.B. Worley, Toronto, Mclelland and Stewart Limited, 1971.
p.p. 290 — \$10.00

POLITICS IN PARADISE

Patrick L. McGeer, Peter Martin Associates, 1972.
p.p. xiii, 238 — \$7.95

In the foreward of Politics in Paradise, John de Wolf, Progressive Conservative leader in B.C. from 1969 to 1971, describes The Wonderful World of W.A.C. Bennett, as "shamelessly sycophantic." There is not a better phrase to describe the content and the tone of Worley's shallow biography. His "Dick and Jane" literary style, replete with numerous exclamations, folksy anecdotes that are more tiresome than humorous, and simplistic, totally biased analysis of political situations, is hard to reconcile as that of a well-educated right-hand man of a government head for twenty years.

By comparison, Pat McGeer gives a much broader, more factual view of British Columbia politics. He discusses topics of contemporary concern with intelligence and logic, gradually developing the main planks of his political platform. He reviews the recent political history of British Columbia with wit, clarity, and insight. He gives credit to the Socred government for its programs of highway construction and resource development, but devotes most of his writing to examination of its many short comings in the fields of social services, national unity, environmental housekeeping, urban planning, and labour relations. He stresses the need for a modern, progressive view of educational needs and costs, coupled with visionary planning for future educational requirements. Another of his vital concerns is the need to supplement the provinces resource-based economy with secondary manufacturing and technological interests. Included is a chapter concerning the antics of that prima donna of the Socreds, P.A. Gaglardi, revealing a good deal about the flamboyant, wheeler-dealer nature of Kamloops' erstwhile favorite son.

The Wonderful World of W.A.C. Bennett traces with open-mouthed awe the beginnings of the Social Credit party in British Columbia. All events are related with an ingenious superficiality common to a mind that sees everything one-sidedly. The reader finishes with no more idea of what W.A.C. Bennett is like than he had before starting, for Bennett is not given a personality. The author's saccharine, adulatory prose keeps the reader at a safe distance from the real W.A.C. Bennett, whoever he may be, as common multitudes are kept from familiarity with royalty.

Seen through Worley's eyes, Bennett is a political messiah with the light of right in his eyes and a crystal ball in his hands. If this book

is any indication of what Bennett and his cohorts thought, British Columbians wanted to hear, it is no wonder the Socreds were ousted in the last election.

Politics in Paradise is recommended to students of British Columbia politics as a well written analysis of twenty years of Social Credit government, and as a precis of an opposing party leader's ideology. The Wonderful World of W.A.C. Bennett is also recommended to those same students as a curio of the Bennett era, and as an excellent example of how not to write a biography.

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THE TEXAS CREEK BURIAL SITE ASSEMBLAGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA

David Sanger. Ottawa. Anthropology Papers, National Museum
of Canada. Queens Printer, Number 17. February 1968.
pp. 23, illus., maps — No charge.

This short paper is concerned with an assemblage of artifacts collected from a destroyed burial site in the southwestern interior of British Columbia. The site is located on the west bank of the Fraser River about 12 miles downstream from the town of Lillooet. Because the site had been obliterated by logging operations and relic collecting no controlled excavations were carried out. Kamloops Museum now display many of the artifacts from the site.

Artifact description takes up most of the article. Ground stone, chipped stone, bone antler, tooth and shell implements are all described in considerable detail. The descriptive text is greatly reduced by the use of several drawings and photographs. Evidently Sanger was not able to see all of the Museum's Texas Creek Site collection for such major finds as a composite hair comb are not mentioned. It remains uncertain as to whether or not all the artifacts in the Museum collection actually came from the Texas Creek Site.

The site dates from the late pre-historic period, or Kamloops Phase (defined in Sanger 1968), which lasted from A.D. 1250-1800. Sanger places the Texas Creek burials between A.D. 1400-1600, although he does not identify those artifact attributes which led him to suggest this date. Sanger describes various burial techniques used prehistorically in the Interior Plateau, suggesting that the disturbed Texas Creek burials may have resembled the flexed primary pit internments of the nearby Mile 28 Ranch Site.

Sanger compares the Texas Creek artifact collection with other archaeological assemblages from the mid Fraser-Thompson drainage area, concluding that the Texas Creek Site is similar to most Kamloops

Phase sites of the area. Similar artifact types were noted at such distant sites as Dunn Lake on the North Thompson River and the EeQw 1 burial site near the town of Chase. Steatite spindle whorls and bird-bone whistles are local artifact types which were also found at the nearby Mile 28 Ranch Site.

This paper serves an important function in that it records in detail artifacts from an archaeological context traditionally considered uncondusive to scientific study. As such it sets a valuable precedent for the future study of material culture from destroyed sites.

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THE CANADIAN IDENTITY

W.L. Morton. Second edition. Toronto. University of
Toronto Press, 1972. pp. xi, 162 — \$2.95

Often in Canadian history sporadic upsurges of Canadian nationalism have caused Canadians to search for and attempt to define uniquely Canadian Identity which sets Canada apart from the other nations of the world. The Canadian Identity, historically pinpoints those events and circumstances in Canadian history which have molded Canada into her present form and those events which have caused Canadians to demonstrate their independence. The book has a timely theme as Canadians seem once again to be feeling the need to express their identity. Morton's book is not just a historical work, however. It contains some very interesting sociological implications as well.

The first issue of The Canadian Identity consisted of three lectures which Morton presented in 1959 to the University of Wisconsin, where he was Professor of Commonwealth History. The fourth chapter was prepared as a presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association at Queen's University in 1960. In the 1972 edition of his book, Morton added a fifth chapter in which he comments upon the internal and international stresses Canada has had to face in the last decade.

The principle theme of Morton's book is that . . .

"The Canadian Identity, is what their experiences made the Canadian people, a society made by history."

The author relates the evolution of Canadian nationhood by focusing upon Canada's relationship with the two countries that have shaped and influenced her outlook and destiny the most — Great Britain and the United States. By presenting the historical ties and contacts of these two major powers with Canada, Morton has tried to express some inherent traits of the Canadian Identity.

In harmony with his theme, that Canada is a product of her history, Morton employs three distinct facts that characterize the development of Canadian history. These are: Canada in America, Canada in the Commonwealth, and Canada and the United States.

Morton claims that Canada was an attempt to develop in a particularly harsh North American environment, a culture that was European in origin. Canada was also the attempt of two distinct cultures to thrive under one nationality. Finally, Canada was an infant country shielding her vulnerable independence from an expanding neighbour to the south. These characteristics of Canada in America helped to promote a Canadian Identity. Morton states that the American people chose to venture westward to the wealth of the Pacific rather than taking upon themselves the hardships of the extreme Northern environment to which the Canadians were committed. Canada was left to work out a Northern Identity of her own. The French and English, according to Morton, despite their cultural and political differences, were composed of the same basic elements of character that allowed them to brave Canada's climate and physical barriers. In defense of her independence Canada gave birth to a theme of "Northernness" as a counterpart to the American theme of the "Frontier."

Canada's role as a colony of Great Britain and her subsequent role in the Commonwealth of Nations has, in Morton's opinion, contributed to her independence from the United States and ultimately allowed her to break free of Britain. Yet even when Canada was granted the rights of a self governing colony she had little desire to sever connections with Britain. How could Canada, Morton asks, finance a "northern nationality," an inter-colonial railway, and essentially a Confederation that would come to mean "commercial and strategic union" in Canada, without the capital and the skill of Great Britain. When the country was very young, membership in the British Empire meant unity for Canada.

Morton states that her role in the Commonwealth of Nations did two things for Canada. It gave her equality with Britain and it helped her to develop a foreign policy that enabled her to better contend with the rapid advancement of the United States to World Power status.

The people of the United States equated liberty with revolution and they were skeptical of a nation that allowed herself to be governed by a "small group of Pro-British people who kept Canada from recognizing her true destiny with the United States." But time and experience helped to dissipate this skepticism and ideological misunderstanding. Morton cites the example that when the Laurier government of Canada decided to lower the tariff on American goods and to set up a reciprocity system between the United States and Canada, several influential American politicians declared that this was the first step in the absorption of Canada. The Canadian outcry which ensued: "No truck or trade with the Yankees!" surprised the Americans, and perhaps the Canadians too, into realizing that Canadians did indeed feel their nation was an independent country. After this, both countries handled each other with more maturity and a "good neighbour" policy was introduced.

Several times after this initial outburst of Canadian nationalism, the

two countries have experienced periods of friction. Morton rationalizes that the nature of the relationship between Canada and the United States is such that explosions of Canadian resentment are bound to occur from time to time. He feels that Canadians should recognize a lesson from their nation's history in regard to Canada's position with the United States in the past:

"....Canadian nationhood has at least put forward the proposition that association and equality are not incompatible terms, that nations may, in free association, by careful definition and great patience, make mutual accomodation of sovereignty without loss of independence."

The first three chapters of Morton's book prove that he is fully capable of writing sound and informative Canadian history. These chapters are definitely his best. Unfortunately Morton undermines the stability of his argument in the succeeding chapter, "The Relevance of Canadian History." He reiterates and elaborates upon a theme he has already dealt with, the theme of the Canadian North.

The Northern theme in Canadian history is in large part a myth. It has been manipulated by novelists, poets, politicians and historians to bolster the Canadian spirit. It is tragic that a historian as capable as Morton would intentionally present the myth as a wholly-legitimate fact of Canadian history. Perhaps Morton is grappling for something "concrete" that marks a Canadian Identity. How ironic it is that he would spend so much time weaving a delicate pattern of Canadian character only to destroy it with the statement:

"Canadian life is maintained by a factor of deliberate choice and Natural Selection."

The final chapter of The Canadian Identity is interesting but very different in scope from the rest of the book. It is befitting, however, that Morton should conclude his book with examples of his historical theories working in modern day Canada. The only disturbing aspect of "Canada Under Stress in the Sixties" is for the first time Morton admits ethnic unrest and the French problem in Canada. This breaks the unity of the book in an annoying way and makes it obvious that this section is a later addition.

Generally speaking, The Canadian Identity is a good historical interpretation of those things which make Canada different from any other country in the world. No one will read this book without profit. It is especially valuable as a background to further study and understanding of the Canadian Identity.

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