

Although it has various weaknesses and faults, *Miners and Steelworkers* is still a volume of considerable interest and importance. It provides a convenient and often colourful basic outline of the history of labour and politics in industrial Cape Breton. Like James M. Cameron's recent book on coal mining in Pictou County (*The Pictonian Colliers*, Halifax 1974), *Miners and Steelworkers* is sure to be widely used as a source for studying labour history in Nova Scotia.

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WENDY MITCHINSON & RAMSAY COOK, eds. — *The Proper Sphere. Women's Place in Canadian Society*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976.

The Proper Sphere. Woman's Place in Canadian Society is in many ways the type of collection of primary materials one could expect of Wendy Mitchinson and Ramsay Cook. It is thorough, well-researched and precise. The articles range widely, in subject from female doctors to social purity, and in time from 1856 to 1946. There is also balanced representation from conservative and liberals author, including Henri Bourassa, Nellie McClung, Lady Ishbel Aberdeen and George Grant. The editors' introductions to the seven sections — Woman's Proper Sphere, Legal Rights, Education, Work, Organizations, Morality and Suffrage — are judicious and to the point. They sum up the present state of knowledge about Canadian women who lived between roughly 1880 and 1920. The student will put down this volume better informed than ever before regarding the thinking of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada on the woman question. It is not hard to predict that this book will become a mainstay of Canadian history and woman's studies courses for years to come.

Yet *The Proper Sphere* is finally disappointing for those already familiar with the speculative and innovative work done by the editors in this field. We miss the bold judgments and the provocative hypotheses that Mitchinson and Cook are entitled to deliver. Instead, the volume is too frequently predictable, cautious and safe. The passion, the anger, and the high hopes that drove feminist and anti-feminist alike largely disappear in a final testament of ordered, measured and proper prose. Naturally, the public expressions of these men and women were most often restrained. But where are the private agonies that moved such individuals? Where, for instance, are excerpts from the student diaries of Élizabéth Smith-Shortt, the semi-autobiographical novels of Alice Chown and Francis Beynon, the personal journal of Josephine Dandurand? Additions such as these would have done full justice to the individuals who speak in these pages. A brief note concerning the selected writers or periodicals would also have had had much the same result. To know, for instance, that George Grant, probably the nation's foremost educator, was president of Queen's during the controversy over the Kingston Women's Medical College and university co-education or that Francis Beynon, the woman's editor of the *Grain Growers' Guide*, was forced to leave Canada during World War I because of her pacifist sympathies, would have made their arguments here all the more meaningful.

There is also the usual problem with the concentration of middle-class women. Where are the majority of working-class and non-Charter Group women who had their own part to play in the creation of woman's sphere in the Dominion? Like any other historian of women I realize such documents are difficult to find.

But why not give us more information from or about the women of the Grange, the shoemakers, the labour leagues or the prisons? The introductions do not compensate for such omissions. Too often they project that unrealistic image of a homogeneous national identity. References to "traditional role" and "traditional home life" confirm the erroneous impression of a common experience for Canadian women. In fact, we know very little about what 'traditional' meant to a prairie homesteader, a Newfoundland fisherman's wife or a French-Canadian urban settler. Michael Katz's work on Hamilton, for instance, suggests that 'traditional' could mean many things in nineteenth century Canada.

The Proper Sphere has provided us with an authoritative statement about the 'mind-set' of the Victorian middle class on the woman question. It is now time to turn to the study of other classes and ethnic groups. It is also time to consider the pre-industrial patterns which gave birth to the Victorians who so fascinate the present generation of Canadian historians. Hopefully workers in these new areas will reveal the same commitment to solid, fair-minded analysis which characterizes Mitchinson and Cook.

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CHARLES M. JOHNSTON. — *McMaster University, Volume I: The Toronto Years*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press for McMaster University, 1976.

With this the first of a projected two-volume study, McMaster University joins the list of institutions of higher learning in Canada which have seen fit to record in a formal manner their past trials, tribulations and accomplishments. Most of these studies fall clearly into one of two almost mutually exclusive camps. In a few cases the university has commissioned a former administrator to perform the task; often the result has been an exercise in institutional history, a record of bricks and mortar, flattering to the university itself but offering little to the advancement of historical scholarship. More often the task has fallen to an historian of repute, with the result being a rewarding volume in intellectual history. One thinks, for example, of W.L. Morton's, *One University: A History of the University of Manitoba, 1877-1952* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1952). Fortunately, McMaster University chose the latter approach, entrusted the responsibility to an historian who takes pride in his craftsmanship, and the first volume now appears as *McMaster University: The Toronto Years*.

Johnston imposes no social science "model" on his research and writing, but chooses to work inductively, taking as his starting point the abortive efforts of McMaster's forerunners in the mid-nineteenth century, and continuing through the generosity of Sir William McMaster in providing financial assistance, the debate over federation with the University of Toronto, the struggles of an infant college through good years and bad, until the decision to relocate from Toronto to Hamilton in 1930. The resulting story could have been a limited account of a church-run, parochial institution. But a deeper level is reached in the opening chapter as the author introduces the reader to a number of philosophic strands that keep reappearing throughout the volume. The controversies surrounding the Baptist-run McMaster University were firmly rooted in the mainstream of North American theological and ideological debate. Johnston's study thus transcends the particular history of one university and becomes a contribution to the intellectual history of this country.