

Recent Publications

THE BROADVIEW BOOK OF CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY ANECDOTES, Marc Bosc, Broadview Press, Peterborough, 1988, 343 p.

Marc Bosc is a Procedural Clerk with the House of Commons' Journals Directorate. His book is one of a series of three collections of anecdotes published by Broadview Press: the other two are about the Middle Ages and about Canada in general. Anthologies of anecdotes constitute a very specialized literary genre, and to succeed they have to meet certain criteria. As Mr. Bosc explains, an anecdote is the account of an incident or event that is interesting, funny, or striking in itself. It is more likely to reveal something immediate about an individual than to present an in-depth personality analysis; it might also be said that the anecdote's form makes the incident reported seem trivial or without real importance. Be that as it may, the teller of anecdotes can usually count on being a popular success.

Politicians on the whole lend themselves particularly well to being anecdotalized. Their visibility, their idiosyncrasies, the curiosity of the media, all make them ideal targets. Canada's politicians are no exception. As Mr. Bosc's book makes abundantly clear, our parliamentarians are neither drab nor conventional: on the contrary! Their quips, their escapades, their obsessions, both in the House and outside it, make hilarious reading.

Mr. Bosc has chosen to give us his personal favourites, in chronological order, from Confederation to the present day (the latter including only former parliamentarians who are no longer active in politics). Memoirs and biographies were the main sources. And as could have been expected, Prime Ministers are the subject of more anecdotes than anyone else.

This is an entertaining book, and one that humanizes a great many Canadian political figures.

Serge Pelletier
Research Branch
Library of Parliament

THE HAPPY WARRIOR: POLITICAL MEMOIRS, Donald C. MacDonald, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Markham, 1988, 440 p.

When I learned that Don MacDonald was writing his memoirs I looked forward to their publication with great anticipation. As someone who has followed his career with interest and admiration I expected an anecdotal, clear, no-nonsense and captivating book. I was not disappointed.

From the opening recollections of his early years to the present day, the reader is a full partner in these memoirs. The author takes us from his humble and life-shaping beginnings, his years as a teacher, journalist, broadcaster, political

organizer, politician and eventually leader of the Ontario CCF/NDP.

One of the more interesting aspects of these memoirs (and there are many) is how MacDonald arrived at his decision to join the then CCF, forerunner of the NDP. It was by no means a doctrinaire decision. Thanks to these memoirs it can be safely said that no less than a conversation with retired Conservative Prime Minister R.B. Bennett contributed to MacDonald's decision to join the CCF, later the NDP which he led from 1953 to 1970.

For many years he was literally a "one-man-band" as leader, doing his own research and typing his own press releases on that "faithful 1938 Underwood". In those years facing the Tory dynasty and a sometimes complacent Liberal opposition, he worked tirelessly to build the CCF/NDP into an active and credible political force in Ontario. During those "wilderness years" election campaigns there was no campaign bus or plane just his car and interested reporters who tagged along on the campaign trail.

The mountains and valleys which any political leader faces are relayed clearly by MacDonald to the reader as if they happened yesterday. The reader has a front row – or front bench – seat to issues and personalities in Ontario politics. This includes the battle for accessible and universal health care; the contentious separate school funding issue; a

fascinating review of the Northern Ontario Natural Gas (NONG) scandal and MacDonald's views on the role of Ontario vis-à-vis Quebec in nation-building.

MacDonald, in typical straightforward fashion, pulls no punches in his assessments of the political figures he encountered both on the provincial and federal stages. What surprised me was the rather brief description of the leadership of his successor Stephen Lewis. One might have expected more insight into the "Lewis years". To a lesser extent the same can be said of the treatment of Lewis' successor Michael Cassidy. Their respective stewardship of the NDP were dealt with in rather short order. We are treated, however, to an interesting analysis of the Tory Premiers of the time: Drew, Frost, Robarts and Davis.

Just under two hundred pages (about half the book) deal what could be termed "memoirs". We are then led through the "issue section" which deal with MacDonald's views on key provincial subjects including health, education, inter-governmental affairs, and agriculture. MacDonald's opinions on these topics are as relevant as today's headlines. The final section of the book "Reflections" includes a discussion of the NDP both as it relates to organized labour and to the overall Ontario political scene.

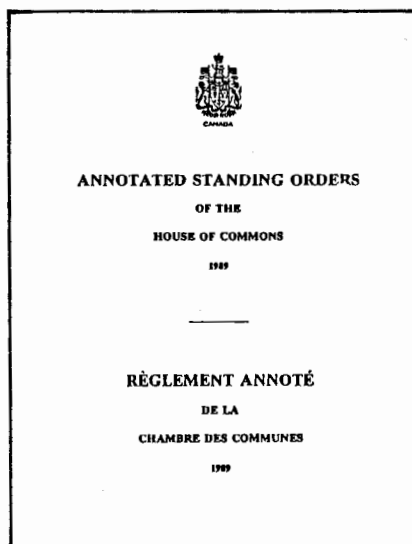
A readable, interesting and informative book by an individual who worked in the political trenches from the backroom to individual polls to the floor of the Ontario legislature, over almost a thirty year period.

Ontario politics is richer because of the active and dedicated contribution of Donald C. MacDonald. His memoirs have at the same time enriched Ontario's political history.

David LaBallister
Nepean, Ontario

ANNOTATED STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons, Queens Printer for Canada, Ottawa, 1989, 487 p. and BEAUCHESNE'S RULES & FORMS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 6TH EDITION, Alistair Fraser, W.F. Dawson and John Holtby, Carswell Co., Toronto, 1989.

The two great names in Canadian parliamentary procedure are J.G. Bourinot and Arthur Beauchesne former Clerks of the House of Commons each of whom wrote a weighty tomb on the subject. Bourinot, Clerk for more than two decades in the last century, was a great admirer of the British authority, Erskine May, and was instrumental in developing procedures for the new



Canadian legislature along well established British patterns.

Beauchesne, Clerk from 1925 to 1949, set out to make the standing orders more intelligible to the average member of parliament by annotating them.

Their works live on in these two recent publications, one produced by a team of experts on the staff of the House of Commons, the other by

three distinguished former parliamentary officials two of whom, Fraser and Dawson, also collaborated on the 5th Edition of Beauchesne published in 1977.

The impetus for both these books can be traced in part to the parliamentary boycott of 1982 which completely shut down the House of Commons for fourteen days. One result was to set into motion a thorough re-examination of parliamentary rules and procedures which culminated with the Report of the McGrath committee in June 1985 and the implementation of most of its recommendations over the next two years.

These reforms necessitated numerous changes in the standing orders and at one point it was decided to completely reorganize and renumber them. The *Annotated Standing Orders* reprint each order from 1 to 159 with commentary and historical summaries of each. The standing orders are divided into sixteen chapters covering the following areas: presiding officers, members, sittings of the House, daily program, questions, process of debate, special debates, motions, public bills, financial procedures, private members' business, committees of the whole, committees, delegated legislation, private bills, house administration.

The *Annotated Standing Orders* represented a considerable achievement and those responsible for the historical research and commentary deserve to be congratulated. Readers may be surprised to find there are actually some opinions offered about certain events that have taken place. This will make reading a little more interesting to the average member although one has to wonder if future Speakers may find themselves having to deal with points of order based on