

based upon the 1979 election, 15 of their 31 seats could possibly change hands in the next election. Only 11 of the NDP's 26 seats are considered this vulnerable. Given the current five seat majority held by Social Credit and assuming the close seats will be the ones to change, the obvious conclusion to be reached is that the next election will be very close. The problem with this concept is that it says nothing about political issues, candidates, etc., which all have a great deal to do with election outcomes.

The author further weakens the analysis by suggesting that since voter turnout changed very little in the 1969, 1972, 1975 and 1979 elections (averaging around 69%), and since the parties changed office twice, very little changes in voter turnout may significantly alter political party fortunes. It is simply nonsense to suggest that minor changes in voter turnout (less than 1%) have any significance in party fortunes over the past few years. This is particularly true unless it is demonstrated that voter turnout has an effect in the swing or marginally held seats by each party. Many conclusions reached in this chapter are little more than speculations based on faith and instinct and do little to enhance the book's worth.

Chapter three lists the provincial electoral districts, names the person and party holding each seat, lists the members of the provincial cabinet and their portfolios (as of 1975) and assigns the members of the opposition special areas of expertise and government critique. It also reproduces three excellent official electoral maps of the province (interior, greater Vancouver and Victoria). Chapter four provides detailed election results for each district since 1966. A brief sketch of the settlement pattern, population size, geographical boundaries, occupational profile, etc., is also provided for each district. Given the swing percentages it is suggested Atlin, Surrey, Skeena, Dewdney, Burnaby-Willingdon, Kamloops, Shusway-Revolstoke and Columbia River are key constituencies to watch in the next election.

Taken as a whole, the book opens with a weak, theoretical discussion, then drops it entirely as it trails off into trend speculations and a straightforward presentation of facts and data. While the latter may be of interest to the novice as well as the more sophisticated observer of B.C. politics, little else is provided which would en-

hance the reader's understanding of what actually goes on.

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STANLEY KNOWLES, THE MAN FROM WINNIPEG NORTH CENTRE, by Susan Trofimenkoff, Saskatoon, Western Producers Prairie Books, 1982, 226 p.

This book offers a ray of hope to those who fear that the Canadian House of Commons is becoming redundant. The Hon. Stanley Knowles has been a member of Parliament since 1942, except for a gap from 1958-1962. He has always been in opposition, a constant and feared critic of whatever government has been in power yet he has been successful in affecting policy and legislation. He has played a major role in bringing about significant change in Canada and he has worked vigorously to ensure that the House conducts itself properly. This "biographical memoir" describes these achievements and helps to explain those forces which have influenced Knowles' behavior and led to his passion for social justice. Professor Trofimenkoff has based her book in the main on a series of interviews with Mr. Knowles, augmented, by research in Hansard and in Mr. Knowles personal files.

Stanley Knowles was born in Los Angeles in 1908; the elder son of working class Maritimers who had settled in the United States. The Knowles family was devoutly Methodist and the Church, as has been the case with so many social democrats in Canada, was an important part of the family's environment. Knowles' mother died early and his father, a thoughtful and active worker in the Church, encouraged his son's religious and intellectual development. Mr. Knowles Sr. was a "social gospeller" and no doubt his views which emphasized action as well as belief had a profound effect on his son who early in life realized that changing the world inevitably meant public action.

Mr. Knowles Sr., however, was a man who was ill-treated by the economic system. In the midst of the depression, at age 58 and after twenty years of loyal service to his employer he was fired — without a pension, without severance pay, unemployment insurance or other benefits. While he did subsequently find menial work, he died at age 60 and his son is convinced that the trauma of his having been fired hastened his father's death. It is small wonder that the son concluded that the country's social conscience needed to be pricked so that economic and social change would be brought about.

Stanley Knowles initially selected the Church as the institution through which he would work to effect change. After graduating from Brandon College and United College, he was ordained a minister of the United Church of Canada in 1933. He served as pastor of several United Churches in Winnipeg and at the same time took an active role in the C.C.F. party. Not surprisingly, his political activities and his stress in the pulpit on the social rather than the personal gospel upset many members of his congregations; even though services were well attended. In 1940 he became provincial secretary and organizer of the Manitoba C.C.F. and his days as a parish minister came to an end. He had come to the conclusion that the Church was not the institution which would be instrumental in bringing about the kinds of change he thought desirable and he turned to other means. It is to Knowles' credit and to the credit of the United Church that he and the Church never formally separated and thus from time to time Rev. Stanley Knowles officiates at weddings, funerals and baptisms.

In 1942, after several unsuccessful attempts at both the provincial and federal levels, Mr. Knowles was elected to Parliament as the successor to J. S. Woodsworth in the constituency of Winnipeg North Centre, bringing with him the zeal of his days as a crusading minister and the memory of a much loved parent who had been a victim of the system. In his maiden speech he managed to mention pensions, defend the rights of workers under war time conditions and to suggest that Humphrey Mitchell, the then Minister of Labour, resign. He was soon put down by the Speaker for a minor breach of the rules and thus learned his first parliamentary lesson — know the rules. Out of his interest in and knowledge of the rules there developed a keen interest in the institution of Parliament itself and in how to make it work well in spite of its obsolete rules and the even more obsolete attitudes

of many of its members. This interest led to his being offered the position of Speaker by both Mr. Diefenbaker and Mr. Pearson; offers he wisely declined. While not adverse to using the rules of the House to advance his own interests or those of his party, Knowles' interest in the rules led to a concern for the survival of Parliament as an institution, a concern which has led him to put Parliament above party — which no doubt has not made him popular at times among his colleagues. His concern for Parliament is manifested in his insistence that the House of Commons must be made to work through compromise and common sense rather than through the confrontation which is almost inevitable, given its adversarial nature.

The same intensity which characterized Knowles' devotion to the House of Commons marks his attitudes towards the pension rights of working class Canadians and his tireless efforts to improve pension benefits. His list of achievements here is remarkable and Professor Trofimenkoff meticulously outlines how his devotion to the cause, his knowledge of the rules and his single mindedness have brought about important victories for all Canadians. What Knowles could not do through the Church he did through Parliament and he has played a major role in seeing to it that most working class Canadians will not share the same unfortunate fate as his father.

Another major theme of the book is the description of Knowles' role as one of the founders of the New Democratic Party. The voters of Winnipeg North Centre may have done the Canadian left a great favor when they elected someone other than Knowles to represent them in 1958. Although personally disappointing, the defeat made it possible for Knowles to take an executive position with the Canadian Labour Congress which enabled him to take a leading role (indeed it was part of his assignment) in the formation of a new party in Canada and fittingly, he presided over the founding convention in 1961.

This is an important book to anyone interested in Canadian politics in general or in such areas as parliamentary procedure or pension reform. In spite of a long personal association the author has kept her distance from her subject and therein lies the book's weakness. The reader learns a great deal about Knowles the politician, the reformer and the parliamentarian but little of Knowles the man. Surely he becomes angry, makes mistakes and annoys people but there is no evidence that this is so. While neither John Diefenbaker nor Hazen Argue emerge as heroes, there are no vil-

lains in this book and one wonders if Knowles' personal relations with other politicians, especially those in his own caucus, have always been smooth and easy. The reader finds out a great deal about Knowles' interest in a few areas of concern (admittedly important ones) but one wonders what he has had to say, if anything, about such crucial issues as the relationship of Quebec to the rest of Canada or federal-provincial fiscal relations.

These are minor criticisms however. Trofimenkoff has succeeded in providing not only the story of a truly unique Canadian politician — a successful failure — she has also illuminated the circumstances which have led to his success.

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RETURNING OFFICER, by Gordon Aiken, Gravenhurst, Ontario, R.O. Publishing, 1982, 301 p.

Returning Officer is an historical novel which recounts events in the life of Richard James Bell, Esq., returning officer for the electoral district of Muskoka, who got himself into more trouble than he could handle on election day, August 23, 1872.

The author chronicles the life of James Bell from his arrival in Draper Township, Muskoka in August 1864 as a settler and farmer, to the zenith of his political influence (mostly imagined) as a federal returning officer and to his subsequent appearance before the bar of the House of Commons to answer for his actions.

After two years of honest toil as a settler, Bell, a man of some learning, became interested in politics. This brought him into contact with George F. Gow, a local Tory henchman and A.P. Cockburn, a lumberman, a Liberal and subsequently an MPP and MP. Bell, a loyal Tory, had an

argument with A.P. Cockburn shortly after he arrived in the Muskoka area. He formed a lasting animosity for Cockburn, and used his position as returning officer in the 1872 election to deny Cockburn's victory even though Cockburn had the most votes. When the Liberals came to power Cockburn finally had his revenge on Bell for this indignity.

Bell's fate has a certain inevitability to it. His lust for recognition in his community as a man of influence and substance led him to partake in local, provincial and federal politics. His more cunning, more aggressive and richer political associates saw that Bell could be used to suit their ends and also be a scapegoat, if need be. Bell comes to life as a character in a drama over which he has little control. The reader develops sympathy for him in his efforts to make something of himself but at the same time sees that Bell is a victim of his own actions.

Bell's summons to the Bar of the House of Commons, for failing to return Cockburn, was one of a number of electoral irregularities of the time that led to changes within the laws governing federal elections. Among other things, controverted elections were put before the courts rather than Parliament. Although a work of fiction *Returning Officer* successfully incorporates real people and real events with artfully concocted character development to present the reader with a clearly written and well organized account of a little known episode in Canadian history.

Gordon Aiken, the author, is a man who is well versed in federal politics. He has written a book on the Canadian House of Commons *The Backbencher* (McClelland & Stewart, 1974) and was the Member of Parliament for Parry Sound — Muskoka for fifteen years, leaving Parliament in 1972. Having successfully fought six federal elections from 1957 to 1968 Mr. Aiken has considerable experience with the electoral process and he demonstrates a great knowledge of the evolution of Canadian electoral laws. His book also shows a real affection for the history of his constituency, and the people who settled there. His descriptions of pioneer life have a ring of authenticity to them. Mr. Aiken must have listened to personal accounts of pioneer life from his elder constituents to bring this degree of reality to his recounting of incidents in this book.

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