

## Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

J.I. Little. *State and Society in Transition: The Politics of Institutional Reform in the Eastern Townships, 1838-1852*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. Pp. x, 320.

Professor Little here offers another of his interesting studies of the development of the Eastern Townships region of Lower Canada/Canada East. He concerns himself mainly with the development of state institutions at the local level in the formative years following the rebellion of 1837. To this end, his several chapters examine the organization of political patronage, the development of the legal system and forms of community regulation, and the origins and operation of institutions of representative local government.

Of particular interest to historians of education are two chapters on the local impact of school laws and of educational administration from the Act of 1841 to that of 1851. Little considers the regional development of schooling, pointing to the distribution of schools and scholars throughout his period. He informs us about model schools and academies, but has little to say about pedagogy and curriculum. He details local reactions to central government attempts to impose property taxation, and examines how these varied from one local community to another. He outlines the role played by the educational inspectorate appointed under the School Act of 1851 in promoting compliance with administrative regulations.

Much of this examination is revealing and instructive. Little shows, for instance, in contrast to a commonly held belief, that opposition to taxation was most intense not in primarily Francophone or seigneurial settlements, but rather in communities where alternative educational institutions pre-dated administrative incursion. He offers a number of enticing hints about how class-cultural organization and local tradition shaped the fate of central government initiatives. Little may not have examined in detail two prime sources for the early part of this period, the investigative activities of the Buller Commission and of the Special Council, but whatever one chooses to make of Little's interpretation, his is by far the most thorough account we have for this region and period.

Little's discussion of the fate of the Durham/Sydenham plan for politically educating "the people" by causing them to govern themselves in local representative institutions is equally valuable. The development of local government in Lower Canada/Canada East is, unfortunately, little studied. Our knowledge of how local government acts were taken up or opposed and of the consequences of such activity is underdeveloped. Little has painstakingly reconstructed the fragmentary surviving information about these bodies in the Eastern Townships region, showing, that, in some instances at least, serious attempts

were made to make them function in the early 1840s, before the railway construction projects gave new urgency to local government organization.

These sections of the book alone recommend it strongly to readers interested in the history of political administration, and Little offers a number of useful comments on such other matters as the place of the *charivari* in the community regulation of behaviour and of the overlapping practices of official and popular justice.

As a contributor to the literature of Canadian state formation and as the author of a recent piece on Lower Canadian educational development in the 1840s,<sup>1</sup> I was particularly enticed by Little's several declarations that his study was intended to engage with the state formation literature; however, I found the work to be quite unsatisfactory from this point of view. Little has insight into the dynamics of central-local relations despite, rather than because of, his general outlook.

Little does not seriously examine the extensive critical literature on state formation. From feminist attacks on Corrigan and Sayer's tendency to assimilate all forms of regulation to state forms, from the burgeoning, Foucauldian "governmentality" school, and from neo-Marxist responses, an historian could acquire a degree of conceptual fluency that might make for a pointed study.<sup>2</sup> Little's unfamiliarity with the literature results in a tendency to treat some themes that strike participants as *problems* as if they were *dogmas*, and he comes remarkably close in places to the now groaningly tedious equation of the state formation approach with that of social control.

Although at times Little adopts a more solid position that would seek to investigate local forms of state formation as interaction between recent central and local authorities, he more commonly attacks a straw opponent who is held to see in state formation nothing but the domination of local relations by all-powerful central state agents. Not surprisingly, in setting out to examine "where on the state-community spectrum the public figures and public institutions of the Eastern Townships tended to fall" (p. 7), Little repeatedly demonstrates that local activists made a contribution. In the course of this demonstration, however, one key question, that of the *form* of the state, is lost from view. Indeed, what contributors to the state formation literature would take as central elements of political *formation*, such as the shift from local dominance by oligarchies to the

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<sup>1</sup>"The State of Tutelage in Lower Canada, 1835–1855," *History of Education Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1997): 25–43.

<sup>2</sup>For an overview and bibliography of the "governmentality" school by a member, see David Garland, "'Governmentality' and the Problem of Crime: Foucault, Criminology, Sociology," *Theoretical Criminology* 1, no. 2 (1997): 173–214; for a neo-Marxist critique, Mark Neocleous, *Administering Civil Society: Towards a Theory of State Power* (London: Macmillan, 1996) and B. Curtis, "Taking the State Back Out: Rose and Miller on Political Power," *British Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 4 (1996): 575–89.

dominance of political parties, are not even described as being about the *form* of political relations.

Little's original research emphasized the civil secretary's correspondence files, a valuable source in state paper collections for local voices on policy matters. His resuscitation of these voices is a helpful contribution. However, he has not been similarly attentive to the origin of government policy initiatives, often taking these as givens against which people in localities reacted. This approach to the sources has the ironic and unintended consequence of casting "the state" as a monolithic entity on policy formation, and Little does not clarify matters by his practice of using the concepts "the state," "the government," and "the administration" interchangeably.

On the whole, then, historians of Canadian education should certainly read this study, but they may find it, as I did, to be more interesting and informative in its empirical materials than in its engagement with debates of interpretation.

*Bruce Curtis*  
*Carleton University*

Jean-Pierre Bastian and Rosa del Carmen Bruno-Jofre, eds. *Protestant Educational Conceptions, Religious Ideology and Schooling Practices: Selected Papers* (Monographs in Education no. 22). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1994. Pp. 164.

The papers in this collection, the proceedings of a symposium on Protestantism and education in Latin America, contribute significantly to our knowledge of Protestant education in Latin America. When read with other volumes on Christian home and foreign missions in the nineteenth century, this work adds to our understanding of the Protestant mission impulse.

*Protestant Educational Conceptions, Religious Ideology and Schooling Practices* achieves partially the three major tasks Jean-Pierre Bastian claims: (1) to create an inventory of the networks of Protestant schools in selected Latin American countries, (2) to compare Protestant education networks with state education systems and Catholic networks, and (3) to contrast the models of education employed by the Protestant missionaries and educators and the content of instruction in their schools. The authors thereby portray the dynamics of Protestant schooling in Latin America and show how far these efforts succeeded: "the formation of individuals with [Protestant] character and democratic civil conscience."

Jether Pereira Ramalho's "The Pedagogical Characteristics of Protestant Schools and the Ideological Categories of Liberalism" explores the linkages between the theory of liberal progressive education and its practice in Protestant schools in Brazil in the early twentieth century. On the evidence, Protestant schools implemented the theory of progressivism: education for liberal democratic development, emphasizing the integration of theory and practice, respect