

economy, he says, "generates the kind of social problems that civic and political leaders *perceive* education to be able to ameliorate or solve" (p. 357). Hence the motivation for the attempts of social reformers and governments to establish school systems. More precise attention, he concludes, needs to be given to "the mechanisms by which formal education is determined by, or otherwise linked to, economic development" (p. 357). Finally, he expresses scepticism as to the effectiveness of interpretations based on the theory of the centrality of education in "nation building," recently strongly advocated.

British educational provision, Smelser concludes, was marked by "muddling through"—a characteristic, he suggests, of the country's style of political leadership and social change (p. 369). This process Smelser has precisely documented in this specific instance (elementary education). The term does not in itself explain much, he adds disarmingly. But the special pattern of primordialism in British society ensured that such an approach was the only one that was politically (or socially) viable. Reformers had to tread a delicate path "through a maze of primordial groups who regarded their own presence as inviolable and their interests as not to be violated." The aim was "to squeeze limited increments of social change by and through them without disturbing them" (p. 370). In the long run, Smelser claims, this policy "revolutionised the educational system." The road to that end was marked, however, "by a great deal of muddling through the obstacle

course of primordialism and the sentiments of territoriality it nurtured."

These are the author's closing words. I hope I have said enough to show that this is an unusual book. Examining British developments, as he does, from another culture, Smelser is able to take an outside view denied to natives of these islands. That is why his analysis is so stimulating. The comparative approach also enhances the value of this study. British historians, sociologists, and policy analysts (a new breed) must be grateful for the close attention Smelser has given to unravelling the historical origins, and determinants, of a crucially important aspect of British social policy.

Brian Simon  
Leicester, England

**Robin Fisher.** *Duff Pattullo of British Columbia.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Biography as a form of Canadian historiography has experienced something of a rebirth over the last decade since its fall from grace in the early 1960s. However, in keeping with a precedent set by an earlier generation of scholars it is still heavily weighted towards biographies of federal politicians or national figures. Robin Fisher's *Duff Pattullo of British Columbia* represents an attempt to correct this centralist bias and

demonstrate the utility of political biography to regional studies. The book is also very much a personal effort to rescue Thomas Dufferin ("Duff") Pattullo from obscurity and revise the prevalent view of him as a man who attempted to sabotage national unity during the war through opposition to the recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois Commission. Despite the fact that today many only associate his name with a bridge across the Fraser River, Pattullo, Fisher argues, was one of British Columbia's most important politicians and of the four premiers who "have dominated British Columbia politics in the twentieth century...the most significant" (p. ix).

*Duff Pattullo of British Columbia* begins with three richly contextual chapters on Pattullo's life before politics. He was born in 1873 in Woodstock, Ontario, to locally prominent and staunchly Liberal parents of Scottish descent. After graduating from school he seemed destined to lead a dissolute life until his father was moved to play the patronage game. Duff departed for the Yukon in 1897 as part of a federal government contingent intended to bring Dominion authority to the gold fields and over the next eleven years he applied his considerable energy and organizational talents to reorganizing the Gold Commissioner's Office, to business, and to a healthy dose of local politics. In 1908 he moved south, attracted by the brighter business prospects offered in Prince Rupert, the projected terminus for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. There he unsuccessfully dabbled in a variety of

business ventures and real estate speculation before abandoning the business world and pursuing his true calling full-time.

The remainder of the book represents a rather conventional political biography. Elected as a member for Prince Rupert in the Provincial Legislature in 1916, Pattullo rapidly ascended through the ranks of the Liberals. He held the post of Minister of Lands from 1917 to 1928, led the party in opposition for the next five years, and from 1933 to 1941 governed the province as premier. While premier he enacted a wide range of anti-Depression measures. Some, such as a proposed health insurance scheme, were quite innovative while most were controversial and Duff's arbitrary manner soon earned him the reputation for being something of a dictator.

Pattullo's reputation suffered further blows from his government's inability to finance many of its schemes as the Depression wore on. Fisher believes this failure can largely be attributed to Pattullo staking the success of his social and economic reforms on funding from the federal government—funding that was not forthcoming under both the Bennett and King governments (pp. 298-99). Federal-provincial relations worsened further in early 1941 over the recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois Commission. So, too, did Pattullo's reputation and support within his party. His strong opposition to the implementation of the Commission's findings—recommendations which would have increased the power of the federal government—earned him the lasting

reputation of being out to scuttle the ship of state. Partly as a result of the disloyal implications of his stance during a time of war, Pattullo was forced to step down. He retired from active politics in 1945 and died in 1956 at the age of 83.

While Fisher is in general agreement with Canadian historians over the broad outline of Pattullo's opposition to the Rowell-Sirois Report, he takes them to task for their "centralist interpretation" (p. xii) of his subject's actions. Rather than being motivated by narrow regional concerns and a sense of western grievances, Fisher contends that Pattullo's opposition was the product of a coherent political ideology based on a particular view of the federal system. He skilfully develops this theme in the first three chapters of the biography where he suggests that Pattullo inherited a firm belief in the value of the federal party system from his politically active family. While he maintained this view throughout his life it was modified by his experiences in the unique social and political setting of the Yukon and northern B.C. Perhaps the most important political lesson Pattullo learned in the North was the need for an active, interventionist government to stimulate economic growth in Canada's peripheral regions. Pattullo's consistent adherence to this philosophy helps explain his success within the provincial arena and, when coupled with long years of frustration over the reticence of the federal government to help pay for provincial schemes without exerting a corresponding degree of central control, it does much to explain his opposition to

the Rowell-Sirois Report. It also suggests that Canadian historians might want to re-evaluate their general acceptance of the metropolitan thesis—a viewpoint which tends to discount the importance of the periphery in the development of political culture in the provinces and Ottawa.

*Duff Pattullo of British Columbia* owes much of its success to Fisher's sensitive exploration of his main theme, a forceful writing style, and meticulous primary research, all of which should be expected from a scholar many regard as Margaret Ormsby's successor as dean of British Columbia history. Apart from providing the only biography of Pattullo, the book is also an excellent source of information on the major issues which dominated provincial politics over the course of three turbulent decades. It is particularly useful as a source on the internal politics of the powerful provincial Liberal party. For those not overly fond of general political histories, the personal perspective a biography brings to bear on the subject helps provide a degree of clarity to complex issues and a focus of attention that might otherwise be lacking.

Although deserving of praise, *Duff Pattullo of British Columbia* is not without weaknesses. One arises from a heavy emphasis on archival sources and subsequently, a relative neglect of secondary literature. As a result, the biography lacks context and a strong comparative dimension and the author is unable to identify what is unique about Pattullo specifically and British Columbia politics in general. It also means that he cannot substantiate his statement about Duff's pre-

eminence amongst twentieth-century British Columbia premiers. Despite Fisher's claim to the contrary (p. x), it is also definitely not a social biography and sheds little light on broader issues of class, gender, and culture. His effort to explore social context is strictly limited to the first three chapters and he makes little attempt to extend his analysis to those dealing with Pattullo's political career. The final result is a static view of both his subject's personal development and the development of British Columbia society after 1916. Another problem arises from a danger inherent in the writing of biographies: a tendency on the part of the biographer to over-sympathize with their subject. But one example of this is Fisher's consistent neglect of self-interest as a primary explanation for Pattullo's political behaviour despite the fact that the book abounds with examples of Duff acting in a less than altruistic manner.

On a more serious note, Fisher can be criticized for failing to make good several controversial claims he asserts in the preface. The most notable is his play on words involving the title of a book recently co-edited by Veronica Strong-Boag, *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History* (1986). Fisher argues that "to the extent that this biography looks at masculine British Columbia it could be described, to take in vain the title of a colleague's book, as 'redinking Canada'" (p. xii). While it is probably true that the circles Pattullo moved in were primarily male preserves, Fisher makes no effort to explore the issue of male culture nor extend his analysis to British Columbian society as a whole.

Thus he fails to challenge women's and gender historians on their own ground and simply succeeds in offending many would-be readers. Perhaps he would have been better advised to have emphasized a different connotation of the term "redinking". Pattullo was certainly self-seeking, sometimes underhanded, always ambitious, egotistical, and a bit of a misogynist. In fact, he was of a type all too familiar to the current generation weaned on a steady stream of political scandals in both Victoria and Ottawa. Fisher's inflammatory remark aside, *Duff Pattullo of British Columbia* represents a well-crafted biography that must be considered an important contribution to British Columbia and national historiography. Hopefully it will encourage similar analyses of other regional figures. It is important both in its revised view of an often maligned character and as further evidence of the validity of biography as a form of historiography, albeit a form whose weaknesses and limitations must be understood in order to advance the genre and the discipline. The book will undoubtedly become the authoritative work on Thomas Dufferin Pattullo and a standard source on the political history of British Columbia.

Clint Evans  
University of British Columbia

**Samuel D. Kassow.** *Students, Professors, and the State in Tsarist*