Ben Forster — *A Conjunction of Interests: Business, Politics & Tariffs, 1825-1879*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986. Pp. ix, 288.

Tariff matters have bulked large in Canada's past, its present and promise to continue to do so for its foreseeable future. Not surprisingly, then, much ink has been spilt detailing the origins, impact and changes to tariffs over time. Arguably, the National Policy tariff of 1879 has received more than its share of such attention. Economists, historians and political scientists have commented, often at length, on aspects of this landmark piece of commercial legislation. Some historians like Donald Creighton and to a lesser extent Andy Den Otter, have depicted the tariff as the linch-pin of a coherent national policy binding the west and the east to the centre. Others like Craig Brown and Bill Acheson have commented favourably on the tariff's short-term economic impact. Economists, like John Dales, have been much more skeptical. None of the above, however, have focussed as closely, researched as meticulously and presented as nuanced and balanced an appraisal of the National Policy tariff's origins as Ben Forster in a *Conjunction of Interests*.

In the course of his discussion Forster gently revises some of the prevalent stereotypes surrounding the National Policy tariff. He shows that the linkage of the tariff to western development was more the product of later historians' imaginations than the considered policy of nineteenth century governments. He emphasizes the central importance of revenue to tariff formation throughout this period in contrast to work by Barnett and to a degree by Den Otter. He points to the derivative nature of protectionist arguments and in so doing situates Canada's movement to higher tariffs within a wider global trend. He is not concerned with assessing the tariff's economic impact and while this may disappoint some readers, it is a decision clearly stated and quite justifiable, given what the book does accomplish.

Forster's analysis of the role of the state and political parties in the making of the tariff will be of particular interest to the readers of this journal. Protectionism resulted from more than simply the rise of local industry. In the 1830s farmers and artisans, albeit sporadically, petitioned for higher duties. In the 1870s, faced with declining agricultural markets, many farmers were once again attracted by the seductive promises of agrarian protectionism. Throughout the period covered, industrialists themselves were far from united on the desirability and/or extent of protection required. The variety of often conflicting interest subsumed under the term industrial coupled with the at times overlapping and at times discordant views of merchants, agriculturalists, and extractive interests, gave to the state and political parties significant latitude to act as they saw fit. Despite, in other words, the increasingly sophisticated nature — Foster uses the term bureaucratization — of the protectionist movement — tactics evolved from relying on friendship, to petitioning to group lobbying — protectionists never dominated the political sector. As Forster puts it, "the Conservative government [in 1879], as governments before it, was able to pursue its own aims in this context."

The implications of this statement remain, despite Forster's succinct conclusion, somewhat scattered throughout the book. If government could act as a creative and conditioning factor on tariff making and if political parties could fashion their own social visions around tariff policy — the Conservatives increasingly urban and industrial, and the Liberals increasingly rural and agrarian — there were nonetheless limits to political autonomy. Both parties responded to rather than created public demand. Despite differences in the willingness of Conservatives to listen sympathetically to interest group lobbies and Liberals to shun and avoid such groups, neither party could use the tariff as an effective patronage tool. This finding stands in contrast to the recent arguments put forward by Gordon Stewart concerning the centrality of patronage to party development in the nineteenth century.

Patronage played little role in the emergence of one of the primary policies of both parties in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Forster provides a picture of much more fluid scene of competing and interacting interests with compromise, not control, the ultimate adhesive. This, somewhat implicit, emphasis on the brokerage role of the state might have been more clearly delineated by explicitly linking this theme to the arguments put forward by Craven in his work on industrial relations in the early twentieth century, Mahon in her work on textiles and the state in the

post World War II era and Panitch in his work on the Canadian state. A closer attention to wider political economy literature would have improved what is already a very fine, empirically based, analysis.

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Chad Gaffield — *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987. Pp. xviii, 249.

This book is another welcome contribution to McGill-Queen's growing collection of volumes examining the history of Canadian education. It offers both less and more than its title suggests. It offers less because its focus is not province-wide but rather limited to Prescott County in the period from the mid-1800s until the turn of the century. It also offers more because it successfully demonstrates the rich historical detail and subtle nuances that can be gleaned from local histories — histories which both inform and contradict the aggregate historical context.

Gaffield defends his micro approach to the history of the french-language controversy in Ontario by arguing, justifiably I believe, that previous political studies of minority-language education too often simply "narrate the major electoral campaigns in which the school question has been a focus of debate" (130). In the process, they inappropriately convey the impression that the language question was an episodic dimension of Ontario's educational history rather than, as this study shows, an ongoing and dynamic issue in both the local and provincial arenas. Similary, previous studies have tended to be elite-centered, emphasizing party platforms and leaders, instead of examining how the debate was experienced at the community level or how local social and economic conditions influenced both demands for minority-languaged education and the outcomes of electoral campaigns.

This study explores the development of the language controversy from the perspective of Prescott County which, in the later half of the nineteenth century, was the "buckle of the bilingual belt" (xiv) in Ontario. This unique lens enables the author to reinterpret the origins of the language controversy in three ways. First, he suggests that the coercive language policies implemented by the provincial government at the end of the century were informed by the experience of Prescott County. Second, he argues that demands for minority-language education in Prescott County arose directly out of its changing and complex material contexts and third, he traces the origins of a distinct Franco-Ontarian identity to the 1880s rather than, as other studies contend, the 1960s.

The book is straight-forward in its format. It begins with a survey of nineteenth-century provincial educational policy which had as its expressed goal the "voluntary assimilation" of the growing numbers of French Canadians in Ontario. The next two chapters make excellent use of census data to recreate the social and economic texture of the period. Here, students of Ontario social history will find a revealing acccount of how the rise and decline of the "système agro-forestier" affected both the family and demands on the educational system. In the beginning, this system of seasonal lumbering and subsistence farming required the full participation of all family members as economic producers. Since only a few families could afford to lose the productive contribution of their offspring, local schools were not well-attended while the family became the major medium for the preservation of language and culture. In the meantime, the nascent public school system in Prescott County remained underfunded, ill-equipped and dominated by women teachers because they could be hired inexpensively, at rates below labourers and servants and for "about half to two-thirds of what men received" (113). With the decline of the forest frontier and land availability in the 1870s, "demand for child labour within the family setting declined," thus making school attendance more possible (121).