

One reason why complete victory eluded the Social Gospellers is unconsciously presented in these papers — the fact that their backgrounds and their opinions were overwhelmingly bourgeois. With the exception of Fred Tipping, the reformers of *The Social Gospel in Canada* all came from middle class families active in Methodism or Presbyterianism. This created a gulf between themselves and the working class they wanted so earnestly to help, a gulf they were never able to cross. Beatrice Brigden, for example, concludes her presentation by stating proudly that she has never been found in “a beer parlour, a cocktail lounge, in a pool room or a dance hall, at a hockey match or a baseball game” — the very places the people she wanted to save probably frequented! Harold Allen says nothing about improving the living or working conditions of the “migrant type” farm workers he encountered at Chilliwack, B.C. Instead he reports that when he heard that “a cheap brothel” had been set up near the workers’ camp, he succeeded in having “the authorities” shut down what was probably the men’s principal source of recreation!

Although the concluding section “Contemporary Scholarship” lacks the fascination of “Living History,” the papers are useful and competent. Marilyn Barber outlines the work of Protestant Churches among East-European immigrants, pointing to the role the Social Gospel played in encouraging the churches to take up the task of assimilation. J.R. Kidd’s “The Social Gospel and Adult Education” speculates about a relationship between the two, without demonstrating that it actually existed. Stewart Crysedale contends that the Social Gospel “eludes a simple and inclusive definition” and sees it instead as a “quest for a modern ideology” to replace nineteenth century individualism. The final two selections take a more theological perspective. Benjamin G. Smillie offers a “theological critique” of the Social Gospel, concluding that the Social Gospellers failures outweigh their successes, while Roger Hutchinson places “The Canadian Social Gospel in the Context of Christian Social Ethics” using the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order as the centre of his discussion.

*The Social Gospel in Canada* does not pretend to provide a comprehensive history of the Social Gospel movement in Canada, nor to say the last word on the relationship of the Social Gospel to social reform. Instead it serves the important and useful function of demonstrating the complex diversity which existed within the movement itself.

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PAUL MACEWAN. — *Miners and Steelworkers: Labour in Cape Breton*. Toronto: Samuel Stevens Hakkert and Company, 1976.

Economic conditions in Cape Breton today present a bleak picture; the island’s future seems once more to hang on the decisions of distant governments and financiers. For more than fifty years the miners and steelworkers of Cape Breton have lived with the poverty, exploitation, unemployment and uncertainty created by the uneven development of industrial capitalism in Canada. But Cape Bretoners have never been willing victims, and the history of industrial Cape Breton is one of considerable struggle, sacrifice and achievement. This history is the theme of Paul MacEwan’s *Miners and Steelworkers*.

Several university theses have been written on the history of industrial Cape Breton, but until now the only published study was Eugene Forsey's *Economic and Social Aspects of the Nova Scotia Coal Industry* (1926), still a good introduction to the history of the coal industry. MacEwan first published the results of his research in the weekly *Cape Breton Highlander* in the late 1960s, and the present book is a rewritten version of those popular columns. His research included a large number of interviews with veterans of the trade union and CCF movements in Cape Breton, and many of these valuable reminiscences might have been lost without his efforts. Like all researchers in Cape Breton labour history, MacEwan also is much in debt to C.B. Wade, research director for the miners' union in the 1940s; Wade's excellent unpublished history of the miners' union provided much basic information and inspired an eloquent (but unacknowledged) passage for MacEwan's preface: "The heroes of history books are nearly always the generals, the industrialists, the 'empire builders', and the politicians associated with them. In the steel and coal districts of Nova Scotia, as in a score of industrial towns in Canada, thousands of men and women have lived and died who have shown courage and made sacrifices far greater than many history-book heroes ever knew."

*Miners and Steelworkers* provides a general narrative of the growth of trade unionism and left wing politics in Cape Breton. The coal miners' struggle for collective bargaining culminated in the dissolution of the ineffective Provincial Workmen's Association (1879-1917) and the formation of the short-lived Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia (1917-1918) and the present District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America. The coal miners then faced two decades of short time and wage reductions in a crisis-ridden industry, and their struggle against the truculent British Empire Steel Corporation in the early 1920s is one of the most dramatic episodes of class conflict in Canadian history. Similarly, the steelworkers of Sydney battled more than thirty years to win the right to a union; they finally gained this victory in 1937 by forcing the provincial government to pass Canada's first trade union act compelling employers to engage in collective bargaining. These struggles took place against great odds, including the blacklists, evictions, court judgements, police and troops resorted to by employers and governments. Political action also faced similar obstacles, and this history is traced at length, from the first tentative efforts of the PWA to the Socialist and ILP campaigns of the 1910s and 1920s and the later successes of the CCF and NDP, including the author's own election as a provincial NDP candidate in 1970 and 1974.

The content of the book is divided about equally between these two themes, but social historians will find the book is weighed down with too much detail of the wage contracts, internal union battles and political skulduggery of the past. MacEwan seems almost to reduce his story to "a series of betrayals by elected leaders." Impressive individuals like J.B. McLachlan, the radical union leader, and Clarie Gillis, the CCF coal miner MP, emerge as larger than life figures, but we learn little about the people who supported them. The courage and determination of the people of industrial Cape Breton draw the reader's admiration, and one reads the book wanting to know more about how and why they were able to fight such unequal battles. Many more aspects of life and work in the industrial communities needed to be explored to begin to answer this. Readers also deserved in a book of this length more analysis of various other issues raised by the history of industrial Cape Breton. What part did women play in the industrial conflict? What was the role of the church and other local institutions? Why did the steelworkers meet greater obstacles than the coal miners in their struggle for trade unionism? Why did the provincial government work so closely with the coal and steel companies? Why did union leaders feel that Canadian unions like the PWA, the AMWNS and the One Big Union were unsatisfactory for their needs? A key

theme in MacEwan's book is the relationship between the labour movement and radical politics; in Cape Breton, as in many working class communities, the experience of industrial conflict had dramatic effects on the growth of trade union loyalties and class consciousness, but this did not always translate into support for the available left wing parties. A more systematic analysis of the reasons for this, which included both the resourcefulness of the two-party system and serious mistakes by the left, is still needed.

Another central question in the book is, why was class conflict so sharp in industrial Cape Breton, especially in the 1920s? Part of the answer might be found in a closer analysis of the process of capitalist development in the coal and steel industries. A pattern of distant markets, wasting resources and frenzied financing led to short periods of boom and a long cycle of decline. For workers the results were unstable employment and an above average rate of exploitation in the form of low wages, long hours and frequent deaths and injuries. At the same time, changing working class attitudes were also important. By the end of the First World War, the local working class was determined to win substantial improvements in their conditions and no longer accepted the logic that the burdens of capitalist economic crisis should be shared "equally" by capital and labour. Despite MacEwan's concern over the failure of the coal and steel industries to bring prosperity to Cape Breton, he offers no real analysis of the reasons for this and he pays little attention to the penetrating critique of capitalist development articulated by the miners and steelworkers themselves. The idea that productive labour was the true source of wealth, typical of the PWA and much 19th century labour ideology, was the keystone of working class ideology. In this view large, inefficient and avaricious monopolies like Dominion Coal and Besco were idle parasites, and readily discarded the idea of partnership between equals in industry for one of struggle for a fair and just economic and social system. MacEwan consistently underestimates the radicalism and vitality of working class popular culture. For instance, he refers briefly to support for nationalization of the coal mines in the 1940s, but this had long been a popular idea and was adopted by the coal miners in 1918 as union policy.

Never one to underdramatize a situation, MacEwan is often led to error or exaggeration. For instance, he reports the Glace Bay town council in 1925 "flatly refused to pay the bill thrown at them" for support of troops during that year's strike, but by this time as a result of outburst all across the country, amendments to the Militia Act provided that towns like Glace Bay could no longer be billed for the upkeep of invading troops (as in 1909, 1922 and 1923); reference to Don Macgillivray's study of the military invasions of the 1920s (*Acadiensis*, III, 1 Spring 1974) would have avoided error and improved the treatment of this theme. The book is also misleading on a variety of other points; these include statements that Nova Scotia's coal production in 1893 was 700,000 tons (it was almost 2.5 million tons), that McLachlan's tombstone is wrong in stating he was born in 1869, that a branch of the Socialist Party of Canada was organized at Glace Bay in 1910 (it was 1904), that Silby Barrett became international board member for the UMW in 1910 (he served briefly in 1919-1920 and 1922-3), and that Clarie Gillis was the first coal miner elected to the House of Commons (Ralph Smith of Nanaimo was elected in 1900). Various names are misspelled, including coal company officials E.H. McLurg and A.J. Tonge and Halifax labour leader John T. Joy; one misprint has the Knights of Labor formed in 1896 and another makes a wildcat strike an "authorized" strike. There is also a serious problem of balance in the book, for it is difficult to believe that the author's own opponents in the NDP in the 1960s were as despicable as the police, politicians and businessmen of the first part of the book. Better editorial advice would have tempered the author's excesses and shortened the book; the result would have been a cheaper price and better popular history.

Although it has various weaknesses and faults, *Miners and Steelworkers* is still a volume of considerable interest and importance. It provides a convenient and often colourful basic outline of the history of labour and politics in industrial Cape Breton. Like James M. Cameron's recent book on coal mining in Pictou County (*The Pictonian Colliers*, Halifax 1974), *Miners and Steelworkers* is sure to be widely used as a source for studying labour history in Nova Scotia.

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WENDY MITCHINSON & RAMSAY COOK, eds. — *The Proper Sphere. Women's Place in Canadian Society*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976.

*The Proper Sphere. Woman's Place in Canadian Society* is in many ways the type of collection of primary materials one could expect of Wendy Mitchinson and Ramsay Cook. It is thorough, well-researched and precise. The articles range widely, in subject from female doctors to social purity, and in time from 1856 to 1946. There is also balanced representation from conservative and liberals author, including Henri Bourassa, Nellie McClung, Lady Ishbel Aberdeen and George Grant. The editors' introductions to the seven sections — Woman's Proper Sphere, Legal Rights, Education, Work, Organizations, Morality and Suffrage — are judicious and to the point. They sum up the present state of knowledge about Canadian women who lived between roughly 1880 and 1920. The student will put down this volume better informed than ever before regarding the thinking of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada on the woman question. It is not hard to predict that this book will become a mainstay of Canadian history and woman's studies courses for years to come.

Yet *The Proper Sphere* is finally disappointing for those already familiar with the speculative and innovative work done by the editors in this field. We miss the bold judgments and the provocative hypotheses that Mitchinson and Cook are entitled to deliver. Instead, the volume is too frequently predictable, cautious and safe. The passion, the anger, and the high hopes that drove feminist and anti-feminist alike largely disappear in a final testament of ordered, measured and proper prose. Naturally, the public expressions of these men and women were most often restrained. But where are the private agonies that moved such individuals? Where, for instance, are excerpts from the student diaries of Élizabéth Smith-Shortt, the semi-autobiographical novels of Alice Chown and Francis Beynon, the personal journal of Josephine Dandurand? Additions such as these would have done full justice to the individuals who speak in these pages. A brief note concerning the selected writers or periodicals would also have had had much the same result. To know, for instance, that George Grant, probably the nation's foremost educator, was president of Queen's during the controversy over the Kingston Women's Medical College and university co-education or that Francis Beynon, the woman's editor of the *Grain Growers' Guide*, was forced to leave Canada during World War I because of her pacifist sympathies, would have made their arguments here all the more meaningful.

There is also the usual problem with the concentration of middle-class women. Where are the majority of working-class and non-Charter Group women who had their own part to play in the creation of woman's sphere in the Dominion? Like any other historian of women I realize such documents are difficult to find.