

Yet, the uncertainty of purpose extends farther than the author seems aware. Though the format of the book suggests a reasonably complete analysis of the "Italian passage," the book is actually quite selective. Not only the Italian family, but the Catholic church and the mafia, are omitted from consideration. Business, politics, and residential patterns are treated so briefly and superficially that they would have been better omitted. Essentially, this is a book about the education of Italian-Americans, education being conceived in a broad sense to include not only schools, but the press and self-help societies as well. The author seems dimly aware of his emphasis only at the very end. As the book peters out in a call for further research, Briggs asserts that an exploration of immigrant education might shed new light on the ethnic experience. The author should have re-shaped and re-focused this book around the educational theme in order to begin shedding some of that light.

As it stands, *An Italian Passage* is more a series of loosely-related research and historiographical essays on "selected topics in Italian-American immigration" than a rounded study. It should be consulted by specialists in American immigration for the wide range of interesting questions it asks and the occasionally perceptive answers it presents, but it will be of little interest to a more general audience.

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RALPH MATTHEWS. — *'There's No Better Place Than Here': Social Change in Three Newfoundland Communities*. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1976. Pp. 164.

The quarter century following World War II was filled with optimism that governments could engineer a more prosperous and stable world order. International institutions were established to stabilize exchange rates and regulate international liquidity and world trade; there were expectations that world poverty could be defeated through generous economic and technical aid from the developed countries; and Keynesian fine tuning and built-in stabilizers would control business cycle fluctuations and prevent a recurrence of the 1930s' collapse. In the late 1970s this optimism gave way to a renewed pessimism about man's ability to control and manage his environment. Currencies once again float, and there is rising trade protectionism in the wealthy countries; overseas development aid has contracted, and some countries are dismissed as "basket-cases" that should be allowed to stew in their own misery; and in the advanced economies the free play of market forces is once again hailed as the most effective mechanism for rationing scarce resources for growth, and for allocating rewards among deserving and undeserving claimants.

It is the weak who are the guinea pigs for the fashions of the powerful, and in this century the latter have been urban, well-educated, well-meaning, and patronizing towards those who do not and cannot share their values and styles. In the 1950s and '60s Newfoundland was an obvious laboratory for the economic and social engineers, both foreign and native. It was a country that had failed in the 1930s, and its people were respectful towards those who knew better and seemed to mean well. Accordingly, Newfoundland was incredibly open to social engineering in the postwar decades, and it is likely to be the first casualty of any sudden descent

into a neo-conservatism demanding greater "self-reliance" and a reduced level of public and social services.

In 1965 the provincial and federal governments launched a joint programme to eliminate some 600 Newfoundland communities and to relocate around fifteen percent of the province's population into urban "growth centres." On the face of it, the objectives of the programme were humane and apparently sensible. Many of the communities were too small and isolated to be provided at reasonable cost with the modern education, medical and communications services they wanted and expected. In some cases the economic base had become so weak that the inhabitants were in danger of becoming permanent wards of the state. Although the methods used to induce urban migration in Newfoundland do not bear comparison with the opposite programme in Cambodia, the emotional response was similar. There was widespread revulsion against government which "forced" people to abandon ancient settlements, especially when almost everyone understood that the "growth centres" offered very little hope of employment and a better life for the reluctant migrants. Eventually governments had to concede that the growth centres were something less than dynamic, but they advanced as a last defence that a generation might have to be sacrificed for the sake of the children. Only very long distance will place the whole business in its proper perspective, but by the late 1960s Newfoundland had come to the end of its patience at being the laboratory for the bright ideas of urban Canada. For a country which had made quite enormous sacrifices in two world wars, chatter about sacrificing one generation for another had a rather familiar and nasty ring. In the early 1970s the community resettlement programme was officially buried.

Memorial University was a centre of opposition to community resettlement and for that effort it was sneered at from abroad. Ralph Matthews was one of the Newfoundland social scientists who was prominent in the 1960s in soberly questioning the utility and humanity of the scheme. His *'There's No Better Place than Here'* is only one of the studies he undertook to assess the economic and social implications of massive population relocation. The book is written from a social survey he did to determine why three communities designated for clearance were able to avoid extermination. On this point he finds that government bureaucracy, ostensibly so all-powerful and relentless, can be deflected from its goals by a handful of apparently powerless people. Since he studied only three communities, it is difficult to know whether he has uncovered a general rule, or simply the exceptions to it. And one senses that the officials in this case were more easily deflected than might usually be the case, because they too were uneasy about what they were doing. In one of the communities the two levels of government simply tripped over each other in launching the clearance, and shrewdly the local people were then able to manipulate them into providing the services which were needed to maintain the community. In the second, the community was simply too big to be closed down: the people knew it, the officials knew it, and so both simply forgot about the talk of resettlement. In the third, a very poor and unusually backward outpost, it was impossible for anyone to pretend that the people could be successfully relocated, and when a teacher mobilized the community into opposition, government abandoned the project with obvious relief.

It is fascinating to observe the interaction between the social engineers and a people who, while accustomed to obedience and deference to authority, were nonetheless unwilling to concede that the planners knew what was best for them. The extensive direct quotation from the informants, and Matthews' sensitive gloss on their comments, is perhaps the most absorbing feature of an interesting book. He effectively makes the point that these rural Newfoundlanders were far more

realistic than the technicians about where they would be best-off, and hence where they could contribute most, or draw least, from the net output of the country:

They own their own homes and have no worries about mortgages or debts. They have clean air, good water, free food, plenty of land and fish. From their point of view it would not make sense for them to move to a larger town or city. Most are uneducated and probably 'wouldn't be much good in town' (p. 103).

For the middle class urbanite, who always forgets the extent to which his environment is massively subsidized, these poor rural communities might appear hopelessly unproductive, limiting, and grossly unaesthetic — and hence the urge to promote social engineering. But their inhabitants perceive them very differently, and make a sensitive estimation of the opportunity costs to themselves of a major upheaval, while hoping that their children will be able through education successfully to make an easier transition into the modern market economy, urban or otherwise.

In his last chapter Matthews places these community studies within the context of Canadian regional and rural development policy. It is a reasoned, reasonable and effective critique. What is most interesting about the book is that a scholar, equipped with all the apparatus of the behavioural social scientist, provides a strongly humanist perspective on the human follies of his colleagues. It is ironic, and instructive, that since he wrote — in the very depths of the economic crisis that was destroying rural Newfoundland — a new buoyancy has returned with the recovery of the fishing industry. There is a very long way to go before one can say that rural Newfoundland is economically and socially healthy, but in postwar perspective, an unprecedented *earned* prosperity is moving back into the outports of Newfoundland. There will always be communities that are weak or dying, but it will be a very brave or very foolish person who will again advocate programmes of radical social engineering. It is much to the credit of people like Ralph Matthews that they understood this is the 1960s when such views were not at all fashionable in fashionable circles.

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DAVID ALEXANDER. — *The Decay of Trade, An Economic History of the Newfoundland Saltfish Trade, 1935-1965*. St. John's, Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977. Pp. x, 173.

David Alexander has produced a very readable and interesting account of the Newfoundland saltfish trade during what appeared to have been the period of its demise. One can only commiserate with him that the time of the book's publication was not the best. Its reference to the "existing wreckage that is Canada's east-coast maritime economy" (p. 16) at a time when the 200-mile limit is in place and the Atlantic fishery is enjoying almost unprecedented prosperity rings a little hollow. This is a pity, since it is a scholarly work and adds greatly to our knowledge of the Newfoundland saltfish industry.

After describing the state of the Newfoundland fisheries at the beginning of the period, he discusses the movements to form a Newfoundland fish export cartel culminating in 1945 in the Newfoundland Association of Fish Exporters Limited