

believes marked the end of the first great expansionary period and had a devastating impact, producing problems which were much more difficult to surmount than any similar previous occurrence.

The story of the Buchanans themselves as told by Professor McCalla, is also highly instructive. The importance to a company of the personal factor comes through loud and clear, in both a positive and a negative sense. Professor McCalla's account makes it quite obvious that Peter Buchanan was the mainstay of the family firm, until he was accidentally shot by his bumbling nephew in 1860. On the other hand it is made no less obvious just what an incompetent *poseur* Isaac Buchanan really was, despite a Canadian reputation, mostly self-engendered, as a leading businessman, politician and economic theorist.

Isaac Buchanan's career and the fortunes of the Canadian business as described by Professor McCalla provide in fact a good example of the importance, then as now, of a successful "image". Despite Isaac's habitual neglect and mishandling of the firm, he, and it, were able to maintain a consistent public façade of expertise and solvency, not only among other businessmen and politicians and the public at large, but in the opinion of the supposedly sharp-eyed Mercantile Agency, which as late as 1866 was still giving the business an A1A1 rating, which on the evidence, was totally undeserved. There is an evident warning here which Professor McCalla ought to have made even plainer. Nineteenth-century business historians ought not to put too much weight on the assessments of such credit rating organizations as the Mercantile Agency or R. G. Dun and Company.

But no author no matter however generally successful, can satisfy everyone. There are two, somewhat interrelated, complaints which can be made about *The Upper Canada Trade*. First, for those of us whose claims to an expert grasp of economics in general and accountancy in particular are essentially fraudulent, Professor McCalla's explanations of trends and transactions are frequently all too brief and all too technical. Secondly, Professor McCalla has succeeded too well in compressing the doctoral dissertation on which the book is based into a pared down version of 159 pages of text. Almost everything that does not deal directly with the business itself has been ruthlessly ignored — Isaac Buchanan's political career, his extensive writings and his even more extensive dabbling in railways are barely touched upon. Even the conclusion, where Professor McCalla might have been expected to relax a bit, while thoughtful and thought provoking, is almost cryptic. Still, better a good short book than a bad long one. On the whole, *The Upper Canada Trade* deserves far more praise than blame.

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LINDA KEALEY, ed. — *A Not Unreasonable Claim. Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s*. Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979. Pp. 233.

Aside from its rather apologetic title, *A Not Unreasonable Claim* has not much to apologize for. Comprising nine articles connected by time period, Canadian content, the theme of reform and Linda Kealey's useful general and individual

introductions, the book demonstrates the wide range of work being done within the field of Canadian women's history.

Deborah Gorham presents us with a meticulously researched biographical piece on Flora MacDonald Denison, a feminist of particular interest in that she was a "working woman", an anomaly in a movement dominated by professionals. There are two articles discussing women's reform organizations. Wendy Mitchinson's excellent chapter on the Women's Christian Temperance Union argues that desire for a specific reform — prohibition — led basically non-feminist temperance workers to make forays into the campaign for women's suffrage. The chapter on the *Fédération Nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste* by Marie Lavigne, Yolande Pinar and Jeniffer Stoddart argues the slightly different point that reform work made women aware of the limits that had been imposed on them by society's definition of their role and that this realization helped move them in the direction of feminism. Another point of view on women's organizations is put forth by Carol Bacchi in her work on the response of farm and labour women to the dominantly urban bourgeois suffrage movement. Sisterhood, she points out, cannot be based simply on the communal fact of female gender; there will always be complications of background and class.

Joy Parr's chapter on the theological aspects of the child emigration programmes during the five decades straddling the turn of the century deals with a movement the policies of which can be seen as anti-reform, concerned with moving excess labour from Britain to Canada in order to shore up the *status quo* in both locales. In addition to being about non-reform rather than reform solutions, the paper is not about a strictly female activity — women played a major part in mass child emigration but not an exclusive one. However, its inclusion in a book about women and reform is apt. Provision for the future of children was considered a peculiarly female duty: it is important to know that concerned women did not all undertake to fulfil this mandate in the same manner. The sections by Veronica Strong-Boag and Suzann Buckley are about a different way in which women went about organizing themselves. Although they justified their interest in these fields by using the vocabulary of women's obligation to succour the human race, women who would be doctors and women who would be nurses also showed a healthy liking for individual achievement. Their involvement in feminism and reform could not help but be affected by their desire to establish themselves in a previously male-dominated profession as did Strong-Boag's doctors or to raise themselves to professional status as did Buckley's nurses. Professionalization adds one more complication to the search for sisterhood. There seems to be a wish, not far below the surface, in the remaining two chapters that such complications did not exist. Wayne Roberts' discussion of maternal feminism and Barbara Roberts' of British female immigration programmes carry an undertone of regret that the women of which they speak were what they were and not necessarily what we would like. This is not to dismiss the articles: Ms Roberts' chapter shows the difficulties women had in evolving general plans for the good of the sex and Mr Roberts' sets out the major theme for the book.

There is much said in *A Not Unreasonable Claim* about maternal feminism — the notion that women's role in public life was best satisfied by mothering on a large, in addition to a small, scale. For this reason, a chapter on just what women's role was in the family at that time would have been a useful addition, especially if the book makes its way into the classroom. Mitchinson brings up the point that the increase of women's power outside the home was a way of consolidating or increasing power within the home. This, plus the fact that these women justified so much of their activity by preaching preservation of the family,

makes one wish for a discussion of the nature of that particular piece of social organization. Another theme that pervades the collection is that of ghettoization. Women generally took part in certain activities and not in others. Two explanations can be offered for this, both of which raise their heads at intervals in the various chapters. One is the old victimization interpretation: women were only allowed to do certain things. The other is less defensive: women — owing to a complicated combination of socialization, education and sex-role notions — chose to do certain things. Ghettoization lives on today. Twelve people produced the material in this book, eleven of them female. I do not believe that any of these women see themselves as victims shunted into a restrictive field, although those of us women historians who do not “do” women’s history can testify that such stereotyping exists. Rather, they have chosen the field for the more healthy reason that, just like the women they deal with, they are drawn to the study of topics of concern to themselves. Working from a certain ideological standpoint can be fraught with dangers but it can also produce vital results.

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MICHAEL J. PIVA. — *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto 1900-1921*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979. Pp. xiv, 190.

The study of the urban working class in Canadian society, formulated on the recognition of “class”, has only recently attracted Canadian historians. Not surprisingly these studies are the result of the work of scholars no longer willing to subscribe to the outmoded and unacceptable concept of a “classless society”. The most well-known, stimulating and controversial examinations are those on Hamilton in the nineteenth century by Michael Katz, and Bryan Palmer, and on Montreal in the early decades of the twentieth century by Terry Copp. Now Toronto, one of the most important cities of Canada because of its political, social, financial and economic power has been investigated by Michael Piva, a former student of Copp, using the basic framework of Copp’s appraisal of Montreal.

Piva states that “the present work examines the standard of living of blue-collar workers in Toronto” (p. ix) and that it “makes no attempt to discuss working-class ‘culture’” (p. ix). Furthermore the working class is defined “as all blue-collar wage workers” (p. xi) although the constitution of this class is not elaborated.

The book is structured thematically to deal with industrial growth, real wages, unemployment and relief, working conditions, public health and housing, and labour unrest. To clarify and demonstrate graphically these themes, numerous charts, tables and photographs are included.

The core of the study shows clearly how the decline of real wages and the rising costs of living entrapped workers. This substantiates what O. J. Firestone (*Canada’s Economic Development 1867-1953*) had already stated but Piva does it in a more thorough fashion. In addition the important relation between the workers’ real income and unemployment is made, a point which is often ignored but which underscores the difficulties of the working class. Here, however, care must be