



Recent Publications

RED TORY BLUES: A POLITICAL MEMOIR, by Heath Macquarrie, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992, 378 pages.

"The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada will not regain public approval by a neo-conservative posture. Rather it must recall that government should do most for those who most need help. Because I worry about our current sense of values, I've called these candid Memoirs *Red Tory Blues*."

In introducing his memoir of more than three decades on Parliament Hill, Senator (and former MP) Heath Macquarrie laments the ideological direction his party has followed in recent years. Those few PCs who emphasize the Progressive half of their party label will nod their heads in sad agreement as Macquarrie chronicles the dismantling of those institutions and attitudes which previous generations of Conservatives considered vital to the maintenance of an independent nation requiring state support to resist the gravitational force of continentalism.

Red Tory Blues is part critique of the author's party, part prescription for ministering to his party's perceived ills. Mainly, however, it is an account of a life in politics, with sharply-drawn portraits of Macquarrie's peers and mentors, and engrossing accounts of the political events and issues which have shaped late twentieth-century Can-

ada. Although he never held a cabinet post, Macquarrie never lacked a prominent public profile, both nationally and in his beloved Prince Edward Island. On the national scene, he supported a variety of causes, not all of them guaranteed to win his party's or the public's support — especially his outspoken advocacy of the Palestinian cause. In Ottawa, he was a tireless booster of his Island province, and his accounts of Island politics in all their personal, patronage-driven exuberance are worth the price of the volume.


The other main interest of the book lies in Macquarrie's depiction of the major political figures during his time on the Hill. His portrait of John Diefenbaker is etched in vitriol: his acquaintance with the Chief is not recollected with affection. If there is any hero in the book, it is Robert Stanfield, described by the author as "the best Prime Minister we almost had." Stanfield's struggles with his party in the face of his predecessor's obstructionism are particularly well-chronicled.

Of his own roles as MP and Senator, Macquarrie is frequently unsparing: he voted reluctantly with his party to support the imposition of the *War Measures Act* in 1970, and regretted it. He considers that crisis "the only occasion on which I still consider I was fundamentally wrong.... Although it has done me no good, I have spent a long time in repenting my own apostasy."

In 1979, Macquarrie was appointed to the Senate, which he

found a more compatible and effective institution, except for the period in late 1990 when it "descended to shocking depths of nastiness" over the GST debate. On the issue of Senate reform, incidentally, the author is no advocate of a Triple-E Senate, recognizing that the institution has been effective precisely because it has not exercised its extensive constitutional power. As a second chamber of confidence with an electoral mandate, a Triple-E Senate would not have to wait long before clashing head-on with the Commons. Where, then, would its effectiveness lie?

The book is not without its faults: it is a typical example of the incompetent level of proofreading to be expected of modern publishers — even the University of Toronto Press. *Desserts* is printed as *deserts*, R.J. Manion's surname becomes Mansion, Iona Campagnolo once more becomes the slightly more alliterative Iona Campagnola, and George Hees at one point receives an uncapped surname. These are small errors, to be sure, but they are cumulatively irritating, and Macquarrie in his other incarnation as *Professor Macquarrie* would surely not allow them to pass unpunished in an undergraduate essay.

On balance, though, this is a worthy addition to anyone's bookshelf of political memoirs. 

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