

include material on the important changes in Westminster's committee system stemming from the 1978 report of the Procedure Committee. However, surely we deserve better than an analysis of the committees of the Canadian House of Commons which treats the 1968 reforms as experimental, and a treatment of Indian committees written entirely prior to the 1975 "emergency", to take only two particularly irksome examples. In a sense, the essay on committees of the Philippine Congress by Robert Jackson is all too symbolic of the whole enterprise: the Congress and its committees ceased to exist in 1972 when President Marcos declared martial law!

The great pity is that the idea behind the book was first-rate: assemble a team of specialists to analyse the workings of committees in eight national Legislatures: Canada, the United States, India, Japan, West Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the Philippines. This would offer the reader authoritative reviews of particular committee systems and would also provide the basis for more analytical attempts to draw general conclusions about legislative committees.

The eight academics and one practitioner responsible for individual chapters demonstrate a sure grasp of their subjects and generally write well. Several of the chapters, especially those on the United Kingdom and West Germany by S. A. Walkland and Nevil Johnson, are particularly adept in analysing committees within the broad context of a nation's political culture and its overall legislative setting. Perceptive as such insights are, they represent but a small proportion of the book, the bulk of which is given over to extensive detail on the structure and operation of the various committee systems. Much of this material is either outdated or else is of marginal interest to the 1980 reader. Michael Rush's piece on Canada, by way of illustration, is heavily based on surveys of MPs conducted in 1968 and 1970.

Although the editors did not impose a rigid framework on their con-

tributors, each chapter sets out the basics of the political environment within which each committee system operates, and provides the essential information as to committee membership, structure, influence, staff and the like, as they were about 1970. A certain unevenness is evident in that not all chapters discuss the same topics; the chapter on Italy, for instance, makes no mention of committees in the control or oversight of government finance.

The conclusion, by editor Shaw, struggles mightily to divine patterns across the eight committee systems. He reaches few non-obvious conclusions, but is occasionally led astray by surface appearances: "legislatures where British influence is strong give special emphasis to finance at the committee level". Particularly disappointing is Shaw's failure to draw upon the extensive research done into political behaviour in small groups as an approach to understanding legislative committees.

In sum, unless one is interested in decade old information on committees in eight legislatures, and is willing to shell out \$19.75 (U.S.) for it, this book has little to commend it.

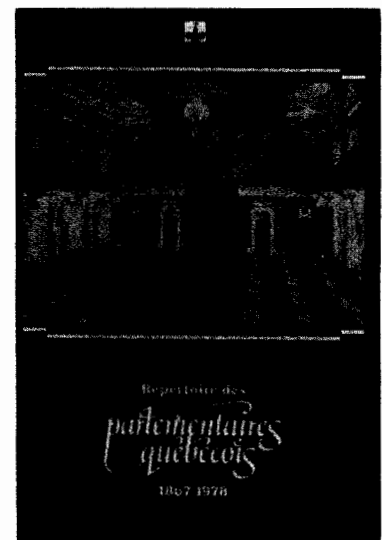
**Graham White**  
Assistant Clerk  
Ontario Legislative Assembly

**Répertoire des parlementaires québécois 1867-1978, Québec, Le Service de documentation politique de la Bibliothèque de la législature, 1980, 796 p.**

This directory contains biographies of all members of the Quebec Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly since Confederation up to 1968 as well as all members of the National Assembly from 1968 to the by-elections of April 30, 1979. Claude Ryan makes it just under the wire. It does not contain the names of Quebecers appointed to the Senate, elected to the House of Commons or to any other legislative assembly in other provinces or countries unless first elected in Quebec. This

*Répertoire des parlementaires québécois* does not include the names of Louis St. Laurent, Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, Jean Marchand, Jean-François Pouliot, Jean-Luc Pépin, Réal Caouette, Stuart Smith etc. Perhaps the term *parlementaire québécois* could have been more precisely defined in the introduction.

The book is made up of biographies containing the following elements: basic information (name, place and date of birth, name and profession of parents); marital status (date and place of marriage or marriages and name of in-laws); information on professional, industrial or business careers; an outline of political and parliamentary careers at all levels of government (municipal,



provincial, and federal); university studies; honors (decorations, medals, social and cultural associations); the date and place of death and burial; and finally relatives who were parliamentarians or public figures.

In a few cases information is lacking completely such as the absence of birth or death dates for R.G. Meikle and L.H. Gosselin. In other instances information has not been verified to the editor's satisfaction and he uses brackets as a simple method of indicating such cases. Some references are vague, particularly those pertaining to professional or university careers.

Research for the book was done according to the following method as explained in the introduction. For each member they started from parliamentary records and information found in them. The editorial team then searched through a wide variety of biographical dictionaries, local histories, obituaries and newspapers. If contradictions were found they were checked against primary sources such as official publications, and archival material. The family or descendents of members were contacted, particularly the person most familiar with family history. For deceased members certificates of birth or baptism, marriage and death were obtained. The book includes, at the end of each biography, a partial list of the sources or collaborators involved.

Even short biographies (such as Gosselin's with 66 words or Meikle's with 91 words) manage to convey essential information. The longer ones, like those of Laurier and Louis-Alexandre Taschereau, take more than two columns. Yet all are concise without digression into anecdote, commentary or character analysis. One has only to look at the entries for René Lévesque, Claire Kirkland-Casgrain and others to grasp this point. For even the most notable parliamentarians there is no attempt to outline their political thought or evaluate their role in political life. Of Luc Letellier de Saint-Just it merely says he dismissed the Conservative government of Boucher de Boucherville on February 25, 1878 then was relieved of his post as Lieutenant-Governor on July 25, 1879. Maurice Le Noblet Duplessis is given one column consisting mainly of dates and facts without embellishment or commentary of any kind. For Jean Lesage there is not even a mention of the "Quiet Revolution".

In certain cases sentences or phrases can say a lot without undermining the objective framework of the work. Thus we learn Armand Lavergne was expelled from the Liberal Party by Wilfrid Laurier in 1907; Pierre Laporte was kidnapped by the FLQ on October 9, 1970 and his body was found in St-Hubert eight days later. Gérald

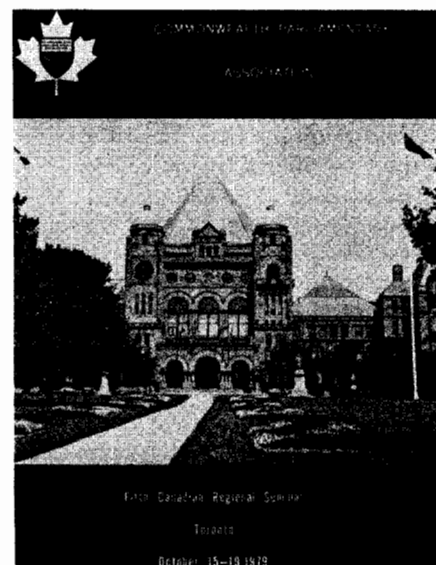
Martineau was called before the Salvas Commission and found guilty; Camilien Houde was interned from 1940 to 1944 for his opposition to conscription.

The *Répertoire* is limited in its objectives to the presentation of strictly factual material and as a result it is a difficult book to review. Nevertheless, one method is to compare it to the *Canadian Directory of Parliament 1867-1967* published by the Public Archives of Canada. A quick comparison reveals not only that information in the *Répertoire* is more complete but one quickly notices a number of errors in the *Directory*. About 160 parliamentarians are found in both books and the latter contains so many mistaken birth dates, forgotten second marriages, incorrect names of wives, dates and place of death, that one is led to conclude the *Directory* is in need of revision. (To be fair, however, it must be conceded that the *Directory* was a pioneer work containing more than twice the number of entries. It was mainly concerned with information regarding careers in Parliament, political affiliations and constituencies represented. It continues to be a useful reference source in these areas.)

The *Répertoire* includes a number of interesting appendices including lists of general elections, by-elections, legislatures and sessions, Lieutenant-Governors, Speakers, Prime Ministers, Leaders of the Opposition, Presidents of the Legislative Council, Members of the Legislative Council, Members of the Executive Council (Cabinet) and candidates elected and defeated in all Quebec elections up to 1979.

In publishing the *Répertoire* the Library of the National Assembly has made a significant contribution to political and parliamentary documentation in Canada. The editor-in-chief, André Lavoie, and his team are to be congratulated.

**Louis Brilliant**  
Information and Reference Branch  
Library of Parliament  
Ottawa



**Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Fifth Canadian-Regional Seminar, Toronto, October 15-19, 1979, 217 pp & appendix 73 pp.**

This is a difficult publication to review. It comprises five background papers and over two hundred pages of transcribed discussions on the topic of legislative committees. While the focus is fixed mainly on Canadian experience (and here principally on MPs at Ottawa and MPPs at Toronto), the experience in other jurisdictions, especially Great Britain and the United States, is discussed frequently enough to make the study a work in comparative legislative behaviour as well.

However, the volume's scope and especially its manner of presentation detract from the importance the subject deserves. Quite clearly, as they are discussed here, there are committees and, then again, there are committees. Those that examine Public Accounts or Statutory Instruments are vital elements of the parliamentary system but their experiences, here and abroad, are described as qualitatively different from the experience of standing and select or special committees. The contrast, of course, is that while their manner of operation and degree of success in fulfilling varied terms of reference may differ from legislature to legislature, their *raison d'être* is seldom questioned. The same cannot be said of those other committees whose relationship to the bureaucracy who serve them, the execu-