

politics of the new province. When drought in the period after 1911 blunted farm settlement, the Borden Government finally restored a reasonable system of grazing leases to shore-up the industry and lead it to new prosperity.

Breen's book can be faulted for the inordinate amount of space he devotes to proving the unique British and Canadian attributes of the ranching community. This perhaps results from the length of time it took to convert his doctoral thesis into a book. The hypothesis was new and startling a decade ago, but is less so today. If this portion had been trimmed, more space could have been devoted to examining the question of markets and political gamesmanship. That sort of analysis would perhaps have balanced nicely with the detailed look at resource policies underlying the ranching industry and made the study more complete. These criticisms, however, do not detract from the importance of the book. Breen's extensive research draws on prime ministerial records, federal and provincial government records, manuscript sources for public officials like William Pearce, and ranchers like A.E. Cross, and on the records of producer organizations such as the Western Stock Growers Association. For those interested in natural resource studies, Breen has shown how these various sources can be tapped to gain insight into individuals like Frank Oliver whose importance has been somewhat overlooked because of the lack of personal papers. *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924* inserts a large and important piece in the puzzle of Western development before 1930.

Peter Gillis
Treasury Board
Ottawa

"No Fault of Their Own," Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941. JAMES STRUTHERS. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983. x, 268 p. ISBN 0-8020-6502-3 \$12.50 pa.

"No Fault of Their Own" by James Struthers examines the evolution of public responsibility for the unemployed in Canada from local governments and private charities before World War I to the federal government through creation of the unemployment insurance scheme in 1940. Over the last ten years, historians have studied aspects of unemployment and poverty in different Canadian municipalities. Recent work has examined the Canadian government's attempts to measure the extent of unemployment during the interwar years. *"No Fault of Their Own"* is the first to widen that perspective by focusing on the development of federal government policy toward unemployment, especially the long bouts of joblessness prevalent during periods of severe recession.

Struthers argues that the desire to reinforce the work ethic more than humanitarian notions to relieve suffering governed the formation of federal social welfare measures. He maintains that Canadian attitudes toward unemployment and destitution derived from the British poor law principle of "less eligibility." According to this principle, the able-bodied unemployed were only entitled to a paltry amount of relief dispensed by local authorities to ensure that their condition would be less attractive than that of the lowest paid unskilled labourer. In other words, the wage from any work no matter how minimal should be preferable to a miserable life on relief. These attitudes were most evident in Canada during the long and heated

debate from 1913 to 1940 over whether unemployment insurance should replace direct relief as the principal means of caring for the jobless. The ineffectiveness of these outmoded attitudes in coping with mass unemployment eventually led to the breakdown of the notion of local responsibility for joblessness and relief during the Depression of the 1930s.

Struthers contends that Canada did not just discover large-scale unemployment during the 1930s. A severe recession prior to the outbreak of World War I caused widespread unemployment which, in turn, placed a heavy strain on the ability of private associations and municipalities to care for the victims of the economic crisis. Local governments looked to Ottawa for assistance since the federal government possessed most of the power to raise revenue. Several public figures called for the establishment of labour exchanges and unemployment insurance. As a result, the Borden government adopted measures which suggested that unemployment was a national social problem requiring the financial and administrative powers of the federal government to allay the consequences. The serious economic crisis after the war caused further federal involvement in the economy through the establishment of the Employment Service of Canada, the provision of funds to municipalities for unemployment relief, and the actual drafting of an unemployment insurance programme.

Disagreeing that constitutional obstructions lay behind Canada's reluctance to adopt unemployment insurance at that time, the author points out that in 1920 the Justice Department felt that the federal government's authority to enact laws for "peace, order and good government" justified such a programme. The reason for not enacting such a measure was political. A change of leaders and a change of government in 1921 put off any idea of Canada taking its first steps toward the welfare state. Despite Liberal Party support for an insurance scheme in 1919, Mackenzie King's dependence on the agrarian-dominated Progressive Party for support in Parliament made him sensitive to their views that surplus labour should be directed "back-to-the-land" as agricultural labour. Consequently, less money was spent on the Employment Service of Canada and Bryce Stewart's pioneering research on unemployment was done away with by the mid-1920s. Some politicians feared that unemployment insurance would prove more attractive than work in farming, lumbering, and construction. Although King shelved the insurance scheme by citing constitutional difficulties, Struthers believes that the Prime Minister was basically indifferent to the plight of the unemployed and ignored any idea of further federal responsibility to improve their condition.

As Canada entered the Depression, earlier efforts to measure the extent of unemployment and to devise ways of combatting the resultant poverty lay forgotten in government records. Moreover, "deliberate policy decisions," not inexperience, underscored Canada's lack of preparation for the highest level of joblessness ever experienced. To support this view, Struthers presents a minutely detailed analysis of how the Bennett and King administrations tried to ignore or delay acceptance of unemployment as an enduring social problem of national importance which required state intervention to resolve. He also demonstrates how the federal government contended with the differing opinions of the farm community, business, labour, the unemployed, provincial governments, municipalities, senior civil

servants, and social workers who tried to influence unemployment policy. Struthers argues that these groups feared loss of ambition and self-reliance among those on "the dole" and their permanent dependence on the state.

The influence of the social work profession, particularly in the person of Charlotte Whitton, is one of the more fascinating aspects of this study. Whitton proposed largely administrative solutions. The hiring of professionally trained social workers would ensure the efficient administration of relief within the constraints of limited budgets. The practice of casework on the unemployed would offset any loss of their incentive to work. Struthers harshly assesses the consequences of Whitton's insistence on local responsibility for relief and her penchant for exaggerating relief costs and relief abuses. Whitton's strategy backfired, especially when the Bennett government ignored her pleas for professional staff and simply reduced relief grants to the provinces in 1932. This, in turn, created further hardship for those out of work. Struthers' portrayal of Whitton as a one-dimensional administrator is too narrowly conceived. While there is no denying her essential conservatism, her contribution to the development of social welfare deserves a fuller assessment than Struthers provides.

Whitton's complaints about relief payments which came close to the wages of unskilled labourers and, in her opinion, encouraged long-term dependence on the state, found receptive ears among some politicians, businessmen, and senior civil servants. Where they differed was in the method by which to cope with unemployment. Constitutional obstructions allowed the King government to stall implementation of any unemployment scheme requiring permanent federal responsibility. World War II prompted the Liberal government to enact unemployment insurance in 1940, not the Depression. The government realized that "a federal government which was about to demand great sacrifice from its citizens could not simply abandon them to fate once hostilities ended." The benefits under the 1940 legislation, however, ensured that work would always be more attractive than unemployment insurance.

James Struthers has written a provocative, but convincing thesis on the federal response to the tremendous social problem posed by lengthy unemployment. No doubt some readers will question his emphasis on the preservation of the work ethic as the chief motivating factor for the reluctant policies. This view, however, explains why the federal government persisted in following shortsighted policies when it was obvious after 1932 that the relief system was inadequate and that unemployment was an enduring problem which required state intervention to cushion the effects of future economic recessions. The human tragedy of the Depression receded into the background as both government and the private sector sought answers that would ensure no loss of the desire to work on the part of the unemployed.

Some flaws do exist in the book. The author's analysis of the interplay of interest groups on the federal government occasionally becomes bogged down in detail and repetitiveness. Struthers, nevertheless, synthesizes much of what is already known about this era and presents interesting, new information on unemployment, relief, and the social work profession. Since the development of social welfare policy in an historical context is a new subject, it is regrettable that a bibliography or, even better, a bibliographic essay on the sources is not included. These criticisms aside, Struthers' book is a valuable contribution to Canadian historiography.

"No Fault of Their Own" is based almost equally on published sources and manuscript collections. Struthers demonstrates an awareness of the current literature regarding social welfare and unemployment and has been influenced by the 1971 study, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* by Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward. He delved deeply into the private papers of Borden, Meighen, Bennett, and King, traditionally a rich source for political histories. And he made use of government records, particularly those of the Departments of Labour and National Defence, to assess unemployment relief programmes.

Struthers' use of the papers of the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) at the Public Archives of Canada is most striking. Anyone who discovers this collection will be impressed with the wealth of information it contains. These records are essential for assessing the Council's influence on public policy, for determining Whitton's importance in the initial stages of the professionalization of social work, and for tracing the development of social welfare during and after the World War II. The CCSD papers provide valuable background on unemployment, poverty, private charities, relief, and child and family welfare in most Canadian cities and towns after the mid-1920s. Archivists engaged in the acquisition of private papers ought to ensure that the records of similar associations are preserved in an archival institution. Such associations must be encouraged to retain their records permanently in the interests of scholarly research. The personal papers of other contemporary social workers — Bessie Touzel, Marjorie Bradford, Dorothy King, and Freda Held — should also be traced and preserved.

"No Fault of Their Own" employs the documents created by the elite — prime ministers, politicians, senior civil servants and influential public figures — in order to examine public policy. But how are the unemployed to be studied? The conditions experienced by the unemployed and the poor can be judged indirectly from statistics and descriptive reports, especially those generated by government departments and private organizations. One is nevertheless left with a sense of dissatisfaction that the whole story of the poor and the jobless has not yet been told. Since the unemployed left few written records, the pursuit of this missing ingredient in the field of social history should stimulate archivists and historical researchers to consider an oral history/archival programme to present a fuller picture from another perspective.

Judith Roberts-Moore
Federal Archives Division
Public Archives of Canada

Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918.
CAROL LEE BACCHI. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983. ix, 203 p.
ISBN 0-8020-6466-3 \$8.95 pa.

In this book Carol Lee Bacchi attempts to explain the transformation of the suffrage movement in Canada from the radicalism of the late nineteenth century to the so-called "maternal feminism" of the early twentieth century. She discovers the transformation by comparing the early suffrage associations, like the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association, with social reform associations like the National Council of Women and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. As the