

become his first political hero; and later in life he held Franklin Delano Roosevelt in equally high esteem. Martin also admired Mackenzie King, especially as a political strategist. King, for his part, thought Martin much too ambitious; Martin believed this to be a reason why he was not promoted to the rank of parliamentary assistant before 1943 or to the cabinet before 1945. One must not forget, however, that he was up against some stiff competition in the Liberal caucus for there were a number of equally young and well-qualified members of Parliament waiting in the wings such as Brooke Claxton, Douglas Abbott, and Lionel Chevrier. All eventually joined Louis St. Laurent, C.D. Howe, and others in what became one of our strongest cabinets.

Paul Martin became a consummate politician with a fine ability to organize and to raise funds. His only defeat at the polls was in an Ontario provincial by-election in 1928 when as a student he was soundly defeated in North Renfrew. His drive and ambition did, however, pay off. His left-of-centre views were tolerated in the Liberal party and he was courted for a time by the CCF where he had some very close friends. Ever careful to comprehend his opponents, he recalls an amusing incident about beating a hasty retreat from a meeting of communists in Windsor in 1945 after he had dropped in to "find out what made them tick." (p. 368)

Memoirs by their very nature provide us with one person's view of the universe. These memoirs are no exception and must of course be balanced against other accounts. Once the Martin Papers are open to researchers, others will want to examine and measure Martin's contributions to the social issues and international matters he held as priorities.

Although volume 1 of Martin's memoirs whets one's appetite for more, I must take issue with the decision to forego the use of footnotes for material used from the Martin Papers. While this may result in a tidy manuscript, it makes it particularly difficult to trace sources; future historians and archivists will pay the price. Another drawback is that one cannot easily tell at times whether the text reflects Martin's views at the time in the storyline or at the time he wrote the memoirs. Precise footnotes for material used from the Martin Papers would help here.

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Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered. THOMAS FLANAGAN. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983. ix, 177 p. ISBN 0-88833-108-8.

This is in many respects an admirable book. Thomas Flanagan knows the sources more thoroughly than any writer on Louis Riel since George Stanley. He has a unique ability to use this knowledge to formulate relevant and searching questions which challenge the conventional wisdom. Those who teach Canadian history will be grateful to have a book that is so ideally suited for enlightening students about the techniques of historical analysis and, perhaps more important, the relevance of historical inquiry. But with all its strengths, *Riel and the Rebellion* has a number of serious weaknesses.

The fundamental question addressed in the book is set out in the first chapter: "Was Riel, were the Métis, justified in resorting to arms?" All the subsidiary questions, and indeed the entire book, revolve around this central issue. The way the question is phrased is therefore crucial. By calling it a Métis rebellion, ignoring the participation of the Indians and whites in the events leading up to the outbreak of the fighting, the author pre-judges the issue. Isolating the Métis artificially in this way helps to trivialize the grievances of the Métis by removing them from their context. The Cree population of the prairies, in particular, were treated badly enough to push them to the point of rebelling whether or not the Métis did. The Farmer's Union agitation of 1884 created a climate in which Riel was at first welcomed by the white population. The book takes no account of the fact that the Métis decision to rebel was a product, not merely of their own relationship with the government, but also their perception of Ottawa's mistreatment of the entire population.

In the second chapter, dealing with the disputes over land and surveys between the Métis and the government, Flanagan does a fine job of explaining the technical and administrative complexities that bedevilled relations. The chapter goes into much detail on the problems faced by the officials of the Department of the Interior, but makes no effort to see the process from the Métis point of view. In taking up their river lot farms along the South Saskatchewan after the initial survey, the Métis were simply doing what they had done for many years before. The difference between settling before and after the survey was crucial to Ottawa but quite meaningless to the Métis. Flanagan points out, quite correctly, that many of the Métis demands could not have been met without changes to the Dominion Lands Act, as if the Act was somehow immutable. The government was ready enough to amend it at short notice if the CPR wanted it done.

Flanagan's argument that the government did everything in its power to settle the land question strains the reader's credibility. No claims had actually been settled by the time the fighting began. Letters had been sent stating the government's intentions, but it is by no means clear that these letters had been received. All the instances that Flanagan cites to show the reasonableness of the government refer to settlements reached well after the Rebellion was over — as much as four years after in one case. Flanagan concludes: "It cannot reasonably be said that the government ultimately failed to carry out its responsibilities." This judgment is only possible if one adopts the most narrowly legalistic interpretation of events.

I have even greater difficulty accepting the interpretation of the government's actions concerning the Scrip Commission and land grant. Flanagan claims that the reason the Commission was not appointed until the end of January 1885 was that John A. Macdonald was searching for a better method of distributing land than was used in Manitoba earlier. If so, his wait was in vain because it was distributed in the same way. The Commission is much more plausibly interpreted as a hasty, last-ditch effort to try to avert trouble if possible, or, if not, to provide *post facto* justification. It is certainly true that the Métis were anxious for the money that the sale of land scrip would bring, but this was not simple greed on their part. The book fails entirely to bring out the really desperate

poverty of most of the Métis community in 1884 and 1885. The few dollars realized from the sale of land scrip could mean the difference between eating and going hungry.

The oddest part of the book is the chapter on Riel's personal financial demands. Flanagan finds it strange that historians have hitherto paid so little attention to them. After reading the chapter it seems to me that previous writers were correct in ignoring the episode. Riel unquestionably demanded money for himself, but it is not at all clear what this meant to him. The demands were well known to his followers and did not bother them at all. Riel's followers did not regard him as a saint and found nothing anomalous in his attempt to get something from the government on his own account. They might well have been suspicious if he had not done so.

The strongest chapters in the book are those dealing with aboriginal title, Riel's trial, and the medical commission. Riel's views on aboriginal title for the Métis and its importance in leading him to rebellion are explained with admirable clarity. Various myths about the unfairness or illegality of the trial are dispatched efficiently. The medical commission on Riel's sanity is confirmed as one of the shabbiest episodes in John A. Macdonald's long career. The final chapter on the question of a posthumous pardon for Riel might turn out to be the most publicly controversial part of the book. Here I agree with Flanagan that the basically Stalinist desire to rewrite history by government fiat should be resisted.

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Automation for Archivists and Records Managers: Planning and Implementation Strategies. RICHARD M. KESNER. Chicago: American Library Association, 1984. xii, 222 p. ISBN 0-8389-0406-8 \$27.50 pa.

Members of the Association of Canadian Archivists fortunate enough to hear Richard Kesner's stimulating address on the future role of the archivist in the automated office at the 1984 ACA conference in Toronto will know that he advocates a transformation of archivists from passive recipients of documents to active participants in the creation, distribution, and preservation of information. Archivists who are interested in computers as archival tools are probably aware of his excellent work as a compiler of two annotated bibliographies on automation and machine readable records and as the author of articles on automation which have appeared in *Archivaria* and *The American Archivist*, among other archival journals. We would expect therefore that Kesner's latest book, *Automation for Archivists and Records Managers: Planning and Implementation Strategies*, will prove to be an enlightening guide to the volatile world of computers, and indeed he does present a thoughtful introduction to the new information technologies. The book should be of particular assistance to records managers and archivists who have not yet taken the first step towards automation. Needs assessment, system analysis, planning strategies, and implementation patterns are all discussed in some detail.