

Gagnon's book provides a model for future scholars; as such it is an excellent beginning to the Directorate of History of the Department of National Defence's proposed series on socio-military history.

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Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930. DESMOND MORTON and GLENN WRIGHT. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987. xiv, 328 p., illus., appendix. ISBN 0-8020-5705-5 cl. ISBN 0-8020-6634-8 pa. \$40.00 cl. \$17.97 pa.

In 1936, nearly a generation after the guns fell silent on the Western Front, the federal government at last erected its monument to Great War veterans. The grudging gesture was symbolic of Canada's reluctance to acknowledge the sacrifices of its citizen-soldiers. In this book, Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright describe in discouraging detail the struggle of returned men for recognition and re-establishment. In their skirmishes over bonuses, land settlement, and rehabilitation, yesterday's heroes fought public apathy, bureaucratic parsimony, and political indifference. Ultimately the veterans lost their battles but won their war. What they failed to gain for themselves they secured for their successors: programmes based on entitlement. But for most of the old soldiers, the victory came too late.

"Re-establishment," the authors conclude, "failed both its architects and its intended beneficiaries." Why? Although it initially gave little thought to the aftermath of what was expected to be a short war, the government soon recognized its error. Volunteerism, charity, and patriotic funds — the traditional responses — would not suffice for the survivors of the CEF. Drawing on the experience of Britain, France, and the United States, officials set about devising the principles, organizations, and facilities needed to cope with the casualties of modern war. The result, in the words of J.L. Todd of the Pensions Commission, was "a most perfect scheme." Based on hard business sense, a minimum of sentiment, and a coherent set of principles, Canada's re-establishment programme represented "as excellent a system as could be devised" for looking after the returned men. Through a combination of re-training, rehabilitation, and limited pension assistance, the government would ensure that veterans regained their economic self-sufficiency; "normalcy" would be quickly restored and the country's duty finally discharged.

Both the presumption and the expectation proved false. From the outset, fear, not generosity, animated the administrators. Todd, Ernest Scammell, and Walter Segsworth struggled to protect Canada from the menace of the pension evil. Self-styled trustees of the nation's future, they frequently responded to the veterans' problems with a meanness of spirit that refused to recognize the shortcomings of an approach more suited to imaginary clients than to the real victims of trench warfare. Private Pat represented the popular perception: though he had lost a leg he came back with spirit intact and a determination to put the war behind him. Fitted with an artificial limb, given a bit of retraining, and resettled on a prairie homestead, this plucky fellow would soon make a go

of it. No handouts for him. More often, however, the disabled vet returned chronically sick, shell-shocked, or exhausted, with few job skills and fewer prospects. For those who gave their lives but had the misfortune to return, "self-sufficiency" was a chimera. No amount of rehabilitation could restore the missing years. Last hired and first fired, these "burnt-out cases" drifted through the postwar years with more memories than hopes. "A decade after demobilization," the authors point out, "disability and dependency were greater than ever." Despite the government's determination to contain its commitment, Parliament eventually legislated means-tested pensions to replace a patchwork of charitable concessions. The acceptance by the state of an obligation in principle to provide for its citizens signalled the veterans' final victory.

Morton and Wright, historian and archivist respectively, have together drawn on an extensive collection of manuscript, contemporary, and secondary material in producing the first comprehensive study of Canada's veterans. Although the reader occasionally gets lost in the Byzantine labyrinth of legislation and regulations, the authors have managed — the publisher's contradictory preface notwithstanding — to make sense out of policies and programmes that frequently baffled those they were intended to assist. At times the effort to draw general conclusions out of the complexities seems to result in oversimplification. The Canadian public, for example, are described as hostile to the ex-servicemen and suspicious of their greed, but little evidence is offered in support. Instead, claims for bonuses and other benefits consistently won the support of a wide range of groups and organizations. Similarly, while unemployment among veterans is pointed to as proof of the failure of the government's approach, the figures given seem to suggest that veterans did better in the realm of employment than the population as a whole. The authors rightly remind us that there were numbers of women among the "returned men," but how they fared remains largely a mystery. Finally, it is apparent throughout that the authors' hearts are on the side of the veterans in this second battle.

These caveats notwithstanding, the Morton and Wright volume becomes at once the essential starting point for anyone pursuing veterans affairs, as well as an illuminating insight into social policy-making. It serves also as a useful reminder, in the words of the Repatriation Committee, of "how much easier it was to make war than to make peace."

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The Half-Million: The Canadians in Britain, 1939-1946. C.P. STACEY and BARBARA M. WILSON. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987. xii, 198 p. ISBN 0-8020-5757-8 \$24.95.

This book goes a long way towards filling a significant gap in the history of the Canadian armed forces during the Second World War. Unlike the First War when most Canadian troops were only in the United Kingdom during brief periods for training, leave, and hospitalization, circumstances in the Second World War dictated that the Canadian Army overseas would spend far more time stationed in the British Isles — four or five years out of six — than it did in military operations on the continent, while for the Air Force and to a lesser extent the Royal Canadian Navy, the United Kingdom was a