

Anyone interested in the actions against individuals which are within the capability of the modern democratic state, and in the effect of current legislation on freedom of information and on the privacy of the individual, will find this book useful reading. Mitgang approves highly of freedom-of-information legislation — indeed, he would have had no book without it — but is worried that the Reagan administration has weakened the regulations surrounding these laws, and can give no assurance that U.S. agencies are not still compiling files and watching American authors, even though the legislation is now supposed to make that practice illegal. “To this day [authors] can be watched and kept on file through what I consider to be a wide opening in the back door of the guidelines.” In fact, the *New York Times* of 21 August 1988 carried a story entitled “F.B.I. Kept a File on Supreme Court,” which outlined how the FBI watched, taped, and wiretapped the judges of the U.S. Supreme Court “from 1932 until at least 1985.”

As this review is written, a former head of the CIA has become President of the United States. However, neither Canadians in general nor Canadian archivists in particular should permit themselves too many superior glances at the United States when the questions raised by Mitgang’s book come up for discussion. In the winter of 1988, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service raided the offices of Radio-Canada in Montreal, and one recalls the RCMP’s raid in recent years on the home of Ottawa author John Sawatsky. A further useful corrective may be obtained by a close reading of Gregory S. Kealey’s article in the Spring 1988 issue of *Labour/Le Travail*, “The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the National Archives, and Access to Information: A Curious Tale.”

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The Bank of Upper Canada. PETER BASKERVILLE, ed. Carleton Library Series No. 141. Toronto: The Champlain Society in cooperation with the Ontario Heritage Foundation and Carleton University Press, 1987. cliii, 400 p. ISBN 0-88629-059-7 \$18.95.

For most of the forty years after its organization in 1822, the Bank of Upper Canada was the leading financial institution in Upper Canada. It was a key player in financing Upper Canadian trade during the period, in arranging government finances, and in financing the construction of the basic railway system which was essential to the industrialization of Ontario. In spite of the bank’s importance, Peter Baskerville’s preface to this collection of documents, published by the Champlain Society in cooperation with Carleton University Press, is the first major study of the institution. The reasons for this neglect are not difficult to find; after the bank failed in 1866, ten tons of the bank’s records were sold to a papermaker and reduced to pulp. This edition of records relating to the bank’s history is evidence of how much can be gleaned from related collections of historical documents when the primary collection has been lost.

During much of its existence, the Bank of Upper Canada was derided as a pet bank, created by members of the Family Compact to serve their personal interests, favoured by the government, and unable to survive without government favours.

The bank's reputation as a pet began with its formation. Its charter had been intended for a bank in Kingston. However, the Legislative Council, the stronghold of the Family Compact, revised the charter to have the bank's headquarters moved to York; the directors from Kingston were replaced by directors from among Compact supporters in York. The Compact was also able to arrange government support for the initial financing of the bank and the government held shares in the bank until 1841.

Peter Baskerville's excellent introduction to the documents qualifies this view of the bank, but does not reverse it. During the 1820s the government intervened on several occasions to protect the bank from competition but in the 1830s it granted charters to several banks and allowed Lower Canadian banks, particularly the Bank of Montreal, to operate in Upper Canada. Equally important, although the bank received important business from the government, it did not become the sole government bank until 1850.

The Bank of Upper Canada was regularly accused of favouring Family Compact supporters with its loan policy. Baskerville finds little evidence of this claim. What he does find is that under its first president, William Allan, the bank favoured businesses in the York district; this was apparently a result of the practical difficulties of supervising the bank's agents in areas beyond York. During Allan's presidency the bank followed a conservative policy of buying and selling foreign exchange and providing short-term loans to merchants to finance imports and exports. Although the policy was appropriate to a staple exporting economy, it could not, Baskerville suggests, provide the long-term credits necessary to develop a Canadian manufacturing sector.

Allan's successors were less traditional and less competent. They concentrated on obtaining government business to the neglect of mercantile accounts. When, in 1850, the bank finally achieved its goal of becoming the government bank, it found that the business involved unexpected liabilities. Baskerville notes that, although government accounts in the 1850s often showed large deposits in the bank, these were frequently accounting fictions which covered overdrafts created by the government's loose system of financial controls. The bank was forced to make interest free, short-term advances to the government at times when the official accounts showed credits in the government's account.

The government also encouraged, and in some instances pressured, the bank to support fixed capital investments in projects such as the Great Western Railway, the Grand Trunk Railway, and the railways promoted by Samuel Zimmerman. When these investments soured in the late 1850s, the government, which was itself in desperate financial straits, cut the bank "adrift to die a slow and, significantly, little lamented death." This tale of banks, governments, and resource development has relevance to the history of the 1980s and the national energy policy: the difference is that now major banks are too important to be cut adrift.

Following the history of the Bank of Upper Canada in the introduction, the documents come almost as an anti-climax; there is little to be gleaned from them by the casual reader which Baskerville has not already presented in a concise and understandable manner. The worth of any selection of documents depends on the soundness of the editor's judgement in selecting documents and on his care in editing

them. The calibre of the introduction provides reassurance as to the editor's ability to select documents; nevertheless, it is unfortunate that there is no explicit statement of the principles of selection and editing which governed the production of the work.

Such a statement might have explained the use of the Adam Shortt Papers in preparing this volume. Approximately ten of the documents reproduced have been taken from volumes 2, 3, 4, and 10 of the Adam Shortt Papers in the National Archives of Canada. The volumes consist of typescripts of documents relating to Canadian economic history. In some instances the original documents are no longer available but in many cases they are; for example document C59, C. Poulett Thomson to Lord John Russell, Montreal, 27 May 1840, is now in C0 42, Volume 10, folios 224-9, Reel B-276. Although the Shortt transcripts are accurate, to the best of this reviewer's knowledge, it would have been better to have gone back to the original. In the example cited, Shortt's version is doubly a transcript because it was taken from the old "Q" series of transcripts prepared for the National Archives before the advent of microfilming.

This is, however, a quibble. In general the editing has been well done and there are few instances where one would question the appropriateness of a document being included or the manner in which it has been edited. The introduction provides an excellent short history of the Bank of Upper Canada and throws considerable light on government finances in the four decades before Confederation. It will be a standard for years to come.

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The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada 1839-1930. JAY CASSEL. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987. viii, 340 p. ISBN 0-8020-2593-5 (cl.) ISBN 0-8020-6617-8 (pa.) \$35.00 cl. \$17.95 pa.

The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980. ANGUS McLAREN and ARLENE TIGAR McLAREN. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986. 186 p. ISBN 0-7710-5532-3 \$14.95.

Is it intuition, foresight, or mere luck that leads some historians to write books of incredible relevance to current issues? Whatever the reason, Jay Cassel, and Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, have produced works on venereal disease and birth control in Canada that could not have been more timely, considering the current furore over the spread of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the emotional debate over abortion. Both books are well researched and readable, and will no doubt quickly become popular with those interested in Canadian social and medical history.

Jay Cassel could only have written *The Secret Plague* with the current AIDS epidemic in mind. While the author does not refer to AIDS explicitly, it is never far from the reader's mind as Cassel recounts one hundred years of the cruel treatments, fear, and shame that were the result of a long misunderstood and untreatable set of diseases. He follows a medical history model in this book, allowing the major