Socialism and Democracy in Alberta: Essays in Honour of Grant Notley
ed. Larry Pratt

Socialism and Democracy in Alberta is a must-read for anyone interested in the political history of Alberta. Larry Pratt, the editor of this tribute to the former New Democratic Party leader, is a masterful editor who has assembled a collection of essays that provide a comprehensive overview of Notley's leadership and his impact on Alberta's political landscape.

The essays cover a wide range of topics, from Notley's role in the development of the NDP to his influence on Canadian politics. The contributors include prominent scholars and politicians who were close friends and colleagues of Notley. The result is a volume that is both informative and engaging, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in Alberta's political history.

In conclusion, Socialism and Democracy in Alberta is a must-read for anyone interested in the political history of Alberta. It is a well-written and well-researched volume that provides a comprehensive overview of Notley's impact on Canadian politics. It is a testament to Notley's legacy and a valuable resource for anyone interested in Alberta's political history.

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political arena, the discuss the voters' ability to ensure political representation for the NDP, that the monarchy is dead in Alberta, and the new political landscape looking back at Notley claims to have failed to make the NDP the party of the working class. Look at the white collar government workers. Engelke, Macpherson's the least until 1947, that independent community, Cherishing their scared interests each other.
political arena, the final three essays discuss the voters the NDP should target to ensure political success. The essential premise for this final group of articles is that the monolithic political culture of Alberta is disintegrating and that the future political fate for the NDP lies in the urban centres of the province. In looking back at Notley, Fred Engelman claims he failed to capture two crucial groups in Alberta, the remnants of the petite bourgeoisie and the rising new middle class. Looking to the future, he urges the NDP to concentrate on the white collar government and service workers. Engelman accepts C.B. Macpherson’s theory that Alberta, at least until 1947, was a society of small independent community producers. Cherishing their own property, they were hostile towards the Eastern possessed interests such as the banks and railways. This absence of class and dependence on the East meant that opposition in Alberta was unnecessary and as a result, elections became plebiscites. In the post-Leeds Alberta period, Engelman follows the analysis of Alberta development proposed by Richards and Pret in Prairie Capitalism. They claim that oil brought the rise of a new middle class divorced from populism. Yet, with nothing to stimulate opposition, one party dominance remained. The Tories under Peter Lougheed represented this new middle class and thus came to dominate the provincial political scene. Engelman claims that Notley emerged from independent commodity producer stock, a group out of step with the new Alberta by the time he became leader. He failed to represent the dominant group of the quasi-party system in the seventies. Not surprisingly, Notley failed in his election bid in Edmonton and sought a rural northern seat. As Alberta becomes more stable and settled, Engelman argues that a true party system might emerge which would benefit the NDP if the party follows his suggestion.

In the following Engelman, Garason Dacks argues that in Alberta the political consensus is breaking up and is being replaced by the politics of fragmentation and fear of economic decline. Thus, over the long run, this change will improve the competitive position of the NDP. In the short run, it will impose a more marginal existence on the party. Dacks points out that class, while important, has not been the crucial political dimension in terms of which Albertans have been divided. Rather, there has been a dominant commodity interest which underlines the political consensus that is directed against those outside Alberta. In Alberta, the political struggle is with the East. Dacks says that the "conjunction of this perceived community of interest with the alienation Albertans have felt against central Canada has produced decades of single party dominance in Alberta. This consensus is breaking down because of the loss of confidence in one or two commodities which have traditionally integrated Alberta society, like agriculture and oil and gas." Dacks encourages the NDP to address the problems of the various interest groups in the province to rally single parents and Natives, to public servants and farmers, to jar them from the political consensus. He notes that the alienation of Ottawa and central Canada will endure but it cannot hold the Alberta consensus itself. Thus, Dacks offers hope that the Alberta wilderness can be escaped if social democrats are active in responding to the specific and tangible grievances felt increasingly by Albertans.

In a final essay, Garth Stevenson encourages the NDP to look to the working class and “middle class” as the party’s natural consultants in the future. He criticizes the NDP under Notley for having left inside the cities in order to pursue a populist message. The legacy of agrarian populism has weighed heavily as seen in the virtual “blessing” of William Levine, whose name is carried by the provincial headquarters and whose portrait hangs in the NDP legislative offices. Stevenson regrets that the party has failed to adapt to the rapidly changing society of Alberta. He argues that the NDP should meet the future by defining itself primarily as a party of the working class, meaning the party that includes construction workers, transportation workers, oilfield workers, miners, clerical sales workers and service workers. If properly defined, he points out that the working class outnumber farmers ten to one. In addition, there is support for the party among some elements of the middle class who have always favoured the NDP such as those involved in the social sciences, religion, the teaching profession and the arts. Indeed, one reason for the move towards the NDP from the CCF was to attract more middle class voters. In English-speaking Canada, support has come from the educated, salary-earning new middle class, particularly those working outside the profit-oriented sector of the economy. Even the small businessperson is looked upon as a possible supporter. Stevenson feels that the NDP has difficulty relating to the working class in Alberta because that class has little sense of solidarity. He feels, however, that by providing an alterna-
People and Place — Studies of Small Town Life in the Maritimes
edited by Larry McCann

People and Place is a collection of essays written by faculty members of Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick as part of a project on small town life, sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The editor, Larry McCann, writes that the project was the faculty's "opportunity to learn about ourselves." The book can be seen as the attempt of a group of thoughtful people to reveal the deeper meaning of the place in which their lives and work are rooted. If taken as such, the book has an immediate appeal for anyone interested in the Maritimes' "regional identity."

This exercise in self-knowledge gets off to a bad start with William Godfrey's essay on "James Glennie and the Politics of Sunbury County." Loyalist themes are undeveloped and remain a mere setting for a paraphrased political thesis which is interesting only for specialists. Perhaps the collection should have started closer to home; this is suggested by the more satisfying quality of Dean Jobb's essay, "Sackville promotes a Railway: The Politics of the New Brunswick and P.E.I. Railways, 1872-1866." A photographic print by Thaddeus Holowas shows one of Sackville's foundries built near the main track while a map on the next page illustrates the story: the rivalry between Sackville and Amherst to become the centre of an economic corridor between Prince Edward Island and the major port of Saint John. If you are unfamiliar with the history of the region, this essay is worth reading if only for the way Jobb portrays the diverse resource-based economy of Sackville as it took on a new manufacturing base under the direction of an energetic group of well-established local entrepreneurs. The purpose of building a railway to P.E.I. was to promote economic growth and the whole town was delighted by the spurred political maneuvering which successfully brought it to completion.

As a historical slice of regional life this essay is fascinating, but the reader is left startled by this image of a booming economic life which is a stark contrast to the ghost town Sackville is today. At least part of the reason for the Maritimes — part of the mystery of the regions a whole — is focused by what happened in Sackville.

The very next essay by McCann and Burnett takes us further down what became the Inter-Colonial Railroad to New Glasgow, Nova Scotia which, during the same period, was transforming itself into a major industrial area. Another Holowas photo shows the steel plant in Tensm (along with New Glasgow, Stellarton, and Westville, these Pictou County "towns" constitute the industrial core of northern Nova Scotia) and a few pages later there are a couple of panoramic maps of New Glasgow. These maps are less informative than the map in Jobb's essay. Nevertheless, we get a visual sense of how steel and coal changed the character of the communities. The authors provide a scholarly argument that the North American steel baron's riches stories of this age were the exception to the rule in New Glasgow where a closed, traditional social hierarchy kept "things" the same even as the economy was quickly changing. However, we never get a broader political-economic perspective on why New Glasgow never fulfilled its potential of the late nineteenth century.

Perhaps I should be satisfied with these two competent, sometimes lively, accounts of Sackville and New Glasgow life, and not take seriously the editor's claim to some degree of self-knowledge. After all, as the editor writes, the authors are a "true multidisciplinary lot" and a synthetic historical perspective is very hard to achieve. Still, I was struck by the way the collection as a whole managed to evade the phenomena which could be the most obvious unifying theme — Confederation. This is the event ingrained in the consciousness of many Maritimers and it explains a great deal about the place and the people who live here.

Maritimers are haunted by memories of the "Gold Rush," which they believe characterized life in the region immediately before Confederation. According to the myth, Confederation was something we were manipulated into; it destroyed a whole way of life and the economy based on that life, and led the region into the doom and gloom of the twentieth century. Perhaps the most accessible way for other Canadians to understand this belief is to view the National Film Board's evocative video, Empty Harbours, Empty Dreams. No doubt the authors in this book cannot swallow this myth whole. Still, they cannot start to "learn about ourselves" without confronting the basic truth conveyed by the myth and its influence on the region's consciousness.

This essay reveals the ambiguity of the book's apparent leading theme. The opening sentence of the editor's preface reiterates its subtitle — "the Maritimes is a region of small towns." The authors are supposed to have "recognized the significance of this fact," but either as an assumption or a leading theme "this fact" is consistent. Rhyme off some of the major stations stops on the railway: Moncton, Sackville, Amherst, Truro, New Glasgow and Sydney. Only Sackville can really be considered a small town, and in Jobb's essay we see that town struggling to become a large manufacturing centre; in the twentieth century it lapsed back, forever, into being a small town. In general, these railway stops signified one basic fact: the Maritime economy was changing in the late nineteenth century from the traditional fishing (or "land and sea") which captures the interaction focused in the shipping industry) to the newer industrial and manufacturing bases. This meant a shift from small town to urban life. McCann writes that "the essays group themselves quite naturally into three major themes: casting the pattern, the passing of traditional society; and contemporary small town life." Yet the 1870s and 1880s around which the first group of essays generally revolve was the time when the traditional pattern was being broken; this time was really the "passing of traditional society."

In turn, the Politico-economic themes raised in the Sackville and New Glasgow essays are not developed or complemented by the others even though economists DeRidder and Price write about contemporary economic trends in the Maritimes. In an atrociously jargon-ridden and mathematically obscure text, which is com-