

This book reopens the window on a fascinating era, though occasionally it lets out air instead of letting in light. It will make an important contribution to, without itself becoming, the definitive study of the "children of privilege."

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*The Short Road Down: A University Changes.* By Robin Ross. Toronto, Published by the University of Toronto, 1984. A limited number of copies is available from the Office of the Vice-President, Institutional Relations, University of Toronto.

In 1958, when Robin Ross came to the University of Toronto as Assistant Registrar, it was governed in the traditional Canadian manner by two bodies: a Board of Governors appointed by the provincial government, which held supreme authority but limited itself largely to financial matters; and a Senate composed chiefly of members of the teaching staff but with some alumni representation, which was responsible for academic affairs. When Mr. Ross retired in 1982, the University was run by one body, a politicized Governing Council representing a variety of "estates": government appointees, alumni, faculty — and students. The process by which this change came about, and some of its consequences, are the subject of his little book. It will repay study by anybody interested in Canadian higher education, and not only by people with a special interest in the University of Toronto.

Robin Ross began his academic career at the ancient Scottish University of St. Andrews. He went on to Oxford, but his time there was interrupted by the war and service in the Cameron Highlanders. Thereafter he went into the Indian Civil Service, and upon the "transfer of power" transferred himself to the Commonwealth Office, which changed his life by sending him to Canada. He moved to the Canadian public service, and then the University of Toronto wisely snapped him up, and he was a senior university administrator for a quarter of a century. He calls the book "a personal history of the University of Toronto during the period 1958-1982, together with an examination into its governance, made by a sometime university Registrar".

Mr. Ross's opinion of the development he describes is perhaps adequately expressed in the book's title. And he makes the telling remark that, although the developments at Toronto have been well publicized, no university in Canada or elsewhere has chosen to imitate the University of Toronto's new system of government. Not everybody at his university will agree with Mr. Ross; people who had responsibility for the policies on which he comments will be livid; but unless I am much mistaken there will be a pretty unanimous chorus of applause from the university faculty.

The author quotes with approval a remark of Alexander Corry of Queen's that it is the business of a university to give "a training in civility". He practices

what he preaches when commenting on the actors in his drama. He deals chiefly with two Presidents, Claude Bissell and John Evans. Of Bissell as a person he has the highest opinion, but he makes it quite clear that he thinks he made a fundamental error when, instead of undertaking to reform the machinery existing in 1958, he went for a total change and a unicameral system of government. Of Evans he says less, but he permits himself the phrase, "what can only be described as the reign of John Evans and Donald Forster" (page 63). The only people he speaks of with real distaste are the student "revolutionaries" of 1967-74 – not the reformers, but the would-be destroyers. Set down in cold type today, the "disruptions" of those years make extraordinary reading, and it is hard to avoid recalling that many members of the university faculty then felt that Evans and his associates were prepared to go to almost any length to avoid confrontation with the dissidents.

This is not a book for the "general reader". Its format – typescript photographically reproduced – is difficult, and not everyone wants to follow the detailed stages through which the long and acrimonious discussion that produced the new Governing Council proceeded, but the audience to which it is addressed can hardly fail to find it fascinating. Mr. Ross deals mainly with university government, and says less about purely academic subjects, including the abolition of the honour courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science which was one of the great disasters at the University of Toronto in this period. In doing what he has done he has performed a notable public service, and it should be added that the University of Toronto – not, be it noted, the University of Toronto Press – deserves much credit for making what he has written available to the public. If a complete modern history of the university is ever written, its author or authors will be grateful.

This is a story of decline and fall. But it is only one chapter. Mr. Ross observes sadly that the University of Toronto is no longer the "great good place" of which Claude Bissell once wrote. But he is not wholly pessimistic; if the members and governing bodies of the institution do their duty, there can still be a great future. Problems abound, but signs of hope are not entirely lacking. With a better social atmosphere prevailing, a new President may be able to put the University's feet on the Long Road Up.

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A Review of *The Great Brain Robbery, Canada's Universities on the Road to Ruin* by David J. Bercuson, Robert Bothwell, and J.L. Granatstein, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1984.

Canadian universities are subjected to a great deal of questioning and pressures by society and government as reflected in the numerous and recent articles ranging from Reader's Digest, Maclean's and Saturday Night and throughout the