

inadequate fire-fighting apparatus combined to turn much of the building into an empty shell. Making effective use of contemporary accounts, Richardson is particularly good at measuring first, the dismayed reaction of the faculty, student, and citizen to the disaster, and then the varied and inspired steps to restore the structure.

Apart from providing a sense of mood and the historical setting, Richardson's main contribution, of course, is in the realm of architectural history and detail (although occasionally there seem to be a few too many technical specifics and some unnecessary repetition of historical items). For the most part, however, he presents his material, textual as well as illustrative, in such an imaginative way as to ensure the warm response of those who have any kind of commitment to understanding the social role played by architecture and to exploring their community's past and its artistic triumphs. For what it's worth, this reviewer will certainly look at UC in a profoundly more sensitive fashion than he did as an undergraduate so long ago.

MacLeod, Malcolm. *A Bridge Built Halfway: A History of Memorial University College, 1925-1950*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, (1990). xxx, 376 pages. Price: \$34.95. Reviewed by Michiel Horn, Department of History, Glendon College of York University.

For most Canadians the history of Canada's tenth province is virtually a closed book. The history of higher education in Newfoundland has much the same status even with professional historians. We may know that there is a Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, but few of us have any idea what it is supposed to be a memorial to or, indeed, about any other aspect of the history of the institution.

Anybody wishing to end such ignorance should read *A Bridge Built Halfway*. Written by Malcolm MacLeod, a member of Memorial's department of history, it deals lovingly and exhaustively, sometimes almost exhaustingly, with the first twenty-five years of Memorial University College (M.U.C.), from its founding in 1925 as a memorial to the Newfoundlanders who died overseas during the Great War, to 1950, the year in which the institution graduated its own students for the first time.

Professor MacLeod has done a prodigious amount of research and has written a volume that in many ways is a model of its kind. His chapters, in

order, paint the historical background, offer a profile of the students, and discuss curriculum, staffing, college life, the spirit of the place, the socioeconomic background, M.U.C.'s relations with Newfoundland government and society, college governance, and affiliations with other institutions. The penultimate chapter tells us what happened to M.U.C. students after they completed the two years of university training that it offered until 1949; a brief conclusion provides an overview of M.U.C. and its successor, the Memorial University of Newfoundland. The book is augmented by an impressive array of tables and appendixes that provide financial and other statistics and additional information about both faculty and students.

Perhaps it would have been better had chapter 7, on the socioeconomic background, followed immediately upon the introductory chapter. Essential to an understanding of M.U.C.'s history are the dismal economic experience of Newfoundland in the 1930s and its distressing political consequences. The collapse of the primary industries on which Newfoundland's precarious and limited prosperity rested, the country's inability to service its debt, and the decision of its elites to surrender self-government, put the existence of M.U.C. very much in doubt. That it survived was due in part to the generosity of the Carnegie Corporation, which had also played a key role in getting M.U.C. started, and in part to the determination of Newfoundlanders to preserve a national institution.

It is easy for mainland Canadians to forget (if we realize it at all) that Newfoundland was a country before it was a province, one that had its own "national policy" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This policy, like Canada's, was aimed at laying a sound basis for continued economic growth. National cultural institutions had to wait as, indeed, they did in Canada. But when M.U.C. was founded, Professor MacLeod shows, it was an important step towards enabling the country to produce its own leaders.

Relatively little happened before 1949 to expand the two year college founded in 1925. This was the result not of a lack of vision, but of the economic and political calamities that overtook Newfoundland: "The quarter century 1925-50 was one of the most difficult, most unstable periods in Newfoundland's history" (p. 148).

MacLeod correctly notes that M.U.C. "related more comprehensively to the society it served than did any other university in eastern Canada. That was because it expressed national rather than narrowly sectarian concerns" (p. 263). M.U.C. had more in common with the provincial universities of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia than with almost all of the institutions of Nova

Scotia, New Brunswick, and Central Canada. That common experience extends to the slump of the 1930s. The crisis of 1931-32 at the University of British Columbia, for example, provides a fascinating insight on M.U.C.'s history.

A Bridge Built Halfway is sometimes heavy going. Although the interviews Professor MacLeod has carried out lend some sparkle to his book, on the whole he makes few concessions to the general reader. But this is a minor fault in a scholarly work that constitutes an important contribution to the histories of both higher education and Newfoundland.

Frost, Stanley Brice. *The Man in the Ivory Tower: F. Cyril James of McGill*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, (1991). xiii, 314 pages. Price: \$34.95. Reviewed by Michael Owen, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Office of Research Services.

Biography, especially of prominent educators, is a difficult task, one that requires much research, a sympathy with the subject of the biography, and a critical eye to the events that surrounded her or him. Biography, when it tells of the story of the rise of a boy born to humble working class parents north of London in the late nineteenth century to the principalship of a major Canadian university, can easily become a romance. *The Man in the Ivory Tower* demonstrates how biography should be written, a history of an individual, his career, his personal life, and his times.

It is not often that one reads of a true-to-life, rags-to-riches story, but such is the story of F. Cyril James, principal of McGill University from 1940 to 1962. What is refreshing about the story of Frank Cyril James, by McGill historian Stanley B. Frost, is that it is narrated with sympathy and a critical eye. We are provided with a clear understanding of the working class environment of London in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and how such origins provided only limited opportunities for social and economic advancement through the educational system. The life story of Frank Cyril James is fascinating: after an initial failure to enter the university system through the stringent 11-plus examinations, James began his university studies in the new Bachelor of Commerce degree at London University, at first on a scholarship and then part-time while working at Barclay's Bank as a junior clerk. Frost shows how serendipity played an important role in the educational life and career of F. Cyril James — a factor often underestimated — as he