

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

moved from bank clerk to graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania to lecturer at Wharton School of Business to Principal of McGill University, Montreal. Serendipity also contributed to the reception and popularity of his publications, first of his thesis and then of his subsequent books, on topics of great interest in the late 1920s and early 1930s: *Cyclical Fluctuations in the Shipping and Shipbuilding Industries* (1927); *The Economics of Money, Banking and Credit* (1930); and *The Road to Revival* (1931). As a result of the depression and his knowledge of banking and credit, James became a well-known academic in the United States, receiving honours and offers, including commissions to study the American banking systems and to write a history of Chicago as a financial centre (1938). James, it seemed, led a charmed life as an academic: he was bright, articulate, and very productive.

Then serendipity again played a role in his life. After undertaking the directorship of the School of Commerce at McGill in the autumn of 1939 (while assuring an escape to Wharton as he was only on a leave of absence from his former employer), he was appointed Principal upon the resignation of Lewis Douglas. Thus within two months of his arrival at McGill to undertake the reformation of the School of Commerce, James had accepted, with much persuasion and a large increase in salary, the position of Principal.

It was during the war years that McGill assumed its position as one of Canada's foremost research and teaching universities. This achievement was the result of the efforts of Cyril James who involved McGill and other Canadian universities in the planning for the post-war era, ensuring that the needs of Canadian universities would be a priority for the federal government. James' participation on a variety of federal war-time panels and commissions and through the National Conference of Canadian Universities enhanced the position of McGill and the other universities. Moreover, James took advantage of the war and post-war needs of the federal government, especially reconstruction, to insinuate universities further into the economic and social life of the nation.

James, more than most senior administrators, anticipated the needs of universities in a post-war Canada, especially the need to serve returned servicemen and to provide for a research-based faculty. Some of this understanding derived from the role of McGill faculty in significant war-time research projects, especially the Manhattan project, but also from the widening participation of faculty in routine research. James' ability to curry favour with major American donors, notably Carnegie, Ford, and Donner, ensured that McGill had a significant contribution to make to Canadian research.

However, for McGill, as a private university, the need for more funds to increase the miserly salaries paid to its faculty (McGill was noted for its low salary scale), to enhance teaching and research infrastructure, and to provide for student support, gained greater and greater prominence during and immediately following the war. And, as with present day concerns, federal-provincial politics hindered the efforts of university presidents to obtain an adequate bounty for their institutions. While McGill relied heavily on the efficacy of fund-raising skills of the Board of Governors, James and his fellow university presidents pressured the federal government to provide for university level education. Success was assured in the early 1950s with the findings of the Massey Commission and the support of Prime Minister St. Laurent. McGill, however, was caught in the battle between Duplessis' Union Nationale government (and French-Canadian journalism) and the apparent federal foray into provincial jurisdiction - postsecondary education. The conflict resolved in the 1960s after Duplessis' death, with funds previously held in trust by the Canadian University Foundation for Quebec universities being transferred to those institutions. What is important, for this review, is the role that James played in the establishment of C.U.F., and the extension of the N.C.C.U. and other inter-university relations. The base of present-day institutions such as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and the strength of these institutions have their bases in the work of James and other university presidents, e.g., MacKenzie of U.N.B. and U.B.C., in the 1940s and 1950s. James encouraged inter-university relations in Canada, and played a major role in supporting and extending the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth (now the Association of Commonwealth Universities) and the International Association of Universities, bringing the A.U.B.C. conference to Montreal in 1958, and assuming the presidency of the International Association of Universities in 1960. These forays into national and international university politics demonstrated his executive leadership and organizing abilities, and ensured for Canada a major place in international educational developments.

James' national and international endeavours mirrored his ability to master the affairs of McGill University in an era of great expansion. Yet these outside interests also demonstrated his restlessness, his need to be seen as one who was in control of affairs. It is important to realize, however, that James' career straddled two distinct eras in the history of higher education in Canada — the one being the period in which the Principal controlled the university with "dictatorial" powers (albeit on behalf of a board of governors which had not faculty or student representation), the other being the era of the Principal

assuming the role of a chief executive officer, one who uses executive skills to balance the often conflicting views of the faculty-controlled senates and politically-appointed boards of governors. James had all the skills to make him a successful president in the 1940s and 1950s, and the 1990s, but his view of the role of the Principal was clearly that of an agent of the board, albeit as an agent who used his intimate knowledge of the affairs of the university to influence the decisions of the board.

Indeed, James' dismissal in 1962 (as his appointment in 1939) reveals the non-democratic nature of university governance during his tenure. In 1990, neither would have been possible or permissible without faculty and student involvement.

Frost skillfully weaves an intimate story of a man - F. Cyril James - who, for many, represented the epitome of the expatriate principal: distant, urbane, witty. However, Frost aptly shows how James' public persona masked a private life that was filled with anxiety about a shaky marriage and uncertainty about his abilities to achieve his goals. Frost's rendering of James' life is more than a biography of an individual; it is also the biography of the middle years of an institution. And it shows how closely James' public persona matched that of McGill. Both had achieved great prominence nationally and internationally, and were respected — James as a principal and scholar, McGill as a teaching and research university. But both were uncertain about their role — James uncertain about his abilities to provide innovative leadership to McGill, McGill uncertain about its place as a Canadian and a Quebec university. Yet James' stewardship of McGill ensured that institution's place of leadership within Canada's university community and provided Canadian universities with a competent and tireless worker.

This biography of F. Cyril James, Principal of McGill University from 1940 to 1962, is an excellent model for historians and biographers. It combines rigorous scholarship and detached critique with an intimate understanding of the institution and era, and a sympathetic treatment of the object of the biography.