

Verney began to realize that in “out-of-the way part[s] of the world” (p. 189) such as BC, new identities and local agendas were emerging that threatened to shatter his model of colonialism and his conception of empire. The valuable, if now well-theorized, insight in his letters is that colonial variation — or imperial deviation — was not simply a political or ideological affair that could be fixed by loyal governors, more representative institutions, or the emigration of more Britons. If colonial officials had dirty hands, and if colonists did not think of Britain as often as they should, it was because they were tackling difficult and discrepant lands.

This engagement with land was a basic medium of social change in colonial societies. Verney’s letters also contain ample material with which to engage the recent critical literature on colonialism in a BC context — especially Homi Bhabha’s argument that imperial ideas and messages become unstable and hybridized when they hit colonial spaces. Verney did not have the time or the cultural inclination to reflect on colonial experience as analytically as do these colonial theorists, but he would have understood much of what they are saying. And I suspect he would have approved of their dress, if not of their manners and customs.

### *Politics, Policy, and Government in British Columbia*

R.K. Carty, ed.

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996. 381 pp. \$65.00 cloth, \$26.95 paper.

By Stephen Tomblin, *Memorial University of Newfoundland*

**T**HIS EDITED BOOK OF ESSAYS deals with how BC politics is changing in response to new socio-economic and political forces. BC’s rich and complex political system is dissected and analyzed from a number of different perspectives. Indeed, the great strength of this impressive work is the diversity of approaches that it offers to the reader interested in BC politics.

The book itself is organized into four sections. Part one offers a compelling analysis of the province’s political culture, political economy, and the history of struggle over key federal-provincial and Native issues. Even though the book presents an odd mix of themes, in an important way this prepares the reader for what

comes later. In an impressive analysis of the ever-changing political landscape, Donald Blake highlights the impact of old embedded memories and experiences on the way both citizens and political actors respond to political issues in the 1990s. Michael Howlett and Keith Brownsey deal with the changing nature of the province’s political economy and the political realities and dynamics associated with a service-based rather than a resource-based economy. The chapter by Edwin Black provides the reader with an informative and comprehensive overview of federal-provincial relations. In writing about BC in the 1990s, Black grapples with some of the key policy issues that have added to the province’s reputation as

a "spoilt child." Paul Tennant's thorough analysis of the history of the Native land claim issue is timely and significant, and he does a good job probing the history of struggle over the question of Aboriginal title.

Part two deals with themes associated with the political stage. In "The Politics of Polarization," Donald Blake examines the BC party system over recent decades and highlights the many political realignments that have taken place. Norman Ruff provides a first-rate overview of the province's legislative traditions and then deals with the issue of reform and with whether there is a need for new systems of representation in the 1990s. Linda Erickson's chapter on women and politics clearly demonstrates that, while BC was the first province in Canada to elect a woman premier, equality of the sexes has still not been achieved. It raises further questions about the need for new institutions and processes. The chapter by Barbara McLintock and Gerry Kristianson focuses on the political role of the media and addresses several themes and issues that are important for understanding why there have been so many political realignments in the province. This chapter also helps to explain recent calls for reform in the way people are represented.

The third section examines the institutional aspect of provincial government. Terence Morley's thought-provoking analysis of the role of the premier and cabinet questions old assumptions about executive power and the extent to which premiers are held in check by other political actors. This account also provides a brief summary of the different leadership styles, from the time of W.A.C. Bennett right up to the time of Glen

Clark. BC's provincial bureaucracy is the subject of Norman Ruff's insightful analysis, which is an important contribution to the literature. The final chapter by Terence Morley provides the reader with a rich and well-researched analysis of the justice system.

The fourth section of the volume deals with patterns of public policy. Gerry Kristianson provides important insights into how lobbying has changed over the years, and he also raises a number of interesting questions about democracy in BC. Brian Scarfe's chapter on the province's finance and fiscal policy offers a fascinating analysis. The province's complex system of social policy and the forces that shape it are the themes explored in Michael Prince's impressive chapter. While George Hoberg offers a number of critical insights in his chapter on forest policy, Kathryn Harrison's work on environmental politics is an equally impressive contribution to the literature. The final chapter, by Richard Sigurdson, deals with the issue of whether the NDP is any different from other, more pragmatic, parties. This is a topic that has attracted much scholarly attention in the past, and this detailed analysis of many of the themes raised in the book provides a great ending.

The volume under review is a welcome addition to the study of government and politics in BC. One of the book's great strengths is that all of the chapters are important and that the reader is exposed to a number of different issues and themes. This group of writers did an excellent job in probing the province's changing political terrain in the 1990s, and these timely contributions to our understanding of BC politics should help to generate new interest in the topic.