

symbolic meaning (and federal employment) that entailed? What role did the postwar demise of “Britishness” play in allowing Ontarians to identify so strongly with Canada? Still, to be fair, such questions might very well have taken the book beyond the intended focus of the author.

“*A Justifiable Obsession*” should be of interest to many readers and not only to historians of Ontario, the Constitution, or federalism. In many ways, and as Bryden so eloquently demonstrates, the story of postwar federalism is the story of the construction of the Canadian social-welfare state – how it would function, the shape of different social programs, who would run it, and how we would pay for it. All of this created new jurisdictional challenges and gave rise (often with Ontario leading the way) to more fundamental questions surrounding the function and responsibility of the two levels of government, something that has often been overlooked by constitutional scholars fixated on the Quebec question. As Bryden explains, Ontario officials increasingly saw the Constitution as a panacea to a slate of outstanding issues in Canadian federalism and became increasingly supportive of Ottawa’s efforts to patriate, culminating in Ontario’s pivotal role in securing a compromise in 1982. Bryden’s work is a must for anyone interested in twentieth-century Ontario, Canadian federalism, the rise of the social-welfare state, or constitutional politics. It is a compelling read, both as a reference tool for specific questions and as a general history that helps us understand how and why, imperfect as it is and after nearly 150 years, the Canadian federal experiment has been made to function.

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The First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario. Ryan O’Connor. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015. Pp. 264, \$95.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper

For those of us who study the history of environmental change in the Great Lakes region, Pollution Probe is almost synonymous with the growth of media-savvy activism and resulting public awareness that characterized Canada’s “first wave” of environmentalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. And yet, until now, the organization has made only cameo appearances in histories of postwar pollution and environmental degradation in the region. Ryan O’Connor’s *The First Green Wave* finally gives Pollution Probe the comprehensive coverage it deserves in the history of Canadian environmental movements.

The book is divided into six chapters that explore the origins, development, and eventual decline of Pollution Probe and the related Toronto-based environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) that grew up around it from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s. The book opens with an examination of the impact of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's documentary "The Air of Death" in 1967, which O'Connor credits with launching "first wave" environmental activism in Ontario. Subsequent chapters detail the environmental concerns and campaigns, the youthful leadership and playful tactics that defined this first wave, with its focus on predominantly local concerns such as pollution, energy production, and resource use. The book concludes by investigating the eclipse of first-wave organizations such as Pollution Probe by emerging "second-wave" ENGOS in the mid-1980s, which adopted an overtly transnational approach in response to border-crossing problems such as acid rain, ozone depletion, and global warming.

O'Connor argues that the environmental organizations that formed within the context of the heightened social activism of the late 1960s and 1970s differed both from their conservationist predecessors and from their counterparts south of the border. Drawing upon a rich repository of source materials, including the private records of Pollution Probe and an impressive range of oral history interviews with activists, politicians, journalists, and members of the business community, O'Connor shows how Probe and other first-wave ENGOS eschewed traditional conservationist concerns such as parks, forests, and wildlife. Instead, this new and youthful generation of activists directed their energy at problems surrounding chemical pollution, energy use, and environmental degradation that affected people and natural systems close to home. And the evolution of these organizations, O'Connor finds, was distinctly Canadian. Unlike American ENGOS, which evolved from established, national conservation organizations, Canadian ENGOS sprang up rapidly and independently, and they remained highly regionalized, much like the Canadian conservation organizations that preceded them.

Of all the organizations that emerged in these heady days of environmental activism in Ontario, Pollution Probe was the most enduring and the most successful. O'Connor attributes its success to three factors: its association with respected scientists at the University of Toronto; the elite backgrounds of its early leaders; and its relationship with advertisers and print media. Its success in establishing itself as a credible critic of government and industry on environmental issues drew in large part, O'Connor shows, on the scientific expertise of its

founders within the University of Toronto's Department of Zoology. The elite backgrounds of Probe's early leaders allowed for strong relationships with Toronto's business community. These relationships were instrumental to Probe's success in inserting itself as a recognized voice for environmental concerns in what were previously private, bipartite negotiations between government and industry. This significant shift in Canadian policy-making reflected not only the growing sophistication of groups such as Probe but also the fact that "government had lost the public legitimacy necessary to bargain on behalf of the environment" (11). Finally, Probe's ability to effect a dramatic shift in public awareness of environmental issues stemmed from its strong media connections. Partnerships forged with advertising agencies and with newspapers such as the *Toronto Telegram*, for example, allowed Probe to publish free of cost a memorable series of full-page ads on the Don River water quality and other issues of environmental concern.

Of particular interest to scholars of postwar political movements is the challenge O'Connor presents to the assumption that first-wave environmental movements were inherently leftist in their political orientation. O'Connor argues persuasively that Pollution Probe "adopted a position of pragmatic centrism" in its negotiations with government and industry that contributed to its success (171). Success with one demographic, however, also led to neglect of others. Like environmental groups in other parts of Canada and in the United States in this period, Probe's white, privileged, and largely male leadership contributed to a lack of attention to immigrant or working-class concerns until the rise of the environmental justice movement (and the relative decline of Probe's influence) in the 1980s.

O'Connor's book provides an important intervention into the growing body of work on the social activism of late 1960s and 1970s Canada, bringing needed attention to the role of environmental consciousness in those movements. While many of us are quick to point to the Canadian origins of more immediately recognizable groups such as Greenpeace, Greenpeace was from its earliest years, as Frank Zelco has shown, more of an international than a Canadian organization. Overlooked in our fascination with household names such as Greenpeace are the "made-in-Canada" organizations that focused predominantly on Canadian environmental concerns. In this context, O'Connor's examination of "home-grown" environmental organizations, the issues that concerned them, and the approaches they adopted fills an important gap in the historiography of Canadian environmentalism.

The book's highly chronological structure is both a strength and a weakness. While it provides a strong backbone to the rise and fall of Ontario's most influential environmental organization, the issue-by-issue, year-by-year narrative becomes repetitive in places. Some overuse of subheadings and block quotations, and the abrupt shift to a lengthy bulleted list of second-wave organizations in the final chapter (168–9), detract from what is otherwise a coherent and carefully constructed monograph. *The First Green Wave* will be a welcome addition to senior undergraduate courses in Canadian and environmental history and the history of postwar Canada. Its clear and accessible prose will also make it an attractive read for environmental professionals and the staff members of today's ENGOS interested in exploring the origins of the movements they now lead.

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