

strated that the first major political interpretation of a period shapes much of the subsequent interpretation of that period. The business of myth-making in Canada is seldom allowed outside the doors of the Whig historical establishment.

If, in reading the above, the reader is led to the conclusion that this reviewer did not enjoy Professor Neatby's book, he is wrong. It is well-written, organized to effect and, as I have noted above, its content is a positive fascination. That this review disagrees with the presentation of King in certain particulars takes nothing away from Neatby's achievement. Indeed, one regrets the decision of Mackenzie King's literary executors to substitute the four-volume *Mackenzie King Record*,

spanning the period from the outbreak of the Second World War to King's death in 1950, for a complete official biography of King's life. The decision of the executors to open the Mackenzie King Papers under the 30-year rule and to make them available on microfiche (a decision warmly applauded) will render the *Record* less useful to scholars; it never had a large reading audience. No doubt the period of King's national stewardship will continue to receive the attention of scholars. To date, however, their work has lacked the authority of a Blair Neatby.

Neatby, H. Blair. *William Lyon Mackenzie King, Volume III: The prism of power, 1932-39*. Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1976.

Book review

Stursberg on Diefenbaker shows value of oral history

By Nora S. Lever

With the publication of his second volume of interviews, Peter Stursberg completes what he calls a "living history" of the Diefenbaker era. In accomplishing this task, Stursberg effectively combines the journalistic and academic approaches to oral history.

Researchers in universities, museums and archives question whether oral history embraces a legitimate approach to historical research. But those who belittle the method may be missing vital perceptual material that creates a sympathetic understanding of certain epochs. On the other hand, those who enthusiastically espouse such a procedure must remind themselves that oral history is a supplement to other methodologies, and that the foundation of such an approach relies on extensive use of conventional library and archival sources.

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As a journalist in conversation with a newsworthy politician, Stursberg is effective, as a prompter eliciting the feelings and atmosphere that permeated the Diefenbaker era. Meanwhile, as an academic, he has obviously engaged in preliminary research that guided him in establishing a regular format for his interviews. Moreover, as an archivist in collaboration with Léo LaClare, he has deposited the tapes and transcripts in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, for general release on December 31, 1980. For that the academic community will be grateful. Vivid reports of political tribulations appear in conversation with Gordon Churchill, Donald Fleming, Fulton, Grattan O'Leary, Waldo Martin and many others who were active in the centre of Canadian politics during Diefenbaker's leadership. But the story of the decline, which is the particular focus of this volume, is a sad one to read. A Government with the largest majority in the history of Canada's Parliament was reduced to a minority by the 1962 election. The ensuing months held enormous