

### Dief's talent to stir the pot

By FRASER MacDOUGALL  
John Diefenbaker's 32-plus years haven't dimmed his talent for stirring up controversy and capturing headlines. The reception the country gave the third volume of the Old Chief's memoirs testifies to that.

Like the first two volumes, the main title is One Canada. But the defining sub-title forms a vivid reminder of the period: The Tumultuous Years 1962-67 (Macmillan Co.; 302 pages; \$15.95).

Tumultuous the years and the events were, the political period one of the stormiest Canada has seen, the time one of never-ending confrontation and controversy.

The book deals with such events as the 1962 election, when the Conservatives sank to a minority of 116 of the 265 House of Commons seats from the 208 seats they captured in 1958; the Conservative government's defeat on a confidence motion in the Commons in 1963 amid party plots to oust Diefenbaker as leader; Diefenbaker's unexpected successes in 1963 and 1965 in preventing Lester Pearson and the Liberals from achieving majority government; and Diefenbaker's replacement as party leader in 1967, after bitter turmoil within the party.

#### ONE MAN'S STORY

Diefenbaker tells his story graphically. He sports derision at his foes, particularly those he had thought were his friends, and says kind things about people who stood by him although some of those do take a lump or two.

But it is clearly his story, his recollection of events, told in the way that he undoubtedly wants his conduct in those years to be remembered.

Some people have been quick to disagree. One was forthright Douglas Harkness whose resignation as defence minister Feb. 3, 1963, proved the catalyst that touched off an internal crisis within the Conservative party and set in motion a chain of events that led inexorably to the government's overthrow two days later.

As soon as excerpts from Tumultuous Years began appearing in Canadian newspapers on Oct. 8, Mr. Harkness swung into print with his own account of the resignation and other events he was connected with. He had written his story at the time and deposited it with the Public Archives for use when he might feel compelled to speak out.

He and Diefenbaker do agree there was a resignation, and on a matter of principle, but the details differ sharply.

#### CAMP COMES BACK

Fellow Conservative Dalton Camp, blamed by Diefenbaker for a great many of his troubles, came back at his one-time leader with a cleverly crafted review disputing statement after statement in the book.

The review's lengthy title reflected the nature of the content: "This is Byzantium, exquisitely complex, buried in impenetrable rhetoric. Here there can be no figure more heroic than the man who goes into battle and falls on his own sword."

Former Liberal Jack Pickersgill, no slouch at sounding the praises of his own party and its "right" to govern, also turned reviewer saying that in the book "Diefenbaker has nailed down for all time his status as the supreme egocentric of Canadian public life."

None of the controversy is likely to hurt sales of the book which is on the market in good time for the Christmas trade. Diefenbaker and his publishers must be laughing all the way to the bank.

#### HELP FROM OTHERS

As in the first two volumes, Diefenbaker had the assistance of historians John A. Munro and Dr. John H. Archer.

Mr. Munro wrote a foreword saying that the Diefenbaker memoirs "stand as a personal tribute to the worth of our heritage and institutions, and to the solubility of our problems as a nation."

Dr. Archer contributed a sensitive biography of Diefenbaker's wife, Olive, who died Dec. 21, 1976, describing her as "a whole person in herself, a resourceful, cultured woman who made a conscious choice of role and unflinchingly pursued and developed that role."

Fraser MacDougall is former Ottawa bureau chief, Canadian Press.

— Thomson News Service.

#### Fundamental

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