

Outlook on Lifestyle

Ed Broadbent depicted in a favorable light

By ALLAN GOULD

For some two years now, the leader of the federal New Democratic Party has been (by far) the most popular of the Big Three. Indeed, rather nasty books keep being churned out about Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Liberal Leader John Turner, so it seems only fitting that Ed Broadbent gets his "unauthorized" story told by Globe and Mail writer Judy Steed (Viking/Penguin, 347 pages, \$24.95 cloth). Not surprisingly, considering how much the Canadian public likes the "ordinary" fellow, if not the party he leads, the picture we get in this volume is quite a favorable one.

There are a few surprises, however, subjects that apparently made the NDP leader rather uncomfortable in the many interviews. He had an alcoholic father, clearly a negative influence, but strongly balanced by a loving, decent, generous mother. And a brief, failed first marriage, to a Japanese-Canadian, which only served to make the aspiring politician ever more sensitive to the way this country treated that ethnic group. (Indeed, although reviled for it at the time, it was Broadbent's party alone that challenged and even attacked the use of the War Measures Act in the so-called FLQ Crisis of 1970 - the same law that had been used a generation earlier to imprison and rob the one-time in-laws of this book's subject.)

Steed is at her best when she evokes the people of Ottawa, Ont. the home of General Motors, as well as the birthplace of John Edward Broadbent - and it is helpful to read that the NDP head is "as distinctive

REVIEW

a product of industrial Ontario as Pierre Trudeau was of the Quebec intelligentsia." Broadbent's youth in Canada's Motown; his father's drunkenness and gambling (they even lost the family home due to them); his happy years at the University of Toronto; here, the book shines, and evokes a marvelous sense of What It Meant To Be Young And Bright in that dull St. Laurent/Eisenhower era.

INSIGHTS
One of the keenest insights is from journalist/author Michele Landberg (who married Stephen Lewis, one of the NDP's other great lights): "We were brought up that nothing Canadian was interesting. We were colonial. English Canada seemed so pale, pallid and unfocused. The French at least had the power of a clear identity - oppression gave them that - but we didn't know who we were. Then we got to university and we started to wake up. We began to sense our intellectual power." In fact, Broadbent would stand first in his class in honors philosophy, and go on to earn a doctorate with his study of John Stuart Mill, making his image as the penultimate "ordinary Canadian," and his sincere fight for the votes of the same, seem almost comical.

Political junkies will enjoy Steed's recounting of Broadbent's first foray into politics (the then-university professor's image was frequently one of "academic sh-head" - the tensions with the Waffle movement the wipe-out of the federal party in 1974 after David Lewis had spent two

years in bed with Trudeau's Liberals, sustaining the latter's minority government; the endless ways that the federal Grits kept swiping the NDP's best ideas; the plan of Broadbent to destroy Tory Joe Clark's short-lived 1979 interregnum, for which he was nearly demolished in Trudeau's Lazarus-imitation of 1980; Trudeau's offering the NDP leader one - even a half dozen - cabinet posts; the way that the socialists staggered back from the brink during the Mulroney landslide of 1984.

But most of these have been hashed out in a thousand newspaper articles. What is most pleasurable - and ultimately, the most insightful - are Broadbent's infantile practical joking; his struggle to assemble an Ikea bookcase for his daughter ("he couldn't follow the instructions," and young Christine eventually put it together herself); the attempts of his advisors to quiet the Broadbent wit (especially after he told a TV interviewer, who asked about his religion, that he was a Druid); his endless discussions with his wife, Lucille, about "Ed's pursuit of power" ("I was against compromises," she declares: "I thought it was very important to stick to one's basic principles. I saw a shift in Ed. I saw indications his idealism was being deflated, it disturbed me. I was concerned about what was happening to him as an individual.")

(Can one honestly imagine Pierre/Maggie, John/Geills, or Brian/Mila having such a passionate discussion about "selling out"?)

ADMIRATION

Ultimately, what makes this book most convincing - especially since it reads more and more like a puff-piece in the last hundred pages - is the clear growth of admiration in the author, Steed, for her subject. When she quotes journalist Carol Goar as describing Broadbent as "one of the most personally secure people I have ever met," while "Mulroney has so many personal insecurities he could keep a psychiatrist busy for 30 years and Turner is a bundle of unresolved conflicts," you just know that Steed is nodding in agreement.

And, as Canada sluggers toward a federal election, Steed's solid, warm, not-uncritical but ultimately warmly positive look at the life and career of Ed Broadbent could just as easily add to his immense popularity, while the frequent literary hatchet-jobs on the two other federal leaders might subtract from theirs, which could make this the first truly three-way race yet.



Willow Park residents had a Community Day Sept. 18 for Halton Hills residents. Residents held open houses, a raffle for the cancer society, games and clowns roamed the park. Here, Matthew Gray (4) tests out one of the games while Alex Kavanagh (1), Lisa Simmons and Blair Atwell look on.

Escarpment highlighted

Niagara Escarpment Day will be held at the Crawford Lake Conservation Area on Thanksgiving Day, Monday, Oct. 10.

The Halton Region Conservation Authority's mascot, Tidy the Turkey Vulture will be on hand to greet visitors and hand out souvenir buttons and balloons displaying the new Niagara Escarpment logo - a stylized cliff and rising sun.

Each car will receive the latest issue of the Niagara Escarpment magazine along with a full color guide to the Niagara Escarpment in the Halton area.

Niagara Escarpment Day is part of the "Autumn on the Escarpment" program which is available all weekend.

Wagons will take visitors through the local woodlands at the peak of the annual color change. A stop will be made at the Escarpment Lookout for a spectacular view of the Nassagaweya Canyon.

Back at the Conservation Centre, country craft demonstrations will feature corn husk dolls, straw hats, spinning, folk art and gourmet preserves. A nature photography exhibit by Rob Stimpson will also be shown along with films on the Niagara Escarpment.

The cultural heritage of the Niagara Escarpment will come to life with a visit to the reconstructed Indian Village built on its original location. Visitors will be able to try several native games, such as double ball and lacrosse or try and out a

500-year-old pot together as part of an archaeological demonstration.

You may even hear the song of the Great Spirit or the shuffle of moccasins as Rose Nixon, a native story teller, spins legends in the Wolfcamp longhouse. Folk musicians will also be performing on the Conservation Centre patio as people enjoy the cool, crisp days of autumn.

Crawford Lake is located on the corner of Steeles Avenue and the Guelph Line - 15 miles north of the QEW or four miles south of Hwy 401. For further information, please call the Halton Region Conservation Authority at 336-1151 (weekdays) or the Crawford Lake Conservation Area 854-0234 (weekends).



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