
This highly significant work is one of a series of colonial price studies, which, when completed, will greatly broaden our understanding of early American economic history. It further forms the first volume of a projected survey of the history of prices in the Philadelphia area.

From the prices current printed in the Philadelphia newspapers, supplemented by the correspondence of colonial merchants, the authors have charted the course of the wholesale prices of commodities bought and sold in Philadelphia between 1720 and 1776. The principal commodities examined were wheat, flour, bread, beef, pork and minor agricultural products, naval stores, iron, sugar, molasses, rum and imported "European goods." The price fluctuations of each of these staples of trade are tabulated on one or more charts, and a chapter of the text is devoted to an analysis and explanation of the fluctuations. Then a general index of the prices of twenty commodities for the whole period, a study of sterling exchange, an elaborate set of tables, and a chapter on the statistical method complete the volume.

The charts reveal the fact that from 1720 to 1740 average prices remained low and exhibited a horizontal trend; while from 1740 to 1776 prices steadily mounted, reaching a peak in 1772-1773. That the colonial period experienced the vicissitudes of the business cycle is abundantly clear. Philadelphians suffered from nine successive price waves which brought alternate periods of prosperity and depression. The severest of the depressions came in 1740-1744. Although several recessions occurred after this date, the general price level never fell as low again—in fact the low points tended generally to remain above the peaks of the period prior to 1740. Significantly enough, the colonists did not notice the periodic nature of these price waves.

The authors present an able analysis of the vagaries of Pennsylvania prices. Internal conditions such as slow and intermittent transportation facilities greatly affected the Philadelphia market. Since most of the colony's products were agricultural, significant seasonal variations in price naturally occurred; prices of most commodities usually mounted in the spring. External factors also produced a vital effect. A crop failure or an abundant harvest in Europe or the West Indies was always reflected in the Pennsylvania market. Most important of all was the influence produced by the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War.

Prices in Colonial Pennsylvania is a most thorough piece of research and its authors are exceedingly cautious in their pronouncements. Wherever possible they have used several methods in reaching conclusions. In this review the book has been examined only in the light of its value for the economic and social historian. The economist alone is qualified to judge its
statistical soundness. In this connection, however, it may not be amiss to suggest one of the major problems of the social sciences that this work brings up anew. Until the specialists discard the technical jargon of their respective disciplines, it will be impossible for the uninitiated to comprehend and use their researches. Despite the admirable chapter on method in this present work, the authors have not made sufficiently clear to the general reader the meaning of their statistical terms. As a result much valuable time is lost in seeking definitions. Perhaps the future volumes will eliminate this difficulty.

One especially significant result of this study is the evidence of more manufacturing in colonial Pennsylvania than has been generally supposed. In many other ways this excellent work will contribute to our knowledge. It is the outstanding contribution made to Pennsylvania's early history in recent years.

CARL BRIDENBAUGH.


The problem here analyzed is that of preserving our economic system and making it function in a socially desirable manner in a changed, and constantly changing, world. It can now no longer optimistically be assumed that a policy of economic anarchy will permit our industrial ills to cure themselves. Careful planning is necessary to integrate the complex factors of which our problems are composed. Yet it is far from the author's intention to suggest that we should entrust our planning to a single politico-economic authority which would determine quantitatively and in detail the direction of our productive efforts. To do so would be to sacrifice that individual initiative which he considers a mainspring of progress, and to exchange the problems of our present system for others which, while their precise nature cannot be foreseen, are apt to be just as acute and all the more difficult of solution since they would be placed in an unfamiliar setting. The planning advocated by Dr. Dickinson consists rather of meeting specific problems as they arise. Not that he takes a short-sighted view. Where feasible he would anticipate maladjustment, thus minimizing its effects. The author makes a brilliant analysis of the major problems of the present day. Where private initiative will solve them he is clearly willing that it be permitted so to do. He is persuaded, however, that government action is also necessary to produce the desired results. He explodes the current phobias of such action, pointing out that governmental interference with business activity is of great antiquity and that the protest against it is really directed simply at those forms of interference which are too new for us to have become accustomed to them. He feels that the present administration has made substantial progress in the desired direction, yet is awake to the attendant difficulties. To heed the reactionary who advises doing nothing would, in Dr. Dickinson's opinion, produce a condition of progressive industrial stagnation which would destroy our standard of living and play
directly into the hands of the radical in whose dreams the author has so little confidence. He takes instead the realistic position that our economic problems cannot be solved once for all, and clearly believes that the price of economic well-being is eternal vigilance.

Leonidas Dodson.


The author of this volume, professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, is here continuing the general history of Canada begun with his two volumes on New France (1928)—the Parkman period. He is also known in this country for his volume on the Revolution in the Yale "Chronicles of America" series. But perhaps because Professor A. L. Burt has recently given us what seems the definitive history of old Quebec province, from 1760 to 1791, the present volume is less a history of Canada during these years than a history of the Revolution itself, with its causes and results, as the breakup of the first British Empire—out of which disruption have come the two great federations which now span the American continent.

The story centers at Boston, Philadelphia or London more often than at Quebec. We have first a description of several chapters on Canadian life under British rule—a population remaining tenaciously Catholic and French—and the complicated problems faced by the military governors which culminated in the Quebec Act. But most of the volume deals with the broader story of the issues between the older countries and the home government. We are shown the dilemma of the Indians, caught between the conflicting thirsts of the whites for furs and land, and the failure of the "conspiracy" led by Pontiac. The author then sketches a picture of society and politics in England under George III and in the colonies, contrasting the differences in outlook between the two. He describes the governmental machinery of control under the old colonial system, and traces the controversies over stamps and tea until attempted coercion was met by open revolt and civil war. After an account of the French Canadian attitude toward the revolt, and of the campaigns which crossed the boundary to or from Canada, but only passing reference to the service of the Loyalist regiments, we are given a lively story of the treaty negotiations, and the work closes with an extended account of the expulsion of the Loyalists from America and their settlement in England, Ontario and the Maritimes. Pennsylvania history is naturally touched upon at many points.

The treatment is in the main a narrative of picturesque incident and personality rather than a profound treatise on causes and effects, or a study of institutions. As compared with Van Tyne or A. L. Burt, for example, this work perhaps covers a broader field, but plows a more shallow furrow. Professor Wrong's is not an original contribution to knowledge based upon unpublished manuscript material; but it is a readable popular account, based on printed works, through use of which errors in fact or interpreta-
tions have sometimes appeared. Its chief value lies in its interpretations, the breadth of the field it unifies, and its inviting style. It is fair and unprejudiced, without nationalistic bias. One of its short-comings, in view of its aim, is that it ignores completely the attitude of the Maritime region, during much of this period all included in Nova Scotia, and the large English-speaking population most of which was chiefly from the older colonies.

There is a good concluding discussion on the effect of Revolutionary and Loyalist traditions on present day nationalism in Canada and the United States. Fortunately it seems finally possible to enact tariff or St. Lawrence agreements on a basis of mutual respect and equality, without fear of either tyranny or annexation. But the importance and influence of these traditions surviving from the Revolution upon the attitude of each country toward its international relations can scarcely be overestimated. For this schools and textbooks can in large measure be held responsible, in each country.

AUSTIN E. HUTCHESON.


This booklet, the first in a projected series to be published by the Historical Society, is an offprint from an exact reproduction of M'Robert's Tour which appeared in The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography for April, 1935. M'Robert was a well-educated Scot who traveled in 1774-75 from New York to Nova Scotia, visiting all the large cities excepting Boston. His original publication in Edinburgh in 1776 included seven letters written "on the spot," and three tables presenting such travel data as stage rates between New York and Philadelphia, rates of exchange for coins in current usage, and a list of the principal roads in North America. To this, full editorial notes have been added for the two-fold purpose of amplifying the account and providing a ready set of references to test the accuracy of the author's observations. But three extant originals in the United States are mentioned by the editor, testifying to the rarity and value of the pamphlet.

Among the publications of its kind the Tour excels. This is true largely because it is based upon the actual experiences of the observer rather than borrowings from predecessors. For the most part it represents the viewpoint of a Scottish man of business turned upon the practical affairs of farming, industry, and commerce. The momentous political affairs developing at the time receive but scant attention.

EDGAR B. CALE.