

Quill and Quire (January, 1978)

RIDEAU HALL: An Illustrated History of Government House, Ottawa, R. H. Hubbard, McGill-Queen's University Press, \$25.00 cloth ISBN 0 7735 0310 2, 282 pp., illus., Index, October 1977

Among the relatively few scholars interested in the Canadian monarchy there has always been a lively debate about whether the office of Governor-General should be traced back to Champlain or to Monck. R. H. Hubbard neatly sidesteps this question by focusing on Government House although, of course, the original vice-regal occupant of Rideau Hall was Lord Monck, the first Governor-General after Confederation. The author of this lavishly illustrated and handsomely bound book is the chief curator of the National Gallery and for several years he has been cultural advisor to the Governor-General.

Hubbard admits that any book on Rideau Hall will be far more than a study of Canadian architecture. It is also a history of the country, a study of a political institution and a biography of 21 individuals. For most readers this biographical aspect will be of greatest interest, and the character sketches in the book of the various individuals who have occupied Rideau Hall are fascinating.

Most Canadians are familiar with the native-born Governors-General — Massey, Vanier, Michener and Leger — and these receive rather superficial treatment from Hubbard, perhaps because it is not yet possible to give their lives a historical perspective. Much better are the chapters on the early Governors-General — Dufferin, Lorne, Lansdowne, Stanley, Grey and others whose names are honoured in various ways in Canadian society although their lives have now been largely forgotten by everyone.

There is little in this book to change the fundamental perception of many Canadians, both French and English, that the monarchy has long been a symbol of a colonial past and a foreign identity. On the other hand it might help those Canadians to appreciate and understand the unqualified affection the monarchy still arouses in some of their fellow countrymen. *Gary Levy*