

like the creation account of Genesis, are deliberately vague, incomplete, and cryptic but still basically true, I take the position that they contain enough advanced information to prove that their source was the Creator himself. The task of full interpretation lies in the future," and "The seeming illogic of the Genesis story in having plant life appear before the creation of the sun may not be illogical after all. The Genesis order could well be essentially correct, another proof for a divine origin of the scriptures." Such hedging sounds weak.

Because the essay is specifically addressed to an LDS audience, it is unfortunate that the publishers who deal with LDS books were unwilling to print it. Not only would it have become more visible and available to those for whom it was written, but also it would have been greatly improved by careful editing. An editor could have removed the numerous, annoying typographical errors and the several incidents of redundancy. Despite its weaknesses, however, it is a delightful stimulating contribution that deserves to be read.

Feisty Lee—Still Enigmatic

Let 'em Holler: A Political Biography of J. Bracken Lee, by Dennis L. Lythgoe (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1982), 343 pp., \$17.50.

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IN THE FALL OF 1971, Mayor J. Bracken Lee announced his retirement from public office. He said he was "sick and tired of politics and sick and tired of politicians." Such a statement seems out of character when you read Dennis L. Lythgoe's delightful political biography of Lee which portrays him as a perennial candidate (winning nine and losing eight elections) or office holder (mayor of Price for twelve years, governor of Utah for eight, and mayor of Salt Lake City for another twelve) from 1931 through 1971. Forty years of uninterrupted political activity clearly qualify Lee as "Mr. Politician" of Utah.

In Lythgoe's somewhat hyperbolic style, he claims Lee "became the most colorful and controversial politician in Utah history with, probably, a greater impact on the state and the nation than any Utah figure since Brigham Young" (p. 1). Of course many will resent the comparison of Lee to Brigham Young, a man who spent his last thirty years building and develop-

ing Utah. Lee's detractors admit Lee had a great impact on the state but more often characterize it as deleterious to Utah's growth and progress.

The author's biography of the feisty and bombastic Lee is a needed and important work, based on careful scholarship and written in a lively and interesting style. It not only clarifies many of Lee's strengths, weaknesses, and motives; but it adds another valuable dimension to Utah's political history—including the role of the Mormon Church in Lee's victories and defeats and in the political life of the state generally.

Lythgoe illuminates J. Reuben Clark, Jr.'s, well-known support of Lee in the 1948 gubernatorial campaign; without it, according to Lee, he would not have been elected governor. Church backing continued in the 1952 election; but by 1956, Mormon enthusiasm had cooled and Lee lost the election. Lee had vetoed the Sunday closing bill, resisted requests from Church leaders on a number of appointments and political issues, and most importantly attacked President Eisenhower and his policies — by inference, a criticism of Ezra Taft Benson, apostle and Secretary of Agriculture. Lythgoe calls this act "political suicide in Mormon circles" (p. 220). Lee, however, saw it as a personal issue and believed that he began to

lose support "when McKay demoted Clark" by appointing Stephen L. Richards as his first counselor.

Perhaps less well known were the measures the Mormon leadership took to influence public policies. On moral issues, the First Presidency applied political pressure overtly. But other General Authorities exercised "quiet influence" which may or may not have been instigated by the First Presidency. Thorpe B. Isaacson, then a member of the Presiding Bishopric, and several other General Authorities requested Lee's consideration of political appointments or policies, frequently implying that Isaacson spoke for Clark or had the approval of other General Authorities, when in fact they were often personal views. In contrast, other Church leaders carefully wrote their political requests on personal stationary, attempting to "separate church and state." Lee often interpreted these overtures as representing church positions; and, though the requests were sometimes irritating to him and he denied them, he worked to maintain a special rapport with Church officials. When someone asked how important the Church had been in his political career, Lee wryly said, "It was about as important as the Catholic church in Boston or the Baptist church in Texas" (p. 103).

However, the book is disappointing in some respects. When Lee announced his retirement, he added that his wife Margaret wanted him to stay in politics, indicating a significant role of Mrs. Lee in his political career. It is regrettable that Lythgoe includes only three brief references to Mrs. Lee. She is a charming woman who undoubtedly had a great impact on his political career.

Furthermore, those readers who expect a definitive assessment of Lee's contested political contributions will not be totally satisfied with the book. The author frequently quotes from oral histories, newspapers, magazines, letters, and personal records and places quite dissimilar judgments in juxtaposition, often leaving conclusions to the reader. For example, "The

Tribune's astute former political editor, O. N. Malmquist, . . . regarded Lee as 'a good governor.' Conversely, the *Deseret News's* incisive former political editor, DeMar Teuscher, believed that penny-pinching in education unquestionably cost the state more later, creating a serious flaw in Lee's contribution" (pp. 142-43). One wonders how an *astute* political analyst and an *incisive* political editor could arrive at such opposite conclusions? On this subject Lythgoe does draw conclusions of his own and he comes down on the side of Teuscher — I think — with this summation of Lee's education policies:

[Lee's] constant battling reduced the quality of education in Utah and did irreparable harm to teacher morale. Yet, it also demonstrated unequivocally Lee's candor, his straightforward approach, his determination to plod ahead with his principles no matter what the political consequences — what most of his admirers proudly called "the courage of his convictions." Such varying reactions to Lee reinforce his image as not only the controversial politician but the charismatic one as well. (p. 144)

Lythgoe clearly has mixed feelings on Lee's contributions to Utah. He praises Lee for his economy measures but faults him on his education policies, lauds his state liquor control reforms but castigates his attitude toward the United Nations, applauds his sensitivity to the rights of the accused (the Don Jesse Neal capital punishment case) but condemns his support of McCarthyism and the anti-Communist hysteria in Utah, and admires his courage to fight the Internal Revenue Service but criticizes his opposition to urban renewal projects. The author, however, does not conceal his admiration for Lee's forthright, plain-speaking, honest ways. "In the end," Lythgoe concludes, "it was the personality of J. Bracken Lee that dominated all of his political offices and superseded most of his accomplishments and failures" (p. 331). Lythgoe quotes a Democrat, Wayne L. Black, to express his own summation: "Every county, state, and city needs a Brack Lee once in a while — *this* state and city needed Bracken Lee" (p. 332).