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**Book Review of *The Limits of Participation: Members and Leaders
in Canada's Reform Party* by Faron Ellis**

David J. Hall

Department of History and Classics, Emeritus, University of Alberta

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Conservatives won a minority government. Although Faron Ellis's book was completed too early to include much about the denouement of this process, it does provide some of its background.

Ellis, who teaches at Lethbridge Community College in southern Alberta, was active in the Reform movement in the early years, completing his PhD in 1997 on this subject under scholars at the University of Calgary who comprised much of the nascent party's "brain trust." Thus his is in many ways an insider's perspective on events. He examines the tension between a populism demanding control of policies and leadership by members and constituencies, and a party leadership that wished to exercise more control over strategy and to modify policies for partisan advantage. Ellis also provides detailed analysis of several surveys of party members and their opinions, which he was very much involved in administering. These are the most useful parts of the book, challenging many stereotypes of Reform Party members and policies. Ellis is not entirely objective, however. His sympathies clearly lie with the membership and its efforts to restrain Reform leader Preston Manning from compromising the party's principles in an effort to gain national influence. Ellis's conclusion is gloomy, for he seems convinced that the creation of the Conservative Party amounts to the co-opting of the West once again by central Canada and brokerage politics, which will lead inexorably to another western regional populist protest movement.

There are several lost opportunities here. Ellis fails to note the extent to which western Canada, especially Alberta, was historically influenced by American populism and progressivism. Many of Reform's policies are grounded in a long history of direct democracy and idealism. Was Reform more a protest movement than a political party? The problem has bedeviled populist protest in western Canada at least since the 1890s. One of Ellis's mentors, Barry Cooper, has suggested that "popular sovereignty has no place in a parliamentary regime," but Ellis does not address this issue. Ellis was ideally placed to interview Reformers about his theories, but apparently did not do so. There is little contextual material either from populism elsewhere or from what else was transpiring on the Canadian political scene during the years under review. The last chapter, covering 1997 to 2004, is but a half-hearted attempt to bridge the gap since the PhD was completed, and several significant works on the Reform party do not appear in the bibliography or notes. Editors left too many irritating minor slips and infelicities, and the index is by no means comprehensive. The result is less satisfactory than it should have been. **David J. Hall**, *Department of History and Classics, Emeritus, University of Alberta.*

The Limits of Participation: Members and Leaders in Canada's Reform Party. By Faron Ellis. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2005. xxii + 225 pp. Tables, appendixes, bibliography, notes, index. \$29.95 paper.

The Reform Party began as a populist party of regional protest in western Canada in 1987. Its policies were mostly on the right of the political spectrum, and from the early 1990s it developed ambitions to become a national party. In 2000 it amalgamated with some Progressive Conservatives (PC) to form the Canadian Alliance (CA), and in 2003 the CA and a rump of the PC Party united to form the Conservative Party of Canada; in January 2006 the