

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and  
Social Sciences

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

Spring 1999

## Review of *Public Enterprise in an Era of Change* Edited by John R. Allan

Ken Dennis  
*University of Manitoba*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Dennis, Ken, "Review of *Public Enterprise in an Era of Change* Edited by John R. Allan" (1999). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 448.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch/448>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

**Public Enterprise in an Era of Change.** Edited by John R. Allan. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1998. vi+194 pp. Tables, figures, notes. C\$18.95 paper (ISBN 0-88977-112-X).

This collection of fifteen papers—lively, diverse and (for the most part) mercifully concise—derives from a December 1996 conference in Regina on the role and future of Saskatchewan's crown corporations. Arguably the most qualified jurisdiction in North America to host such a conference, Saskatchewan is well represented in these pages, though the papers by no means limit themselves to the experience of this province. Nor do they confine themselves to the broad subject of public enterprise. Participants came from most regions of Canada, while the keynote speaker, David Heald, added a British/European perspective to the proceedings. Included among the participants were seven academics, two public opinion pollsters, two former public office holders, and four others, each representing, respectively, a broad-based public interest group, a privately funded think-tank, organized labor, and the business community. The occasion afforded each contributor the opportunity to range far and wide over the vast terrain of policy issues and options facing public sector enterprise today.

"Diverse" may be too weak a word to characterize this collection. A jarring sense of dissonant juxtaposition might more accurately describe the feeling one comes away with from reading these papers in sequence. The editor begins with a usefully detailed summary of each paper; a concluding summary or overview, however, is lacking, though providing one would have been an admittedly daunting task for anyone trying to edit these fifteen papers.

Nevertheless, after reading this book, one might reasonably wonder whether Saskatchewan is the last bastion of a dying or already obsolete institution or an oasis of public-spirited citizenry set in a desert wasteland of privatization. According to my tally, in this gathering eight are in favor of preserving and promoting public enterprise, five opposed, and two abstaining (or, rather, vacillating on the issue). The editor's thoughtful afterword to his opening summary reports that the Province's official response (in June of 1997) to the questions raised at the conference was to continue with state ownership, albeit with some modest restructuring.

The conference organizers are to be congratulated for holding an event that has generated some highly recommended reading. **Ken Dennis**, *Department of Economics, University of Manitoba*.