
is its catalyst. Understanding our cultural uses of fire may help us, Pyne concludes, in understanding that other powerful event—the splitting of the atom.

**BIG BUSINESS AND
PRESIDENTIAL
POWER: From FDR to
Reagan**

by Kim McQuaid
Morrow, 1982
383 pp. \$17.50

“Big Business” in 1980 was unenthusiastic about Ronald Reagan, just as it had been about Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Robert Taft in 1952. Why did U.S. business turn a cold shoulder to such conspicuous celebrants of free enterprise? McQuaid, a historian at Lake Erie College, offers an answer. After the jolts of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and a world war, corporate leaders realized that federal power was here to stay. To limit the “damage” and even turn governmental might to its own advantage, business had to accept the reality of an activist state and adopt a “yes, but” political strategy (e.g., agreeing that government should work for full employment while objecting to excessive efforts toward that end). Focusing on such organizations as the Business Council (a panel of more than 60 Chief Executive Officers, created in 1933) and the more aggressive Business Roundtable (which emerged in the early '70s), McQuaid traces Big Business's political and economic education since the 1930s. He also describes corporate triumphs: U.S. Steel's winning of antitrust protection from FDR; the conversion of the Kennedy administration to “conservative Keynesianism,” which set the stage for a sequence of corporate and individual tax cuts.

Contemporary Affairs

**REVOLT AGAINST
REGULATION:**

**The Rise and Pause of
the Consumer Market**
by Michael Pertschuk
Univ. of Calif., 1982
165 pp. \$12.95

In 1964, when Pertschuk, then 31, joined the staff of the Senate Commerce Committee, the consumer movement was entering its heyday. Economic prosperity, combined with public outrage at business-related health and safety scandals (e.g., flammable infant wear, thalidomide) generated widespread support for regulation protecting the consumer.