

Stelter, Gilbert A. and Alan F. J. Artibise, eds. *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited in Association with The Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1977. Pp. 437. Maps, tables, illustrations. \$5.95

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Toronto, who are not really interested in reform, as Caulfield's article illustrates. To elect reform parties, for example, TEAM in Vancouver, which are equally captured by the property industry, as Gutstein's article points out? In other words, this type of analysis does not sufficiently explicate the structural conditions under which municipal governments operate. Rather it provides a description of the tip of the iceberg. One is left with the impression that *if only* Crombie were not mayor, *if only* TEAM had been purer, *if only* Joe Kennedy were still Chairman of the O.M.B., things would be fine. However, urban politics is not as it is because politicians are corrupt, because citizens groups are not vigilant, because planners are insufficiently socially conscious. It is as it is because of very particular economic and social conditions which are not specific to city governments but are equally important at the federal and provincial levels. These structural conditions have not yet been laid bare by analyses such as these, which continue to treat city politics as aberrations requiring reform to make them more responsive to their citizens.

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Although the study of Canadian urban history is still in its infancy, interest in the field has grown substantially in recent years. Much of the published material, unfortunately, remains buried in specialized journals which are relatively inaccessible to all but the more ardent scholars.

This book, undoubtedly reflecting selections of the best work in the field, helps to overcome some of these problems. It includes seventeen scholarly and informative articles, two of which have been written expressly for the volume. The articles are strategically selected to highlight major processes and forms of Canadian urban development. Although a few articles discuss Canadian urbanization from its earliest beginnings and others refer to post-World War II urban Canada, the major emphasis is on the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century.

The six major themes of the book deal with cities in the wilderness, metropolitan growth and development, the physical environment, urban society, urban reform, and methodologies of the urban historian. In addition, the editors have provided a brief general introduction to the volume, informative introductions to each of the thematic sections, and a bibliography of recent publications on Canadian urban history.

Altogether, it is a balanced set of readings offering unique multidisciplinary viewpoints of Canadian cities from St. John's to Victoria, and covering topics ranging from land ownership to architectural styles and from the role of women in 19th century Montreal to national monetary policies and their relationship to industrialization and urbanization.

Although broad in scope, this book is much more than an overview of Canadian urbanization. Each article treats its subject with substantial thoroughness and presents it with unusual clarity. And, unlike the more usual case in readings on urban history, the articles in this book do not dwell purely descriptively on disconnected local histories and unique historic events; rather, most develop either penetrating cross-city comparisons and thematic generalizations or evolve and test hypotheses. In this way, they tend to be generative rather than purely informative.

Three of the articles, for very different reasons, are particularly seminal: J. M. S. Careless' article on Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver, 1870-1914, reflects again his influential work on the concept of metropolitanism and reaffirms his position as a major force in the development of the study of urban history in Canada; Michael B. Katz' study of Hamilton, 1851-52, introduces a methodological sophistication rare to the field of urban history and opens up numerous unexplored possibilities; and Alan Artibise's article on immigrants in Winnipeg, 1874-1921, elaborates some of the historical roots of inter-ethnic conflict in that city and suggests particularly the problems which result when political pluralism lags behind social and ethnic pluralism.

The rambling article by Deryck Holdsworth is by far the most speculative and the least satisfactory. In attempting to show how and why the California Bungalow and Tudor Cottage styles of housing in Vancouver between 1886 and 1929 relates to the character and aspirations of the people in the community, this article poses more questions than it answers. First, and most fundamentally, as an explanatory device, this relationship is tenuous at best; it is extremely doubtful that generalizations regarding changing tastes in architectural style can tell us a great deal about the character and aspirations of a community. Also, neither a credible theoretical base nor a workable methodology exists in this area. Hence, concepts such as ". . . the half-timber motif" and a ". . . 'cosey', 'cottagey' architecture" (p. 184) lack both the precision of meaning and the possibilities for objectification to be very useful in substantive historical research.

Yet, as a whole, the articles are exceptional in their thoroughness, readability, scope, and consistently high quality. In offering such a unique and penetrating glimpse of our urban past, this book must be regarded as a major and significant contribution to the field of Canadian urban history. It deserves a wide readership.

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