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Résumés des thèses

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Thesis Abstracts/Résumés des thèses

Carl F. Betke. "The Development of Urban Community in Prairie Canada: Edmonton, 1898-1921." Ph.D. Thesis, Department of History, University of Alberta, 1981.

This is a study of the development of urban community in the Canadian prairie west in the early twentieth century. It tests the thesis that a multitude of group associations in the new city of Edmonton had significance for urban cohesion, even if that was not always a primary objective. It suggests the degree to which life in Edmonton offered and was ordered by an urban collective experience beyond individual, family or small group pursuits.

Intensive research provided information about Edmonton organizations in 1898, 1906, 1913 and 1921. Over this quarter century the nature of many associations and even of the urban context changed, but the primacy of the city for individual relationships continued. During these years the population increased and became more diversified in background during an immigration and railway construction boom. Municipal councils before World War I made long-term commitments for urban services against which no fundamental argument was raised, although election campaigns and aldermanic debates became heated on occasion over the precise forms of implementation. Rival centres on the two sides of the North Saskatchewan River, South Edmonton (later Strathcona) and Edmonton, merged. Organizations were formed to represent significant sectors of the population: the Board of Trade, the Trades and Labor Council, the Federation of Community Leagues. Private welfare organizations accepted collective responsibilities so substantial that the public was gradually reconciled to paying for increasing proportions of them out of taxes. Churches continually espoused community causes or raise questions of public morality for debate, and church-related institutions, such as Alberta College and the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, devised broad programmes catering to urban needs. Hundreds of élite, professional, business, fraternal, service, recreational and church-based societies co-ordinated their own specific priorities with civic aims. Theatrical and sporting entertainment came to be organized for mass audiences on a regular basis. At that particular time North American communications and corporate organization cast such widespread nets that, despite the newness of the city, much of what developed in the Edmonton economy, civic administration, voluntary associations and recreation followed standard international patterns.

The social fabric of the city, woven from many associa-

tional threads, was somewhat different in each of the years for which a composite picture is presented. The aggregate effect was in one sense unique; in another sense, however, variety was limited by the commitments to collective strategies. What were first conceived of as new opportunities arising from consolidation in many fields could be transformed into binding strictures. The city became something like an organism in which easily replaced individual citizens had differing cellular roles, but by which the individual's quality of life was largely determined.

Angus Earl Schaffenburg. "The Development of Federal Urban Policy: A Case Study of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, 1971-1977." M.A. Thesis, Department of Regional Planning, University of Waterloo, 1978.

In 1971 the Canadian Parliament established the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs (MSUA), a new type of institution without any programme responsibilities. MSUA was to be the federal government's visible commitment to the problems of urbanization.

This thesis, a case study, undertakes a critical examination of the urban affairs portfolio through the years 1970-77, covering its genesis, operation and re-organization. The events leading up to and the establishment of MSUA are discussed. Various chapters also treat the subject of intergovernmental co-ordination, research and policy research, inter-agency co-ordination and policy development. Four questions are offered as touchstones of the effectiveness of MSUA. These relate to the effectiveness of a programme of policy research, the degree to which urban issues were reflected in federal policy, the effectiveness of intergovernmental consultation on policy and programmes, and the attainment of the intra-governmental process of co-ordination.

A number of conclusions are offered concerning MSUA's performance. Its lack of success is attributed to the frailty of political leadership and commitment on the part of the federal government, the difficulties of sharing power between the jurisdictions involved in urban affairs, the intense interdepartmental rivalry and the difficulty of sustaining a programme of policy research within a government agency. Possible future directions for MSUA are enclosed.

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