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Volume 11, numéro 3, february 1983

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019011ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019011ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

McDonald, R. A. J. (1983). The Business Élite and Municipal Politics in Vancouver 1886-1914. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 11(3), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019011ar>

### Résumé de l'article

Le présent article examine la participation directe et indirecte des grands hommes d'affaires à la politique municipale de Vancouver de 1886 à 1914. L'auteur y fait ressortir les divergences d'objectifs et de rôles politiques entre les petits et les grands entrepreneurs. À Vancouver, contrairement à Winnipeg, ce sont les petits hommes d'affaires plutôt que l'élite des affaires qui avaient la haute main sur la politique municipale. Après la fondation de la ville, plusieurs facteurs empêchèrent l'élite du monde des affaires de Vancouver de participer directement à la politique municipale et d'orienter les décisions municipales. En effet, l'accroissement des activités économiques qui accompagna la régionalisation de l'économie de Vancouver força les grands hommes d'affaires à consacrer toute leur attention aux opérations commerciales. De plus, les hommes d'affaires importants retiraient peu d'avantages législatifs de leur participation à la gestion quotidienne de l'administration locale. Enfin, les électeurs respectaient de moins en moins les opinions de l'élite des affaires depuis la mise en place d'une institution municipale. Un mouvement de réforme visant à rétablir l'influence de l'élite dans la politique municipale remporta moins de succès à Vancouver que dans beaucoup d'autres centres canadiens et américains parce que les conditions économiques, sociales et politiques de Vancouver rendaient la réforme moins nécessaire.

# The Business Élite and Municipal Politics in Vancouver 1886-1914\*

Robert A.J. McDonald

Résumé/Abstract

*Le présent article examine la participation directe et indirecte des grands hommes d'affaires à la politique municipale de Vancouver de 1886 à 1914. L'auteur y fait ressortir les divergences d'objectifs et de rôles politiques entre les petits et les grands entrepreneurs. À Vancouver, contrairement à Winnipeg, ce sont les petits hommes d'affaires plutôt que l'élite des affaires qui avaient la haute main sur la politique municipale. Après la fondation de la ville, plusieurs facteurs empêchèrent l'élite du monde des affaires de Vancouver de participer directement à la politique municipale et d'orienter les décisions municipales. En effet, l'accroissement des activités économiques qui accompagna la régionalisation de l'économie de Vancouver força les grands hommes d'affaires à consacrer toute leur attention aux opérations commerciales. De plus, les hommes d'affaires importants tiraient peu d'avantages législatifs de leur participation à la gestion quotidienne de l'administration locale. Enfin, les électeurs respectaient de moins en moins les opinions de l'élite des affaires depuis la mise en place d'une institution municipale. Un mouvement de réforme visant à rétablir l'influence de l'élite dans la politique municipale remporta moins de succès à Vancouver que dans beaucoup d'autres centres canadiens et américains parce que les conditions économiques, sociales et politiques de Vancouver rendaient la réforme moins nécessaire.*

*This paper explores the direct and indirect involvement of top businessmen in Vancouver municipal politics from 1886 to 1914. It emphasizes the divergent political aims and roles of large and small entrepreneurs. In Vancouver, unlike Winnipeg, small businessmen rather than the business élite controlled municipal politics. The Vancouver business élite's direct participation in civic politics and indirect influence over municipal decision making were both circumscribed after the initial city-founding period by several factors: business pressures mounted as Vancouver's economy became regionally based, forcing top businessmen to devote their undivided attention to business affairs; limited legislative benefits were to be derived by leading businessmen from formal participation in the day-to-day administration of local government; and voters' deference to business élite views declined once the city's institutional structure had been organized. A government reform movement, aimed at reasserting élite influence in civic politics, was less successful in Vancouver than in many other American and Canadian centres because Vancouver's underlying economic, social and political conditions made reform less necessary.*

Although the emergence of large, socially differentiated, spatially dispersed and economically complex cities followed broadly similar patterns in both the United States and Canada, the American experience has received far more scholarly attention than the Canadian. A notable example is the impact of economic change on municipal politics. Historical literature on American cities abounds with studies of the evolution of municipal politics from the commercial to industrial eras. Though a vast body of work examines the role of political machines and the response of municipal reformers,<sup>1</sup> studies also extend beyond bosses and reform to address questions about the

social basis of local politics<sup>2</sup> and the distribution of urban power.<sup>3</sup> Such is not the case for Canadian cities. Several historical studies have examined the occupational structure of municipal councils in major Canadian cities and commented on the role of entrepreneurial élites in the country's turn-of-the-century reform movement, but the social basis of Canadian municipal politics remains relatively unexplored and the distribution of civic power virtually ignored.<sup>4</sup> Notably absent are analyses of the effects that divisions within different levels of Canadian urban society, particularly those between the entrepreneurial élite and smaller businessmen, had upon the municipal political process.

Generally speaking, American works have found that municipal politics in the age of industrialism was marked by the separation of socio-economic from political élites. Thus, while some authors argue that economic élites have never dominated municipal decision making and others suggest that they have always done so, a greater number conclude that at some point between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries power in American cities became more widely dispersed.<sup>5</sup> To quote Robert Dahl's

\* I would like to thank Sharon Meen, Catherine LeGrand, Jean Barman, Norb MacDonald, and Ken Coates for their critical comments on earlier drafts of this paper. An abridged version was read at the second B.C. Studies Conference held in October 1981 at Simon Fraser University.

well-known conclusion about New Haven, Connecticut, municipal politics evolved from oligarchy to pluralism.<sup>6</sup> The precise moment when social and economic élites lost control of municipal politics varied from city to city according to such factors as the age of the community, population size, the ethnic mix and the structure of local business, particularly the extent to which businessmen were tied to local or regional business networks and the degree to which local businesses were externally controlled.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the widely accepted conclusions that political and non-political élites became distinct from one another and that socio-economic élites withdrew from municipal politics have been qualified, most notably by Samuel Hays.<sup>8</sup> Hays argues that, in the large American industrial cities where upper-level groups had retired from municipal government in the face of mid-century industrialization and immigration, new professionals, leading businessmen and the social upper classes later reasserted élite control of municipal affairs by re-entering public life through reform organizations.

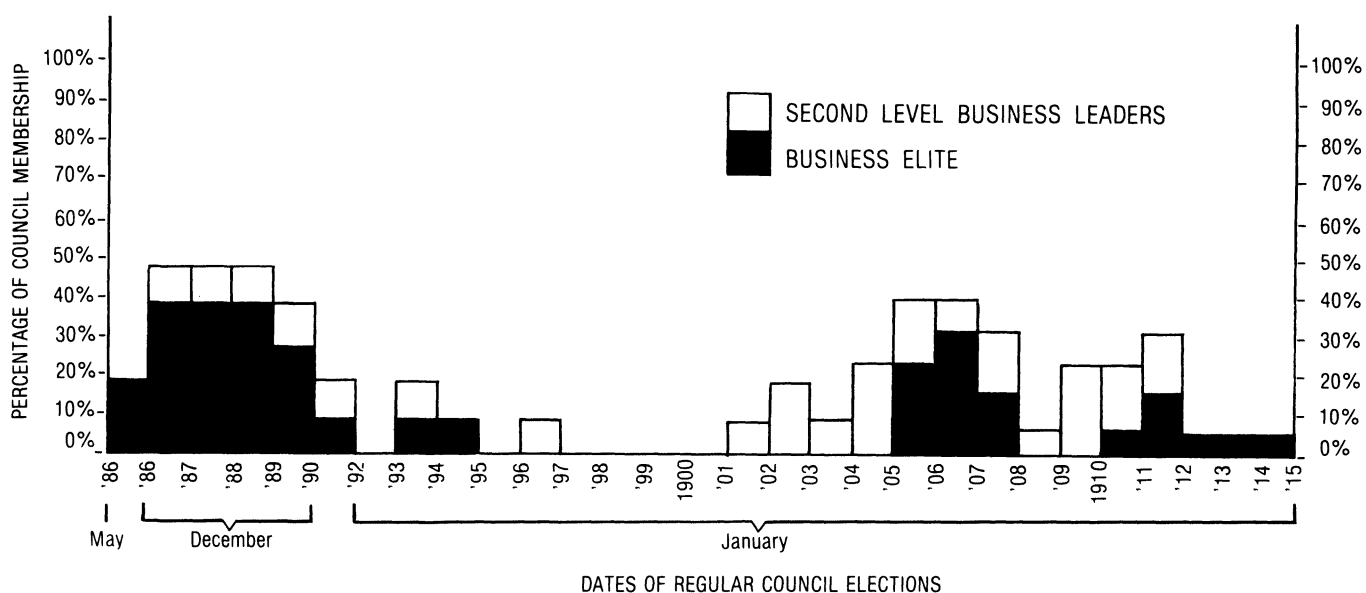
Although fewer in number, at least two Canadian studies examine similar questions about the role of élites in municipal politics. Guy Bourassa's conclusion about

the composition of Montreal's civic political élite from 1840 to 1960 follows the most persistent interpretative trend in the American literature: the Montreal business élite's control of municipal government in the nineteenth century gave way to a more varied and democratic distribution of power in the twentieth.<sup>9</sup> At odds with this is Alan Artibise's conclusion, based on an extensive examination of civic decision making in Winnipeg from 1874 to 1914, that Winnipeg's commercial élite was actively involved in municipal affairs and dominated civic government throughout the pre-war period.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever the interpretative variation, these studies share the view that an assessment of the political role of élite businessmen is crucial to an understanding of municipal politics. This assumption provides the focus of the following paper, which examines the business élite's formal and informal participation during the pre-war period in the municipal politics of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada's fourth largest city in 1914. The business élite's control of municipal decision making during Vancouver's first five years as an incorporated city gave way to political dominance by middle-level occupational groups for the next quarter century. While finding local government less

GRAPH A

DIRECT PARTICIPATION ON CITY COUNCIL BY VANCOUVER'S BUSINESS ELITE AND SECOND LEVEL BUSINESS LEADERS, 1886-1914



This graph includes the results of regular annual elections only. The 'elite' and 'second level business leaders' referred to here were defined initially for the 1890-93 and 1910-13 periods (see note 11). Several additional entrepreneurs who were obviously important as top or second level businessmen for years other than 1890-93 or 1910-13, and who were omitted from among the 'business leaders' or 'business elite' categories because of the restrictive definitions employed, have also been included in the graph; an obvious example is C.P.R. Land Commissioner L.A. Hamilton, who left Vancouver in 1888.

useful to them and the ratepaying majority less willing to follow their leadership after the initial city-building period, the business élite did not lose interest entirely in local government. They attempted to exert political influence both directly by participating in the decision-making process and indirectly by working through business associations and Council representatives. Despite such initiatives, small rather than large businessmen controlled Vancouver municipal politics.

\* \* \*

Through the years preceding World War I, the city's top businessmen were never numerically dominant on Vancouver City Council (see Graph A). Vancouver's entrepreneurial élite (defined as the 21 men from 1910 to 1913 who headed or held directorships in the largest business enterprises operating in the city) were most active in civic politics during the earliest period after the city's incorporation, comprising 36 per cent of council membership.<sup>11</sup> Their role much diminished by 1890, they were entirely absent from council for a decade after 1895. A business reform initiative in 1905 brought 3 top entrepreneurs back into local government, where they remained for a scant average of two years. The next, or second level of Vancouver business leaders (defined as the élite plus 45 other businessmen from 1890-93 and the élite plus 186 others after 1910) likewise played only a limited role as city councillors; they were elected more frequently than the entrepreneurial élite in the early 1900s and during the pre-war boom but, like the less numerous élite, also failed to achieve council dominance.

The entrepreneurial élite's influence, however, far outweighed its numbers for the five years after the city was incorporated when it controlled council decision making. The élite's early pre-eminence in civic politics is explained by the overwhelming economic importance of locally oriented businesses during Vancouver's city-building stage of development.<sup>12</sup> Granville, on the Burrard Inlet, grew rapidly after the Canadian Pacific Railway decided in 1884 to make it the transcontinental line's western terminus. A small community of several hundred people at the beginning of 1886, Vancouver within a year boasted 2,000 inhabitants, and within six 13,000. But early growth did not derive from the development of metropolitan functions that tied Vancouver to its resource hinterland: Vancouver would supplant Victoria as B.C.'s most important regional distribution centre only a decade later. Rather, the profit-making potential of real estate speculation, the improvement of land and the provision of utilities and commercial services within the city itself drew entrepreneurs and investors to the coastal centre. Even the CPR, with which these business interests joined to establish Vancouver's institutional structure, was largely concerned with local business and civic affairs during the first years after 1886.

Civic government's single most important function in pioneer Vancouver was to assist property investors. Councillors achieved this by borrowing heavily to construct streets and bridges that would open land for development, by bonusing transportation and manufacturing companies and by employing the city's credit to ensure the provision of necessary utility services. The entrepreneurial élite dominated early decision making in these crucial areas. Between 1887 and 1889 four élite members, the most prominent of whom was land promoter and wholesale merchant David Oppenheimer, and one second-level business leader manoeuvred three general loan by-laws through council; the city's entire credit could then be employed to finance more services at a faster rate than under the previously employed, local debenture system of civic financing.<sup>13</sup> A series of by-laws was introduced to provide civic bonuses for enterprises ranging from smelting works and a foundry to the CPR workshops and roundhouse; all major bonusing proposals before 1891 came from entrepreneurial élite members of council.<sup>14</sup> And David Oppenheimer and J.W. Horne, the latter a leading real estate and utilities investor, initiated the early city's most important public utilities decision, municipalization of the Vancouver Water Works Company.<sup>15</sup>

Reflecting the significance of local government's property-related functions, Vancouver's largest residential real estate owners intervened directly in the city's political process for several years after 1886 (Table 1). In fact, large landholders were more active on council than élite members of the business community as a whole.<sup>16</sup> The two business groups most active in early Vancouver politics were the CPR, Vancouver's largest property holder, and David and Isaac Oppenheimer, the second largest. Politics was organized around these two factions, the west-end élite led by CPR aldermen and the east-end members controlled by the Oppenheimers.

Elected CPR officials publicly acknowledged that their role in government was represent "the vast interests" of Vancouver's largest property owner.<sup>17</sup> Company representatives on council demanded more civic funds for westside roads, defended the CPR's claim to ownership of much of the city's Burrard Inlet waterfront and boosted private companies in which CPR executives were interested.<sup>18</sup> The latter provides an excellent example of how company executives used their political positions for corporate and personal benefit. In February 1890 finance chairman J.M. Browning directed council to bonus B.C. Sugar's anticipated new refinery in Vancouver. This he did while serving as CPR land commissioner and as the representative for Montreal-based CPR executives financing the refinery enterprise. The development-minded councillors did not consider Browning's dual role as both a grantor and recipient of the city's largesse a conflict of interest warranting denial of his continued position on the aldermanic board. A month after council's decision to

TABLE 1

## Direct Participation in Civic Politics by Vancouver's Ten Major Real Estate Owners, 1889

Company or Individual	Assessed Value of Vancouver Holdings	Direct Participation on Council
<b>A. Residence or Regional Office in Vancouver</b>		
1. Canadian Pacific Ry.	\$1,700,000	L.A. Hamilton, Ald., 1886-87 Wm. Salsbury, Ald., 1889; 1893-94 J.M. Browning, Ald., 1890 H.E. Connon, Ald., 1892
2. Vancouver Improvement Co.	225,000	David Oppenheimer, Ald., 1887 Mayor, 1888-91
3. Oppenheimer Bros.	150,000	Isaac Oppenheimer, Ald., 1887-89 (David Oppenheimer)
4. J. W. Horne	125,000	J. W. Horne, Ald., 1889-90
5. Dr. Jas. Whetham	100,000	Dr. J. Whetham, Ald., 1889
6. A.G. Ferguson	100,000	None
7. Bewicke and Wulffsohn	60,000	None
<b>B. Residence or Regional Office Unknown</b>		
8. Isaac Robinson	125,000	None
9. H. A. Dewindt	60,000	None
10. Town and Robson	60,000	None

SOURCE: Assessed value of real estate holdings is drawn from N.A. MacDonald, "The Canadian Pacific Railway and Vancouver's Development to 1900," *BC Studies*, No. 35 (Autumn 1977), p. 18.

bonus the company, finance chairman Browning was also named B.C. Sugar's first president.<sup>19</sup>

David Oppenheimer's activities best exemplify the quiet melding of public and private interests during these early years. As Board of Trade president for two years and mayor for four, Oppenheimer held the two most important elective positions in the city. Not coincidentally, he also directed the city's second largest land syndicate and at one time in the 1890s controlled both city tramway companies.<sup>20</sup> During much of his mayoralty Oppenheimer succeeded in dominating local government by the creation of a closely knit coalition of eastside supporters, supporters described by one critic as a "number of enthusiastic boosters, principally real estate men and others interested as promoters."<sup>21</sup> Oppenheimer's control was particularly evident in the late 1880s. To cite but one example of his influence, he gained council and ratepayer approval in 1889 for plans to clear and service an east-end exhibition site, despite sharp opposition from sectionally motivated elite aldermen from the west side. As the *News-Advertiser*, the mayor's principal detractor, grudgingly admitted,

"those acquainted with the manner in which the Mayor works ... will not hesitate to give him the entire credit" for guiding public opinion towards approval of the scheme.<sup>22</sup> As the early city's quintessential town builder, David Oppenheimer reflected the exaggerated influence of elite businessmen and leading property holders during Vancouver's initial stage of development.

Elite influence diminished markedly in the early 1890s. Defeat of the Oppenheimer forces in December 1890 by a coalition of middle-class and upper working-class interests opposed to the exploitation of city resources for the economic benefit of a privileged few signalled an end to Oppenheimer's control of civic affairs.<sup>23</sup> A narrow mayoralty victory in January 1892 by David Oppenheimer's hand-picked successor, Fred Cope, was made possible by extensive public support from CPR officials and other elite businessmen; but such success could not mask the fact that the elite no longer participated actively in aldermanic politics or controlled the aldermanic board.<sup>24</sup> A year later elite commission merchant and salmon canner H.O. Bell-Irving "deplored the fact

that so many men of affairs kept aloof from civic affairs...."<sup>25</sup> Suffering from the collapse of the city's real estate market after 1892, the CPR decided in August 1894 to close its Vancouver land office.<sup>26</sup> Never again would the corporation be so extensively involved in the servicing and marketing of Vancouver lands, instead leaving development to smaller dealers. Since local government powers were now less relevant to company needs, direct CPR representation on council ended with the termination of treasurer W.F. Salsbury's term in January 1895. By this time the Oppenheimer business clique, which had "controlled to a very great extent the government of the city" in the 1880s, had also abandoned the civic arena, failing even "to venture a candidate in the field for the mayoralty."<sup>27</sup>

Two fundamental changes in the Vancouver civic electorate's political attitudes account for the end of Oppenheimer and CPR influence over council affairs. First, as Vancouver became a more complex and mature social environment, elite businessmen no longer received the ratepaying majority's unquestioning deference as they had in the 1880s. Once the city's basic institutional structure and economy had been established, the consensus in favour of growth-inducing expenditures for the city as a whole gave way to concern about sectional interests and high taxes. In addition, a restrictive franchise, which had led to uncontested victories by a handful of extensive property holders in the December 1887 election, was liberalized in 1891, further reducing the electoral influence of the property-holding elite.<sup>28</sup>

More importantly, as the initial city-building period ended, the business elite lost much of its interest in day-to-day municipal administration. Top businessmen were unlikely to have the time to devote to local politics; thus in 1888 and 1889 respectively canning entrepreneur H.O. Bell-Irving and sawmill manager R.H. Alexander departed municipal politics for business reasons.<sup>29</sup> Such men were also less likely to run for office because the scale and nature of their businesses made local government powers less relevant to their needs. During the first stage of city growth, all businessmen shared a common interest in establishing modern social and economic services that would attract outside investors and allow Vancouver businesses to operate efficiently. Thus land speculators, CPR officials, mill managers and shopkeepers alike could unite to bonus major enterprises, establish a park system, write a comprehensive health by-law, build streets and secure an adequate water supply. But once the institutional structure was in place the municipal government's limited powers were of less consequence than provincial or national powers to businesses operating in a regional business environment. Thus, for example, because the federal government had jurisdiction over the coastal fishery, west coast salmon canners depended on Ottawa to regulate the industry in a manner favourable to their interests.<sup>30</sup> Lum-

bermen looked to Victoria for advantageous forest-cutting and royalty policies and to Ottawa for tariff protection against American imports.<sup>31</sup> Wholesale merchants joined lumbermen in lobbying the federal government for fairer western freight rates.<sup>32</sup> And those interested in urban waterfront development looked to the federal government for favours in granting lots along the Vancouver harbour.<sup>33</sup> The proportion of Vancouver's top businessmen who looked primarily to Victoria and Ottawa rather than to Vancouver for government support grew substantially as the city emerged from a period of local business activity in the 1880s to become B.C.'s commercial, financial, and resource management metropolis in the 1890s.<sup>34</sup>

Occupational groups in the middle of the city's economic hierarchy, and not elite businessmen and second-level business leaders, provided the bulk of Vancouver's aldermen and mayors in the years preceding World War I. As Table 2 illustrates, civic politicians were largely businessmen engaged in such property-related fields as construction and real estate, or active in retail and service enterprises. Approximately 30 per cent of Vancouver's mayors and councillors from 1886 to 1914 were contractors or real estate businessmen and another 30 per cent were merchants. The businesses they headed were characteristically small, were organized to serve a local rather than hinterland market and were controlled in Vancouver rather than from outside the region. Contracting work, especially residential construction, was usually carried out by small entrepreneurs with limited capital who erected only a few buildings at a time.<sup>35</sup> In addition, contractors had often risen into the lower reaches of the middle class from the artisan class immediately below.<sup>36</sup> Contractors on council, in short, were likely to be small businessmen. So too were merchant aldermen; they generally headed one of Vancouver's small retail firms rather than one of its several large wholesale houses. Businessmen heading small, locally oriented businesses were more likely than entrepreneurs directing large, regionally centred companies to seek election to council: the former depended for their prosperity upon the provision of adequate physical services within the city and upon favourable municipal taxation and licensing policies; the latter looked to Victoria and Ottawa for help.<sup>37</sup> Middle-level realtors, contractors and merchants had been numerically dominant on council even in the 1880s but had temporarily yielded power to Vancouver's largest business interests. Thereafter, only during the economically less prosperous period of 1895-1904, when skilled tradesmen and clerical workers on the lower margin of the middle class formed more than one-third of council membership, was the small businessmen's numerical majority threatened.

The urban development issues that had commanded councillors' interest in the 1880s and the severe depression that had focused political attention in the early 1890s gave

TABLE 2

Vancouver City Council, 1886-1914: Occupations of Mayors<sup>a</sup> and Aldermen by Period of Presentation

Occupational Groups <sup>b</sup>	Total <sup>c</sup>	Period of Presentation <sup>d</sup>		
	1886-1914 N=147	1886-1894 N=60	1895-1904 N=44	1905-1914 N=62
Business				
Contractors	12.2	10.0	11.1	16.1
Real Estate & Non-Banking Finance	19.0	15.0	8.9	30.6
Commerce & Service	29.9	40.0	20.0	22.6
Manufacturing	6.1	5.0	2.2	6.5
Banking & Trans.	2.7	6.7	—	—
Professions	7.5	5.0	13.3	9.7
Clerical	6.1	3.3	11.1	3.2
Skilled & Semi-Skilled	10.9	6.7	24.4	8.1
Unskilled	—	—	—	—
Private Means	6.8	8.3	8.9	3.2
Total (%)	100	100	100	100
Unknown (N)	3	2	2	—

**SOURCES:** Several sources provided the bulk of the biographical and occupational information about the 150 council members examined in Table 2: Vancouver city directory; the *B.C. Newspaper Index* and Vancouver newspapers; Major J.S. Matthews, Miscellaneous Papers, MSS, Vancouver City Archives (VCA); Clipping file, VCA; Mountain View Cemetery Records, microfilm, VCA; J.B. Kerr, *Biographical Dictionary of Well-Known British Columbians* (Vancouver, 1890); R.E. Gosnell, *A History of British Columbia* (n.p., 1906); and E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay, *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Vols. 3 and 4 (Vancouver, 1914).

- a Vancouver had 14 mayors from 1886 to 1914, 8 of whom were recruited from the aldermanic ranks. The occupational profile of mayors differs little from that of aldermen. Mayors were employed as follows (with percentages in brackets): commerce and service, 5 (35.7%); real estate, 4 (28.6%); clerical work, 2 (14.3%); manufacturing, professions and skilled labour, 1 each (7.1% each); and others, 0.
- b The non-business occupational categories are employed here as defined by Peter G. Goheen, *Victorian Toronto, 1850 to 1900* (Chicago, 1970), pp.229-30. "Private Means" includes "retired," "gentleman" and "capitalist."
- c Only aldermen and mayors victorious in regular municipal elections are included in Table 2. Regular elections were held in May 1886, each December from 1886 to 1890 and yearly in January from 1892 to 1914.
- d Aldermen and mayors are included once for each period in which they were elected to council. Seventeen men sat on the council board in two different periods and an additional pair of aldermen were elected in all three; nineteen individuals are thus included more than once in the "Period of Representation" section of the table.

way to a decade of heightened political concern about public morality. Thus, the licensing of music halls was the principal issue of the January 1898 election, and gambling, prostitution and liquor distribution dominated campaigns between 1901 and 1904.<sup>38</sup> The economic downturn of the 1890s and the slow but steady recovery thereafter may explain why non-economic issues, of which

public morality was the most significant, gained such prominence in this period between booms. Certainly, development-minded small businessmen comprised a smaller proportion of aldermen from 1895 to 1904 than during the remainder of the pre-war period. The defence of traditional moral standards may also have become an important civic political issue for another reason: Vancouver's

emergence as a regional labour centre. The city's stable, property-owning elements were no doubt increasingly aware during this period that, in addition to obvious economic benefits, metropolitan status was also bringing to Vancouver a transient, male labour force whose public behaviour deviated from their own family-based moral standards. The fact that a substantial proportion of this labour force was racially different from Vancouver's Anglo-Saxon majority must have exaggerated concern for the security of the old moral order.

Renewed prosperity again directed political attention to the problems of city development. Financing and directing road, bridge, sewer and water-main construction, funding neighbourhood schools, hospitals and fire halls, and generally promoting the city's growth occupied much of the time of middle-level businessmen on council after 1905. Small merchants, real estate entrepreneurs and contractors, rather than the business élite, controlled Vancouver's most aggressive boosterist organizations during this period; they also formed the largest occupational group elected to council.<sup>39</sup> Almost half of all aldermen elected from 1905 to 1914 were either contractors or real estate businessmen, more than double the proportion for the previous ten years (Table 2). Typical councilmen were Edward Odum and George McSpadden, prominent eastside real estate company entrepreneurs who helped found and build the important Vancouver Exhibition Association after 1907;<sup>40</sup> Sanford J. Crowe, a Nova Scotia-born carpenter whose first thirteen years as a journeyman artisan in Vancouver were followed by another eight as a contractor, several more after 1909 as real estate agent and alderman and a final period as federal member of parliament and senator;<sup>41</sup> and John MacMillan, whose aggressive role in advocating street and bridge improvements for Fairview Heights constituents stemmed from his own practical background in the property field as both carpenter and contractor.<sup>42</sup>

Élite businessmen were not unconcerned about municipal issues; in fact, services such as street paving, police protection, sewers and lighting "continued to have a bearing on the economic well being of the city" long after Vancouver's basic economic services had been organized.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the social regulatory functions of local government affected the health and moral standards of the entire city, about which all classes were concerned. But after the 1880s the élite seldom viewed direct participation in the day-to-day administration of civic government as essential for the protection of its local interests. Rather, top businessmen exerted political influence in more limited and specific ways. Élite involvement in civic affairs was generally indirect, taking place through special interest organizations and ward representatives; it was sporadic, most often addressed to issues of particular concern to élite businessmen rather than to the ongoing questions of government; and it was reformist, designed to

enhance élite influence at the expense of the middle-rank council majority by restructuring the institutions of government.

Several organizations pressured civic decision-makers to favour the material interests of the business élite. The Board of Trade, while including a wide range of businessmen, was controlled by leading merchants. Vancouver's oldest and most prestigious business organization, the Board of Trade showed special concern for the problems of metropolitan businesses operating beyond the city. In keeping with its regional orientation, the board spoke out on only a limited number of major civic issues.<sup>44</sup> The Vancouver Electoral Union, a moral reform association, served as the city's most active political organization for four years after its 1901 inception, claiming major victories in 1902, 1903 and 1904. Headed by Vancouver's most prominent Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist business leaders, the religious based Electoral Union non the less spoke for only a small portion of the élite.<sup>45</sup> More representative was the Citizens' Association, formed in 1900 to promote Vancouver's commercial prospects and to return successful businessmen to positions of influence in local government. Reflecting the business élite's regional interests, the Citizens' Association shared the Board of Trade's desire for an improved communications network and better transportation between the city and its market hinterland. While separate from the Board of Trade, the association was led by many of the board's most prominent members and clearly represented the board's views. The association was also backed by the Vancouver Property Owners' Association, organized in May 1900 to defend the property interests of Vancouver's most prominent taxpayers.<sup>46</sup>

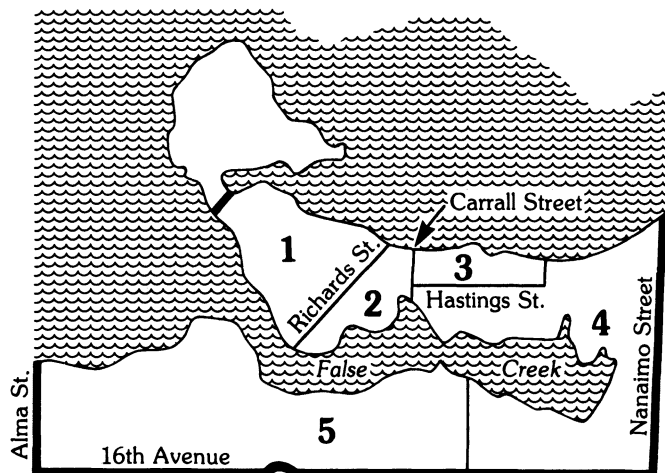
The residential clustering of Vancouver's top businessmen into the city's west end made Ward I aldermen another agency for the indirect expression of business views on civic affairs. In the 1880s the spatial separation of Vancouver's social groups had not yet become rigid; thus, even though CPR executives and their friends had established the city's west side as Vancouver's prestigious residential area, prominent business and professional people such as R.H. Alexander and Duncan and Henry Bell-Irving lived east of Cambie Street. Few remained there by 1900, the majority residing now in Ward I, west of Howe Street. By 1909 three-quarters of over 250 pre-war élite and second-level business leaders lived in the old and new residential areas of the west end (see Map 1).<sup>47</sup>

Only systematic analysis of all civic decision making can determine precisely the extent to which Ward I aldermen acted in municipal government as surrogates for their élite constituents. But the history of two key public issues, one moral and the other developmental, suggests that, when specific concerns did draw business mandarins into civic debate, Ward I aldermen were more than



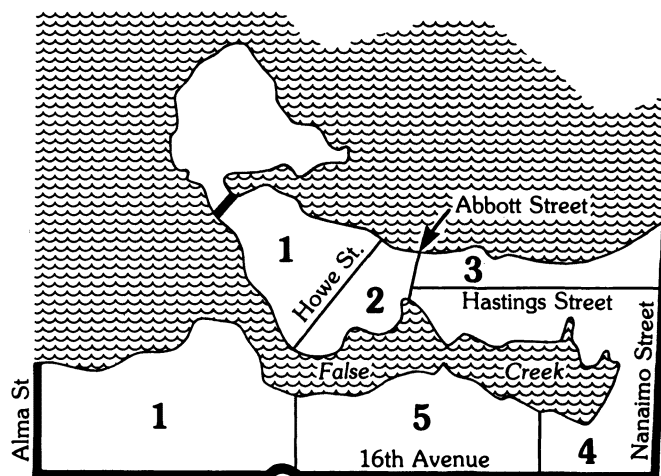
# VANCOUVER WARD BOUNDARIES

**Map 1: 1886-1891 \***

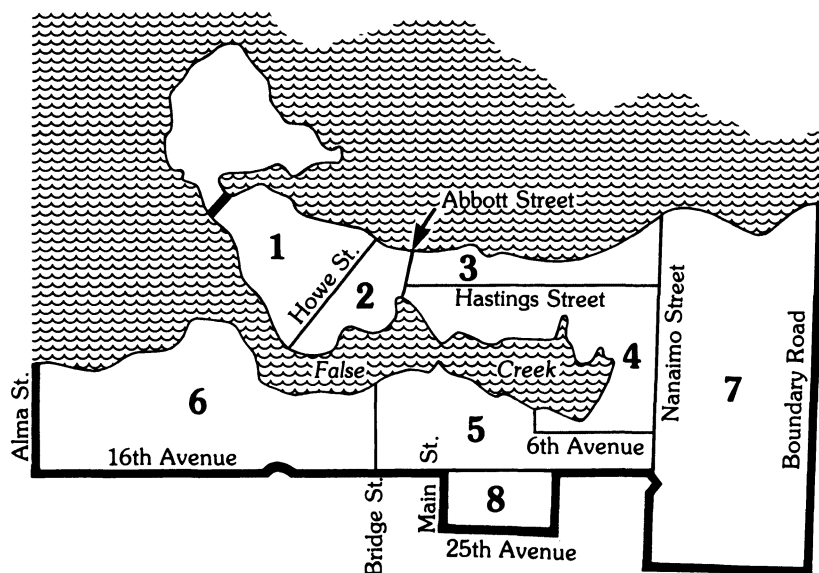


*\*minor changes made in 1891 are not included.*

**Map 2: 1895-1904**



**Map 3: 1904-1914**  
(with 1911 additions  
of Wards 7 and 8)



SOURCE: Map Group #594, Vancouver City Archives

willing to join the Board of Trade as spokesmen for the entrepreneurial élite. The first issue, the business community's campaign for acceptance of licensed music halls, emerged at a time when many Vancouverites were growing uneasy about urbanization's threat to traditional moral values. Early in 1896 Captain D. McPhaiden, a former sailor, stevedore, sea captain and steamboat owner, introduced a by-law to relax the city's Sabbatarian laws by allowing the sale of fruit and tobacco on Sundays.<sup>48</sup> By the fall of 1897 the defence of traditional Sundays had given way to the question of allowing music halls to operate any time in Vancouver, and the initiative of McPhaiden had yielded to the leadership of council's two west-end aldermen. The Board of Trade's strong support for music halls suggests that leading businessmen were orchestrating the campaign for a more open city for commercial purposes. Their argument was that loggers, miners and artisans would not stay in Vancouver without the kind of entertainment that music halls offered. Ward I alderman H. R. Shaw, for example, believed that Vancouver's failure to provide such places of popular amusement would "drive money out of the city." "People who had been out in the woods all year did not want to go to the Free Library and church all the time," added Campbell Sweeny, Bank of Montreal manager and prominent social leader. Music hall supporters also feared that Vancouver would not get its share of the rapidly expanding Klondike trade.<sup>49</sup>

The businessmen, however, were unsuccessful. Aligned against this initiative was the formidable evangelical Protestant church lobby and its representatives on council. When the issue came to a plebiscite vote in March 1898, the anti-music hall view triumphed by a two-to-one margin, carrying even the west end.<sup>50</sup> Three years later, when H. J. Painter, Ward I representative and Anglican, succeeded in having yet another plebiscite on the issue put before the voters, ratepayers in every city ward again rejected the idea of allowing music halls that would sell liquor.<sup>51</sup>

Debate over one of Vancouver's most important development projects, the filling in of False Creek above Main Street, also illustrate the business élite's sporadic and indirect involvement in civic decision making after the 1880s. Initiated in 1912 by the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway Company, the False Creek scheme from its inception received support from Vancouver's middle-level occupational groups, especially ratepayers in the upper working- and lower middle-class wards of the east and southeast areas of the city. The supporters wanted immediate development, especially since the long slide into depression was already beginning to slow the city's real estate and construction boom. The agreement eventually signed between railway company and city was expected to halt the decline: it called for the company to fill 157 acres of mud flats at the east end of False Creek; build on it a terminal station, yards, tracks and freight sheds sufficient to

accommodate the needs of the Canadian National and any other competing railway that might enter Vancouver; construct a first-class hotel; service the property with suitable roads and bridges; pay city taxes; complete the construction work within five years; and have a trans-Pacific steamship line in operation within eight. In return, Vancouver would give up title to 113 acres of filled land, retaining only 44.<sup>52</sup>

The decision to provide this large bonus of city land to the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway Company came only after a hard fight. While the scheme's leading opponent, Ward I alderman Walter Hepburn, received support from only three of fifteen other council representatives in the final council vote, he enjoyed strong endorsement outside government chambers from westside economic and social leaders.<sup>53</sup> Although several prominent merchants did support the scheme, a far greater number of the city's élite were publicly hostile. The Board of Trade, initially in favour, finally voted against the Canadian agreement by a two-to-one margin.<sup>54</sup> The opponents argued that the project was short-sighted, sacrificing the city's long-term economic needs for immediate economic stimulation. According to former mayor C. S. Douglas, the whole thing was "a huge real estate transaction." Hepburn and C. M. Woodsworth claimed that land worth \$17 million was being sacrificed for improvement worth one-tenth that amount. And former Board of Trade president Henry Stone asked, "Have we lost faith in the future of our city?" He believed that giving up so much land to one railway company was "unwise and foolish" since it jeopardized the city's future chances of attracting other railway systems.<sup>55</sup> They argued in vain. Élite views carried little weight with the small business majority on council or with voters; after literally dozens of public meetings had been called to discuss the by-law that would implement the agreement, the issue was decided in March 1913 by an emphatic 78 per cent vote in favour of the booster proposal.<sup>56</sup>

Failure to shape council policies through the political intervention of the Board of Trade and aldermanic surrogates undoubtedly reinforced the élite's attempt to regain lost civic power through another means, reform of the civic political system. Starting in the 1890s, reform proposals took various forms: attempts to take water management out of council's hands; the more traditional approach of putting leading businessmen back into direct "command of civic affairs"; and initiatives to strengthen the executive at the expense of ward-based councillors. But whatever the reform, the specific proposals and the assumptions underlying them derived from a common source, the reform movement in other North American cities where business, social and professional élites had similarly withdrawn from an active role in municipal politics.<sup>57</sup> Reformers emphasized the need to rationalize government by the employment of scientific methods of

investigation and administration. Efficiency and order were the cornerstones of the reform ethic. The philosophy was profoundly anti-democratic and élitist, emphasizing centralized control of decision making by strong men. While the need to create a more efficient society by using bureaucratic and business methods appealed gradually to a broad spectrum of society, support for reform derived principally from society's upper levels.<sup>58</sup> Reform was intended to reduce the political influence of ward-based council representatives, who in Vancouver as elsewhere were often small businessmen, clerks and skilled workers, and to increase the municipal power of élite business and professional classes. The drive to rationalize and reorder society in other cities attracted business and social leaders intent on regaining lost control over society, economy and politics; Vancouver was no exception.

In 1893 élite businessmen first attempted to reform Vancouver's municipal government by proposing an elected commission to administer the city's publicly owned water system. By this plan leading entrepreneurs hoped to retain control over a select part of the governmental structure now that they had both voluntarily given up and involuntarily lost their former influence over the regular administration of civic affairs. While elected school and park boards had been established without controversy soon after incorporation, the legislation to establish a water commission was such a blatant attempt by business leaders to wrest control of the important municipal waterworks from city councillors that it provoked a sharp confrontation between the business élite and council's middle-level occupational majority. According to the by-law written by CPR treasurer and Ward I alderman W.F. Salsbury and approved initially without opposition in December 1893, three individuals elected in city-wide contests would constitute a board of water commissioners. Board members would have "supreme control" over the works and revenue of the recently municipalized water system, thus removing it from the influence of ward-elected, non-élite politicians. The commission idea would allow the "best men," "men of ability," as Salsbury described them, to give their time to a select aspect of civic administration.<sup>59</sup> Coincidentally, it would also permit the élite to control an important area of government activity without first being elected to council. In January 1894 three of Vancouver's most prominent social and business leaders were elected water commissioners: west-end capitalist and substantial property owner A.G. Ferguson, lumberman R.H. Alexander, and CPR chief engineer H.J. Cambie. But also successful were a group of aldermen less sympathetic than their predecessors to the élite's raid on municipal government authority. By the end of January the non-élite council majority had removed water revenues from commission control, thereby effectively ending the board's independence. All three water commissioners resigned in protest, and the commission by-law was repealed.<sup>60</sup> A similar attempt in

1905 by Mayor Buscombe and his reform clique to transfer control of water from council's ward-based, small business majority to an appointed board of commissioners also failed, though by the slimmest of margins.

Continued emphasis on moral issues at the turn of the century led élite businessmen to adopt a second reform strategy: the reassertion of direct influence by leading businessmen in civic government. While a strong commitment to the idea of a "decently run city" had drawn a small minority of pietistic business leaders into local politics as organizers and executive members of the Vancouver Electoral Union, few élite entrepreneurs had backed this moral reform organization. Instead, leading businessmen in 1900 formed the Citizens' Association, an organization dedicated to returning successful businessmen to positions of power in local government. Frustrated by what it perceived as the continued distraction of moral issues and the persistent control of civic life by non-élite, ward-based politicians, the Citizens' Association convinced Frederick Buscombe to run as the business community's mayoralty candidate in the January 1905 election.<sup>61</sup> Following victory, Buscombe and three other business leaders carried into office with him made a concerted effort to build a reform administration. Having advocated a "vigorous policy" of urban development, Buscombe encouraged more extensive borrowing to provide civic services. Challenging the notion that mayors were mere figureheads, he led a spirited attack on telephone company control of city streets. Arguing against parochialism in civic affairs, he and his supporters introduced tariff and freight-rate issues into municipal council debate. And to modernize the government administration, his reform group appointed a city comptroller with complete charge of civic accounting and auditing.<sup>62</sup>

But Buscombe's short-term political and administrative successes did not provide a permanent solution to the élite's loss of direct influence in local government. Occupational pressures left the business élite with little time to attend to municipal affairs; nor were local issues important enough to draw them into civic political life on a more permanent basis. By the end of Buscombe's two-year administration the business-oriented *Vancouver Province* was again complaining that "attempts ... to get influential businessmen to accept candidacy have proved fruitless."<sup>63</sup>

The imminent demise of Buscombe's administration sparked renewed demands for structural reforms. In December 1906 two downtown aldermen, Jonathan Rogers and Donald Stewart, initiated a Board of Trade debate on the merit of ending wards. Mayoralty candidate and former Ward I alderman Alexander Bethune made the idea of a council executive, or board of control, one of his January 1907 election proposals. He and two other Ward I aldermen, business leader and moral activist James

Ramsay and contractor Walter Hepburn, succeeded in having council bring the board of control matter to a plebiscite vote a year later. Arguing that a board of control would "give an incentive to businessmen to enter public and civic life," Ramsay was again instrumental in the Board of Trade's endorsement of executive reform in December 1909.<sup>64</sup> By the following year interest in reform was broadening, particularly because of interest in the commission government movement then sweeping the United States.<sup>65</sup> Non-élite councillors such as Ward 5's Harry Stevens and former provincial Labour member of the Legislative Assembly Robert Macpherson also now openly supported the commission idea. Leadership for a commission government came principally from three non-élite middle-class reformers from the new westside Ward 6. The commission idea was approved in a January 1911 plebiscite by half the 5,000 ratepayers who voted; the board of control and council forms of government shared the support of the other half. Delays by Vancouver aldermen and finally opposition by the provincial government's Private Bills Committee scuttled the commission idea, and, while the board of control was endorsed by a solid majority in another plebiscite in January 1914, the movement for a strengthened executive died with the outbreak of war.<sup>66</sup>

The failure of Vancouver's structural reform movement rather than its ideas, timing or class support stand out as unique in the history of Canadian urban reform. By 1914 Vancouver alone among Canada's major cities had not altered its form of government. Several factors may account for this condition. The small business majority on council displayed an understandable reluctance to alter the ward-based, council-committee system that had served its interests so well. Council's shifting opinions about structural reform and its year-long delay in acting upon the 1911 plebiscite results revealed a natural unwillingness to adopt changes that could transfer power to Vancouver's westside élites. In addition, the provincial government first postponed acceptance of Vancouver's reform request by establishing a commission of inquiry on municipal government; it then adopted the inquiry's advice that Vancouver's commission government request be rejected, thereby effectively blocking Vancouver's most important reform initiative.<sup>67</sup>

Closer examination reveals a more fundamental explanation for the business élite's failure to regain its once ascendent position in local government: Vancouver's benign social and political environment denied reform the sustenance to grow into a widely accepted political movement. The conditions of political corruption, deplorable health conditions and deficient utility services that nurtured public support for reform in other centres were not present in Vancouver. The fact that political corruption was not an important issue before 1914 can be accounted for in part by the city's relatively homogeneous character.<sup>68</sup>

Vancouver's social geography did not include teeming immigrant ghettos such as Winnipeg's North End, Toronto's "Ward," or New York City's Lower East Side. Nor did the city receive large numbers of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants whose integration into the social system depended upon the patronage and attendant corruption of political machines.<sup>69</sup> Only the sizeable Asian population stood out as a clearly recognizable foreign element in the city, and denial of the franchise prevented it from becoming a legitimate political presence. In addition, health conditions were better in Vancouver than in comparable Canadian cities. As Margaret Andrews has demonstrated, Vancouver's relatively low death rate – "a measure of the state of health of the whole population" – was due to the city's "liberal expense of money and effort" on health services; another significant factor was the nearby location of large supplies of fresh water.<sup>70</sup> As for utility services, despite numerous clashes earlier between the street railway, light, and telephone utilities and the city, by the 1907-14 period most major issues had been resolved. More than one alderman, in evidence given to the 1912 Royal Commission, asserted that "probably the whole of the utility companies ... here in Vancouver are trying to work as much as they can in harmony with the Council ... there is not a large amount of friction."<sup>71</sup> The corruption and bossism that fuelled Montreal's drive for political reform, the administrative corruption and water service mismanagement that conditioned Toronto's acceptance of a board of control, and the proposal to operate a municipal power utility and growing concern over an inadequate water supply that starchy the Winnipeg élite's resolve in favour of a strong council executive were not characteristic of Vancouver.<sup>72</sup> Government reform initiatives, including the water commission plan of 1893-94, Buscombe's élite-led reform administration of 1905-06, and the board of control board of commission initiatives after 1907, met with less success in Vancouver than in other large Canadian and American cities because they were less necessary. Business élite proposals to regain lost power by reforming the governmental system foundered because neither the élite itself nor the ratepayers as a whole were fully convinced that reform was imperative.

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What then can we conclude about the business élite's role in Vancouver municipal politics? On one hand, occupational evidence indicates that aldermen and mayors came primarily from the middle of Vancouver's occupational hierarchy. Electoral office at the civic level appealed to small businessmen in particular because their enterprises required sympathetic taxation and licensing policies as well as the provision of extensive urban services. Real estate entrepreneurs and contractors especially looked to local government for favourable street construction, utility regulation and protective services. But, on the other hand, economic élites exerted far more influence

in municipal government during the early city-building years than their numbers on council would indicate. Thereafter, with some exceptions, élites participated in electoral politics only sporadically, favouring less formal means of exerting political influence. Direct participation in civic politics and indirect influence over municipal decision making by the Vancouver business élite were both circumscribed after the 1880s by several factors: business pressures mounted as Vancouver's economy became regionally based, forcing top businessmen to devote their undivided attention to business affairs; limited legislative benefits were to be derived by leading businessmen from their formal participation in the day-to-day administration of local government; and voters' deference to business élite views declined once the city's institutional structure had been organized. In addition, although several reform initiatives designed to reassert business influence over municipal decision making followed the élite's withdrawal from the political arena at the end of the 1880s, these reforms were less successful in Vancouver than in many other American and Canadian centres. The government reform impulse was weaker in Vancouver because the latter's underlying economic, social and political conditions made reform less necessary.

The Vancouver pattern of élite participation in civic politics between 1886 and 1914 follows the broad outline suggested by many scholars for American cities in the industrial era. Since Vancouver was a new city in the 1880s, it did not experience a period when pre-modern social

values and limited expectations of local government allowed social and economic élites to control municipal power continuously over a significant span of time; in effect, Vancouver was born modern, and limited direct participation of its entrepreneurial élite in and indirect influence over municipal affairs were consistent with political patterns in numerous large American centres.

While similar to the late nineteenth-century American experience, Vancouver's political history differs significantly from that of at least one major Canadian City. In Winnipeg, a city comparable to Vancouver in size and pattern of development, the commercial élite, according to Alan Artibise, was actively involved in municipal affairs and controlled civic decision making throughout the 1880-1914 period.<sup>73</sup> This difference may reflect dissimilar political traditions in Winnipeg and Vancouver, traditions that stemmed in turn from the unique social environments of each. The apparent distinctiveness of the Winnipeg élite's dominant role may also be explained by the "provisional" nature of Artibise's political analysis.<sup>74</sup> Failure to differentiate adequately between businessmen according to the size or function of their enterprises may have biased his study towards an assumption that Winnipeg's business community formed a relatively homogeneous and politically dominant whole. Certainly the Vancouver experience suggests the crucial importance of understanding the divergent political aims and roles of large and small businessmen.

## NOTES

1. Blaine Brownell and Warren E. Stickle, eds., *Bosses and Reformers: Urban Politics in America, 1880-1920* (Boston, 1973).
2. See Carl V. Harris, *Political Power in Birmingham 1871-1921* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1977); and Eugene J. Watts, *The Social Bases of City Politics: Atlanta, 1865-1903* (Westport and London, 1978).
3. David C. Hammack, "Problems in the Historical Study of Power in the Cities and Towns of the United States, 1800-1960," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 83 (April 1978), pp.323-49; Michael Aiken and Paul E. Mott, eds., *The Structure of Community Power* (New York, 1970); and Daniel N. Gordon, ed., *Social Change and Urban Politics: Readings* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973).
4. Guy Bourassa, "The Political Elite of Montreal: From Aristocracy to Democracy," in Lionel D. Feldman and Michael D. Goldrick, eds., *Politics and Government of Urban Canada: Selected Readings*, 3rd ed. (Toronto, 1976), pp. 146-56; Alan F.J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914* (Montreal, 1975), Chap. 2; and J.E. Rea, "The Politics of Class: Winnipeg City Council, 1919-1945," in Carl Berger and W.L. Morton, eds., *The West and the Nation* (Toronto, 1976), pp.232-49. For an excellent study of the social basis of municipal politics in resource industry towns, see David Frank, "Company Town/Labour Town: Local Government in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1917-1926," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, Vol. 14 (May 1981), pp.177-96.
5. Hammack, "Historical Study of Power," pp.332-38, 349; and Daniel Gordon, "The Bases of Urban Political Change: A Brief History of Developments and Trends," in Gordon, *Social Change and Urban Politics*, pp.6-15.
6. Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven and London, 1961).
7. Michael Aiken, "The Distribution of Community Power: Structural Bases and Social Consequences," in Aiken and Mott, *Structure of Community Power*, pp.493-99.
8. Samuel P. Hays, "The Changing Political Structure of the City in Industrial America," *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (November 1974), pp.6-25.
9. Bourassa, "Political Elite of Montreal," p.155.
10. Artibise, *Winnipeg*, Chap. 2 and *passim*.
11. The second-level "business leaders" and the more restrictive "business élite" referred to in this paper were initially defined together after which the élite was extracted as a subgroup. Business leaders and élite together, referred to as "business leaders," were chosen for the four-year periods 1890-93 and 1910-13, during which substantial business growth occurred in Vancouver. Business leaders were defined as (1) men holding the top positions in the biggest (and hence, in terms of their economic influence, presumably the most important) business organizations operating within the local business community, or (2) those holding either a vice-presidency and directorship or three directorships in equivalent companies. "Top" officials were to include both owners of locally based firms and managers of branch enterprises (such as banks and railroads). "Important" business affiliations were defined for Vancouver-based companies as those whose assets equalled \$50,000 or more for the 1890-93 period and \$100,000 or more for 1910-13, and for the externally controlled businesses those

- whose assets in Vancouver or controlled from it equalled similar amounts. Measurement of the local importance of absentee-controlled businesses was a difficult task, because businesses with head offices outside the city left no obvious record of the extent of their operations inside it; in the 1890-93 period the task was almost as demanding for most local businesses, the majority of which were unincorporated partnerships or single proprietorships; few had been organized as incorporated, limited liability companies. In both cases more subjective evidence, such as economic information about the scale of local operations found in newspapers or in bibliographical sketches of company officials, was used. Several businessmen who did not meet the criteria used to define business leaders were chosen for subjective reasons. Sixty-six Vancouver businessmen were designated business leaders for the 1890-93 period and 276 for 1910-13. The "élite" were then defined as a subgroup of this larger category by a similar process of identification, the one difference being that criteria for "important" businesses were now applied in a more restrictive fashion. Thus the dividing line between "important" and "unimportant" businesses was set at \$100,000 for the 1890-93 élite (as opposed to \$50,000 for the business leaders) and at \$500,000 for the 1910-13 élite (rather than \$100,000 for the business leaders). Sources employed included B.C. Registrar of Companies Office records, newspapers and published biographical dictionaries, among others. For a fuller discussion of the methods and sources used to define Vancouver's leading businessmen, see Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977), Chaps. 1 and 6.
12. Robert A.J. McDonald, "City-Building in the Canadian West: A Case Study of Economic Growth in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914," *B.C. Studies*, No. 43 (Autumn 1979), pp. 3-28.
  13. *Vancouver News*, January 5, 1887, p.4; February 22, 1887, p.1; February 23, 1887, p.2; and March 30, 1887, p.1. *Daily News-Advertiser* (hereafter *N-A*), March 27, 1888, pp.1, 4; May 24, 1888, p.6, and April 9, 1889, p.8.
  14. *News*, March 1, 1887, p.1; and *N-A*, August 9, 1887, p.1; August 16, 1887, pp.1, 4; August 30, 1887, p.2; September 25, 1887, p.4; March 20, 1888, p.4.
  15. *N-A*, January 8, 1889, p.8; January 22, 1889, p.8; September 17, 1889, p.1; November 11, 1890, p.1.
  16. Mere ownership of land was not in itself considered a business function; thus large landholders Dr. James Whetham and A.G. Ferguson were not defined as business leaders.
  17. *News*, December 11, 1886, p.1. *N-A*, December 9, 1889, p.4; January 12, 1893, p.1.
  18. *News*, February 23, 1887, p.2. *N-A*, June 4, 1889, p.1; July 25, 1889, p.4; August 14, 1889, p.2; August 16, 1889, p.4; and September 30, 1894, p.4. Vancouver City Archives (VCA), Vancouver City, Office of the City Clerk, Correspondence (hereafter cited as Van. City, OOTCC, Correspondence), Vol. 2 (1889), micro., Doc. No. 1642.
  19. VCA, Vancouver City, *By-Laws*, Vol. 1 (micro.), By-law No. 94, pp.561-68; *Vancouver City Council Minutes*, February 3 and 10, and April 14, 1890, Vol. 3 (micro.).
  20. McDonald, "City-Building," pp.14-17; and *N-A*, April 5, 1892, p.8.
  21. The cohesiveness of Oppenheimer's clique was especially evident in 1889 and 1891 during heated debates over the city wharf (see note 18) and the firing of Vancouver's city engineer (see full accounts of council discussion of this issue in the *N-A*, February 13, 1891, to June 2, 1891). The quotation is a comment by R.E. Gosnell reproduced in the *Province*, November 15, 1924, p.24.
  22. *N-A*, May 18, 1889, pp.4 and 8.
  23. McDonald, "Business Leaders," pp.293-95.
  24. *Vancouver Daily World*, December 15, 1891, p.5; and January 3, 1895, p.4.
  25. *N-A*, January 11, 1893, p.1.
  26. J.M. Browning to Sir William Van Horne, August 29, 1894, Sir William Van Horne, Correspondence Inward, RG1, File 77945, Canadian Pacific Railway Company Archives.
  27. *N-A*, January 13, 1895, p.4.
  28. For most of the 1886-1914 period mayoralty candidates were required to hold real property valued at \$1,000 or more (\$2,000 from 1887 to 1891, \$500 from 1891 to 1892); a man could run for alderman only if he owned real property assessed at \$1,000 or more before 1891, \$500 after. The voting franchise was somewhat more liberal: property owners, or tenants renting property assessed at over \$300, could vote for aldermen and mayors and on plebiscites, but the money by-law franchise belonged to property owners alone. Changes in the franchise section of the Vancouver charter are documented in the *Statutes of British Columbia*, 49 Vict. 1886, c. 32, pp.162-65; 50 Vict. 1887, c. 37, pp.143-44; 52 Vict. 1889, c. 40, pp.281-82; 54 Vict. 1891, c. 72, pp.549-50; 55 Vict. 1892, c. 62, pp.403-5; 58 Vict. 1895, c. 68, pp.319-20; 64 Vict. 1901, c. 54, pp.282-83, 316; and 1 Geo. 5, 1911, c. 75, p.517.
  29. *N-A*, May 29, 1888, p.6; January 8, 1889, p.3. Also see Gordon, "The Bases of Urban Political Change," p.8 and Donald S. Bradley and Mayer N. Zald, "From Commercial Elite to Political Administrator: The Recruitment of the Mayors of Chicago," in Aiken and Mott, *Structure of Community Power*, p.28.
  30. H.K. Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen" (M.A. Thesis, U.B.C., 1965), pp.45-46 and Chap. 3; Cicely Lyons, *Salmon: Our Heritage; the Story of a Province and an Industry* (Vancouver, 1969), pp.174-77.
  31. Robert H. Marris, "'Pretty Sleek and Fat': the Genesis of Forest Policy in British Columbia, 1903-1914" (M.A. Thesis, U.B.C., 1979); Vancouver Board of Trade, *Annual Report, 1904-1905* (Vancouver, 1905), pp.14, 22-25 (hereafter V.B. of T., A.R.); Wm. Skene to R. McBride, December 22, 1904, B.C. Premiers' Papers, 1904-05, Private Correspondence, Doc. No. 616, Public Archives of British Columbia (PABC).
  32. Patricia E. Roy, "Railways, Politicians and the Development of the City of Vancouver as a Metropolitan Centre" (M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1963), p.106; V.B. of T., A.R. 1907-1908, pp.19-20; F.C. Wade to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, November 27, 1909, Laurier Papers re: B.C., Roll 5, micro., Doc's. No. 162816-24, PABC; and *Western Lumberman*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1910), p.15.
  33. "Granting of foreshore application to the B.C. Mills, Timber and Trading Company," Borden Papers re: B.C., Roll 7, micro., Marine File No. 13118, Doc. No. 93724, U.B.C.
  34. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Victoria, Vancouver and the Economic Development of British Columbia, 1886-1914," in Alan F.J. Artibise, ed., *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development* (Regina, 1981), pp.39-55. This insight is also suggested in Bradley and Zald, "From Commercial Elite," pp.28-29 and Robert O. Schulze, "The Role of Economic Dominants in Community Power Structure," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (February 1958), p.6.
  35. John C. Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity, the Suburban Life of Westdale (Hamilton), Ontario, 1911-1951," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, Vol. 11 (November 1978), pp.421-23; and Deryck W. Holdsworth, "House and Home in Vancouver: The Emergence of a West Coast Urban Landscape, 1886-1929" (Ph.D. Thesis, U.B.C., 1981), pp.129, 155, 193, 200.
  36. At least eight of eighteen contractors elected to council seats before 1914 at one time had worked as wage earners, six of them as carpenters.
  37. In *Political Power in Birmingham*, Harris also concludes that municipal political offices in Birmingham, Alabama, were occupied principally by middle-ranked occupational groups; this, he argues, was because local government was most relevant to their interests (pp.274-76, 279-80).
  38. *World*, January 11, 1898, p.4; January 3, 1901, p.1; January 11,

- 1901, pp.1, 4; January 6, 1902, p.3; January 10, 1902, p.1. N-A, January 7, 1903, p.4; January 6, 1904, p.5.
39. McDonald, "Business Leaders," pp.315-23.
40. J.J. Miller, *Early History of the Vancouver Exhibition Association* (Vancouver, 1953), pp.3, 5; E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay, *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Vol. 4 (Vancouver, 1914), pp.336, 828-32.
41. Scholefield and Howay, *British Columbia*, Vol. 3, pp.352-55; J.K. Johnson, ed., *The Canadian Directory of Parliament, 1867-1967* (Ottawa, 1968), p.145.
42. N-A, January 7, 1906, p.5; April 25, 1908, p.5; June 4, 1908, p.3.
43. Bradley R. Rice, *Progressive Cities: The Commission Government Movement in America, 1901-1920* (Austin, Texas, 1977), p.63.
44. McDonald, "Business Leaders," pp.315-20.
45. *World*, December 15, 1901, p.5; December 7, 1901, p.4; January 10, 1902, p.1; January 5, 1905, p.5. N-A, January 3, 1903, p.4; January 10, 1904, p.7. *Province*, January 7, 1901, p.1; January 8, 1902, p.3; October 24, 1902, p.2. Thomas Langlois to Richard McBride, February 16, 1904, Premiers' Papers, 1904, Official Correspondence In, Doc. No. 350, PABC.
46. McDonald, "Business Leaders," pp.299-304.
47. *Ibid.*, pp.259-67; and Angus E. Robertson, "The Pursuit of Power, Profit and Privacy: A Study of Vancouver's West End Elite, 1886-1914" (M.A. Thesis, U.B.C., 1977), Chap. 1.
48. N-A, February 9, 1896, p.4; February 11, 1896, p.5; March 14, 1896, p.3.
49. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1897, p.8; September 8, 1897, p.5; October 13, 1897, p.6; October 19, 1897, p.5; November 16, 1897, p.5; November 17, 1897, p.3; November 24, 1897, p.6; December 14, 1897, p.6; February 15, 1898, p.3; March 6, 1898, p.7.
50. *Ibid.*, September 25, 1896, p.5; March 4, 1898, p.5; March 6, 1898, p.7.
51. *Ibid.*, May 28, 1901, p.5; June 4, 1901, p.6; July 5, 1901, p.4; May 30, 1901, p.4; July 7, 1901, p.6.
52. *Ibid.*, March 5, 1913, p.4; March 16, 1913, p.1.
53. *Province*, February 6, 1913, p.7. N-A, February 26, 1913, p.7; March 6, 1913, p.7; March 7, 1913, p.4; March 15, 1913, p.4.
54. N-A, September 4, 1912, p.4; September 7, 1912, p.12; February 12, 1913, p.7; February 19, 1913, p.2. *Province*, August 21, 1912, p.4.
55. *Province*, February 5, 1913, p.7. N-A, September 29, 1912, p.3; February 19, 1913, p.2; February 23, 1913, p.2.
56. For the public debate see Vancouver newspapers from February 6 to March 16, 1913.
57. See Rice, *Progressive Cities*, Chap. 4; Anderson, "Reform Movement," pp.77-111; Hays, "Changing Political Structure," pp.16-27; Howard Chudacoff, *The Evolution of American Urban Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1975), pp.149-56; and John C. Weaver, "The Modern City Realized: Toronto Civic Affairs, 1880-1915," in Artibise and Stelter, eds., *Usable Urban Past*, pp.39-72.
58. Hays, "Changing Political Structure," p.23; Anderson "Reform Movement," pp.101-2; Rice, *Progressive Cities*, pp.60-61 and 110-11; Donald F. Davis, "The City Remodelled: The Limits of Automotive Industry Leadership in Detroit, 1910-1929," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, Vol. 13 (November 1980), pp.455-63; and Weaver, "Elitism and the Corporate Ideal," pp.51-57.
59. N-A, December 5, 1893, p.1; December 15, 1893, p.3; December 21, 1893, p.3; December 23, 1893, p.4.
60. *Ibid.*, January 23, 1894, p.5; January 28, 1894, p.4; January 30, 1894, p.5; February 20, 1894, p.5.
61. *Province*, January 11, 1905, p.6; January 13, 1905, pp.6, 11. V.B. of T., A.R., 1904-1905, p.12.
62. For policy see the *Province*, December 17, 1904, p.2; January 3, 1905, p.1. For the telephone issue, N-A, June 10, 1905, p.7; June 20, 1905, p.1; July 9, 1905, p.6. For the tariff and freight rate issues, *ibid.*, September 12, 1905, p.4; and *Province*, October 5, 1905, p.5. For administrative reform, see N-A, March 4, 1905, p.1; October 17, 1905, p.3; November 25, 1905, p.2; November 28, 1905, p.1.
63. *Province*, December 22, 1906, p.1.
64. For the 1906-09 period, see N-A, December 12, 1906, p.6; January 4, 1907, p.2; February 26, 1907, p.2; January 7, 1908, p.8; December 8, 1909, pp.1, 2. V.B. of T., A.R., 1907-1908, p.21. Robert Tinkess, "The Failure of Civic Structural Reform Movements in Vancouver, 1907-1916" (graduating essay, U.B.C., 1981), Chap. 2.
65. Rice, *Progressive Cities*, p.53.
66. N-A, May 31, 1910, p.12; December 15, 1910, p.9; May 2, 1911, p.2; July 5, 1911, p.1; January 25, 1912, pp.1, 10. Tinkess, "Structural Reform," Chap. 3.
67. Tinkess, "Structural Reform," pp.33-38. N-A, February 15, 1912, p.4; February 17, 1912, p.4; November 13, 1912, p.5. British Columbia, Royal Commission on Municipal Government, 1912, "Evidence and Documents," Box 1, File 2, p.63.
68. Norbert MacDonald, "Population Growth and Change in Seattle and Vancouver, 1880-1960," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 39 (August 1970), pp.297-321; and McDonald, "Business Leaders," p.183.
69. Structural reform leader Walter Hepburn made clear that corruption was not a motive for reform in Vancouver. See B.C., R.C. on Municipal Government, "Evidence," pp.587, 670. On the role of machines, see Robert K. Merton, "Latent Functions of the Machine," in Alexander B. Callow Jr., *American Urban History: An Interpretive Reader with Commentaries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York, 1973), pp.220-29.
70. Margaret W. Andrews, "Medical Services in Vancouver, 1886-1920: A Study in the Interplay of Attitudes, Medical Knowledge, and Administrative Structures" (Ph.D. Thesis, U.B.C., 1979), pp.1, 4-7, 17-18, 33; Patricia E. Roy, *Vancouver: An Illustrated History* (Toronto, 1980), p.176, n.43; J.T. Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty* (Toronto, 1974), p.100; and Artibise, *Winnipeg*, p.231. Medical health officials and others commented often on Vancouver's plentiful supply of fresh water; see N-A, August 21, 1891, p.4; March 5, 1908, p.12; October 31, 1912, p.2.
71. B.C., R.C. on Municipal Government, "Evidence," pp.33-34, 68.
72. Michel Gauvin, "The Reformer and the Machine: Montreal Civic Politics from Préfontaine to Médéric Martin," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1978), pp.16-26; John C. Weaver, "The Modern City Realized: Toronto Civic Affairs, 1880-1915," in *Usable Urban Past*, pp.40-49; and Artibise, *Winnipeg*, pp.57, 98-99.
73. Artibise, *Winnipeg*, Chap. 2. Although he defines the "commercial élite" more broadly than I do, assigning élite status to both large and small businessmen, he also indicates that the largest and most successful businessmen led the commercial group on council (pp.27-32).
74. *Ibid.*, p.32.