Urban History Review
Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Knight, David B. *Choosing Canada's Capital: Conflict Resolution in a Parliamentary System*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991. Pp. xix, 398. Maps. $18.95 (paper)

John H. Taylor

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Découvrir la revue

Citer ce compte rendu

Taylor, J. H. (1991). Compte rendu de [Knight, David B. *Choosing Canada's Capital: Conflict Resolution in a Parliamentary System*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991. Pp. xix, 398. Maps. $18.95 (paper)]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, *20*(2), 90–90. https://doi.org/10.7202/1019262ar

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.
https://www.erudit.org/fr/

material. One big surprise: the purely functional roundhouse design which dominated the 20th century had not become the normal plan, and the early Grand Trunk Railway built a number of cruciform engine houses, two locomotive stalls in each arm. The nineteenth century was more lavish in decoration and architectural embellishment, while the twentieth century favored more stark, purely functional forms—but inside the roundhouse structures, it provided more ancillary facilities for servicing the larger and more complex locomotives of the final development of the steam locomotive. The author rightly discusses the evolution of the turntable, required by the technology of the steam locomotive and in turn making the "round" of the roundhouse a logical design.

Should we attempt to preserve one or more of these structures in commemoration of one aspect of the steam locomotive era that saw the railways emerge as the binding force of the Canadian nation? Without locomotives in its stalls, with no tracks leading somewhere from its turntable, I personally have rather negative views of the CPR's Drake Street, Vancouver, roundhouse even though it is a survivor of the great fire and so doubly historic. Its function gone, it is just a peculiarly-shaped big old brick building; a specialized one, but having much in common with other industrial buildings of its era. Should we save it? If so, for what? Why not tear it down and build something for our present era on the site? This splendid book does not directly address this problem, but presents a good account of what a roundhouse was so we can consider whether we want to intervene and save one or more.

Fritz Lehmann
Department of History
University of British Columbia

Knight, David B. *Choosing Canada's Capital: Conflict Resolution in a Parliamentary System.* Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991. Pp. xix, 398. Maps. $18.95 (paper).

The choice of a seat of government for the Union of the Canadas was perhaps the most vexatious and protracted question put before its newly-reformed parliament. As the Montreal *Pilot* noted, "objections would have been found to the Garden of Eden ... and we might have gone on fighting about localities until doomsday." Except that Ottawa was fixed on. In narrative and documents, Knight leads the reader to this "last act" in a "concatenation of follies," as the *Boston Daily Advertiser* put it.

This volume is a much altered, enlarged and improved edition of the original on the capital question, published in 1977 to good notices.

Improvements begin with a dressed-up cover, enlarged format and printing, and more substantial paper and binding. The length in words appears to be about double the original.

Substantive changes are of more import. A new sub-title replaces the 1977 version—"Jealousy and Friction in the 19th Century"—reflecting a shift in the interests of the author and the application of recent scholarship to the "seat-of-government" issue.

The notion of conflict resolution thus informs the extensive re-writing of the general introduction and the introductions to each chapter, as well as the selection of (the many more) documents in them.

In effect, the one volume now replaces two: the original *Choosing Canada's Capital*, consisting largely of documents, and a companion volume *A Capital for Canada.* The latter, also issued in 1977, was the author's doctoral dissertation, and

was a largely narrative account of the capital issue. Both books are out of print and, in effect, have become redundant with this new volume.

The new edition is basic reading for scholars of the city in Canada, whether geographers, as the author is, or from other disciplines. But, especially with the new material, Knight's book becomes a valuable entree into the politics and roots of political conflict in Victorian Canada. It also goes far in demonstrating how parliamentary systems in the nineteenth century dealt with tensions. There are insights here for contemporary Canada.

It is thus an important book for political historians and to those interested in constitutions and governmental systems.

Apart from its scholarship, the volume is accessible to students, and is in a format that can be adapted to classroom use, especially where a case study approach is used.

John H. Taylor
Department of History
Carleton University

Gross, Hans. *Rome in the Age of Enlightenment: The post-Tridentine syndrome and the ancien regime.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. x, 409. Illustrations. $54.50.

Heroic Tridentine Rome in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a centre of religious and cultural dynamism whose activist zeal and artistic energies had significant effects in much of the world. Its story is well known to historians. In this welcome monograph, however, Hans Gross examines a city less familiar to English-speaking readers: eighteenth-century Rome, the city, as he puts it, of the "ancien regime." In many respects this is an account of anticlimax, decline, and decay, which finds its own climax fittingly at the intrusion of a