

**Carter-Edwards, Karen. *100 Years of Service. Cornwall: Cornwall Electric, 1987. Pp. x, 335. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth***

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kept investors away, and the developers suddenly found themselves overextended. The activists in Milton-Park had gone through several permutations in the meantime and new combinations had emerged by the mid-1970s, now dedicated to co-op housing. With an angel in the person of Phyllis Lambert, the architect daughter of the Bronfman dynasty, the federal and provincial governments were pushed and prodded into putting up money for renovation of the surviving housing stock. The impending referendum of May 1980, for example, was skillfully used to persuade the federal Liberals that support would be rewarded. And by 1983 the new Milton-Park was in existence, a thriving community of 597 co-op houses restored at a cost of more than \$30 million in government funds and occupied by a mix of classes and occupations.

Claire Helman's book tells this story in a simple prose that is illustrated with some well-chosen photos. She has her heroes and villains, but she is not averse to noting the follies of the residents. What we don't find out, however, is how many of the original residents of Milton-Park were still there in the 1980s to move into the renovated co-ops. My guess is that a maximum of twenty per cent had survived death and change to reap the benefits of the generation-long struggle. But so what? We all work to make the future better. And in Milton-Park, the future happily turned out to be better. An instructive book, this; one that demonstrates that residents can sometimes outlast the developers and politicians.

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Carter-Edwards, Karen. *100 Years of Service*. Cornwall: Cornwall Electric, 1987. Pp. x, 335. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

*100 Years of Service*, is an official history Cornwall Electric, commissioned by the utility to commemorate its 100th anniversary. The book has all of the strengths and weaknesses of both an "institutional" history and a local history, that is one rich in detail but one that does not put Cornwall Electric into a wider context. To her credit, Carter-Edwards does give an interesting and colourful account of electricity's introduction and development in this Ontario town. With more such local studies historians may be able to understand the process of industrial development and public regulation of one of modern society's vital commodities: electricity.

Unfortunately, some problems mar the book. Besides spelling and typing errors, there are several confusing passages. For example, in discussing referenda in 1919 and 1921 to renew the electrical company's franchise, the reader is not given the number of eligible voters, only the margin of defeat

or victory. Nor is the criteria for eligibility made clear: in one place it is residents who vote and in another ratepayers. Clarity would be served by completeness.

The most serious flaw in the book, however, is its company bias. The story of this electric utility's relations with the municipal council, its employees, the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission and the public power movement, is presented entirely from the vantage point of the company, leaving important questions unasked. Public power activists are dismissed as a few isolated "cranks" who enjoyed little community sport: a marginal labour group looking for a platform from which to promote itself; or naive householders and businessmen looking for cheap rates, but who had little regard for the profit motive as an incentive to efficiency.

The conditions that produced this privately-owned utility, in the Ontario sea of public ownership, deserve greater attention than the author gives them. She implies Cornwall chose private ownership because, due to greater efficiency, its rates were lower than those of Ontario Hydro. Cornwall was tempted to join the new Hydro system in 1912, lured like many Ontario municipalities by the promise of lower rates and excitement over "people's power" had the Commission made a firm offer. By the time the matter came up for discussion again in 1919 and 1921 — when referenda to renew the company's franchise produced heated discussion between Hydro and anti-Hydro forces — the Hydro system was coming to be seen as a huge monopoly, impervious to local control. As well, experience had by the 1920s shown that low rates offered to a municipality upon joining the system were not always maintained. At the time Cornwall was reasonably happy with its private electrical utility. So long as abundant hydro-electric resources and the threat of public ownership helped keep rates down, there was no reason to switch to Hydro. Although the author dutifully praises the company for its contributions to the city through promotion of local industrial development, its "commitment to service" and its cultural and charitable activities, these public relations gestures are not assigned their real significance. Clearly good relations with the city was a crucial factor in warding off public ownership.

Accounts of labour relations are badly one-sided. Cornwall strikes are depicted as upheavals generated by outside agitators and the company is portrayed as a wonderful place to work. Carter-Edwards neglects to note here that the electrical utility business was in the forefront of the twentieth century policy of promoting employees stability through good employee benefits. Cornwall Electric was not exceptional nor does she give any recognition to the union's role in creating a good work environment. The company was not alone.

The company's history also provides an excursion into the relationship of utilities and financial institutions. For many years, Cornwall Electric was owned by Sun Life, of Mon-

trepreneurial, the result, initially, of foreclosing on its mortgage with the Cornwall Electric Street Railway. This 1899 acquisition led by 1905 to amalgamation with Stormont Light and Power and the creation of Cornwall Electric. An unprofitable gas company was also purchased in the process to get rid of a rival.

The story of how Sun Life got into the utilities business is testimony both to the enthusiasm for electricity at the turn of the century and to its pitfalls. The electrical utility alone proved profitable and the company for many years was forced to subsidize a transit service that could neither be abandoned because it constituted a public service, nor be made profitable in part because Cornwall was not big enough to support it. Even as late as 1947 the fare remained at 5 cents because the company feared that people would walk rather than pay more.

Sun Life's dilemma shows the extent to which people had become dependent upon electricity and tended to see it as a public service. It also suggests that the issue of public vs. private ownership was not as important to the city as local control. Despite many efforts by Sun Life to unload the company, either on the city or private interests, it was not until a Kingston-based company made a serious offer to purchase that the city in 1972 finally took over the transit and electrical services.

Like most business histories, this book pays little attention to the domestic applications of electricity. No explanation is given as to why Cornwall Electric dropped out of the domestic appliance sales business as soon as stores began carrying these lines. This was clearly not the case with the Hydro towns, where Hydro Shops raised resentment among private dealers with their aggressive promotion of appliance sales. We are told that Cornwall Electric promoted electric ranges as early as 1919 (presumably so that it could get out of an unprofitable gas business) and that the number of electric ranges in Cornwall jumped from 4 in 1920 to 800 in 1930. Surely this was due to some vigorous promotion, aside from the "perception that electricity would soon replace gas for cooking." The author tells us no more. If women were involved in the promotion of domestic electrical applications in Cornwall, as elsewhere, the author likewise gives us no insight into it.

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Léonard, Jean-François and Jacques Léveillé. *Montreal after Drapeau*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1986. Pp. 134. Illustrations. \$29.95 cloth; \$14.95 paper.

This is a useful addition to the existing Canadian urban politics literature in English. The book is basically the translation of a series of articles written by Jean-François Léonard and Jacques Léveillé for *Le Devoir* during the last Montreal municipal election campaign. Given the general significance of the election — the end of the Jean Drapeau era — it is interesting to see the authors' analysis of the Montreal political climate. Léonard and Léveillé are very measured — they are realistic about the limited likelihood of Jean Doré bringing in substantial reforms, yet it is not a personalized denunciation of Doré as having sold out the earlier, more radical, promise of the Montreal Citizens' Movement. Rather, they feel that politics in Montreal is now dominated by a new middle class primarily concerned with its own interests and that this political alliance will fundamentally determine the political direction of the city. This does not preclude the possibility of actions favourable to the less advantaged but it sets limits on these actions. Certainly judging Doré's performance so far, the analysis seems well-founded.

The book is welcome in that it makes available in English the work of Léonard and Léveillé — two of the most important urban scholars in Québec — whose work is not sufficiently known in English-speaking Canada. This book helps to change this and for this reason alone, I hope it makes its way into university classrooms. The translation, done by Dimitri Roussopoulos, who also wrote a lengthy "Introduction," is very readable — it is clearly an advantage to have a translator who is a specialist in the area. While not a complete analysis of the political situation of Montreal, this is journalism of the highest order — thoughtful, well-presented and readable.

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Mormino, Gary Ross. *Immigrants on the Hill: Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986. Pp. xi, 289. Illustrations, tables, bibliography, index.

*Immigrants on the Hill* is an intensive examination of emigration and ethnicity at the local level, more specifically of Italians from Cuggiono in northern Italy to "the Hill" in St. Louis, Missouri from 1882 to the present. The book traces the emergence of a unique Italian neighbourhood, with "the Hill" taking a commanding place as one of the most stable, immobile and cohesive ethnic colonies in the United States. The author's intent is to transcend raw statistics and portray emigrants not as victims of a tragedy, but rather as agents of change and architects of their own destiny. To a considerable degree, this attempt is successful. Placing his study