

Reid and British Columbia politicians such as Harry H. Stevens are exposed as incompetent and racist; Prime Minister Borden and the Immigration Branch hierarchy do not fare much better.

Johnston tells a gripping story and for the most part is judicious in his interpretation. There are, however, some important questions that remain unanswered. Were, for example, the "illiterate and helpless" passengers of the *Komagatu Maru* really that committed to the goals of Gurdit Singh and other Sikh nationalists? Or were they merely used, and in a way contrary to their best interests? Johnston obviously believes that the confrontation strategy was necessary and he tends to dismiss the moderates within Vancouver's Sikh community who sought to find a compromise; indeed, in their response to Canadian immigration officials they are said to have displayed "servility, pessimism and indifference" (p. 14). But was the only option the "affirmative action" approach of Gurdit Singh and the revolutionary *Ghadr* (Mutiny) Party; and did "affirmative action" mean the use of force? Unfortunately, this crucial debate, which Gandhi so dominated, receives little attention. Johnston might also have continued his analysis of the attempts by British and Canadian security services to detect Sikh revolutionaries during World War I. A recent article on the security operations of the Royal North West Mounted Police has demonstrated that, after Hopkinson's assassination, Malcolm Reid did not merely disappear into "an upstairs office in the Vancouver building" (p. 129); rather, he continued to exert a powerful influence on security matters until the end of the war. These small criticisms do not diminish the high quality of Professor Johnston's book. At last many of the misconceptions about the *Komagatu Maru* incident can be safely laid to rest.

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ALAN F. J. ARTIBISE and GILBERT A. STELTER, eds. — *The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1979. Pp. iv, 383.

ALAN F. J. ARTIBISE and GILBERT STELTER. — *Canada's Urban Past. A Bibliography to 1980 and Guide to Canadian Urban Studies*. Vancouver and London: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp. xl, 396.

Canada's urban past has the makings of a history. This increasingly popular view is espoused by Artibise and Stelter in their sustained enterprise as editors and compilers of a lengthening series of volumes. In organizing and presenting the work of numerous scholars from various disciplines they encourage such thinking and invite consideration of how the interpretive task is served by their efforts. The two books which are the focus of this review comprise a collection of previously unpublished essays and a substantial bibliography supplemented by a guide to some major archival collections and sources.

Three themes make up the declared foci of the thirteen chapters and editorial introduction of *The Usable Urban Past*: the economic framework; politics and municipal government; and planning and the development process. The coverage is unequal in scale, one essay being devoted to the first theme, five to the second and seven to the third. Hence the subtitle, *Planning and Politics in the Modern City*. In the one essay, given pride of place, devoted to the economic framework within

which cities function as competitive and complementary units of an encompassing system, the urban geographer James Simmons outlines some basic concepts and offers tantalizing glimpses of the evidence and analysis required to substantiate the argument. His illustrations, confined to the post-1945 period, are out of temporal sync with the other essays which focus on the period before 1945.

Politics and municipal government for long have been a staple product of historians' labouring on the city. The theme provided an obvious point of entry for those who organized their historical interpretation around political events. The essays in this section bear strikingly little resemblance to the election-count school of urban history. Instead, they reflect a closer reading of the issues motivating urban politics and an enhanced interest in the social rather than political positions of the actors. Reform is a central concept, clearly identified in several of the essays whose authors offer a narrative account of the presentation of issues and proceed to assess those interests that the process was being used to serve. There is less attention devoted to the meaning of reform than to its implementation, and the concept remains hazy. James Anderson offers the most succinct statement on the contemporary meaning of the concept when he quotes from F. Underhill's writing. Reform has been an evanescent movement, fading from view to reappear at later times when its context and meaning vary significantly. There is, then, unease with work which focusses on plot and the cast of characters while neglecting to discuss the idea. Reform is illustrated most clearly by Shirley Spragge, who, in an essay in the third section of the book, lifts the veil of obscurity from housing reform in Toronto between 1900 and 1920 and offers an insightful critique of an avowedly failed endeavour.

The hands in control of municipal government and the levers which were theirs to manipulate provide the focus of three essays varying greatly in the scale of topic and the specificity of treatment. Terry Copp's brief essay on Montreal's municipal government crisis of the 1930s explores the web of interests with a stake in the city's governance and deftly traces the changes in circumstance which left the city powerless in its adversity.

Planning has long since been defined as an activity and a purpose by governments, so the essays on the third general theme of the book have greater clarity and focus than those preceding them. Perhaps for this reason, though, it is more difficult to assess the significance of planning to our historical understanding of the city as a formal procedure. How did the formalized process function, and what was its relation to avowed intentions? As the editors recognize in their introduction to this section, this is new ground for the historians' probe. They remind us, too, that planning is older than legislation, a theme developed in numerous essays in this part of the book. The Commission of Conservation receives a good deal of attention; the discussion of its principles and their origins and what it achieved highlights a general issue recurring throughout the book, and Canadian urban history: how do we understand the Canadian urban experience in relation to Britain and the United States? The question is crucial, for the evidence of shared experience and mutual awareness is overwhelming, at least from a Canadian viewpoint. Looking to the particular context of the early twentieth century, when the Commission existed, several authors clearly trace the influence in Canada both of American "city beautiful" ideas and of British "new towns" concepts. The evidence of our borrowing seems clear, but the significance of the whole effort remains to be evaluated. The idealism that was vented may have been one of the episode's more important and lasting contributions. Certainly, the ideals expressed early in the century carried through, refracting in new ways on contemporary issues. Peter Moore presents an especially felicitous demonstration of durable and recognizable ideals in his dissection of zoning and planning in Toronto from 1904 to 1970.

To read *The Usable Urban Past* is to be impressed by the grasp of the scholarship represented and also by how far the reach must yet extend. By contrast, the *Bibliography*, with its list of 7,054 entries, would seem to suggest an immense amount of research already contributed. If the messages appear contradictory, it is partly because the bibliography is exceedingly catholic in its inclusions, and offers no distinction between writing and research, Rudyard Kipling sharing space with Eric Lampard. The value of a bibliography, be it large or small, rests on its having well defined and clearly stated principles governing the selection of material, on its being well organized and accurate. The last two criteria are well-met. I detected few inaccuracies in spot checking, and the items are organized territorially by province and municipality. An opening general section of 1,097 entries is followed by briefer general categories for provinces and regions. There are three substantial indexes, and a useful section on outlets for publishing on urban themes and on major archival repositories of research materials.

Artibise and Stelter provide few clues to the principles governing their selection of entries. They offer good reasons for confining their bibliography to published items and for omitting to include government documents. The exception to the first generalization is the helpful inclusion of unpublished doctoral dissertations and masters' theses, and to the second their giving space to literature on policy proposals now of historic interest. What remains is a vast area of coverage. Checking the comprehensiveness of their coverage leads to baffling results. Names one expects to find in so long a list are absent: Charles Dickens and Mrs Jameson, for example. D. G. Creighton appears only as the author of a modest journal article on Macdonald and Kingston. Where is the spoor tracing the developing concept of metropolitanism without Creighton's contribution?

Less glaring omissions are not difficult to discover. I will offer two illustrations. By checking the entries given in the *Bibliography* for Calgary against those in the *Catalogue* of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Library, and confining the search to those listed in the Institute's publication under the heading, "Calgary-History", I found that less than one-half of the Glenbow listings were included in the 1981 publication. The Glenbow catalogue was published in 1973. How does one explain the selectivity? No discernible differences existed in terms of the date of publication or the nature of the items. Second, there is very little in the bibliography which is published in languages other than French or English, and very little published abroad. The *Bibliography* offers a view of what we Canadians are writing about ourselves in our own tongues. Granted, we may be more fascinated with ourselves than others are, but the selection presents an unfortunate distortion which is doubly regrettable considering the greater difficulty in locating foreign-language and foreign-published materials compared to domestic writing. The *Bibliography* is a curiously flawed document, seemingly broad and inclusive and yet selective and exclusive.

The two volumes reviewed here mark the effort among historians to organize a field of study focussing on the Canadian city. When the story of that history comes to be told Artibise and Stelter may well have earned by their important editorial initiatives the status of honoured midwives.

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