

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

**Patterns on the Land: Themes of Order and Wildness in Planning,
Calgary 1869 to 1966**

by

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ABSTRACT

A series of plans for the land, town, region and city anchor this study of planning discourse as it unfolds through one hundred years of Calgary's development. While each plan expresses the particular aspirations of its day, the ongoing practice of planning is shown to have been consistently structured around the effort to impose order on wildness. Although what was labeled wild and the techniques used by planners to impose order changed, the narrative structures underlying planning practice remained the same. The concepts of profit and productivity are demonstrated to have been inextricably inter-wound with the planner's mission to facilitate the spread of civilization.

Plans under study include: the Dominion Lands Survey, the Canadian Pacific Railway townsite plans, the City Beautiful Movement, regional planning, the general city plan, and urban renewal; a range that spans from the opening of the West for settlement to the climax of the Modern Movement.

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The notion of "wildness" (or, in its Latinate form, "savagery") belongs to a set of culturally self-authenticating devices which includes, among many others, the ideas of "madness" and "heresy" as well. These terms are used not merely to designate a specific condition or state of being but also to confirm the value of their dialectical antithesis "civilization," "sanity," and "orthodoxy," respectively. Thus, they do not so much refer to a specific thing, place, or condition as dictate a particular attitude governing a relationship between a lived reality and some area of problematical existence that cannot be accommodated easily to conventional conceptions of the normal or familiar.... In times of sociocultural stress, when the need for positive self-definition asserts itself but no compelling criterion of self-identification appears, it is always possible to say something like: "I may not know the precise content of my own felt humanity, but I am most certainly *not* like that," and simply point to something in the landscape that is manifestly different from oneself. This might be called the technique of ostensive self-definition by negation...If we do not know what we think "civilization" *is*, we can always find an example of what it is not.

Hayden White, "The Forms of Wildness" in Tropics of Discourse

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This thesis is about the efforts made by planners to impose a formal structure upon the relationship between civilization and wilderness. In examining the planning history of the region and then the city of Calgary it is clear that while the conceptual categories of order and wilderness, civilization and savagery have persisted, the physical settings associated with each term as well as the measures taken by planners to establish orderly landscapes differed considerably in each period. This thesis will examine the patterns of persistence and change in the work of those surveyors, town planners, and urban designers who sought to impose their particular visions of order upon the land, focusing particularly on the changing definitions of wilderness and civilization and the different strategies planners used to mediate between these extremes.

For some thirty years scholars have explored the idea of wildness, examining it as a human invention, arguing that "there is no perception of wilderness that does not take its meaning from whatever we believe civilization to be, just as no meaning accrues to the word wilderness unless we know its opposite, that is, the cultural norms which the "wild" has violated."¹ Their conclusion, stated succinctly by Roderick Nash in his seminal study Wilderness and the American Mind, has been that "Civilization created wilderness."² Of course the reverse is also true. As Hayden White noted in the epigraph to this paper, the concept of wilderness has also been used to clarify the meaning of civilization.³

The contrast between wilderness and civilization, town and country, city and nature is fundamental in our culture, but any attempt to investigate these themes is problematic in the light of considerable scholarship demonstrating the degree to which the meaning of these words is contingent, subjective and ever changing. That is, given the tendency to regard wilderness as "a state of mind", it is difficult to do more than let the term define itself: to accept as wilderness those places

¹ Patricia Jasen, Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario 1790-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 3.

² "Until there were fenced fields and walled cities 'wilderness' had no meaning." Roderick Nash, Wilderness And The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. xiii.

³ Hayden White, "The Forms of Wildness" in Tropics of Discourse (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 151-152.

people call wilderness.⁴

It was in effort to introduce some measure to the discussion that Roderick Nash proposed that wilderness be considered in "a spectrum of conditions or environments ranging from the purely wild on the one end to the purely civilized on the other--from the primeval to the paved...Wilderness and civilization become antipodal influences which combine in varying proportions to determine the character of an area. In the middle portions of the spectrum is the rural or pastoral environment (the ploughed) that represents a balance of the forces of nature and man."⁵

Examining how planners sought to define and emphasize the ends of this spectrum and how they have attempted to mediate between the extremes, whether by erecting fences and marking out boundaries and frontiers or by setting out a transitional or transcendental middle landscape able to integrate or supersede and resolve differences, was the practical point of departure for this study.

Calgary (as land, district, city, region and metropolis) serves as a common point of reference throughout, offering a body of resource material extending through various periods of development, from a time when the West was seen as wilderness and man as an intruder in a hostile world to the period of Megalopolis when much of North America was conceived of as a single, vast, sprawling interconnected urban region and nature was relegated to the leftover places. It is intriguing to note that, in spite of very real physical changes, Calgary has long been regarded as something of a frontier community, a place where civilization and wilderness intersect and collide. A study of planning at this location offers a unique opportunity to examine the way in which planners, as functionaries of society, have sought to define and mediate the boundaries between civilization and wilderness, the city and nature over an extended period of time in a variety of changing conditions.

The act of planning--of anticipating the future and setting forth the possible options for getting there--often carries with it the aura of scientific objectivity and technical expertise. However, any projection of the future, any selection of a

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

particular set of options from among the wide variety of choices truly available, inevitably involves decision-making. A careful examination of the manner in which problems are defined and in which constraints and possible alternatives are identified reveals persistent sets of value choices. In our society, constrained by a capitalist political economy and a democratic political system, the role of planning has been to create a built environment supportive of the existing social order, to organize the efficient development of the city and the region, to avoid crisis, and to achieve harmonious and steady growth.

A plan reflects much more than the aspirations and values of the individual planner. Whether planning is carried out for private corporations or public government agencies, it should be seen as

"... an aspect of the search for social control. Planning is not simply a disinterested hobby. It would not be undertaken were it not for the fact that someone, somewhere, wants the future to turn out in a way that it might not do so otherwise. It assumes that the normal course of events, let run with individual and institutional choices apart from those who plan, has implications that one does not approve...planning is never divorced from power. The aim of planning is not merely to carry out an interesting exercise... Those who wish to control the future wish not merely to know about it but also to have the capability of making it turn out the way they wish..."⁶

For this reason a planning document, possibly more than any other written text, articulates the ideology of dominant groups in the production of the built environment.⁷ In the broadest sense, planning in western society is concerned with the reproduction of the social order and the encouragement of steady growth and accumulation. As such it involves the effort made by civilization to extend its power over the wilderness and to stave off the threat of disorder. The objectives of capitalism are implicit in this effort. The transformation of raw land into property, the organization of the region for efficient production and distribution and the municipality to ensure the health of the work force and the smooth flow of goods and services, are inherently part of the Canadian planning experience and the process of extending order over both the land and the city. Plans are

⁶Samuel Hays, "Value Premises for Planning and Public Policy: The Historical Context" in Richard Andrews (ed.), Land In America (Lexington: D.C.Heath and Company, 1979, pp.150-151.

⁷Judith Kenny, "Portland's Comprehensive Plan as Text: The Fred Meyer Case and the Politics of Reading" in T.Barnes and J. Duncan ed., Writing Worlds: Discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 176.

intended to transform social and political ideas into physical form.⁸

The roots of planning, both as practice and as theory, must be sought in society's general understanding of man's place in the world and the nature of his relationship to his surroundings. Two frames of references are particularly relevant: the division between man and nature (the human and the not-human) and the distinction between order and wildness. The first distinction is fundamental to understanding the planner's role and source of power; the second gives purpose, direction and meaning to the plans themselves.

Mankind has always tended to see itself as both a part of nature and also as separated from it by virtue of having a soul and intellect. Clarence Glacken has traced the intellectual history of the environmental idea from the beginning of western thought through to the seventeenth century and concludes that no single model can capture the way in which Western man has conceived of himself in relation to the natural world.⁹ In each period it was possible to see three different strains of thinking: an awareness of the power of the environment to influence man's moral and social character, an awareness of the power of man as an agent able to make changes in his physical environment, and belief in a designed universe with man located at the summit of creation. Prior to the seventeenth century, Western tradition emphasized the union of man with nature as much as the contrast of man and nature. The early modern period, however, was marked by a shift in conception of man's place in the world. Technological advances, the systematic study of the natural world, and voyages of exploration to new lands increased man's ability to manipulate his environment and his sense of confidence. It seemed possible that man could, with systematic study, "attain the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire to the effecting of all things possible." By tradition the roots of planning theory are to be found here, in the Enlightenment belief that the submission of the whole of the natural world to careful and systematic observation, measurement and analysis would reveal the laws of Nature.

Planning historian John Friedman locates the "creation myth" of planning in

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Clarence Glacken, Traces on the Rhodian Shore (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

the writings of the Comte de Saint Simon (1760-1825) whose vision of a body social ministered to by scientist-physicians according to society's "organic laws."¹⁰ It was St. Simon's disciple August Comte who transformed this vision into a systematic enterprise by calling for the creation of a "social physics" that would lay bare those laws which regulated the social development of the human race. By proposing that human history be studied as a natural phenomenon utilizing the methods of the objective scientific investigation, Comte lay the foundations of a positivist approach to environmental planning. Comte wrote that "There can be no doubt that man's study of nature must furnish the only basis of his actions upon nature; for it is only by knowing the laws of phenomena and thus being able to foresee them, that we can, in active life, set them to modify one another to our advantage... from science comes prevision; from prevision comes action."¹¹ After learning the "invariable laws"¹² of nature scientists would devise the statics and dynamics of a "social physics" that could be both orderly (insofar as the conditions of society existed in a permanent state of harmony) and progressive (insofar as society continued to develop towards ever higher states of understanding). Science would generate knowledge not only about what was and is but also about what ought to be.¹³ From perfection of knowledge would come perfection of the world.¹⁴

If the possibility of planning emerged from the view of the world as an orderly mechanism, the motive for planning came from the "lust for improvement"¹⁵ that characterized the Enlightenment. Comte himself noted "the constant tendency of Man to act upon Nature, in order to modify it for his own advantage" and attributed it to "the rank which man holds in the system of Nature, the result of facts which are not themselves susceptible of explanation."¹⁶ The object of planning, however, was clear. It aimed at "a collective development of this natural tendency, so as to give the highest possible

¹⁰ John Friedmann, Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 52.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 71.

¹² Patrick Gardiner, Theories of History (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 76.

¹³ Friedmann, p. 71.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁵ Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: The Science of Freedom (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), p. 321.

¹⁶ Gardiner, p. 80.

efficiency to this useful action."¹⁷

The power of the planner lay "in the intelligent apprehension of these laws through observation, his forecast of their effects and the power which he thus obtains of subordinating them to the desired end" provided that he employs them "in accordance with their nature."¹⁸ Although man remained at the mercy of the forces of nature, he could aspire through study and systematization to a degree of control over his fate and hence to improvement in the human condition.

It is intriguing that the disciplines of modern history as well as planning claim Comte among their founding fathers. His social physics effectively made them two sides of the same coin: because it was possible to explain historical change in terms of the operation of fundamental social and intellectual forces, scientific historians could catalogue the facts of the past and study them to determine the laws of nature while scientific planners could then apply these laws to guide the development of society in an orderly way towards the best possible future. Implicit was the notion of an orderly and harmonious universe operating according to a set of fixed and ultimately knowable laws.

In many ways, then, it is possible to see planning as the epitome of the Enlightenment mentality, combining belief in an orderly universe with a belief in man's ability, through study and reason, to understand and successfully manipulate the laws of nature to improve the human condition. This vision of a scientifically based planning reached its zenith in the decades immediately following World War Two, when mankind was widely regarded as having attained control of his own destiny and technique was seen to have supplanted Nature as the milieu of modern man. In his keynote address to the American Institute of Planners' Fiftieth Year Consultation, the biologist René Dubos wrote that

A scientific philosophy of mankind can be derived from the knowledge that man's nature encompasses two aspects that are radically different, yet complementary. On the one hand, *Homo sapiens* has existed as a species with a well-defined genetic endowment for some 50,000 years. On the other hand, man has continued to unfold his latent potentialities ever since that time...Since man has much freedom in selecting and creating his environment, as well as his ways of life, he can determine by such

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Gardiner, p. 81.

decision what he and his descendants will become...The existentialist faith that "man makes himself" implies of course the willingness to decide and the courage to be. But it also demands that action be guided by a deep scientific knowledge of man's nature...In this light, man can truly "make himself" consciously and willfully. He has the privilege of responsible choice for his destiny--probably the noblest, and a unique, attribute of the human condition.¹⁹

Similar views were widely held: in the United Nations Secretary-General U Thant declared that

The truth, the central stupendous truth, about developed countries today is that they can have--in anything but the shortest run--the kind and scale of resources they decide to have...It is no longer resources that limit decision. It is the decision that makes the resources.²⁰

In the August 1958 issue of the popular American magazine Better Homes and Gardens a medical scientist asked "Why Can't We Live Forever?"²¹ He elaborated "We have confidence now that medical science will ultimately find ways to prevent infectious disease of man and his domestic animals and plants. In fact, as far as human disease is concerned, this phase of infectious disease research is already in what might be called the "mopping up" period...Medical experience has taught us that when we fully understand a chemical event, we are able to manipulate and alter or modify it....Aging may prove to be no more fatal or inevitable than smallpox, polio, pneumonia, or tuberculosis."²² From the realm of theoretical physics the renown Werner Heisenberg proposed that "technology can be considered as a large-scale biological process" such that "many of our technical apparatuses will perhaps in the future belong as inescapably to man as the snail's shell does to the snail and the spider's web to

¹⁹ René Dubos, "Man Adapting : His Limitations and Potentialities" in William R. Ewald (ed.), Environment for Man: The Next Fifty Years (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), pp. 24-25. Commissioned on behalf of the American Institute of Planners as part of a two year long consultation looking ahead into the next fifty years, 1967-2017, in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute.

²⁰ R.J. Forbes (ed.), The Conquest of Nature: Technology and Its Consequences (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. vii.

²¹ John Burke (ed.), The New Technology and Human Values (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1966), pp. 299-300, 304.

²² Ibid.

the spider."²³

This new view of man's ability to remake both his environment and himself was no less apparent in Canada, where the academic and "pop guru" Marshall McLuhan declared that

The electronic age is distinct from any other age in having extended the human nervous system itself...The immediate extensions of our nervous system by telegraph and telephone and radio and television not only usher us into a period when the codifying and moving of information supersede all other tasks in scope and in the creation of wealth, but they involve us totally in one another's lives....they constitute a new man-made environment...²⁴

Science had magnified man's abilities to the point where the environment once revered as given by God was seen as secondary in importance to the world made by man-the-scientist. The feeling that mankind now lived in a world of its own making found corresponding expression in academia when "wilderness" came to be seen as a cultural construct and the idea of nature to contain "an extra-ordinary amount of human history."²⁵ That is, the transformation of wilderness from a place to an idea not only paralleled certain changes in man's relationship to the material world, it was also the ultimate expression of those changes. The drive to improve and control the environment can be seen not only in man's increasing ability to manipulate the external forms of nature but also in the attempt to abolish nature altogether as a fixed category. Certainly, the notion that the meaning of the wilderness lay within man was not an entirely new one. (Thoreau alluded to it over one hundred and fifty years ago: "It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brain and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires that dream."²⁶) But the reduction of nature and wilderness to idea rather than physical place remains a particularly modern event.

The use of science as a tool to control nature to human advantage was clear in the planning history of the Canadian West: the surveyors' lines and other arts

²³ Forbes, p. ix.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁵ Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature" in Problems in Materialism and Culture (London: Verso, 1980), p.67.

²⁶ cited in Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), p. 578.

of civilization were employed to "push back the wilderness,"²⁷ subdividing the unknown and unmarked territories to lay the foundations of an agrarian society; later the railroader and the agriculturist aided by science and technology dreamed of converting the empty lands to a new Garden of Eden; the expert town planner proposed to operate upon the diseased body of the city, cutting out dead tissue and straightening roads to allow the lifeblood of transportation, communication and commerce to flow freely; the technocrat administered zoning by-laws to balance the competing demands of industry, domesticity and good health; the scientific urban planner used grids and ratios to measure the good (or ill) health of the inner city on a block by block basis as a prelude to recommending the demolition of the chaotic inner core.

Then rather suddenly (or so it seemed), in the late 1960's and 1970's, a crisis arose. The promises of science had not so much failed as revealed unintended and unwanted consequences.²⁸ The once "immutable laws of human progress" seemed less fixed. Unexpected results, combined with certain failures of promise, combined to call into question the premises of planning. Suddenly it seemed that "the constant flow of interlocked events has accelerated to a point where our understanding of the world actually seems to be decreasing."²⁹ Although the key figures of the Enlightenment had not claimed to hold all of the answers necessary to improve the human condition, they were confident that science would provide them in time. However, Enlightenment science and planning were rooted in a particular view of the world as a harmonious and indeed orderly place operating according to fixed laws of nature, which could, through the application of a scientific method, be discovered and utilized.

²⁷ Sanford Fleming, "The Early Days of the Canadian Institute", Transactions of The Canadian Institute, Vol. VI, 1898-1899, p. 11.

²⁸ For example, the work of Rachel Carson was also widely publicized at the time. Carson shared the view that "within the moment of time represented by the present century ... one species--man--acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world" but focused attention on the dangers of pollution and chemical pesticides "used in man's war against nature." "Some would-be architects of our future look toward a time when it will be possible to alter the human germ plasm by design. But we may easily be doing so now by inadvertence, for many chemicals, like radiation, bring about gene mutations. It is ironic to think that man might determine his own future by something so seemingly trivial as the choice of an insect spray." from Rachel Carson, Silent Spring (1962) excerpted in Jay Stein, Classic Readings in Urban Planning (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995), pp. 471, 472.

²⁹ Friedmann, p. 73.

Planning depended upon the idea of nature as a self regulating mechanism, and the distinction between a found state and an ideal one. Without the positivist vision of science progressively extending the control over Nature by providing the tools needed to control human destiny, the possibility of planning was cast in doubt.

In considering the collapse of planning as a visionary undertaking it is interesting to examine the place traditionally allotted to that which resisted the ordering of the scientist, that which sat in antithesis to the orderly growth of civilization, namely, that which bore the label "wilderness". The illusion of order was obtained by casting out, suppressing or repressing certain ideas and action, these relocated, or re-emerge under the rubric of "wildness".

When Glacken examined the relationship between nature and culture in western thought, he had focused on a particular pair of ideas frequently set in opposition to one another. Ten years after Traces on the Rhodian Shore Hayden White offered a different interpretation, emphasizing the distinction between order and wildness rather than the division between nature and culture as the key to understanding civilized man's relationship with his environment. White proposed that notion of wilderness heading into the early modern period received ideas from both biblical and classical sources which tended to conflate the idea of wilderness as a moral state with the idea of wilderness as a place.

In examining the evolution of the idea of wilderness and the notion of a Wild Man, White began in Eden, where the universe was conceived to be perfectly ordered and harmonious in its parts.³⁰ In the biblical narrative confusion and sin were introduced into the Edenic state by Adam's sin. Man was expelled from Eden and sent out into a world that suddenly appeared hostile and hard. Nature assumed the aspect of a chaotic and violent enemy against which man must struggle to win back his proper humanity or godlike nature. But, White stressed, in Hebrew thought the fall was merely that event which explained the human condition. It did not create an ontological flaw at the heart of humanity. All men were not made wild by Adam's fall. Instead wildness was that state which resulted when G-d withdrew his blessing from a man, an animal, a people or the land in general. The result was a fall into degeneracy below that of "nature"

³⁰ the following paragraphs summarize White's argument on pp. 158-162.

itself. At that point the relationship of the community to the accursed thing was unambiguous: it was to be exiled, isolated, and avoided at all costs, at least until such time as the curse was removed and the state of blessedness restored.

Ultimately White asserted that the distinction between man and animal, though fundamental to Hebrew thinking, was less significant than the distinction between those things which enjoyed the blessing of G-d and those which did not. Animal nature was not in itself wild; it was merely not human. Wildness itself was a moral condition and the forms and the attributes of wildness were the manifestation of a specific relationship to G-d. It was not only the what of a sin, but the where as well.³¹

White proposed that Greek thinkers regarded the Wild Man in a somewhat different way. Like the Jews, the Greeks "set the life of men who lived under some law over and against that of men without the law, the order (cosmos) of the city against the turbulence (chaos) of the countryside."³² Only those men who had attained to the condition of politicality could hope to realize a *full* humanity. "Not *all* within the city could hope to become fully human: women, slaves, and businessmen were specifically denied that possibility ... but *no one outside* the city had the slightest chance at all of *fully* realizing his humanity: the conditions of a life unregulated by law precluded it."³³

However, White also identified a second stream of Greek thought as critical to the modern use of the term wild. This was the pagan tradition in which wild, erotic creatures seek out physical pleasure, usually in relatively peaceful mountain meadows and pools. White suggested that the redemption of the image of the Wild man began with the recovery of classical culture and the revival of humanist values in the late Middle Ages. The malignant side of wildness drew upon the Hebrew notion of wildness as a curse, the loss of the blessing from G-d. Meanwhile the pagan images of erotic freedom, lust, violence, perversion and deceit, although clearly reprehensible and outside the bounds of civilized society, began to attract a certain degree of envy, particularly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the social bonds of medieval culture

³¹ Ibid., p. 159.

³² Ibid., p. 169.

³³ Ibid.

began to disintegrate. White proposed that the association of the Wild Man with pagan images of erotic freedom created the imaginative reserves necessary for the cultivation of a socially revolutionary primitivism in the early modern era, when the Wild Man became a model of a free humanity "whose *way of life* was the repudiation of all the accumulated *values* of civilization."³⁴

By the end of the Middle Ages, the Wild Man had become endowed with two distinct personalities, each consonant with one of the possible attitudes men might assume with respect to society and nature.³⁵ If one looked upon nature as a horrible world of struggle and society, as a condition which, for all its shortcomings, was still preferable to the natural state, then he would continue to view the Wild Man as the antitype of a desirable humanity, as a warning. If on the other hand, one took a vision of nature from the cultivated countryside and saw society, with all its struggle, as a fall away from natural perfection, then he might be inclined to populate that nature with wild men whose function was to serve as the antitype of social existence.

According to White, these two views carry forward as a primitivism which seeks to idealize any group as yet unbroken to civilizational discipline and an archaism tends toward the idealization of real or legendary remote ancestors, either wild or civilized. Both repress the desire to escape present obligations, but each conceives of the "nature-in-general" which serves as the background against which imagined heroes act in a different way. The archaist image of nature is shot through with violence and turbulence. It is the nature of the jungle "red in tooth and claw" where only the strongest survive. The primitivists' nature is, by contrast, Arcadian and peaceful. It is the place where the lion lies down with the lamb, the world of the enclosed garden and the picnic.

In the early modern period, as part of the general movement of secularization and as a function of humanism, White proposed that the benign conception of the Wild Man was disengaged from the malignant one, and image of wildness separated from the essence of wildness to become available for limited use as an instrument of social criticism.³⁶

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

During this transitional early modern period the wild man was "despatialized" and fictionalized. Knowledge was extended into those parts of the world which "though known about (but not actual known), had originally served as the physical stage onto which the "civilized" imagination could project its fantasies and anxieties."³⁷ It was then necessary to relocate the Wild Man beyond the confines of civilization, whether in space or time (eg. the distant past)--to put him off to any place sufficiently obscure as to allow him to appear as whatever thinkers wanted to make of him when drawing conceptual distinctions between, for example, the savage mind and its civilized counterpart or a fallen humanity and the noble savage.

As the places of physical wilderness were brought under control, the process of progressive despatialization was accompanied by a compensatory process of psychic interiorization. From biblical times to the present, the notion of the Wild Man was associated with the idea of the wilderness--the desert, forest, jungle and mountains--those parts of the physical world that had not yet been domesticated or marked out for domestication in any significant way. Gradually the relatively comforting idea of a Wild Man who might exist "out there" and could be contained by some kind of physical action was replaced by the notion of a Wild Man clamoring for release within us all.³⁸

During the nineteenth century, primitive man came to be regarded less as an ideal than as an example of *arrested* humanity, than as that part of the species which had failed to raise itself above a dependency upon nature. For the Victorian Mind primitive peoples had not fallen from an ideal state, instead they represented the original condition, an example of what western man had been at one time and what he might become once more if he failed to cultivate the virtues and disciplines which had allowed him to escape from nature.

In modern times the term wildness became a psychological category designating certain form of sickness or personality malfunction. "Wild" was now a potentiality lurking in the heart of every individual, whether primitive or civilized. It is his or her possible incapacity to come to terms with this socially provided world.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 178-180.

For particular historical reasons, then, nature was sometimes seen as continuous with civilization and all the world as orderly while sometimes nature was seen as that place which resists civilization. As such, wilderness was given the potential to revitalize civilization as well as to overthrow it. In either case, Nature could be cast as a vehicle of reform.

Ultimately White claims that the tendency to view mankind in dialectical terms, by sorting people into mutually exclusive classes such as the "natural" and the "artificial" provides the conceptual tools needed to gain a critical focus on the conditions of our own civilized existence. "By playing with the extremes, we are forced to the mean; by torturing one concept with its antithesis, we are driven to closer attention to our own perceptions; by manipulating the fictions of artificiality and naturalness, we gradually approximate a truth about a world that is as complex and changing as our possible ways of comprehending that world."³⁹

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how such themes, play themselves out in the field of planning by examining how planners, in their effort to improve the human condition by giving structure to man's physical environment, were influenced by paradigms of order and wildness.

Literature Review

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an overview of relevant scholarship. In examining the ways in which different scholars have configured the relationship between wilderness and civilization it should be noted that American and Canadian historians have tended to come at the issue from opposite ends, with Americans focusing their attention on idea of Nature and Canadians on metropolitan relations and the extension of civilization over wilderness as the key to national identity. Since both of these formulations bear on the subject of this thesis, writers presenting a variety of positions will be examined.

One of the first books to examine wilderness as an idea rather than a physical place was the Roderick Nash study cited earlier. Nash based his book on the observation that "wilderness was the basic ingredient of American

³⁹ Ibid., p. 177.

civilization."⁴⁰ He presented wilderness as a concept resonant with Old World meanings related to the etymological derivation of the word as the place of wild beasts.⁴¹ When the Puritans left England and began their "errand into the wilderness," they instinctively understood that "the control and order their civilization imposed on the natural world was absent".⁴² Wilderness was the unknown and uncontrolled "other" to be controlled in oneself and banished from the community. Physically reducing the amount of wilderness measured man's advance towards a state of civilization.

Nash suggested that an appreciation of the aesthetic and ethical values of wilderness began with the growth of cities after second and third generation Americans had achieved some distance from the physical wilderness that had at first characterized their surroundings. Attitudes towards nature evolved gradually, shifting from fear, to ambivalence, to glorification with the emergence of a Transcendentalist appreciation of Nature (with a capital "N") as a source of spiritual strength and purity. The emergence of a popular cult of the wilderness at the turn of the century, culminated in the demand for wilderness preservation and the struggle to establish America's national parks, reflecting the growing appreciation of wilderness as "necessity"⁴³ where "thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people"⁴⁴ could go to recuperate and recreate themselves through contact with a deeper force: "something older and more stable than what controls our normal, hurried lives."⁴⁵ In that Nash contends that wilderness appreciation emerged and gained strength in direct response to urbanization, the entire environmental movement is presented as following logically from increased urbanization until a fully developed environmental philosophy that valued wilderness primarily in counterpoint to civilization had taken shape by the 1970's.

Nash's study ended, however, not with the high note of wilderness appreciation but with the "irony of victory."⁴⁶ Americans, it seemed, were about

⁴⁰ Nash, p. xi.

⁴¹ ibid., p. 2.

⁴² ibid., p. 7.

⁴³ ibid., p. 319.

⁴⁴ ibid.

⁴⁵ ibid., p. 338.

⁴⁶ ibid., p. 384.

to love the wilderness to death.⁴⁷ In examining the modern threats to wilderness Nash pointed to decentralization as well as creeping urbanization. The pastoral vision of a garden-earth with humanity settled on 100 acre homesteads scattered throughout the hemisphere "may in fact be the worst of both worlds, lacking both elk and computers."⁴⁸ Instead Nash proposed that concentrating people in cities was the best way to preserve the wilderness. This notion of a managed wildness and correspondingly of a managed civilization lay at the center of the plan for the future Nash set out at the conclusion of his book. At the outset then, Nash argued that "the story of the Garden and its loss embedded into Western thought the idea that wilderness and paradise were both physical and spiritual opposites."⁴⁹ At the end he asserted that strengthening one end of the continuum was necessary to preserve the other.

It is intriguing to note that during the same years Nash was studying the centrality of the wilderness ideal in the American mind, another scholar was producing an equally convincing study of America as an idealized middle landscape balanced between nature and civilization. According to Leo Marx in The Machine in the Garden⁵⁰ the archetypal myth of withdrawal and regeneration was given new strength with the creation of America. The Puritan journey was not an errand into the wilderness but an act of withdrawal from the city (the locus of power and politics) and the attempt to begin anew in nature.⁵¹ In the same way that the pastoral landscape idealized since Virgil was balanced between civilization and nature, American settlement was balanced between the Old World and the frontier wilderness.

Marx presented the pastoral as a fundamentally dialectical mode of perception, rooted in a conflict between civilization and nature and in the existence of an idealized herdsman/shepherd/watcher able to transcend both realms. The power of the pastoral came not just from its spatial symbolism as a

⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that the book itself has benefited from the growing appreciation of wilderness that it documents: in addition to its general popularity (it had already run to three editions and nineteen reprintings by 1982) Wilderness and the American Mind was listed in 1981 by the L.A. Times as among the 100 most influential books in the past quarter century.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 384.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 15

⁵⁰ Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford, 1964).

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 20.

middle landscape but also from its vulnerability. The most successful works of pastoral literature offered not merely the simple affirmation of a pleasing scenery. They also called into question the illusion of peace and harmony through the introduction of a counter force. In the case of America the counter force was change, progress and technology, often symbolized by the steam engine.

Marx proposed that two ideologies have dominated America's world view: progress and the pastoral. In the early years of the country's existence intellectuals were able to reconcile what might have been seen as conflicting ideologies because expansionary behavior and attitudes were considered the necessary means to creating the garden in the midst of the New World. It was possible to believe that the initial conquest of nature would in turn lead to more harmonious relationship with nature.

The coming of industrialization and the closing of the frontier (the filling in of the middle ground) destroyed the possibility of the two ideologies co-existing, firstly because the world of nature represented in America by the frontier no longer existed and secondly because the notion of progress (defined by Marx as the "preordained expansion of human knowledge and power") had become overwhelming. In the face of the machine's increasing domination of the visible world, the ideal of the middle landscape had become obsolete and unrealizable. Business elites and politicians were able to reconcile what might have been seen as an intrusion into the garden by adapting the rhetoric of technological sublime or by letting go of the pastoral vision altogether and embracing an ethic of progress. Others retreated into the empty imagery of a pleasing landscape, abandoning the ideal of balance. In the end Marx proposed that the desirability of the pastoral and the conflict between the pastoral and progress remain as unresolved root conflicts in American culture.⁵² He suggested that it is this vision which fuels suburban growth on the one hand and primitivism on the other, as people seek to satisfy their urge to withdraw from civilizations' growing power and complexity.⁵³

Marx proposed that the pastoral ideal of withdrawal from the world followed by a new beginning in a fresh green landscape has been used to define the

⁵² Ibid., p. 9.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 8-11

meaning of America ever since the age of discovery. Nash offered a similar claim for wilderness as "the basic ingredient of American civilization."⁵⁴ In both cases, nature, whether in the form of wilderness or rural landscape, was opposed to civilization in defining a national consciousness.

In Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth⁵⁵ Henry Nash Smith, convincingly demonstrated the lingering presence of both ideas in American literature (popular and elite) and their power to influence behavior, government policy and historiography. In particular Smith noted the influence of the wilderness frontier in the work of American historian Frederick Jackson Turner and argued that Turner's contention that the "existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward explain American development,"⁵⁶ was the natural outgrowth of the themes of wilderness and the myth of the garden which had echoed through the American culture for generations. (Indeed, both the Roderick Nash and the Leo Marx studies should be understood as emerging from within this same intellectual tradition.)

Ultimately, Smith proposed that notions such as Turner's view of American democracy as born of the free land were not adequate instruments for a world dominated by industry, urbanization, and international conflict. Agrarian philosophy and the agrarian myth affirmed an admirable set of values "but they ceased very early to be useful in interpreting American society as a whole because they offered no intellectual apparatus for taking account of the industrial revolution."⁵⁷ In spite of this the image of wilderness, the garden, the yeoman persist and continue to influence attitudes, popular culture and government policy. (As examples Smith pointed to the special status accorded to agriculture in federal legislation, isolationism in American foreign policy, and the tendency to stigmatize the West as "uncivilized".)

Smith, however, saw a vital social role for such myths: "men cannot engage in purposive group behavior--without images which simultaneously express

⁵⁴ Nash, p. xi.

⁵⁵ Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950, reissued 1970).

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 250.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 259.

collective desires and impose coherence on the infinitely numerous and infinitely varied data of experience. These images are never, of course, exact reproductions of the physical and social environment. They cannot motivate and direct action unless they are drastic simplifications, yet if the impulse toward clarity of form is not controlled in some process of verification, symbols and myths can become dangerous by inciting behavior grossly inappropriate to the given historical situation.¹⁵⁸ That is, the ideas may linger on to give false direction to future generations.

More recent scholarship has attempted to overturn the division between wilderness and civilization implicit in interpretations that rely upon the frontier wilderness and the pastoral garden as driving themes in American culture, offering new models for understanding the relationship of man and nature in America. In Landscape and Memory Simon Schama rejected the polarization of wilderness and civilization implicit in traditional approaches. Instead he claimed that "...it seems to me that neither the frontier between the wild and the cultivated, nor those that lie between the past and the present, are so easily fixed. Whether we scramble the slopes or ramble the woods, our Western sensibilities carry a bulging backpack of myth and recollection."⁵⁹

Schama built his narrative around "moments of recognition...when a place suddenly exposes its connections to an ancient and peculiar vision of the forest, the mountain, or the river. A curious excavator of traditions stumbles over something protruding above the surface of the commonplaces of contemporary life. He scratches away, discovering bits and pieces of a cultural design that seems to elude coherent reconstitution but which leads him deeper into the past."⁶⁰ Each chapter took the form of an excavation "beginning with the familiar, digging down through layers of memories and representations toward the primary bedrock, laid down centuries or even millennia ago, and then working upward again toward the light of contemporary recognition."⁶¹ In this way Schama proposed to reveal the endurance of nature myths in western culture and their ongoing power to shape modern institutions.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. x.

⁵⁹ Schama, p. 574.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

Schama's presentation was quite captivating and certainly established the richness of western tradition of involvement with nature. He failed, however, to establish exactly how social memory might work beyond the initial flash of recognition and the metaphor of the backpack. How are these images and memories transmitted from generation to generation? After all the book itself is the result of research, not memory or hypnotherapy. If these images were barely operational for Schama before beginning his research, how much do they actually influence the actions of the majority? How does one measure the weight of tradition operating in any one case? Even in Schama's text the chain of connection is often traced in the behavior of a series of eccentric individuals rather than in the mainstream of society. Thus while Schama traces a rich tradition of landscape imagery, one must continue to ask to what degree is this a living tradition?

The historian William Cronon has also objected to the separation of man and nature implicit in many theories of American history, particularly to the manner in which the wilderness has come to symbolize the "unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization."⁸² Cronon asserted that the polarization of nature and humanity has resulted in an oddly dualistic vision, that places mankind entirely outside the natural world. Following such premises to their logical conclusion has led radical environmentalists to a tautology that "gives us no way out: if wild nature is the only thing worth saving, and if our mere presence destroys it, then the sole solution to our own unnaturalness, the only way to protect sacred wilderness from profane humanity, would seem to be suicide."⁸³

Rejecting such extremism, Cronon proposed that wilderness "far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity... is quite profoundly a human creation--indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history. It is not a pristine sanctuary where the last remnant of an untouched, endangered, but still transcendent nature can for at least a little while longer be encountered without the contaminating taint of civilization. Instead, it is a product of that civilization, and could hardly be

⁸² William Cronon (ed.), Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), p. 80.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 83.

contaminated by the very stuff of which it is made."⁶⁴

These ideas inspired his historical analysis of Chicago and the Great West, titled Nature's Metropolis.⁶⁵ Here Cronon rejected the American tendency to "see city and country as separate places, more isolated from each other than connected."⁶⁶ He offered instead that "the central story of the nineteenth century West was that of an expanding metropolitan economy creating ever more elaborate and intimate linkages between city and country"⁶⁷ and argued that the story of the Great West was to be found, not in the pastoral agrarian landscape, but on the urban frontier.

The city that had grown rich by exploiting nature came to be seen as a wholly human creation because the practices of capitalism (many of which had been developed in Chicago) served to obscure the links between the city and its hinterland. Cronon traced this theme repeatedly: in the emergence of grain elevators and grading systems that severed the link between the farmer's sack of wheat and the physical commodity of grain; in the subsequent emergence of central marketing broads and commodity trading that further transformed grain into capital; in the disassembly lines of the meat packing industry that systematized the transmutation of animal carcasses into packaged goods and reduced geography (the problem of getting the meat to market) to a problem in industrial management; in the lumber yards that stood as an "immense city within a city"⁶⁸ on the banks of the South Branch River. The products of the countryside allowed the city to grow while the demands of the city altered its surrounding landscape, dictating the construction of fences and roadways, the cultivation of new species and the destruction of old ones. Above all the relationship depended upon the magic of the railroad which opened "a corridor between two worlds that would remake each other."⁶⁹ The development of the West was rooted in the "twin birth of city and hinterland. Neither was possible without the other."⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

⁶⁵ William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. xvi.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. xv.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 167.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 264.

Cronon contended that city and countryside emerged from the same past and shared the same values: "Regarding them as distinct and separable obscured their indispensable connections. Each had created the other, so their mutual transformation in fact expressed a single system and a single history."⁷¹ For Cronon the idea that "the place where we are is the place where nature is not"⁷² is a delusion: "We all live in the city. We all live in the country."⁷³ The realities of urban existence emerge, not from the poetic contrast of wilderness and civilization, but from the material links and cultural interchange that bind the citizens of the country with those of the city. Because of this people cannot retreat from the city to the county and they cannot use nature to cure the city. Only by recognizing the true interconnection of apparently separate realms can modern man exercise a measure of control over his destiny.

Although Cronon's approach was novel in the context of American historiography, these themes were not new in the context of Canadian historiography.⁷⁴ In fact Canadian historians had been much more inclined to emphasize the metropolitan rather than the frontier as the formative factor in Canadian identity, asserting first that continued political, economic, social and cultural connections with Europe were critical in directing Canadian development and, later, that ongoing patterns of metropolitanism within the country had served to strengthen its inherent tendency towards regionalism.

Ramsay Cook has proposed that, beginning with Harold Innis in the nineteen twenties, a whole generation of Canadian historians tended to view "the history of Canada as the triumph of central over the frontier forces"⁷⁵ and use their work "to show the extent to which Canada's development and survival was dependent upon the maintenance of order at the center rather than liberty on the frontiers."⁷⁶ Overall, the pattern "has been seen as one whereby the central authority has reached out to integrate new territories into established patterns,"⁷⁷ and the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 368-369.

⁷² Cronon (ed.), *Uncommon Ground*, p. 17.

⁷³ Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, p. 385.

⁷⁴ Cronon himself has made this observation. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁷⁵ Ramsay Cook, "Frontier and Metropolis" in *The Maple Leaf Forever: Essays on Nationalism and Politics in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 171, 172.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

frontier was seen to have been "opened and developed not by rugged individuals but by government sponsored expansionism and entrepreneurs in search of resources to exploit."⁷⁸ Cook proposed that this interpretative stance has colored the full range of Canadian historiography as thoroughly as the emphasis upon the presence of the wilderness frontier as the motivating force in American destiny had colored the historiography of that country. In effect, Cook argued that Canadian historiography tended to "stand Turner on his head,"⁷⁹ emphasizing the impact of organized society (ie.civilization) upon the frontier (ie.wilderness) rather than the opposite.

Thus the comments of Donald Creighton in a radio interview might be seen as typical of the Canadian perspective on the issue:

Fox: Has the fact that we've had a western frontier in Canada tended to clash with these ideas that we've imported from Europe?

Creighton: I don't think it clashed because I don't think the frontier has been that important in Canadian history. I think the Americans had a frontier. I think they made an enormous amount of it. They have even created an historical theory on it which they call "The Frontier Thesis" and by that historical theory they ascribe to the frontier the greatest formative influence in American history. I don't think the frontier in Canada has played any such part and I think that however useful the concept may be in the United States ...it has only a very limited relevance to Canada.⁸⁰

Insofar as historians in Canada responded directly to Turner's Frontier Thesis, they generally considered it to have underestimated the persistence of European institutions and traditions in the New World.⁸¹

The challenges of the frontier approach to Canadian history were taken up most directly by J.M.S. Careless, who proposed to offset its shortcomings by paying more attention to the role of urban centers in the development of the

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁸⁰ Michael S. Cross, The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), p. 39.

⁸¹ see also Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 175.

nation.⁸² According to Careless, metropolitanism was the neglected side to frontier expansion, for behind the unfolding frontier lay "the impelling, directing power of cities."⁸³

The metropolitan relationship as Careless saw it is one of "spheres within spheres,"⁸⁴ with cities and towns linked with and subordinated to more dominant metropolitan centers. It "is a chain, almost a feudal chain of vassal age, wherein one city may stand tributary to a bigger center and yet be the metropolis of a sizable region of its own."⁸⁵ Initially metropolitan power was exerted from outside the region, but eventually the principal frontier bases rise up to become influential urban centers in themselves as their own trade hinterlands developed. The frontier, then, existed merely as a stage within the enduring association of metropolises and hinterlands. While it was "a truism--if no less true--that Canada took shape through the successive occupation of frontiers."⁸⁶ Careless saw the frontier as "the forward margin of an acquisitive society reaching out to fresh areas of resources"⁸⁷ rather than a place existing on its own merits. It was an expression of the limits of metropolitan power and "the furthest and rudest sort of hinterland."⁸⁸ Careless acknowledged that "at first glance, frontier and metropolis might mainly seem to represent contrasting or even antithetical states of human existence" but insisted that "however divergent they were, at either end of a scale of rural-urban interrelations, they remained integrally connected within one of the most basic and pervasive patterns of human history."⁸⁹

Although Careless offered the clearest expression of metropolitanism as a

⁸² Careless is quite deliberate about this: in "Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History" he sets out the evolution of Canadian historiography from its earliest beginnings emphasizing the imperial connection, tracing the progression into studies of political nationhood and the rise of an environmental interpretation that borrowed heavily from Turner in order to cast national growth as a response to the Canadian frontier and the uniquely Canadian environment. Finally Careless notes the emergence of new interpretive school giving emphasis to urban interests and the role of the metropolis as a corrective to the oversimplifications of the past and place his own work within this context. see J.M.S. Careless, Careless at Work: Selected Canadian Historical Studies (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990).

⁸³ Berger, p. 177.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

⁸⁵ Careless, Careless At Work, p. 119.

⁸⁶ J.M.S. Careless, Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities and Identities in Canada before 1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 8.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

⁸⁸ Careless, Frontier and Metropolis, p. 34.

⁸⁹ Careless, Careless At Work, p. 148.

fully developed approach to history, his general conception was broadly shared. Two examples which suggest how deeply this attitude has penetrated into the narrative structures of Canadian historiography are Inventing Canada and The Promise of Eden.

Inventing Canada by Susan Zeller²⁰ considered the impact of the scientific approach to Nature on the creation of Canadian national identity. Firstly, science is seen to offer a “counter-thrust” to the hardships of settlement, presenting certain practical ways to dominate the environment and to encourage newcomers to believe that the problems they faced could ultimately be made manageable through quantification and the statistical accumulation of facts. In other words, Zeller suggested that a belief in the power of science encouraged early Canadians to dream of a quality of life that went beyond mere survival.

Even more critically, Zeller proposed that the logic inherent in the rational pursuit of geology, meteorology, magnetism and botany led Canadians to a transcontinental vision of their country. The theoretical approach of these sciences “contributed substantially to the intellectual framework within which Canada was invented”²¹ by imposing a degree of order over differing cultural, regional, and social visions of the country, by providing a minimal base of stable and certain knowledge on matters concerning the natural environment, and by offering certain practical achievements during a critical period of nation building. Territorial expansion was inherent in both the practice and the theoretical base of the natural sciences, particularly in the techniques of assembling knowledge by the incremental addition of new facts. The attempt to fulfill the mandate of the inventory sciences influenced the behavior and mental patterns of Canadians and encouraged them to think of their country as a transcontinental nation rather than as a series of isolated colonies by forcing them to reach out into the wilderness and helping them to formulate a concept of what Canada was, could be and should be.

In The Promise of Eden²² Doug Owrarn offered a convincing demonstration of

²⁰ Suzanne Zeller, Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of Transcontinental Nation. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

²¹ Zeller, p. 274.

²² Doug Owrarn, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

how the power of a relatively small coterie of committed expansionists who first wrote and then rewrote the history and geography of the West, transformed an apparent western wilderness into a potential garden in order to give impetus to the acquisition of the Rupert's land and bring into being a Canadian empire. Beginning with the premise that it was necessary to banish the idea of wilderness before the West could be considered as a home for man, Owsen traced the progressive transformation in the image of the West, effectively presenting the region as the creation of Old Canada.

As these examples suggest, the inclination to see the development of Canada as the gradual extension of civilization over wilderness was and is a powerful force in Canadian writing. Moreover, inasmuch as the dominant metaphor in Canadian historiography has been metropolitanism, few historians have examined the idea of nature in Canada. No comprehensive study exists as yet, and in fact the first work to attempt an overview of Canadian attitudes towards nature was written by an American. Marcia Kline's booklet Beyond the Land Itself⁸⁸ explored different responses to what was essentially the same landscape by Canadians and Americans in the period 1840 to 1880, proposing that the differences have little to do with environment and were instead conditioned by the way the two countries define themselves in terms of "the great conflict" between Nature and civilization.

Kline's analysis began with the premise that American and English Canadians came from essentially the same background and went to places with essentially the same climate, the same western wilderness and similar patterns of settlement. If some quality in the land itself was responsible for determining the national response to nature, then the attitudes in the United States and Canada should be similar. If something "beyond the land itself" was responsible, then some differences should emerge.

Kline drew her evidence from the literature of each country, choosing works of romantic fiction (because this genre is rooted in the conflict between man and nature) and personal memoirs. In Canadian writing she found that nature and man were often presented as antithetical, opposing forces and people lived in a

⁸⁸ Marcia B. Kline, Beyond the Land Itself: Views of Nature in Canada and the United States. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

constant state of conflict with their natural surroundings: either Nature would force man back to England, or man would muster enough power and equipment to subdue nature and clear a path for civilization to advance. Pioneer life was rejected, not just for its hardships, but because it destroyed order and social stability.

In American writing Kline found that the world of nature and the world of civilization tended to exist in a state of balanced conflict that was often resolved by leaving the civilized man in charge of the town while sending the man of nature back into the wilderness. Kline proposed that this resolution "affirms the American experiment in the wilderness"⁹⁴ and confirmed a view of nature as a source of values, lessons and potential harmony. In spite of the hardships, hard work led to freedom, land ownership, and the creation of a new society.

Kline acknowledged that the American view of nature admitted a degree of ambiguity but contended that nature remained an overwhelmingly positive force in America, where it was to be "mastered in its wild state, by sheer force of will and strength."⁹⁵ Americans moved beyond the hardships of the settlement period by looking West, eventually coming to identify nature, Nature and America as one. Canadians sought to escape the harsh realities of frontier life by looking East, by seeking continuity with the accepted patterns of Old World civilization and by attempting to master Nature through civilization and render it impotent.

As has been noted, Kline's analysis is echoed in the historiographic traditions of each country, with American historians generally emphasizing the force of nature and Canadian historians generally emphasizing the power of civilization in the form of cultural and economic ties to explain national development. Of course whether one could conclude that the historians were following in the literary traditions of each nation or bringing a more objective scientific gaze to bear on the subject remains an open question.

In "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada" George Altmeyer⁹⁶ examined the man-nature relationship at a later stage of national history, focusing on the period reaching from the mid 1890's to World War One. Rejecting the "Nature as a

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹⁶ George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914," Journal of Canadian Studies. Vol. XI, No.3. August 1976.

malevolent force” thesis advanced by Kline, he proposed a more complex range of attitudes which, at least in this period, were “positive and typically North American”. Altmeyer examined a variety of sources including popular magazines, newspapers and government legislation as well as poetry, and literature, ultimately categorizing the material according to three metaphors which came to dominate the national vision.

These were the idea of *Nature as a Benevolent Mother* which he proposes emerged as a reaction against the effects of urban life (a retreat into nature would sooth the nerves of the highly stressed city dweller, strengthen a physically deteriorating race and offer valuable moral lessons to counter a materialistic age), the idea of *Nature as a Limited Storehouse* (which Altmeyer contended was a sort of counter paradigm that emerged with the death of the myth of abundance and lead to, among other trends, the emergence of the Canadian Conservation Movement, forestry management, and bird sanctuaries), and the idea of *Nature as a Temple* which offered a vague sort of spiritual Transcendentalism to alleviate the religious uncertainty that followed Darwinism. Ultimately Altmeyer suggested that nature became the medium through which Canadians dealt with the complexities of a nation in transformation.

In “Imaging a North American Garden”⁹⁷ Ramsay Cook set out “some parallels and difference in Canadian and American culture” beginning with the premise that “it is the fashion in which . . . geography has been interpreted that provides each of these nations with a culture” that it is, in effect, the way the imagination has digested the “raw materials” provided by the national landscape that defines each country.⁹⁸ In considering the frontier settlement period Cook accepted the American vs. Canadian interpretation advanced by Kline, agreeing that for Americans it was not borders but frontiers that were important. In the United States frontiers were not boundaries but places to go to become American and to move further away from European influences. On the other hand, for Canadians the frontier represented not an escape from Europe but an extension of Europe and an opportunity to reproduce British civilization.

⁹⁷ Ramsay Cook, “Imagining a North American Garden: Some Parallels and Differences in Canadian and American Culture” in Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 162.

In the nineteenth century Cook continued to make comparisons: setting the American Transcendentalists (G-d in Nature) against the Canadian garrison mentality (civilization and morality lie within the garrison, while chaos and terror lie without) and proposing that, if the American position could be summed up as “nature made man,” the Canadian view would be “man civilized nature.”⁹⁹ While Americans rejected tradition and found inspiration in the land, Canadians rejected the land and looked to their European connections and historical traditions for inspiration.

In the twentieth century, however, Cook asserted that a new view of nature emerged in response to industrial development, urbanization and modernization. Suddenly Canadians saw nature as a physically and morally healthy alternative to the city, Europe was rejected, the North became the locus of Canadian identity and the American authors of the nineteenth century (initially considered in contradistinction to the Canadian experience) became a source of inspiration. This aesthetic and imaginative revolution brought a modern and North American perspective to Canada’s relationship with nature. Thus, in a view not unlike Altmeyer’s, Cook proposed that the land came to be seen as a source of strength, health and positive identity in the early years of the twentieth century. That is, in the first century of Canadian experience during the settlement period nature was seen as a threat that could destroy civilization, in the second century during the period of urbanization and industrialization nature was apparently transformed into a benevolent force able to reform and revitalize civilization.

A second source of material examining the place of nature in the Canadian imagination comes from literary critics, most notably Northrup Frye, who suggested that themes of “desolation and loneliness, and...the massive indifference” of nature to human values lay at the center of the Canadian experience.¹⁰⁰ In America, the frontier lay to the west and civilization to the east, but Frye proposes that in Canada “the frontier was all around, a part and a condition of one’s whole imaginative being.”¹⁰¹ To feel Canadian is “to feel part

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁰⁰ Northrup Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Anansi, 1971, p. 243.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

of a no-man's-land."¹⁰² Clinging together in the face of this a huge, unthinking, menacing and formidable physical setting Canadians developed "a garrison mentality".¹⁰³ As a result, "civilization in Canada...advanced geometrically across the country...There is little adaptation to nature: in both architecture and arrangement, Canadian cities and villages express rather an arrogant abstraction, the conquest of nature by an intelligence that does not love it."¹⁰⁴

Although Frye's notion of a "garrison mentality" won considerable popularity, literary critic D.G.Jones has countered that hostile wilderness is not merely a Canadian experience and that the division of the world into categories of man and nature or man vs. nature go well beyond the boundaries of Can Lit. Insofar as exile, alienation and estrangement are the essence of the modern experience.¹⁰⁵ Jones rejected the broad claims made by Frye identifying a single national attitude. Instead he argued that to write of the world as wilderness, to understand the isolation of individualism and the menace of death, and to appreciate that the more man sets himself against nature the more he is alienated from the world, is to see themes inherent in the human condition. Jones proposed that Frye overstates the centrality of a hostile wilderness to the Canadian, as opposed to the human, condition.

As this range of interpretive response suggests, there has been little success in formulating a national attitude towards the environment. However, the past decade has seen the appearance of a number of excellent regional studies exploring specific local landscapes as cultural constructs.¹⁰⁶ Turning specifically to works that deal with the region of Western Canada which concerns this study, one must consider Doug Francis' Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960 as an important contribution. In Francis' West the sense

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 224.

¹⁰⁵ D.G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock: Images in Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970). Jones further suggested that these feelings be examined as manifestations of colonial experience. Margaret Atwood offered a similar interpretation in her book Survival, paralleling the sense of victimization early Canadians felt as colonials cut off from the motherland with their obsessive concentration on the harshness of physical environment.

¹⁰⁶ This trend suggests the ongoing relevance of Careless' thesis of regional identity, with the universities now serving as centers of regional study and organization, as well as Northrup Frye's observation (somewhat in contradistinction to his earlier point) that the meaning of Canada is to be found in the regions.

of regional identity is fluid and the perception of the land ever changing: "people saw in the West what they wanted, or were conditioned by their cultural milieu, to see".¹⁰⁷ Although these images change and overlap, dominant perceptions emerge in certain periods and were widely expressed in a variety of media: in literature, art, travelogue, political and scientific writings.

Francis argued that because the land failed to meet the European criteria for agriculture (a moderate climate, forest cover, some evidence of previous agricultural success) the North West was declared a wilderness early on and remained unpopulated for decades. Much later under the influence of the Romantic movement the idea of wilderness began to hold a certain appeal. The newly discovered romance of the west received further positive reinforcement from imperialists and expansionists who saw potential for greatness in the size of the region. As the image of the West blossomed to utopian proportions immigrants, drawn by the vision of a better life, flooded into the region. Disillusioned and disappointed by the harsh realities of settlement, western farmers soon joined together in protest.

More recently an awareness of the role of attitudes, belief, tradition and values have previously played in shaping the image of the West encouraged a range of artists and writers to explore the meaning of the land on a personal basis, trying to "write themselves, and ultimately their region, into existence"¹⁰⁸ through the creation of new images. The character of the landscape, offering only "the skeleton requirements simply of land and sky"¹⁰⁹ encouraged others to use the prairies as a metaphor for more universal, existential experiences.

In the end it is Francis' assertion that such images "have been more than passing commentaries...they have greatly influenced--and sometimes dictated--policies toward the area, and thus profoundly affected the historical evolution of the West."¹¹⁰ For this reason Francis proposed that the history of the West can be found not merely in topography or in a chronology of political events, but in the changing "landscape of the mind."¹¹¹ History had transformed the region from

¹⁰⁷ Douglas Francis, Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), p. 231.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 222.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 232.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. xvi.

wasteland to utopia and back again but "The West had not changed physically over time; only the image had."¹¹² Once again the triumph of man and civilization over nature is implicit in the author's argument.

Another book written in an attempt to address the influence of the frontier was Paul Voisey's study Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community.¹¹³ Voisey arranged his book as a test case to measure the validity of the four principal paradigms of frontier society by examining the influence of a) tradition, b) the wilderness frontier, c) environmental determinism, and d) metropolitanism in the form of government and CPR land policies and the influence of both nearby cities and industrial society in general on the emerging prairie community.

His detailed examination of the attitudes, activities, institutions and relationships in a single community on the frontier suggested that, while there was enough evidence to support any one of these theses, no single model could adequately explain all the complexities of the community. Although each model was useful in particular situations, its explanatory value varied considerably over time and circumstance (eg. environmental influence and technology were key factors in farming but somewhat less relevant in the social life; the frontier was an important influence on the social structure, loosing the bonds of Old World hierarchies and encouraging the creation of new institutions, but had relatively little impact on agricultural production). It seemed, then, that tradition, frontier, environment and metropolis interacted in extremely complex ways, exerting uneven pressures on various aspects of community life. Voisey concluded that however much the human mind "insists on comparing, classifying and generalizing"¹¹⁴ the historian should be wary of any attempt to reduce complex situations to single factor explanations. Historical models, however refined, "remain crude tools at best" in the struggle to make sense of past human experience.¹¹⁵

The fruitfulness of regional studies like Images of the West and Vulcan in comparison with the paucity of nationalist theories and the degree of over

¹¹² ibid., p. 79.

¹¹³ Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

¹¹⁴ ibid., p. 254.

¹¹⁵ ibid.

generalization that one tends to find in those studies which have been conducted, suggest that Canadian attitudes may be more rooted in the particularities of local geography and culture, that the roots of identity lie within the region and that "making geography" is an exercise that occurs within the specifics of time and place. However, the tendency of most authors to present their narratives in a manner that continues to privilege civilization over wilderness and history over geography, suggests that certain patterns of seeing, at least among historians, persist nonetheless.

Within the fields of Canadian urban history and Canadian planning history, little has been done to examine the larger values behind either the urban or the planning processes. Although it has been asserted since 1903, that "the progress of Canada is written in the founding and growth of her cities",¹¹⁶ scholars have tended towards descriptive rather than explanatory analysis, focusing their attention on the city rather than the processes of urbanization, and on the techniques of planning rather than the ideals which inspire planners. "Mounds of historical studies explore events, developments, and processes that occurred largely, or even exclusively, in cities. But although they illuminate urban history, the attention of their authors has been on some other major theme, and there has been no conscious attempt to link their topics to the specific physical and human environment that we know as urban."¹¹⁷ Moreover, as Gilbert Stelter has observed, urban systems have a high degree of interconnectedness and interdependence. Insofar as "a good deal of Social Science thinking still depends, however, on Cartesian reductionism--the notion that complex phenomena can be understood if broken down to their basic components" it is unsuited to the study of urban studies where "the patterns we find may be untidy and imprecise."¹¹⁸ Many studies to date have erred on the side of reductionism and over simplifying complex phenomenon to single causes. Others have focused on technique, introducing history mainly for teleological purposes in

¹¹⁶ Gilbert Stelter and Alan Artibise (ed.), The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Paul Voisey, "Urban History" in Doug Owrarn (ed.), Canadian History: A Reader's Guide. Part 2: Confederation to the Present (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 228.

¹¹⁸ Gilbert Stelter (ed.), Cities and Urbanization (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1990), p. 11.

order to "substantiate positions arrived at by other, non-historical means"¹¹⁹ or, more often, to disparage the methodologies of others as outmoded or elitist.

Walter Van Nus took a look at the City Beautiful Movement in Canada but reduced the complexities of this approach to efforts made to "plan and regulate the entire city so that people might be surrounded by beauty."¹²⁰ His essay concentrated on the Movement purely as an attempt to beautify cities and paid insufficient attention to the theoretical base of City Beautiful thought and to the problems of the industrial city that called up the City Beautiful as a possible solution. In reality this school of planning offered urban cures that went well beyond "massed beauty." The second half of Van Nus' essay was similarly reductive, presenting the shift away from the City Beautiful solely as a move towards efficiency that replaced the principles of coherence, visual variety, and civic grandeur with beauty in orderliness and low taxes. Without denying that there is some essential truth in his simplifications, it is time to move beyond them.

Peter Smith took up where Van Nus left off but only to oversimplify the other end of the spectrum, this time by asserting the preeminence of the principle of utility as the sole guiding ideal behind planning in Alberta. Smith announced at the outset of this essay his belief that utilitarianism was "fundamentally unworkable"¹²¹ as a method of urban planning and, insofar as he asserted that the entire planning history of Alberta was rooted in this ethic, he not surprisingly found little of value in the province's sixty year planning tradition. The essay offers a starting point but one that is highly focused in its approach to the topic.

Paul Rutherford's work on urban reform, particularly his collection Saving the Canadian City is more valuable, carefully establishing the context for urban reform in "the particular sense of crisis" industrialization seemed to have brought in its wake.¹²² Although Rutherford's work seldom dealt directly with Calgary or

¹¹⁹ Alan Artibise and Gilbert Stelter (ed.), The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City (Toronto: Macmillan, 1979), p.1.

¹²⁰ Walter Van Nus, "The Fate of City Beautiful Thought in Canada, 1893-1930" in Artibise, Alan and Stelter, G. (ed.), The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

¹²¹ P.J.Smith, "The Principle of Utility and the Origins of Planning Legislation in Alberta, 1913-1975" in Artibise and Stelter(ed.), The Usable Urban Past, p. 196.

¹²² Paul Rutherford, Saving the Canadian City (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. xv.

with the City Beautiful Movement (which was the particular direction urban reform took in Calgary during this period), he did capture the spirit of the times, the desire for improvement and the widespread sense that something needed to be done.

Of particular interest is Rutherford's observation that while some "yearned for a return to the mythical innocence of rural Canada, not so the urban reformer. Though subject to bouts of nostalgia, he recognized that the new order was a fact of Canadian life, which no back-to-the-land movement could hope to change...The reformer was a child of the age of progress, when all things seemed possible...Likewise, the reformer subscribed to the common belief that Canada was part of the New World, which because of its youth and enormous resources was much better able to solve urban problems...running through [the] rhetoric was a fuzzy vision of 'tomorrow's metropolis,' the ideal city."¹²³ Although Rutherford's essays emphasized "scientific" solutions and the sanitary movement, he accurately located City Beautiful efforts like the Mawson Plan within a broad social context that is relevant to this study.

Alan Artibise's work (beyond his instrumental role in establishing the entire field of urban studies in Canada) has been to point out the role of boosters and boosterism in building communities. In a novel approach to the issue of planning and community development he asserted both the role of boosterism in assuring community solidarity and accounting for the success of one western city relative to another. In other words, Artibise proposed to take at face value what other historians had dismissed as rhetoric. Although Artibise did not suggest that local leaders were, solely by their own actions, able to direct the growth of their communities, he successfully demonstrated that the element of urban leadership, the skill and initiative of particular individuals and groups and their ability to translate the opportunities of their particular situations into realities must be an integral part of any exploration of urban growth."¹²⁴

And finally Max Foran diligent efforts in documenting the history of Calgary and the role played by the CPR in shaping patterns of development on the

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. xvi-xvii.

¹²⁴ Alan Artibise, "Boosterism and the Development of Prairie Cities" in Doug Francis and Howard Palmer (ed.), *The Prairie West*, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), p. 536.

prairies provide a necessary point of entry to anyone interested in the history of the urban West.

Taken together these writings set out a spectrum of possibilities, certainly raising more questions than they answer, but nonetheless pointing out several possible pathways for exploration. They alert the student in the field to the rhetoric of the wilderness ideal, the frequent yearning for balance, and the tendency to see history of this continent (by those who experienced it as well as those who later wrote about it) in terms of a reflexive interplay between a western frontier and a eastern establishment. They reveal firm linkages between the ideas of nature, literature, popular culture and government policy.

In investigating how nature in planning has been constrained by the values that underlay planning practice, it is valuable to examine how different scholars examining broad cultural attitudes have previously configured the relationship between civilization and wilderness. Broadly speaking, American writers have emphasized the impact of the physical environment on the cultural experience (the role of geography over history) while Canadian writers have chosen instead to emphasize the impact of institutions incorporating new lands and replanning settled spaces (emphasizing the importance of history over geography).

Thus Roderick Nash contended that the key to understanding the United States was wilderness and that planning to protect wilderness was vital to maintaining the Americas sense of self, while Leo Marx proposed the idea of a middle ground of refuge/transcendence as the unresolved dilemma at the heart of the American psyche. Henry Nash Smith suggested that both images were significant and documented their direct and lingering but far from beneficial effect on America's understanding of itself and its place in the world. More recently authors have attempted to break down the divisions of the landscape into regions of wilderness, civilization and middle ground. William Cronon rooted his analysis in the economic and cultural ties that bind city and country together in a practical way. Simon Schama emphasized the reservoir of cultural memories that are carried forever forward in the collective unconscious and argued that the division of the world into categories such as order and wilderness does not in fact correspond with man's lived experiences in the landscape.

Mainstream Canadian historians, on the other hand, proposed a different explanation of the continental experience, focusing less on the presence of an extended area of wilderness as a factor shaping national destiny and more on the role played by commercial, cultural, and governmental institutions in extending the reach of civilization and incorporating the new lands into the existing order of things. By contrast Canadian literary critics tended to emphasize the vast empty spaces of the Canadian topography and found in them an explanation of a prolonged and beleaguered nationalism and exaggerated colonial mentality. The wilderness was less a spur to democracy than an overwhelming and somewhat fearsome force that bound the colony more firmly to the mother country.

Planning Calgary: An Overview

Little analysis has been done of Canada's planning history beyond the most basic acts of chronology. Practicing planners who looked to the past for inspiration and examples were seldom concerned with the broader social or intellectual context of events. Historians who picked up on themes of urban history did not delve deeply into the relationship between ideas and the physical world. Given the key role of planning in advancing society's goals these oversights are unfortunate.

Planning the shape of settlement in Canada and making decisions about land use and settlement patterns have been a continual focus of political activity in Canada.¹²⁵ Planning in the west, from settlement through to the present has been constrained or at least given impetus and direction by the realities of planning in a capitalist system. This study looks at planning from a fairly broad point of view, accepting the definition of planning advanced by Campbell and Fainstein as "intervention with an intention to alter the existing course of events to achieve desired objectives."¹²⁶ Perks and Jamieson offered a similar definition of planning as "a process of thinking ahead to accommodate growth" and then

¹²⁵ Kent Grecke, "The history of Canadian city planning " in James Lorimer and Evelyn Ross (ed.), The Second City Book (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1977), p. 155.

¹²⁶ Scott Campbell and Susan Fainstein (ed.), Readings in Planning Theory (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 6.

regulating developments as they are about to occur.¹²⁷ As Hays has observed, "Planning first emerged, in both private industry and government, as part of a drive for greater efficiency in development. It constituted an effort to avoid the wastefulness of short-run decisions and to enhance efficiency in the use of resources natural and human, for development purposes."¹²⁸

While the Canadian West has often been the site of utopian planning,¹²⁹ planners working in the Calgary area have been very much a part of the capitalist mainstream: utopian more in the expansiveness of their vision and the sheer scale of the developments they proposed, rather than in their approach to social innovation. Planners did not question the value of growth and material development. Instead their work was linked to the question of how those goals were to be achieved. In this context planners have tended to be regulators rather than visionaries, and their role often limited to controlling developments driven by the market place. In spite of the rather limited powers planners wield in Canadian society, their work remains a unique historical source, for planning documents are records of man's intention to shape the world as well as the instrument an individual planner uses to direct the changes he or she perceives necessary to bring the existing city into accord with an ideal vision.

Calgary has been the subject of many plans throughout its boom and bust history. This thesis will concentrate primarily on the plans devised during four critical phases in the city's history, examining the writings, drawings, and diagrams of those who made plans for the Calgary region, in order to determine the sorts of relationships they envisioned between the human settlements they were planning and the environment they found. I have limited my sources as much as possible to documents directly pertaining to the Calgary area, supporting my interpretation of this material when appropriate with excerpts from like-minded friends and colleagues of the principles involved in the planning process.

¹²⁷ William Perks and Walter Jamieson, "Planning and Development in Canadian Cities" in Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion (ed.), Canadian Cities in Transition (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 490.

¹²⁸ Hays, p. 155.

¹²⁹ see Anthony Rasporich, "Utopian Ideals and Community Settlements in Western Canada, 1880-1914" in Doug Francis and Howard Palmer (ed.), The Prairie West, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992).

With Canada's acquisition of the North West in 1870 it became necessary to devise a system of settlement that would incorporate vast new lands, lands which had been considered a barren wilderness only a few decades earlier. The first chapter of this thesis will examine the Dominion Land Survey as a tool used to assimilate this new territory. The survey was an exercise in applied mathematics, the most recent evolution in the system of marking property boundaries and ownership, an embodiment of the dictates of agrarian capitalism and the reflection of a commitment to endless expansion and growth. The fundamental unit of the survey--the 160 acre homestead owned and operated by a self-sufficient agriculturalist and his family--was to be the building block of a new Canadian empire.

The Calgary townsite survey followed almost immediately after the Dominion Lands Survey and was conducted by a DLS trained surveyor, working in this case on behalf of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. As the largest private landowner in the West, the CPR condensed the agricultural grid into the gridiron town, imaging the town of Calgary as the centerpiece of pastoral landscape with town and country as an integrated productive unit. In this period of settlement land was viewed as a resource to be used in creating wealth, both in terms of the commodities it could produce and as a merchantable commodity which in itself could be measured, divided and sold. The west was viewed as consistently fertile, although where necessary science and technology would be applied to convert this potential to wealth. In the age of the booster, wilderness was but a distant memory, a measure of how far the city had progressed. This image of the commercial pastoral is the subject of chapter two.

The professional history of planning began in Canada with the turn of the century and in Calgary in 1912, when the growth of cities and the appearance of big city problems prompted the emergence of a wide ranging urban reform movement. The period 1905-1912 saw Calgary almost triple in size. Congestion, pollution, noise, newcomers and sheer visual ugliness became the unhappy facts of life. The sense of urban crisis was widespread in the industrialized world and Calgarians, as the aspiring citizens of a booming metropolis, were only too aware of the problems confronting urban centers in England and America.

Although Calgarians were concerned about their city, a strong pro-growth ethic directed their reform efforts towards the City Beautiful Movement. The hiring of British town planning expert Thomas Mawson was as much an act of boosterism as a response to the crisis of urban growth. Mawson represented only one current in the stream of urban reform, however, he represented it well. His proposals for Calgary were hailed by the well known American civic improver Charles Mulford Robinson: "If one sought an idea of what city planning undertakes to do and were restricted to the scrutiny of a single report, he could do no better than study that for Calgary."¹³⁰ In his plan, the subject of chapter three, Mawson proposed to use the latent power of Nature and a naturalized Neoclassical architecture to cure the ills of the modern city and restore an atmosphere conducive to good citizenship and healthy citizens. Amid a sense of urban crisis, Nature emerged as a possible cure, a source of tremendous energy that could be used in combination with the architecture of order to tame the chaos of the modern city and restore balance to its citizens.

In the post-war period, planning resumed with a new body of theory, a tremendous burst of confidence in man's ability to direct his future, and an undertone of uncertainty. As then--popular book titles such as "The Exploding Metropolis" and the "Megalopolis" suggested, sprawling urban conglomerations seemed destined to take over the planet. Of particular concern in Canada was the real and perceived disappearance of fertile farm land under a growing "urban shadow" which cast a circle of blight around each city and the increasing threat of inner city decay.

Alberta's provincial regional planning initiatives were among the most advanced in the nation. Every acre of land was coded and labeled for maximum utility, ostensibly to preserve distinctions between rural and urban land uses, but effectively eliminating the difference between the man-made and the natural by incorporating the whole of the region into a uniform and consistently controlled realm.

Plans for the City of Calgary emerged from a number of sources, all proposing to control urban chaos whether by rigorous controls or through the

¹³⁰ William Perks, "Idealism, Orchestration and Science in Early Canadian Planning: Calgary and Vancouver Re-Visited, 1914/1928," Environments 17(2), 1985, pp.11-12.

elimination and replacement of the formless conurbations by an orderly landscape. Urban renewal projects, funded jointly by the municipal and federal governments, proposed to remake downtown Calgary, tearing down the haphazard buildings of the inner city and replacing them with a network of carefully zoned megastructures, linked by skywalks and indoor gardens to form a completely self-contained and weather-protected alternative man-made environment.

Finally, in the face of consumer demand and developer power, facilitated and encouraged by planners, a new suburban ideal rolled across the land, promising to resolve the dilemma of town and country life by offering the best of both worlds. Canadian planner Humphrey Carver proposed that a new phase of history had begun and that planners were "entering the unknown...once again pioneers on a new frontier."¹³¹ The controlled garden re-emerged as a planning ideal.

An examination of Calgary's planning efforts during these four key periods provides an opportunity to study planning in a range of conditions, to note the persistence of certain themes and the temporal nature of others and the ongoing attempts to achieve a balanced middle way, as the landscape is redefined by each era to meet changing historic circumstances. At each point planners defined their task as the imposition of order over wildness, although what they labeled as wild and the techniques they used to bring order were always changing. The plans of Calgary, shaped as they were by the global dynamics of capitalism and the assumptions of modernism, reveal patterns that have implications for us all: who we are, how we live, how we define ourselves in relation to our surroundings, and how we structure our environment accordingly.

¹³¹ Humphrey Carver, Cities in the Suburbs (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), pp. 5-6.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DOMINION LANDS SURVEY

In her important study of the American survey system, Hildegarde Johnson noted that “assigning land by co-ordinate systems and planning cities on a rectangular grid are ancient and pervasive practices.”¹ The grid pattern is the simplest form of dividing land and it is a method that has been favored, particularly by colonizers, since the time of ancient Egypt, Greece and China. It has long been the preferred method of “initiating man’s control of land wherever it is flat and fairly uniform in quality”.² And yet the grid pattern, however widely diffused and archetypal, holds particular meanings in each society and in each time period.

This chapter proposes to examine the particular meaning which the rectangular survey grid held for the men who used it to subdivide the Canadian North-West in period 1869 to 1883, that is, from the time the survey was devised until it was applied to the lands of Township 24, Section 15, Range One, West of the Fifth Meridian--the lands that were to become the city of Calgary. The survey was one of the tools used to transform wilderness into property through the subdivision and classification of a vast and relatively unknown land into individual units which could be easily located, bought and sold or improved with the certainty of legal ownership. The system was devised in the first instance to meet these practical concerns and to do so as rapidly and cheaply as possible. It was in effect, an early exercise in mass production: an organized system for turning raw land into a valuable commodity: the 160 acre homestead. The system of survey was also designed with certain social and political ends in mind: the creation of a productive “middle landscape,” an area from which

¹ Hildegarde Johnson, Order Upon the Land (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 30, 219-220.

² Johnson posits that grid patterns might well be anthropocentric, possibly a result of the human upright position. “The circle, with its central point designated by a vertical axis and its easy quarterability, is sacred. The square, the most easily defined and practical form representing a defined horizontal area, is a secular equivalent and archetype... As long as humans perceive themselves as the center--often the center of a circle which can be quartered by lines along cardinal direction--the right angle at the cross point is an archetype by which to plan assignment of the land.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31, 219-220) In any case, Johnson warns against the assumption that the grid had one origin, proposing that the prevalence of grid systems would seem to suggest that “when presented with the same rather simple problems people in different parts of the world solved them in the same way.” (*Ibid.*, p. 32.)

wilderness had been banished and cities did not belong, a homeland for the “intelligent yeoman” touted by The Globe and others as the ideal citizen, the basis of a vast agrarian empire. Finally, this chapter will examine the survey system as a planning technique which, through the projection of imaginary lines on the surface of the earth, imposed an orderly ideal on a “white sheet” and implied a particular view of nature and of man’s relationship to the lands of the North West.

The “Wild” West

Between 1856, when the expansionist movement began, and 1870, when Canada acquired the North West, the image of the region was transformed from a semi-arctic wilderness to a fertile garden. Prior to 1850 the North West was generally regarded as a land unsuited to settlement. As historian Douglas Francis has observed, each group that encountered the land described the region in terms of their own experiences: “For northern fur traders it was a wilderness full of danger and terror, where the climate was forever cold, the land barren, and the native people inhospitable. For southern travelers it was a desert, lacking trees and water essential for agriculture, and having a monotonous, dreary landscape which was unappealing”³ to the European eye. For missionaries the physical state of wilderness took on additional spiritual connotations: the North West was a “heathen and moral desert,”⁴ so remote that the bonds of civilization which distinguished the European visitor from the savage natives might easily dissolve.

Even those who, like explorer David Thompson, praised the land saw little potential there for civilized settlement:

These fine plains will, in time to come be the abode of Mankind, probably semi civilized leading a pastoral life tending Cattle and Sheep. The Farmer requires a considerable quantity of wood for buildings, fences and fuel and it is only in chance places, even along the river side, where such can be found...These great Plains appear to be given by Providence to the Red Men for ever, as the wilds and

³Douglas Francis, Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960. (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), p. 7.

⁴Ibid., p. 9. As described by the Reverend John West, the first Protestant missionary in the Red River community, in 1820.

sands of Africa are given to the Arabians.⁵

Thompson's opinion was shared by fellow explorer Alexander Mackenzie who dismissed the climate of the region as "not in general sufficiently genial to bring the fruits of the earth to maturity,"⁶ while adding that "[t]here is not, perhaps, a finer country in the world, for the residence of uncivilized man, than that which occupies the space between this river and Lake Superior. It abounds in every thing necessary to the wants and comforts of such a people. Fish, venison, and fowl, with wild rice, are in great plenty; while at the same time, their subsistence requires that bodily exercise, so necessary to health and vigor."⁷ Mackenzie's description was cited a generation later by the Reverend John Strachan in an impassioned attempt to dissuade immigrants from trying their fortunes in the new Red River colony: "Sir Alex praises it only as a fine residence for uncivilized man ... the very circumstances which render it valuable to them detract from its value as a civilized colony."⁸ For Strachan the isolation of these prospective settlements "without any market for their produce--any security of title--any expectation of ever becoming comfortable--deprived of civil advantages possessed by all the British colonies--of the protection of the laws--the consolations of religion, and instruction to their children"⁹ precluded the possibility of civilized life.

Typically the physical qualities of the region which caused it to be labeled a wilderness (isolation, uncongenial climate, vast open spaces and the absence of trees) were usually linked, either directly or indirectly, with its unsuitability as a place of moral stability and spiritual sustenance. David Anderson, the first Anglican bishop of Red River, observed in 1851 that the climate "stands in the way of many social improvements, the period of possible labor being so short; and when the country is bound up for so many months, there is little disposition to indulge in much labor for the sake of mere appearance."¹⁰ Anderson felt that

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰ Douglas O'ram, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 14.

this lassitude affected not only the native Indians, but more significantly, he feared that “something of this effect creeps over European minds after a long sojourn here.”¹¹ Historian Douglas Owsram has suggested that the connection commonly made between physical and spiritual wilderness reflected “the conservative and evangelical belief that natural man would inevitably fall into evil. Man needed guidance and the wilderness could not provide it.”¹² Only after the institutions of religion were in place and the land was Christianized would “this moral wilderness blossom as a rose, and the region of darkness and desolation become as the garden of the Lord”.¹³

This tendency to conflate the physical and moral qualities of the region was also shared by non-missionary observers. Owsram cites the fur trader Alexander Ross as an example of someone who believed that “over time the wilderness could claim man for its own”¹⁴ by eroding the moral and religious fabric of a civilized upbringing.

In general, before 1850 the North West was considered innately wild: far from recognized points of civilization, inhospitable in climate and geography, with insufficient resources to support a settled (hence civilized) way of life, home to a native population that was itself nomadic and non-Christian. Even those missionaries who sought to convert the Indians saw themselves working within this context. For this reason they sought not only the religious conversion of the native population but, as Reverend John Ryerson put it, also “to raise the multitudes of this people in the scale of moral and intellectual existence, to surround them with the comforts of civilized life, to rescue them from the gloom of superstition, to mold their hearts to Christian purity and kindness.”¹⁵ Until that time arrived, the North West was largely dismissed as a remote and somewhat evil place, the natural domain for savage Indians and half-savage fur traders.

After mid-century, however, the image of the North West began to change. The wildness of the North West came to be seen less as a quality inherent in the land and more as a temporary state which could, with sufficient effort and

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

appropriate policies, be changed.

In their respective writings, Francis and Owram have proposed that the image of the West evolved for a variety of reasons. The development of the railroad as a practical mode of transportation revived the dream of a passage to the Orient by way of British North America. Proposals urging the construction of a transcontinental system encouraged the settlement of the land to provide the resources and manpower needed to build and service the route and tended for this reason to cast the land itself in a more positive light.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the rise of British Romanticism had begun to give the notion of wilderness a certain appeal, transforming barren wastelands into sites of high adventure and the heathen wilderness into “virgin territory barely touched by man, untamed, unspoiled, undiscovered...a place of serenity, a source of inspiration.”¹⁷ Finally, as the problems of overpopulation in England became more pressing, the North West began to suggest itself as “a suitably empty and distinct place to send Britain’s excess humanity”.¹⁸

In addition to these challenges to the existing image of the North West, challenges which might be viewed as originating external to the colony, must be added a growing interest in the territory from within. Doug Owram has dated the beginning of Canadian expansionism from the 1850’s, a period of prosperity and growth which “expanded the horizons and ambitions”¹⁹ of Canada’s

¹⁶ Consider, for example, Hind’s famous report which noted that “It is a physical reality of the highest importance to the interests of British North America that this continuous belt can be settled and cultivated from a few miles west of the lake of the woods to the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and any line of communication, wither by wagon road or railroad, passing through it, will eventually enjoy the great advantage of being fed by an agricultural population from one extremity to another.” The prospect of the railroad cast a positive glow over the band of land through which it would necessarily have to pass, and the positive qualities of Hind found in the land reflected back on the idea of the railroad, improving its prospects as well.

¹⁷ Francis, p. 39.

¹⁸ Owram, p. 34.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

manufacturers and entrepreneurs.²⁰ In the age of empires and trading nations, future greatness was seen to depend upon the acquisition of an empire. As George Brown, the formidable editor of The Globe, put it:

If Canada acquires this territory, it will rise in a few years from a position of a small and weak province to the greatest colony any country has ever possessed, able to take its place amongst the empires of the earth. The wealth of 400,000 square miles of territory will flow through our waters and be gathered by our merchants, manufacturers and agriculturists. Our sons will occupy the chief places of this vast territory, we will form its institutions, supply its rulers, teach its schools, fill its stores, run its mills, navigates its streams. Every article of European manufacture, every pound of tropical produce will pass through our stores. Our seminaries of learning will be filled by its people. Our cities will be the centers of its business and education, its wealth and refinement. It will afford fields of enterprise for our youth...It is a bright

²⁰ Doug O'ram has identified a small coterie of like-minded men at the heart of the movement to expand Canada. This group was critical to the acquisition of the North West and, both directly and indirectly, to the design of the survey grid and the Dominion land policies. Some of the names more directly linked with this process included William McDougall (reform leader, journalist at the Globe, lawyer, the Minister of the Interior who ordered the first survey and the first Lieutenant Governor of the North West Territories), John Stoughton Dennis (charter member of the Canadian Institute, Ontario land surveyor, first Surveyor General of Canada, devised the system of survey for the North West and the first Dominion Land Policy), Alexander Russell (senior surveyor with the Crown Lands Department, honorary member of Dominion Land Surveyors' Association) and his son Lindsay (Dennis' successor as Surveyor General, devised the Special Survey), Henry Youle Hind (explorer, member of the Canadian Institute, his maps formed the basis of Dennis' initial survey and later helped to direct the staging of survey parties under Lindsay Russell's regime), John Macoun (botanist, honorary member of the Association of Dominion Land Surveyors), Sanford Fleming (Ontario land surveyor, surveyor of CPR route, charter member of the Canadian Institute), S.J. Dawson, (explorer, surveyor, friend of Andrew Russell, honorary member of the Association of Dominion Land Surveyors). Directly and indirectly, through their extended circle of friendships and influence, through the Canadian Institute, Victoria College, various professional associations, the Crown Lands Department, etc... these men created a climate of opinion that led to the acquisition of the territory and shaped expectations for the land and for the survey system. (This analysis applies O'ram's more general thesis, see O'ram, pp. 40-41.) Thus the positive descriptions of the west in the Dawson Report were circulated in the Sessional Papers and in an Addendum to Alexander Russell's Report on Red River. Russell, a surveyor in his own right, was directly influential in the design of the system of the survey of the West as an advisor to Dennis. Russell's son Lindsay was responsible for the creation of the special survey that extended and regularized the system. Both Russell and Dawson were honorary and influential members of the Dominion Land Surveyor's Association, extending their influence even further. Similarly, Jesse Hurlbert's widely circulated pamphlet on the climate of the North West was introduced by Dennis, meanwhile, McDougall, who had studied under Hurlbert and wrote positively about him in the Canadian Agriculturalist, was no doubt also aware of Hurlbert's re-evaluation of the climate. The pamphlet itself influenced Macoun, Macoun in turn influenced Lindsay Russell's re-evaluation of the west in early 1880's. Through associations such as these a common attitude towards the west was woven and disseminated.

prospect and its realization would be worthy of some sacrifice.²¹

The North West was increasingly seen as the means to realize these dreams of eastern greatness: a metropolis, after all, needed a hinterland. The sale of the last of the 'wild' land within the existing boundaries of Canada West was another critical factor in turning eyes westward, although some accessible lands remained after mid-century they were expensive and not particularly well-suited to agriculture.²² New land was needed, not only to attract immigrants from outside Canada, but also to allow the growing population inside the colony room to expand.²³ Finally, the presence of the United States was an increasingly powerful source of motivation, representing both a threat to Canadian sovereignty and an example of worldly success to be envied and emulated.

As these various threads came together, the image of the North West as a wilderness, an image that had held firm for two hundred years, began to shift. What had changed was not the quality of the land, but the material circumstances of the Province of Canada and the needs of the British Empire. "The West had not changed physically over time; only the image had".²⁴ A wilderness west was no longer compatible with the emerging vision of the future. It was therefore necessary, as Hind indicated, to re-examine the North West "in reference to its future occupation by an energetic and civilized race, able to improve on its vast capabilities and appreciate its marvelous beauties."²⁵ The results of such scrutiny were almost always positive and estimates of rainfall and soil fertility in the North West increased steadily.²⁶

The prospect of Canada's future greatness seemed increasingly to influence the perceptions of observers. Thus the naturalist James Macoun recalled that, at first, "the vastness seems to overpower the mind and cause that benumbing feeling which we are prone to feel when in the presence of

²¹ Globe, January 22, 1863, cited in F.H. Underhill, "Some Aspects of Upper Canadian Radical Opinions in the Decade Before Confederation" in In Search of Canadian Liberalism (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 55.

²² Owram, p.43.

²³ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁴ Francis, p. 79. See also Owram, p. 47.

²⁵ Owram, p. 71.

²⁶ Ibid.

something we cannot grasp,"²⁷ but added later that his spirits rose with the knowledge that this solitude was not to last: "200 miles eastward a low steady tramp is heard--it is the advance guard of the teeming millions who will yet possess this land from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains and these plains will resound with the merry laughter of children and the 101 sounds of life."²⁸

Indeed by the time the North West opened for settlement, it was commonplace for writers to adopt the metaphors of the picturesque and present the new territory as a traditional English countryside, as in this example: "There are many delightful spots in the belts, the herbage is clean as well shaven lawn, the clumps of aspen are neatly rounded as if by art, and where little lakes alive with waterfowl abound, the scenery is very charming, and appears to be artificial, the result of taste and skill, rather than the natural features of a wild, almost inhabited country."²⁹ Soon the pamphleteers looked ahead to the time when the entire plains region would be "divided by hedges and fences, into regular fields, interspersed with groves of trees and dotted over with homesteads--the comfortable and substantial dwellings of a prosperous and numerous population."³⁰ In this manner a land which had been described by Lord Grey in 1849 as "a vast and inhospitable region"³¹ became "the great undeveloped North-West"³² by 1854, a fertile region "capable of sustaining a vast population"³³ by 1864, and "the garden of the world"³⁴ by 1879.

Ian MacLaren has argued that the initial vastness of the western landscape "placed a great strain" on the descriptive vocabulary of travelers and was only gradually brought within the English schema of the picturesque.³⁵ A comforting sense of order and control was created by transforming foreign landscapes into

²⁷ W.A. Waiser, The Field Naturalist: John Macoun, the Geological Survey, and Natural Science (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 30.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁹ Owsram, p. 74.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 137.

³¹ Ibid., p. 29.

³² Alexander Morris, "Nova Britannia; or, The Consolidation of the British North American Provinces into the Dominion of Canada" a Lecture before the Mercantile Library Association of Montreal, March 18th, 1858, reprinted in Alexander Morris, Nova Britannia: or, Our New Canadian Dominion Foreshadowed (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1884), p. 7.

³³ Owsram, p. 69.

³⁴ Waiser, p. 39.

³⁵ Ian MacLaren, "The Limits of the Picturesque in British North America," Journal of Garden History, January-March 1985, p. 97.

familiar ones through what was effectively an illusion or mental sleight of hand in which the terrain was “corrected” by the observer and made to conform with an ideal brought from home. MacLaren further proposed that “At a time of imperial expansion the identification of a terrain in terms of British landscape qualities constituted an aesthetic embrace of the territory that complimented the imperial political declaration of its British ownership.”³⁶ In effect he argues that this process of “making geography”³⁷ served to lay the groundwork for future settlement, for what could be more natural than for Englishmen to inhabit an English landscape? By mid-century the tendency to find finished pictures in the North West was a common rhetorical technique, useful for asserting ownership but also carrying with it the implication of a landscape that was inherently civilized rather than wild.

Seeing the North West in the terms of the picturesque landscape implied more than a descriptive evocation of the comforts of home. A picturesque landscape was also a productive, improved landscape. Grass was cropped, trees arranged and domestic animals imported to the scene. The picturesque implied English farmers, livestock, farming techniques, and social structure. Moreover, the very concept of improvement, of uplifting the land, seemed to justify taking possession of it. Grant observed favorably that the United States “had a great West, boundless expanses of fertile lands, and had the wisdom to see that, while the soil is the great source of wealth, untilled soil is valueless.”³⁸ Macoun struck a similar chord when he observed that “the soil wherever tried throughout the whole extent of this vast region gives enormous returns for little labor, giving promise of the day when the land will be filled with a busy multitude who instead of living by the chase will cultivate the rich soil and develop the unbounded resources of this wonderful land.”³⁹

Those qualities of wilderness, isolation, and vast size which had previously been considered obstacles to settlement were now turned to advantage, as in this example: “In fact it would appear as if a kind Providence had deposited an

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³⁷ J. Wreford Watson, “The Role of Illusion in North American Geography: a note on the Geography of North American Settlement,” *The Canadian Geographer*, 1969, XIII, 1.

³⁸ Grant, p. 88.

³⁹ Waiser, p. 30.

immense inheritance to the credit of the great North-West, to be drawn upon and expended to the advantage of this highly favored land, when she should become wedded to civilization, and not till then."⁴⁰ Another observer noted that "Over the untilled fields which nature has spread out, the wild cattle of the plains roam in countless herds, and for hundreds of miles together may be seen grazing like domestic cattle in a field of pasture" and predicted that "a region which thus, in a state of nature, supports animal life in profusion, must be naturally rich, as regards its soil and climate. It is, in fact fitted to sustain as dense an agricultural population as any area of equal extent on the fact of the globe."⁴¹ Even those writers who ostensibly urged a more balanced approach, such as Sanford Fleming, tended to refer to the region as the "vast undeveloped Interior of Canada,"⁴² implying the unbounded potential for growth as much as its current absence.

Increasingly the region was presented not so much as wild but as merely empty. "There seems nothing lacking in this country but good industrious settlers"⁴³ wrote George Grant. The North West was a fertile garden, merely waiting for the gardeners to arrive. As the Department of Agriculture later explained: "Nature has done her share, and done it well and generously; man's labour and industry are alone required to turn these broad rolling prairies to good account."⁴⁴ In this way land that was in fact a subsistence habitat with a native population was rendered empty, re-examined in terms of its suitability for settlement and the potential production of a marketable surplus.⁴⁵ Property, ownership, and domesticity were all given sanctification by the apparent naturalness of the scene. These pastoral descriptions, complete except for the

⁴⁰ Henry J. Clarke, Report To His Excellency, the Honorable Adams George Archibald, On the Immigration Conference held at Ottawa, Fort Garry, December 1871, p. 3.

⁴¹ S.J.Dawson, "Report on the Line of Route between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement" to William McDougall, Minister of Public Works, April 1868, appendix to Alexander J. Russell, C.E. The Red River Country, Hudson's Bay and North-West Territories considered in relation to Canada, Ottawa: G.E.Desbarats, 1869), p. 200.

⁴² Sanford Fleming, "Canada, and its Vast Underdeveloped Interior," address to the Royal Colonial Institute, London, 1878.

⁴³ George Grant, Ocean to Ocean: Sanford Fleming's Expedition Through Canada in 1872 (Toronto: James Campbell and Son, 1873), p. 80.

⁴⁴ in 1877, Francis, p. 112.

⁴⁵ Colin Coates, "Like 'The Thames towards Putney': The Appropriation of Landscape in Lower Canada," Canadian Historical Review, LXXIV, 3, 1993.

manor house, were like silent invitations, inviting the reader to complete the scene by projecting into it a home of their own.

As the link between the idea of wildness and the lands of the North West was severed, it was necessary to account for the years of misperception. Increasingly these were attributed to ignorance, distance, the ways of the Indians and, more particularly, the designs of the Hudson's Bay Company. Thus George Grant asked: "While man was thus triumphing over all the obstacles of nature in the Territory of the United States, how was it that nothing was attempted farther north in British America...? The North American colonies were isolated from each other, the North-west was kept under lock and key by the Hudson Bay Company; and....the time had not yet come for "a consummation so devoutly to be wished".⁴⁶ But now, as another author explained,

The obscurity which enveloped Prince Rupert's Land is passing away. The mist of ignorance is clearing. The country itself is standing forth in its true light, and appears in a very different aspect from that it wore when viewed through the coloured and distorted media of depreciation and misrepresentation. The process is going steadily on. As some fair statue--freed from the accumulation of ages in which it lay buried, and gradually disinterred by some adventurous Layard--stands before us a vision of beauty and of rare excellence: or, to speak more appositely, as the treasure of the hoarding miser are brought to light, and the tenacious grasp of the huge *main mort* of the Hudson's Bay Company is relaxed, so will these fair Territories stand before us and present to the attention of the human family vast expanses of rich arable country--goodly habitations for the residence of civilized man.⁴⁷

It has been argued that, by the late 1860's the distinction between wilderness and civilization was reduced to a matter of time,⁴⁸ but it would perhaps be more accurate to view the transformation of the North West as a two part process. After the mid 1850s wildness was no longer seen as the result of some quality inherent in the land but as a temporary condition which had been unduly prolonged by the schemes of the Hudson's Bay Company. The land

⁴⁶ Grant p. 5.

⁴⁷ Morris, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁸ Owsram, pp. 73-74.

itself had been not so much barren as "lying idle and unoccupied".⁴⁹ Henceforth wildness was reduced to an attribute of the native inhabitants of the land (both human and animal). In the late 1860's and early 1870's the presence of the Indians was itself reduced to a matter of time and indeed "the passing of the Indian" was increasingly used as a measure of progress to denote the distance travelled from the state of wilderness to the state of civilization.

In 1879 Macoun, describing the West for the Dominion Lands Survey, described the Calgary environs in terms that were to become standard:

Two miles before we reached the Fort (Calgary)[sic], we stopped on the top of the last slope and looked over a scene long to be remembered. At our feet lay the Bow river and its beautiful valley. As the river wound from side to side left wooded points on the outer margin of all the bends, and from our altitude water, wood and meadow seemed so beautifully intermixed that the landscape was more like an artist's ideal than a natural picture. Standing by the river margin, or feeding on the green meadows, were hundreds of cattle and horses; these added to the natural features and gave a pastoral character to the scene. Only three short years ago, this same valley was filled with countless herds of buffalo, and the Blackfeet and Sarcees were in the midst of affluence. Now the buffalo are dead or gone, and the Indian, broken in spirit, either dies with the stoicism of his race or partake of the white man's bounty.

Calgary[sic] itself lay hidden among the distant trees, quietly nestling under a bluff of light colored sandstone... Outside the valley, the prairies extended roll over roll into the horizon, dotted here and there with clumps of bushes, but altogether without trees, except in the valleys of the small streams. Behind rose the Rocky Mountains like a wall, bounding the horizon to the west, and giving a vastness to the picture which beholder could feel but not describe.⁵⁰

The key themes of the picturesque were present: the self conscious appraisal of the landscape from a commanding height, the comparison of the view to an "artist's ideal", the breakdown of the panorama into foreground, middle ground, and background, the pastoral references, and the use of the dead buffalo and stoic but broken Indians as a memento mori to evoke the passage of time and a mood of reflection. Indeed the use of the buffalo and the Indian peoples in this way was one the more inventive applications of the

⁴⁹Morris, p. 55.

⁵⁰ Canada, Department of the Interior, Surveyor-General of Dominion Lands Report (Ottawa, 1879), item 51/114.

picturesque genre in the North West, creating a sense of progress without in any way implying that the land itself had ever been wild. Above all the picture exuded a sense of peace: the land itself was calm, the wild things were dead and gone, the city was yet to be born. All was in waiting.

The Survey Begins

The great challenge after the acquisition of the North West territory was to devise policies that would bring man into this garden, fulfilling the destiny of the region and the nation. Foremost among these was the creation of a system of survey and the development of related land policies.

In 1854 the Canadian Institute (a society formed to encourage the development of the Physical Sciences, the Arts and Manufactures) had defined its mission as the promotion of surveying, along with engineering and architecture, as “the arts of opening up the wilderness and preparing the country for the pursuits of the agriculturist, of adjusting with accuracy the boundaries of properties, of improving and adorning our cities and the habitations of our fellow subject, and to otherwise smoothing the path of civilization.”⁵¹ By 1870 the writings of the expansionists had effectively cleared the wilderness from the North West, emptying (as much as smoothing) the land and leaving it, as Surveyor General John Stoughton Dennis was to later recall, “as a white sheet”.⁵²

But, if the mission of the surveyor in the west was no longer to open up the wilderness, the job description had otherwise remained intact. In the following passage George Grant portrayed surveyors as the heroic builders of a new society, comparing their work favorably with that of a military soldier:

...The work of engineers on the survey is a constant march; their shelter, even in the depth of winter, often only canvass; they have sometimes to carry their food for long distances, through swamps and over fallen trees, on their backs; and run all the risks incidental to such a life, without medical assistance, without notice from the press, without the prospect of plunder or promotion, ribands or pensions...The work performed on one of the military expeditions, such as the Abyssinian or Red River, about which so much has

⁵¹ Sanford Fleming, “The Early Days of the Canadian Institute”, p. 11.

⁵² Colin Frederick Read, “John Stoughton Dennis,” The Dictionary of Canadian Biography, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), Vol. 11, p. 246.

been written and which are said to have shed such luster on the British name, is really not more arduous than theirs....To be sure, theirs is the work of construction only, and the world has always given greater prominence to the work of *destruction*.

To *construct* is 'the duty that lies nearest us.' 'We therefore will rise up and build.' ... [Protected] by the might of Britain, we have but to go forward, to open up for our children and the world what G-d has given into our possession, bind it together, consolidate it, and lay the foundations of an enduring future.⁵³

It was for this purpose, in anticipation of the acquisition of lands still under negotiation, that Dennis was invited to confer with the Minister of Public Works in the summer of 1869, and

.....to proceed, without delay, to Fort Garry, Red River, for the purpose....of selecting the most suitable localities for the survey of Townships for immediate settlement....You will report to this Department the plan of survey you propose to adopt (with a rough map) as soon as you shall have determined upon it....

...The American system of survey is that which appears best suited to the country except as to the area of the section. The first emigrants, and the most desirable, will probably go from Upper Canada and it will, therefore, be advisable to offer them lots of a size to which they have been accustomed. This will require you to make the section 300 acres instead of 640 as in the American plan; there should also be an allowance or excess sufficient for public roads...

Dated July 10th, 1869 and signed by Wm. McDougall⁵⁴

In preparing to discharge "the duty which has been entrusted to me" Dennis relied upon the advice of several men who had been very involved in the expansionist movement⁵⁵ and acquired detailed information from the

⁵³ Grant, p. 365.

⁵⁴ Canada Sessional Papers (No. 12.), 1870.

⁵⁵ Including Andrew Russell and Thomas Devine, the Chief of Surveys in the Crown Lands Department. Commenting upon an extensively annotated map Devine had produced describing the resources, beauty and fertility of the region in detail, O'ram observed that "Devine's ability to reshape the map of the North West without any new evidence revealed the power which man's perspective has on his conclusions." O'ram, p. 60. The same observation, separated only by a few degrees of enthusiasm, should be made about Russell, whose own publication on the North West was similarly based on wide readings without field observation. In it Russell warned against making sweeping adverse generalizations about the agricultural potential of the southern prairies because the quality of the land might well have been underrated by Palliser and Hind. Noted in John Warkentin, "Steppe, Desert and Empire", in A. Rasporich and H. Klassen, ed., Prairie Perspectives 2 (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 123.

Commissioner of the United States General Land Office. On route to the Red River, Dennis also consulted with the Surveyor Generals past and present of Minnesota and "other leading and intelligent Americans."⁵⁶ His proposal, sent back to Ottawa after only eight days in Red River, was modelled on the American system, amended to suit the particular conditions of the Territory as Dennis saw them.

It was generally conceded that the American system is faulty in making no appropriation for public roads, which are subsequently taken from the settler out of the net area of land for which he may actually have paid the Government.

I think, further, that the Townships are unnecessarily small.

In a prairie country, where the facilities of communication are greatly in excess of those in a broken or heavily-wooded country, the Townships may well be larger, thus tending to economy in the administration of municipal affairs.

I have, therefore, made my Townships uniformly to contain sixty-four sections of eight hundred acres each, and with regard to an allowance for roads, have thrown five per cent. additional into the area of each section, making in all 53,760 acres as the area of the Township.

This percentage for roads I conceive to be an abundant provision to meet the wants of the country in the matter of highways.

Mr. Snow [the Superintendent of Fort Garry], with whom, according to my instructions, I have advised, is strongly in favor of fixed road allowances; the plan submitted, however, I think preferable, as it contributes to simplicity in the surveys, and places the jurisdiction over the location of the highway more fully in the hands of the municipal authorities.

The numbering of the Townships from uniform base--the southern boundary of the Territory--and the numbering of the ranges of Townships east and west from one principal meridian, is simple, and will therefore be easily understood by all parties.

It will also prevent any possible further confusion in administering the Land Granting Department.

In a country so extensive as this, a reference to the Townships by numbers for the purpose of survey and land granting is in the first instance indispensable.

Names to the several Townships, in accordance with the practice followed in the Western States, will naturally be given subsequently by the settlers themselves.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ John Warkentin, "Manitoba Settlement Patterns", Papers read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 1960-1961, Third Series, No. 16, p. 66.

⁵⁷ Canada, Sessional Papers (No.12), 1870, p. 7.

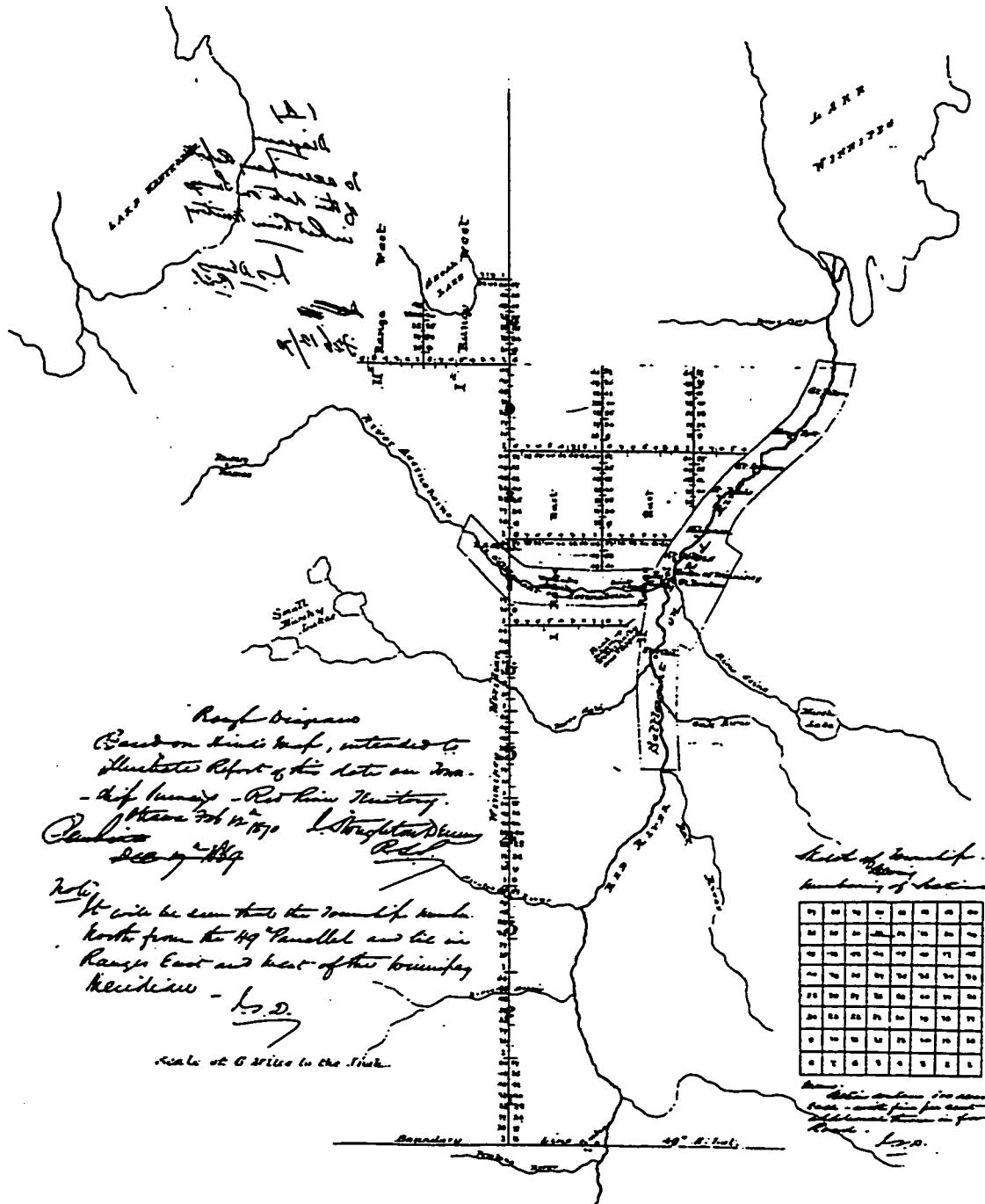


Diagram of the commencement of Dominion Land Surveys, with the establishment of the Winnipeg (Principal) Meridian Red River Territory, 1870, drawn by J. S. Dennis.

Figure One: Beginnings of the Dominion Lands Survey, 1870.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Don Thompson, Men and Meridians: The History of Surveying and Mapping in Canada. Vol. 2. 1867 to 1917. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), p.14.

Overall, Dennis recommended adopting a uniform system of survey for efficiency but proposed to offset excessive standardization by leaving road placement and township naming under local control. Many of the innovations he recommended were rooted in pragmatism: larger townships would be more efficient to administer; a uniform numbering system would be easy for everyone involved to understand. In spite of differences between Dennis views and his own earlier recommendations concerning township and section sizes, McDougall forwarded these proposals without comment to the Privy Council on September 22nd. The system of survey was approved, again without alteration, in October of 1869.⁵⁹

In point of fact, at McDougall's insistence, surveying had begun even before approval was given. Dennis's son later observed that, even though approval might not have been forthcoming, "no doubt it was realized that any scheme adopted would in its main features, resemble the one proposed."⁶⁰ There was moreover, a general expectation on the part of those involved that "a large influx of immigrants would follow the transfer of the country to the Dominion".⁶¹ In order to handle this anticipated influx, it would be necessary for the survey system to be comprehensive and simple. To cite Dennis' son again: "The primary consideration, having in view the future welfare of the country, was to devise a system under which the country would be rapidly and accurately divided into farm holdings."⁶²

Upon his arrival in Red River, Dennis claimed to have explained that the object of the survey was "not to disturb boundaries or possession, but to ascertain each man's actual occupation, and make a plan thereof, so that the government would be in a position at the earliest possible date, to carry out their intention to confirm by government deeds all bona fide occupants of land."⁶³ He further noted that although "the English-speaking people appeared to understand and appreciate the necessity for the measure, and the boon it would

⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that McDougall himself was only been appointed Lieutenant Governor-elect September 28th, 1869. Canada Sessional Papers (No. 12), 1870, pp. 153-154.

⁶⁰ J. Dennis, "A Short History of the Surveys Made Under the Dominion Lands System, 1869 to 1889," Canada, Sessional Papers (No. 13), 1892, p. 2.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶² Ibid., p. 2.

⁶³ Canada, Sessional Papers (No. 12), 1870.

be to have their titles⁶⁴ perfected, and shewed every facility to the surveyors employed at the work," the French and Metis did not. In Dennis' view the survey was intended to establish legal ownership, altering the relationship of the land from one of casual inhabitation to one of possession sanctioned by law. The celebrated incident of Riel standing on the surveyor's chain to block the further intrusion of the Canadian government into the North West, suggests that this understanding was shared by those who opposed the survey as well as by those who supported it.

Dennis' analysis of the response of the local community to the arrival of the surveyors hints at a set of oppositions between ways deemed "civilized" and those deemed "wild" that was later echoed by McDougall in his stirring condemnation of the government's handling of the rebellion and the settlement process:

... [I protest] in the name of every true Canadian, against your willful and criminal delay in offering the lands of the North West to impatient settlers. You have lost one, and probably two years, in preparing for the victorious march of our industrial and political forces to the foot of the Rocky Mountains... But, Sir, I do not despair of my country.... 'westward the star of empire takes its way,' and in spite of all obstacles, the immense wheat-growing and cattle-grazing vallies and plains of our 'Great West,' will soon be subdued and occupied, not by priest-ridden natives addicted to the chase, but by sturdy cultivators of the soil, carrying with them the civilization, the political principles, the self-reliant energy, and the contempt for sacerdotal leadership, which distinguish the colonizing populations of the new world...History, and science, and the irrepressible spirit of modern civilization are against you.⁶⁵

Writing two years later Grant evoked a similar (if more temperate) set of comparisons, counterpointing two ways of life and two ways of living on the land in this discussion of Indian land claims:

Justice, both to the Indians and to the emigrants who are invited to make their home in this newly opened country, demands that a settlement of the difficulty be made as soon as possible. It may be, and very probably is, true that some of them are vain, lazy, dirty, and

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ William McDougall, "Eight Letters to Joseph Howe on the Red River Rebellion," November 1870.

improvident. The few about Fort Frances did not impress us favorably. ...But whatever the benefits that have been conferred on them, or whatever their natural defects, they surely have rights to this country, though they have never divided it up into separate personal holdings. They did not do so, simply because their idea was that the land was free to all. Each tribe had its own ground, which extended over hundreds of miles, and every man had a full right to all of that as far as he could occupy it. Wherever he could walk, ride, or canoe there the land and the water were his. If he went to the land of another tribe, the same rule held good; he might be scalped as an enemy, but he ran no risk of being punished as a trespasser.

And now a foreign race is swarming over the country, to mark out lines, to erect fences, and to say "this is mine and not yours," till not an inch shall be left the original owner. All this may be inevitable. But in the name of justice, of doing as we would be done by, and of the "sacred rights" of property, is not the Indian entitled to liberal, and, if possible, permanent compensation?⁶⁶

All three men used similar sets of opposites to make their point. Dennis emphasized government authority over the actual occupation of land as the means to guarantee ownership. Only by officially recording occupancy through the a process of surveying would land title be "made perfect" and complete. McDougall linked history, science, and modern civilization to self-reliance, cultivation and British political principles and set all of this against Catholicism and a nomadic way of life centered around the hunt. Needless to say, the settlement process and the land system he recommended were linked with the progressive spirit of civilization. Grant pit fences and lines, Christianity, and the all pervasive value of British justice against natural rights, tribal ways, and the free commons. In each case the survey was perceived as a means to extend the values of order and civilization over uncertainty, wildness and primitive ways.

The troubles at Red River that were to follow discredited McDougall and, to a lesser, extent Dennis, and brought the work of surveying to a halt. In August 1870 George Adams Archibald was sent West to assume the position McDougall had forfeited. His report took the basic principles of a rectangular survey for granted but added that

⁶⁶ Grant, pp. 48-49.

I cannot help thinking that Col. Dennis has not acted judiciously in recommending a deviation from the system of 6 mile townships.

In the year 1796, now three-quarters of a century ago, when the United States Congress passed their first law on the subject of the surveys of the lands in their Territories, they adopted the system of 6 miles square, subdivided into 336 square miles, each of these again subdivided into 4 square lots of 160 acres each, and these again in certain cases into four ultimate square lots of 40 acres each....

This system is known all over the world to the Emigrant classes.

A lot of 160 acres is the acknowledged extent of an Emigrant's requirements for farm purposes. The system has been adopted by the most practical people in the world, and after 70 years experience remains unchanged. Why should we change it?

In laying out the boundless prairies to the west of us there might, perhaps, be some justification for liberality in the amount given for a farm lot. But with the limited Territory of Manitoba, with Hudson's Bay Grants and Hudson's Bay Reserves, with squatters' rights and halfbreed rights, and Indian Reserves, our little Territory is already to some extent forestalled, where we should set the first example of prodigality in the allotment of lands.

But with 5,250,000 to grant, and the question before us whether we shall lay it off in lots of 210 or in lots of 160 acres, there is just this difference in the decision to which you come, that the system I should recommend would furnish 32,800 homesteads, while the other would give but 25,000. In effect, therefore you have by one system 8,000 more farms than by the other, and in a Province limited as ours, I consider this a matter of great importance. 160 acres is quite sufficient for an ordinary farm lot. ⁶⁷

The ultimate criteria, then, in determining the precise nature of the survey grid were utility, cost effectiveness, and parity with America. The survey was now focused towards the production of farm lots rather than townships, it would maximize the number of homesteads in the region, and produce them in a fashion that would place the Canadian North West on a competitive footing with the American West. In effect Archibald reduced the superiority of one system of survey over another to a simple matter of division.

In spite of references by McDougall, Dennis, and Archibald to American precedents, there is no evidence of any philosophical commitment to an American frontier model. Doug Owram has suggested that "[b]y 1870 ⁶⁷Lt.Col.L.M. Sebert, "The History of the Rectangular Township of the Canadian Prairies," The Canadian Surveyor, Vol. XVII, December 1963, No. 5., pp. 383-384.

Canadians had convinced themselves that the envied growth of the United States was the result of neither wise government policy nor the attractiveness of American political institutions; rather, they felt it was...the result of 'that inevitable hankering after western homes.'⁶⁸ American policies were adopted in an attempt to turn the tide of immigration "in the direction of Canada's boundless prairie lands."⁶⁹ Expressions of agrarian radicalism in Canada did not constitute an expression of Jeffersonian beliefs in the noble yeoman but instead emphasized property qualifications and public education.

The basis of Canadian democracy was "not the city mob of Europe but an intelligent, independent agricultural class"⁷⁰ and the system of survey was designed from the outset to achieve these social goals. The Canadian West was not a land of opportunity where people of all classes were thrown together and where a man might rise, but a relatively stratified society, stable and civilized with titles perfected by government decree.⁷¹ Even McDougall, who, as a leading member of the Reform party, had supported the abolition of property qualifications for elective office, took a strong stand against a policy of free homesteads, warning that if Canada offered immigrants free land it would

⁶⁸ Owram, p. 103.

⁶⁹ In spite (or perhaps because of) the lack of conclusive evidence, the issue of an American precedent for the system of survey has become a source of some discussion among Canadian historians. Writing in 1935, Hugh Morrison proposed that "although the new federal land system built upon the lessons learned from the past" it was largely "shaped so as to meet the competition of the United States. And if this rivalry dictated the necessity of adopting several of the United States forms, it was done without the slightest hesitation." (Hugh Morrison, "The Background of the Free Land Homestead Law of 1872", The Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1935.) On the other hand, Chester Martin that proposed insofar as the "historic origins" of both the railway land grant and the free homestead "were to be found in the United States...the appropriation of so vast a fund of experience and resources by the young Dominion was taken as a matter of course," the implication throughout his analysis was that the reliance on American precedents was purely a practical matter. (Chester Martin, Dominion Lands Policy (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973.) James Richtik dismissed Martin's suggestion that the adherence to American models was in any way "foreordained" and returned to a position closer to Morrison's in 1975: "Martin argues for an American precedent, but the Canadians in fact were more concerned with competition." (James Richtik, "The Policy Framework for Settling the Canadian West, 1870-1880", Agricultural History, Vol, 49, No. 4. October 1975.) Strict adherence to the American precedent allowed the Canadians to demonstrate that they were "meeting the competition." Doug Owram, writing in 1980, suggested that Canada adopted American land policies in hopes of duplicating America's success. This series of changing interpretations is perhaps more reflective of changes in Canadian and American relations than attitudes prevailing at time of survey itself.

⁷⁰ Underhill, p. 46.

⁷¹ Owram, p. 142.

receive only paupers.⁷² The special freedom that Canada offered immigrants was not the freedom of an open society, but the promise that “in Canada all could be men of property”.⁷³ While the American yeoman was, in the commonly held view, as inclined to be a squatter as a homesteader, carving his place out of the wilderness by his own labor and earning title to his land by the sweat of his brow, the idealized Canadian settler was a yeoman with registered property rights. This concept of a society based upon a British immigrant working a quarter section reflected a particular ideal of orderliness and stability, for the homestead was to be above all a productive unit.⁷⁴ In Canada productivity and material living standards were the measure of a good society.

The survey system recommended by Archibald was adopted immediately. A Manual of Instruction was prepared by Dennis and surveyors were hired.⁷⁵ In 1874 several factors lead to the re-conceptualization of the system of survey.⁷⁶ After this date the task of surveying was divided into three roles: the best surveyors laid out a master grid of meridians and baselines sighted according to the stars and conforming to the lines of longitude and latitude; and marked down the outer lines of blocks of four and later sixteen

⁷² Morrison, p. 63.

⁷³ The Globe cited in Careless, p. 38.

⁷⁴ Owram, p. 137.

⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that the Canadian system remained close enough to the American that Dennis felt it necessary to summarize the key points of difference between the two when introducing his Manual. Essentially these included the dedication in the Canadian system of highways of one and a half chains in width on all township and section lines, the process of advancing the survey by the progressive laying out and subdivision of blocks of four townships, and the need to reference the outlines of these blocks with meridians of longitude on their east and west sides and parallels representing the chords of the arcs of circles of latitude on their north and south sides. Dennis and McDougall assumed (somewhat optimistically as it turned out) that a tremendous demand for land would follow immediately upon the acquisition of the new territory. (“A Short History of the Surveys Made Under the Dominion Lands System 1869 to 1889, Sessional Papers (No. 13), 1892).

⁷⁶ These included accumulated error and irregularities in the grid that resulted from mechanical and human error, and the technical problems of surveying on the prairies (eg. jogs to compensate for the convergence of the meridians, excessive refraction due to the flat topography), and the need to speed up the subdivision process in order to settle outstanding land claims and finance the railroad. After this time Dennis focused his attention on administrative duties in Ottawa, preparing other phases of government land policy, including the first Dominion Lands Act, passed April 14, 1872. One of the sections of this Act established the qualifications necessary for a surveyor to work on the Dominion Lands survey and created a system of apprenticeship and examination for future candidates to follow. Lindsay Russell, son of expansionist Alexander Russell, was appointed head of field operations.

townships within this framework. Townships were bounded on their east and west sides by lines which were meridians of longitude radiating from the North Pole, and on the north and south sides by lines which were chords of the circular parallels of latitude. The size of each section varied somewhat according to its location within the township as the meridians converged slightly along the northern boundary due to the curvature the surface of the Earth. A second team outlined the boundaries of each township within this block, and a third group, often of less qualified surveyors working on a contract basis, subdivided each township into thirty-six sections of 640 acres or one square mile each. Once the larger grid was established, a surveyor could lay out townships and sections as required anywhere in the North West and still be tied-in with the work of other Dominion surveyors. Errors made within the frame of the master grid were relatively easy to detect and limited in scope. In the past surveyors typically set out a line (for example the Winnipeg Meridian) and worked outward from that point, moving along with the frontier of settlement. Now, the use of lines of latitude and longitude for meridians and baselines suggested, surveyors were no longer clearing pockets of land in the wilderness but working to create a grid that would span the entire countryside.

The entire system resembled nothing so much as an industrial assembly line. That is, when confronted with what was effectively an early problem in mass production, surveyors devised a methodology that relied upon standardized measures, the division of labor into a series of specialized, repetitive tasks, and the institution of professional standards that effectively ensured the interchangeability of workers and some degree of quality control.

As Dennis had noted at the outset, it was for the sake of simplicity and efficiency that the lands of the North West were packaged into 160 acre units and assigned a numerical codes.⁷⁷ The need was clear when considered against older methods of property designation. In Vision of an Ordered Land, MacGregor offers this example taken from a British title entry:

A parcel of land one and a half acres in extent the northeast corner of

⁷⁷ The value of simplicity was well recognized at the time, as this quotation suggests: "Any person who comprehends the meaning of the description townships or section corner posts cannot possibly get lost within the surveyed districts of the North West." Charles William Allen, "The land prospector's manual and fieldbook for the use of immigrants and capitalists," London, 1882, p. 9.

which lies ten feet north of the large elm tree near the 16th milestone on the road from Topley-in-the-Stow to Bricham-Super-Wood in the country of Shrops, thence easterly 25 feet to a brook, along its southern bank to the garden wall of the villa Resthaven, thence south 223 feet to a lilac hedge thence northeast for a distance of eight feet and east 19 feet to a large stone known locally as the Druid's Head and thence northeast to the milestone here before mentioned.⁷⁸

By comparison, a parcel of land in the Canadian system would be designated as lands of N.W. 15, Twp, 24, R.1. W. 5th. (the Northwest quarter of Section Fifteen in Township twenty-four numbering north from the 49th parallel and in Range One numbering west from the fifth meridian). The older system required detailed knowledge of the land and readily agreed upon landmarks. Information of this sort was not available in the Canadian North West and indeed this lack of knowledge likely allowed for more abstraction in land subdivision than might otherwise have been the case.

No doubt the vast size of the acquisition, in which the government of Canada acquired "a domain of public lands five times the area of the original Dominion,"⁷⁹ in a single step, also encouraged a certain degree of abstraction. As Johnson had observed in her discussion of the American system of survey: "the less men knew about the land, the straighter were the lines they drew."⁸⁰ In the North West, where almost nothing was known of vast amounts of territory outside of Red River region, the lines were very straight indeed.

The need to subdivide territory without reference to its actual physical characteristics was also evident in provisions of the Dominion Lands Act of 1872. This legislation, prepared by Dennis, contained among its measures provisions assigning to Hudson's Bay Company section 8 and three-quarters of section twenty in every township plus the remaining quarter of section 26 in every 5th township;⁸¹ the act further set apart sections 11 and 29 in each and every surveyed township as an endowment for the purposes of education⁸² and allotted to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company a land grant consisting of

⁷⁸ James G. MacGregor, Vision of an Ordered Land: The Story of the Dominion Land Survey (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1981), pp. 10-11.

⁷⁹ Martin, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Johnson, p. 36.

⁸¹ Martin, p. 24.

⁸² Ibid., p.104.

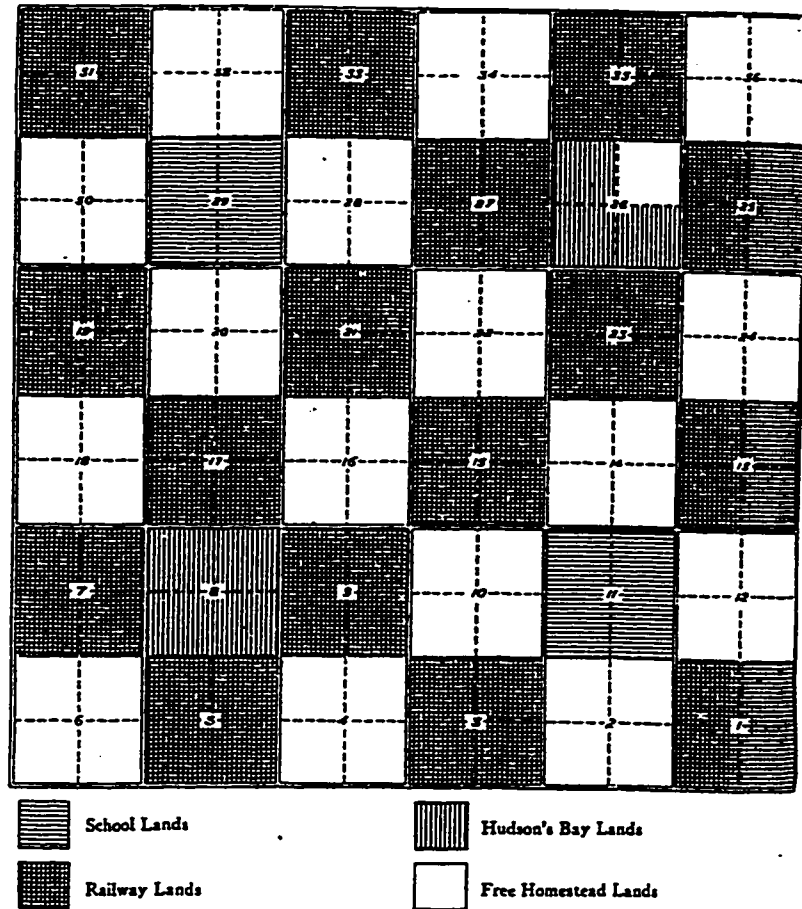


Fig. 1) - Plan of Township showing: (a) School Lands (Sections 11 and 29), (b) Hudson's Bay lands (Sections 8 and three-quarters of 26; the whole of 26 in every fifth township), (c) Free Homestead lands (even-numbered sections, except 8 and 26), (d) Railway lands (odd-numbered sections reserved for selection as railway land grants). Each section is bounded on three sides by road allowance (66 feet).

Figure Two: A Township Plan⁶³

⁶³ Martin, p. 18.

alternating sections in a mile-wide belt along either side of the line. The process of dealing out the sections by number, regardless of the merits of the land in question, suggests that the lands of the North West were being treated as so much raw material to be repackaged into negotiable commodities. Each section was assumed to hold a certain exchange or dollar value: the Hudson's Bay Company was to be compensated by the assignment of single sections equal to its total land grant, schools could sell lands and spend the proceedings, and the CPR was to "be built by means of the land through which it had to pass."⁸⁴ Seen from this perspective the system of survey was a complex and highly technical manufacturing process geared to the production of negotiable commodities in the form of regular sized lots of land.

The Survey as Science

Surveyors were completely aware that their task involved the projection of imaginary lines on to the surface of the Earth. In his 1884 address to the second Annual Meeting of Dominion Land Surveyors, W.F. King, the Chief Inspector of Surveys, observed that:

...a system of survey may be likened to the projection of a map. While it is impossible to represent any portion of the earth's surface on the plane surface of a piece of paper exactly in all respects, as to its area, the directions and curvatures of its lines, and so on, it is conversely equally impossible to lay down out the earth's surface any system of rectangular conterminous lots as projected on a plan, without overlapping or distortion.

....as in choosing a projection for a map, we are guided by what we want to show most correctly, whether it is the areas, or the directions or the curvature of the line, or the distances between points, so in selecting out system we must first decide in what respects we require the most accurate accordance between our lines upon the earth's surface and the squares laid down on the plan.⁸⁵

Consider the system of survey as a *projection on* rather than a *measure of* the North West, and it appears as one of a number of conceptual tools used to eliminate wilderness by assigning wild things a name and place within a system and further reveals the Victorian tendency to see the world and man's place in it

⁸⁴ John A. Macdonald cited in Martin, p. 39.

⁸⁵ Association of Dominion Land Surveyors, Second Annual Meeting (Ottawa, 1885), p. 18.

in an ordered way. The dominance of natural theology in the world view of British North Americans at mid-century has been well documented.⁸⁶ Rooted in the belief “that everywhere in nature there is evidence of design, and that there cannot be design without a designer,”⁸⁷ these teachings held that “nature was the handiwork of G-d and its patterns and operations disclosed his wisdom, power and goodness”.⁸⁸ For the mid Victorians there existed an overall design in nature, a rank and order in the chain of life, a fixed system operating according to regular laws, all of which were seen as evidence of a transcendent guiding intelligence.⁸⁹ Creation, as a reflection of the creator, was characterized above all by balance, order and harmony.

The doctrines of natural theology gave particular importance to taxonomy, the science of classification. Insofar as the study of nature was invested with “theological significance,” natural history “was more than a collection of facts...it was also a way of seeing, a sensibility, and a medium for communicating something essential about nature and man's place in it.”⁹⁰ A good system of classification was “a convenient summary of our knowledge... and much more than all this... the expression of the real plan of the great author of nature, enabling us to feel its beauty, and to understand the harmony which binds together the infinitely varied forms of organized being.”⁹¹ Through the construction of systems of classification, science was able to make the order of “G-d's Plan in Nature”⁹² visible and provide “proof of a thinking mind at work.”⁹³

In laying the grid across the North West, surveyors were involved in the production of a highly ordered landscape: measuring from the stars to the earth, setting out imaginary lines of longitude and latitude, subdividing this master grid into township blocks, and in turn subdividing township blocks into sections which were assigned a numerical code: it was a picture of a static

⁸⁶ Carl Berger, Science, G-d, and Nature in Victorian Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) and A.B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979).

⁸⁷ McKillop, p. 63.

⁸⁸ Berger, p. xiii.

⁸⁹ Berger, p. 32.

⁹⁰ Berger, p.31.

⁹¹ McKillop. p. 115

⁹² McKillop, p. 88.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 85.



Figure Three: A Portion of the Province of Manitoba Showing Dominion Lands Surveyed, 1882.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Capt. Charles William Allen, *The Land Prospector's Manual and Field Book*, 2nd edition (Toronto: The Toronto News Company, 1882). Caption beneath the map reads: "The intending settler will note the Map contains only the Lands Surveyed in part of the Province of Mantioba. There is an almost illimitable extent of Lands for Settlement further West."

world in which there was a place for everything and everything had its proper place. The survey should be seen, not merely as an attempt to impose order on nature, but as an expression of the order already in the world.

The practices of surveying relied upon a sense of order and exactitude, incorporating the lands of the North West into a uniform and single system stretching, not merely from Red River to the Rockies, but also from the immutable stars down to the individual section. The entire process was part of complex mathematical exercise that relied upon the order of the stars to mark out distances on earth. The principal of Queen's College evoked the natural order of things in this 1862 textbook description of the solar system: "The solar system may be viewed as a machine, manifesting intelligent design. The mechanism of the sun, planets, and satellites suggests, just as a watch, the idea of Contriver. One of the most remarkable evidences of design, in the celestial machine, is the provision made for its stability."⁹⁵ It was exactly upon the regularity and stability of the mechanism that surveying depended. When paying tribute to honorary member Andrew Russell the Association of Dominion Land Surveyors noted that "you have preserved throughout that high standard of public morality, integrity and faultless character so worthy of emulation...But our gratitude centers especially upon your professional career. It was you who introduced into Canada the use of the transit theodolite upon the public surveys, displacing the less accurate and variable compass. It was you who pointed to the stars for a sure guide, instead of to the fickle magnetic pole."⁹⁶ Russell's steadfast moral integrity was conflated with his professional accomplishments to emphasize the importance of just those qualities .

In the same way that Linnaen taxonomy allowed for the systematic naming of living things according to species and genera, the survey allowed every unit of land in the North West to be clearly identified by range, township and section, creating a sense of systematic order, stability and control. The unknown North West was steadily displaced as the survey advanced and the spaces on the map replaced by the patterns of civilized settlement until each acre had been neatly labeled.

⁹⁵ McKillop, p. 85.

⁹⁶ Association of Dominion Land Surveyors, First Annual Meeting (Ottawa, February 1884), p. 17.

Coates has described this process of taking possession of the land as “appropriation” and noted that “establishing proprietorship over land first implied taking stock of nature.”⁹⁷ The president of the Association of Dominion Land Surveyors shared this view, complaining in his address to the Second Annual Meeting of the group, that “The greatest drawback to the land surveyor in our country is that neither the Federal nor Provincial government has made or begun to make a systematic and accurate survey of the country...I think we are the only remaining civilized nation that has not commenced such a systematic survey.”⁹⁸ Detailed knowledge of the resources of the land and their location were considered a necessary precursor to their efficient exploitation. But even without detailed topographical maps, the process of surveying in itself provided a sort of “index system”⁹⁹ such that by 1885 few lands remained in the North West that could be termed “unknown” or “wild” in the sense of being outside the domain of man. The projection of order over emptiness was all but complete.

During the late 1870’s and early 1880’s the spread of the survey grid imposed a visual uniformity on maps of the North West that was matched by increasing uniformity in estimations of land quality.¹⁰⁰ The entire process tended to smooth out differences in land quality and topography, creating the satisfying illusion of a huge agrarian empire. This practice was encouraged by the Department of the Interior which noted that “newcomers are inclined to underrate the fertility of prairie soil. A surveyor on his first trip to the North-West, will classify as third and fourth class land, what another, more experienced will call first and second class. It should be remembered that with the same quality of land, the prairie of the west cannot have as good an appearance as the highly cultivated meadows of the east.”¹⁰¹

As the west came to be seen as an orderly agrarian paradise, the mental habit of dividing the land into millions of individual units becomes increasingly widespread, as this quotation from Captain Lefroy suggests:

Let me call attention to the figures mentioned by Mr. Fleming. He

⁹⁷ Colin Coates, p. 330.

⁹⁸ Association of Dominion Land Surveyors, Second Annual Meeting, pp. 8-9.

⁹⁹ Warkentin, “Manitoba Settlement Patterns,” p. 67.

¹⁰⁰ Owram, pp. 150-151.

¹⁰¹ Warkentin, “Steppe, Desert and Empire,” p. 127.

spoke, I think, of one hundred and sixty millions of acres of land supposed to be more or less capable of grazing and cultivation. Now, it is impossible for the mind to conceive what one hundred and sixty million acres are. But let me put it you in this way. Suppose the country marked out like a chess-board, in squares of a mile each way; it would take a quarter of a million of men to put one upon every square. Such is the verge and space which is offered in that region for settlement....If settlers prepared by their antecedents to find happiness in it can be attracted there, Divine Providence has given to the English race a magnificent inheritance in this land. It is our duty and destiny to occupy it.¹⁰²

In setting out their network of lines surveyors were creating a new habitat, a sort of environmental niche to be filled by the intended immigrant. Dennis had already proposed that "Doubtless, with order and good government established in the Territory, an immense tide of emigration will set in, and I am sanguine that with a liberal land policy and efficient emigration arrangements, that country will have irresistible charm to a very large share of the classes in Europe."¹⁰³ Build it and they will come.

The Canadian Pastoral

Both Leo Marx and Raymond Williams have linked the rise of the pastoral rhetoric in the mid 18th century with a generalized sense that the agrarian way of life was threatened by modernization and industrialization. Marx's text, The Machine in the Garden was premised around "the whistle of the distant train" which "destroys the reverie" and shatters the harmony of the pastoral landscape.¹⁰⁴ He proposed that the rise of industrialization threatened the agrarian vision of America that had prevailed since the time of that nation's founding. In The Country and the City Raymond Williams similarly rooted the popularity of the pastoral in 18th century England to the actual displacement of the rural dweller and the destruction of the traditional rural landscape by enclosure and engrossment movements. In both cases changes in lifestyle altered a longstanding relationship between the country dweller and the land,

¹⁰²from the discussion following Fleming's address to the Royal Colonial Institute, Sanford Fleming, "Canada, and its vast Underdeveloped Interior," (London, 1878), p. 263.

¹⁰³ Canada, Sessional Papers (No. 12), 1870, p. 20.

¹⁰⁴ Marx, p. 27-28.

leading to the emergence of a new sensibility.¹⁰⁵

Although the literary conventions of the pastoral often appeared in Canadian writings on the North West, the motivations and meanings were quite different. In Canada the land was a source of wealth rather than retreat. The pastoral represented not “a recoil from” but a march towards the future, particularly towards perceived future greatness rooted in agrarian success. Charles Mair’s slogan “Wheat is empire” summed up this aspiration in a single phrase. The lands of the North West were widely seen as source of future national prosperity. This vision was in no way linked to nostalgia, as was the case in the writings of Marx, Williams, and even Virgil, but to the future of the country.

The Canadian vision of the North West as a middle landscape is intriguing for what it left out as well as for what it included. For what was left out was largely the two extremes, which in other situations have served to define the pastoral, namely, the wilderness and the city. In the true pastoral these themes are the points of reference that help to define the genre,¹⁰⁶ indeed Williams and Marx proposed that it is the threat represented by wilderness and city which help to locate the middle landscape and give the pastoral mode its poignancy. In the literature of the North West these points of references were reduced to ghostly presences on the margins of the physical and mental landscape: the wilderness lay in the past and the city in the East. Similarly, the metaphor of the garden, traditionally used to describe a non-productive landscape in which the aesthetic point of view is dominant, was turned on its head and used instead to denote a land of easy productivity. “Let us have law and order and public improvements, even on a modest scale and we will make this country the home of happy and prosperous millions” McDougall had written to Macdonald in 1869.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Peter de Bolla, “Antipictorialism in the English Landscape Tradition: A Second Look at *The Country and the City*”, in Christopher Prendergast, ed., Cultural Materialism: on Raymond Williams, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. 175.

¹⁰⁶ Marx pp. 24-25 and Williams, The Country and the City, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ McDougall to Macdonald, October 31, 1869 in R.C.Brown, “For the Purposes of the Dominion: Background Paper on the History of Federal Public Lands Policy to 1930” in Nelson, J.G., et al (ed.), Canadian Public Land Use in Perspective (Ottawa: Social Science Research Council of Canada, 1974), pp. 5-6.

The other bookend of the pastoral--the city--was equally absent from the idealized image of the North West. Thus Grant wrote that as "interesting, and after a fashion, phenomenal as Winnipeg is, it must not be supposed that we can find the true North-west in its towns and cities. There speculators congregate to get up "booms" and similar transactions, bogus or slightly otherwise...If we would see the great North-west...we must go out to the quarter-sections..."¹⁰⁸

In the survey system, the township and the homestead were the organizational vehicles of western settlement, not the city. The city represented another sort of uncontrolled wilderness. It was a place of speculation and instability that had little in common with the social ideal of a stable society rooted farming and land ownership. Mair clearly counterpointed the two choices open to planners:

It may be the home of a great, a comfortable and therefore a loyal and contented yeomanry with every other interest developing from its sturdy roots; or it may become the arena of unscrupulous and vulgar monopolies, of absentee landlordism and the whole train of proletarian and socialistic agitations which follows or attends such a state of things. In a word we may find the dreary miseries which are baffling statesmanship in Europe imported into this country.¹⁰⁹

Speculative tendencies, whether in mentality or real estate were condemned. McKillop noted the abhorrence elite groups held for free thinkers and their privileging of values such as "steadiness", "precision" and "certainty" over "fluctuation", "ill founded speculation" and the "rage for novelty and innovation."¹¹⁰ The visual stability of the grid, stretching across the west, must have been a source of considerable satisfaction, generating a certain aesthetic pleasure. For these reasons, even after the wilderness of nature was displaced and inventoried, the wildness of the city remained located in the east.

One kind of wildness (the inherent wildness of nature) was eliminated from the region by the process of redefinition before settlement could begin, because

¹⁰⁸ George Grant ed., Our Picturesque Northern Neighbour (Chicago: Alexander Belford & Co., 1899), p. 212.

¹⁰⁹ Owrarn, p. 136.

¹¹⁰ McKillop, p. 1,3, 8.

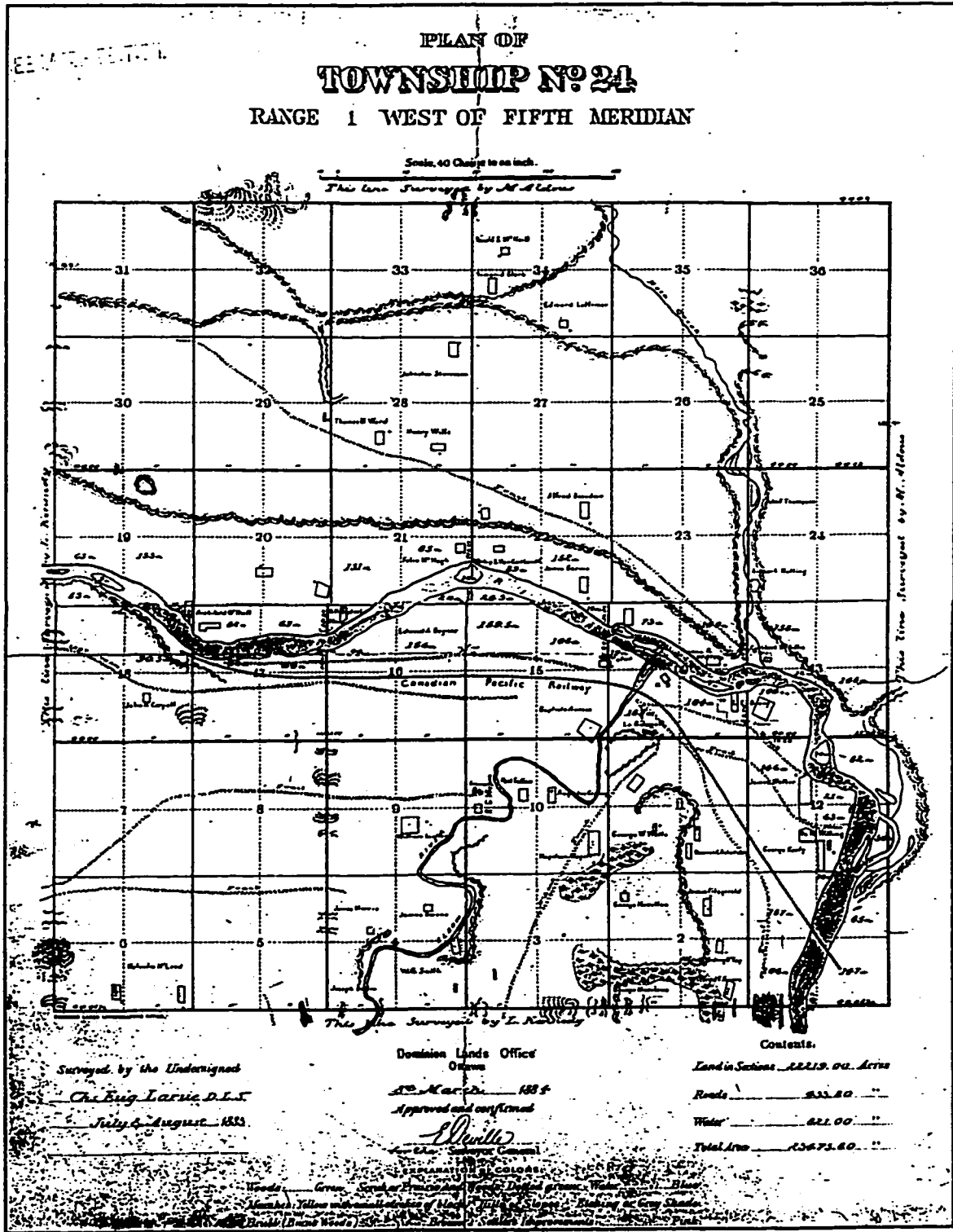


Figure Four: The Future Site of Calgary In Accordance with the Dominion Lands System of Survey, 1883.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta.

a place of wildness, with wilderness holding the connotation of "barren" offered Canada no potential for agrarian greatness. Similarly, a savage wilderness, a place beyond law and order, offered no possibility for stable society to take root. As the moral and physical attributes of wilderness were separated and accounted for, the image of the North West as a place was freed for re-interpretation as a pastoral paradise in waiting, the ideal home of the ideal Canadian citizen: the independent, intelligent yeoman. The system of survey in the Canadian North West was devised to create an extended middle landscape, a vast and idealized agrarian empire with every family in possession of a 160 acre homestead, "the acknowledged extent of an Emigrant's requirements." There was no place here for the restless city dweller, the speculator, the absentee landlord, or the faceless mob. Urban instability and disorder were not seen as compatible with the order of the true West. Although it was possible by combining sections of land to amass sufficient acreage for town planning, the survey grid was an expression of an agricultural rather than an urban order designed to meet the needs of the individual land owner rather than the urban community.

The subjugation of wilderness was completed, first by redefinition of the land itself, secondly by inscribing the patterns of civilized settlement upon the empty space that remained, and thirdly by the pronounced rejection of alternative patterns of settlement. The free commons and the communal life ways of the natives were relegated to the past and urbanization to the East. Within the grid lay a land of systematic order and stability, where the scenery arranged itself according to the canons of art.

In his address to the second annual meeting of the Association of Dominion Land Surveyors, W. F. King, Chief inspector of Surveys and honorary member of the association, gave a presentation on the history of surveys of the North West, linking the historic origins of the profession with the evolution of man from primitive to civilized society:

History tells us that mankind in his primitive state, subsisted by hunting wild animals and fishing, and on the natural products of the earth.

Afterwards, as population increased, game and wild fruits became

scarce, and he found it necessary to domesticate certain animals such as sheep and other cattle...He was still a nomad, as he was obliged continually to drive his herds to where the best pasturage and water could be obtained.

As population increased, and flocks and herds multiplied, it became necessary for each cattle owner to restrict himself to a particular holding, where he would not interfere with his neighbors. These holdings, no doubt were governed in the first place by natural boundaries such as creeks, rivers, mountains, and so forth. In support of this contention, I may refer you to Chapter 15 of the Book of Joshua, in which the boundaries of the lot of Judah are very particularly described, showing that this was the system practiced by the Israelites at a time when they seem to have made some advance in civilization....

It does not appear, however, that agriculture was carried on to any great extent among Eastern nations at the dawn of history, except in countries such as Egypt....

A large agricultural population crowded into a small space, required the sub-division of the country into small holdings, which had to be determined by means of lines instead of natural boundaries.

The science of geometry, which is the foundation of all surveying is, said to have taken its inception here, where every year landmarks swept away by the inundations of the Nile had to be re-established...The Pyramids no doubt were used as a point of reference in these surveys, and it is probable that the Great Pyramid, in which there is a passage pointing to the Pole Star, was so constructed under the orders of the monarch by skilled astronomers for the purpose of establishing a meridian of reference to be used by surveyors...¹¹²

To those involved in the process, surveying the Canadian North West was but another link in this noble tradition, sanctified by the Bible and granted additional authority by references to ancient Egypt. McDougall had written long ago, before his fall from grace, that the application of science to solve modern problems "all converged to one high purpose, the mastery of the Globe."¹¹³ If King's history provided the origins of surveying, McDougall offered the final goal. Meanwhile the practical processes of mastering the Globe, the techniques of geometry (land-measuring) and surveying (fixing land marks), had played a vital role in the transformation of the North West.

Survey crews arrived in Calgary in 1883. The accomplishments of that

¹¹² Association of Dominion Land Surveyors, Second Annual Meeting, pp. 17-18.

¹¹³ Zeller, p.203.

season, in which "one thousand two hundred and twenty-one townships, or somewhat over 27 millions of acres were subdivided into sections and quarter section, ready for occupancy by settlers,"¹¹⁴ were described by the Surveyor General as having been "made on a gigantic scale."¹¹⁵ They remain unrivaled in the history of land subdivision in the western world.¹¹⁶ The mists of ignorance had lifted, the heathen wilderness had been transformed, and a new order had been projected onto the land.

¹¹⁴ "Report of the Surveyor General," 1883, in MacGregor, p. 74.

¹¹⁵ Don Thompson, Men and Meridians: The History of Surveying and Mapping in Canada. Vol. 2. 1867 to 1917. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), pp. 42-43.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE: A CORPORATE VISION

In the early 1880's a second planner entered the North West, "a commercial corporation, with profit-yielding transportation by land and sea" as its chief function. When the corporation took possession of the garden the focus of planning shifted from preparing land for the individual homesteader to the creation of an integrated financial empire. The entire landscape was assimilated into the corporate system, transforming nature from an environmental power to a series of natural resources.²

The relationship of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the lands of the North West was determined not merely by commerce but also by politics. Since the late 1850's the construction of a transcontinental railroad was deemed a vital necessity to the viability of the nation. For this reason steps were taken at the time of the transfer of Rupert's Land to reserve the lands of the North West "for the purposes of the Dominion."³ As Macdonald had succinctly stated "it was of the greatest importance to...have possession of it for the Pacific Railway must be built by means of the land through which it had to pass."⁴ Insofar as the syndicate behind the CPR was forced to rely upon the sale of the lands of the North West to finance construction, a framework was created in which land came to be seen as the means to a desired end.

Corporate planning went through three phases. The initial goals of the CPR were much like those of the government: settling the land with individual homesteaders and servicing this market was seen as the key to sustainable profitability. Rapidly escalating construction costs combined with a slower than anticipated rush to settlement soon forced a less visionary approach. The North West Land Company was born of this financial crisis and the urgent need to raise cash by whatever means possible. Land sales rather than settlement were suddenly the order of the day. Finally, as the CPR moved beyond the immediate crisis, townsites again came to be viewed as a part of the extended corporate network, as a means to access the riches of the land, a transfer point to

¹ Keith Morris, The Story of the Canadian Pacific Railway (London: William Stevens Ltd., 1916), p. 121.

² Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 19.

³ Martin, p. 9.

⁴ Ibid., p. 39.

assemble the resources of the region for shipping and also to distribute goods back into the region.

Initially CPR President George Stephen had rejected an American approach to railroading as it would have involved financing construction through the sale of large bond issues and land speculation. Instead he proposed "to limit the borrowing of money from the public to the smallest possible point, and ...[to look] for the return of our own capital and a legitimate profit entirely to the growth of the country and the development of the property."⁵ "It is settling, not selling that we must aim at," he wrote to Macdonald, "if our lands won't sell we will give them away to settlers."⁶ The objective was to get the land settled as quickly as possible in order to create traffic for the railroad. The financial policy was essentially a conservative one; the directors hoped that the railroad would finance itself, mile-by-mile, through the very process of settling the land. Stephen's plan to bring Irish immigrants to the prairies suggested something of the fabric of settlement he envisioned and the agrarian frame of reference he was operating within.

In the early days, then, the CPR was to be built not as a contractor's road for the profits of construction but for its ultimate value as an operating railroad.⁷ The exigencies of the construction process itself soon forced a change in this philosophy. The change was foreshadowed in a desperate letter sent by Stephen to Macdonald in 1882 urging increased speed in the survey, subdivision and assignment of prairie lands: "We cannot build and equip the C.P.R. without money, and money can only come from the resources we have at command...we shall need every acre of the grant to enable us to find the money requisite to finish our contract...Delay will be fatal to us, we cannot wait."⁸ The pressing need for working capital and the improbability of raising it through a land policy geared towards selling for settlement could no longer be denied. In one of a number of efforts taken to stave off bankruptcy, the corporation devised a plan to convert land into cash by selling its land holdings to a new entity it had helped to create:

⁵ Stephen to Macdonald (July 1880), cited in Heather Gilbert, Awakening Continent: The Life of Lord Mount Stephen. Vol. One: 1829-91 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1965), p. 64.

⁶ Stephen to Macdonald (May 1881), Ibid., p. 82.

⁷ Martin, p. 52.

⁸ Stephen to Macdonald (August 1882), Gilbert, p. 106.

the Canada North West Land Company.

Created on June 6, 1882, the Canada North West Land Company was run by a small group of capitalists who had agreed to purchase five million acres of land (all the odd numbered sections but for 1 and 29 within the area of the land grant), the area of all town and village plots established during the construction of the main line and within one year following its completion between Brandon and the British Columbia border, and \$13.5 million worth of the railway's land grant bonds. The railway received \$4,200,000 in bonds and cash and one-half of the net proceeds of land sales after administrative costs and management fees.⁹ Although many companies were involved in the colonization of the North West at this time, the Canada North West Company was not one of them: "Its contract with the railway contained no provisions or requirements with respect to settlement of the land. It paid a fixed price for the land irrespective of whether it located settlers on its holdings. The Canadian Pacific regarded its agreement with the land company not as a promise of early colonization of the land but as a means of obtaining the financial assistance it so sorely needed during this period."¹⁰ Moreover, the arrangement was far from arm's length. According to Stephen the Canada North West Land Company "was practically a Branch of the land department of the CPR."¹¹

By this arrangement the CPR agreed to divide the proceeds of townsite promotion with the Canada North West Land Company, which would then assume responsibility for the management of all town properties. In fact, in spite of its strong emphasis on land settlement, the CPR was never entirely immune to the potential for revenue from the sale of townsite properties. One of the benefits to be gained by altering the proposed route from the northern to the southern

⁹ James B. Hedges, Building the Canadian West: The Land and Colonization Policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1939), pp. 74,86.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 75. In 1881 the Canadian Pacific Railroad had announced a flat price of \$2.5 per acre for land regardless of quality or location, with a rebate of one half of the purchase price for land cultivated within four years. By the new agreement of 1882 the Canada North West Land Company sold farmland at 1/6 cash down, remainder in five equal annual installments at 6%, and townsite properties at 1/3 cash down, with the balance due in two payments at 6 and 12 months after the initial down payment, interest at 8%. Moreover, the Canada North West Land Company sold lands without restrictions or conditions as to settlement, a further sign of the shift away from settling the land towards policies intended to produce income.

¹¹ Charles S. Lee (ed.), Land to Energy, 1882-1982 (Calgary: Canada Northwest Energy Ltd., 1983), p. 7.

portion of the territory was the potential to place and control townsites along the way. The timing of that decision, coming immediately after the battle between Selkirk and Winnipeg on the one hand, and the easy and profitable settlement of Brandon on the other, no doubt served to underline the point that the selection of a southern route across the empty prairie would give the company tremendous power. In the eyes of the syndicate the emptiness of the North West was less a deterrent to settlement than a prelude to greater profits, enabling it "almost literally to build urban western Canada from bald prairie, and primarily on its own terms."¹²

In all, forty-seven townsites were established by the CPR and conveyed to the North West Land Company during this period, including Calgary. Company policy generally dictated a townsite for each township with larger service centers at 125 mile intervals. The result was a pattern of townsites distributed at fairly equal distances across the prairies, with locations dictated by the practical necessities of the railroad operation rather than any inherent qualities of site.

According to historian James Hedges there was no doubt that "the company planned its towns with a view to obtaining the maximum profit therefrom."¹³ The following excerpt from the memoirs of J.H.E. Secretan, in spite of its dissembling tone, also points to a profit earning strategy:

The location of a prairie town is often more or less a case of luck, accident or mystery. Sometimes a lonely squatter attracts a few more agriculturists to adjoining quarter sections and their solitary shacks are the only little dots to be seen on the landscape, when along comes the busy little land grabbers with a bag full of money, buys out the hayseeds, taking a chance that the railway line will run through "Somewhere's near," and proceeds to lay out the land in streets, avenues and town lots. In many cases he is magnificently rewarded by the sale thereof, or else, if the situation happens to suit the Railway Company, he is bought out by them and so reaps the rewards of this shrewdness or luck. (Other times the greed of the owner led him to ask too high a price and railway moved elsewhere.) The manipulations of the land grabbers and town site boomers were not always successful, and if they did make a lucky selection, it seemed to me that their best plan was to divide up with the Railway company. If not, they often

¹² Max Foran, "The CPR and the Urban West, 1881-1930" in Hugh Dempsey (ed.), The Iron Road and the Making of a Nation (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984), p. 92.

¹³ Hedges, p. 84.

found themselves a mile or two away from the station and their town was either soon deserted or became only a suburb of the real town owned by the C.P.R.¹⁴

In essence, then, it seems that the criteria the CPR followed in selecting townsites was largely the potential of the property to earn revenue. As Innis has argued, understanding the monopoly position of the CPR and the importance of trade to the value of land are critical to the appreciation of land policy. Innis proposed that interest in land ownership persisted in North America largely as a "relic of feudalism."¹⁵ Unable to secure sufficient support from land alone, the Company began to treat land as capital and to use the power of its monopoly to dispose of land in a manner that would best suit the interests of the company. To a degree the fate of Calgary was a demonstration of this power:

Originally located on the East side of the Elbow River by a syndicate which had secured many acres, they failed to come to a satisfactory agreement with the Railway Company, and although the track was actually laid through their property, and many town lots were sold, the speculation was a failure, as the Railway people located the station on the other side of the little Elbow River and started a town of their own which is now the city of Calgary.¹⁶

As the following letter, sent by the superintendent of construction John Egan to William Van Horne, suggested, one of the principal advantages offered by Section 15 was the ability of the company to control its development.

At Calgary on section 15, there is a very good location for a town site. No squatters are on this section, as the Mounted Police have kept them off there. Mr. Hamilton has arranged to lay out a town, and I have no doubt that when you see the place, it will please you. It is West of the Elbow and the north line of the section runs across the Bow River. It is a natural Town site, and far ahead of any location that we have on the line of the road...¹⁷

Again it should be noted that the emptiness of the land was perceived of as

¹⁴ J.H.E. Secretan, Canada's Great Highway: From the First Stake to the Last Spike (reprint of the 1924 edition), (New York: Arno Press, 1981), pp. 127-129.

¹⁵ Harold Innis, "The Place of Land in North American Federations," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXI, No. 1, March 1940, p. 67.

¹⁶ Secretan, p.128.

¹⁷ Omer Lavallée, "John M. Egan, A Railway Officer in Winnipeg, 1882-1886," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Third Series, No. 33, 1976-1977, p. 8.

an advantage that would allow the CPR to monopolize the revenues from town lot sales. The meaning of the term "natural town site" remains vague. Historian Max Foran has argued that it related to the presence of fresh water, the sheltered character of the site, and the anticipated ease of conducting a survey on the flat lands of section 15 (although it must be noted that flat land was hardly unique in the experiences of settling the North West). It may also have alluded to certain physical qualities of the setting. Numerous descriptions of the townsite in the years 1884-1885 emphasized its location at the junction of two rivers with trees, sheltering bluffs and distant vistas. In a typical account, the town was described as surrounded "by two rushing, tumbling rivers of purest, sparking mountain water--the 'Bow' and the 'Elbow'--which find their confluence in the middle of the present town of Calgary. Beyond we have the foothills and, to complete the picture, the G-d-given, majestic, ever beautiful rocky Mountains."⁶ Even though the rivers were not particularly navigable and the trees not especially plentiful, the setting seemed to have evoked a sense of traditional townsite qualities. That is, there was a tendency to evaluate the site according to visual cues more appropriate to European urban history. Even though the future of Calgary was linked to the railroad and the district, a crossroads at the confluence of two rivers and a protected location were seen to denote a "natural townsite," a place where a hamlet might grow into a village, and then a town and one day a city.

The Gridiron Plan

In his examination of urban planning in the American West historian John Reps noted that the Turner thesis, often used as the standard lens for studying the West, presented urban development as a sequential and evolutionary process with hunting and trapping followed by clearing the land for farming, the formation of small hamlets and village centers and the gradual development of cities. Reps has disputed the accuracy of this evolutionary model:

...the simple truth is that in every section of the West, towns were in the vanguard of settlement. They were established as planned communities from the beginning, with designs that provided a framework for future growth...Nearly every Western town and city began as a planned

⁶ J.G.Fitzgerald, Business Directory of Calgary, Alberta, Canada (Calgary: Calgary Herald Printing and Publishing, 1885), unpaginated.

settlement whose physical forms were determined in advance by individuals, corporations, colonial societies, religious groups or public officials. Nothing could be further from the truth than the notion that Western towns originated as spontaneous crossroads hamlets that grew slowly, incrementally, and randomly, without guidance or direction. The West was a region of planned cities.¹⁹

Certainly the CPR believed in the importance of urbanization to tap the resources of the region. The CPR envisioned the typical Western town as a clearing house, serving the needs of the surrounding residents and facilitating the delivery of farm products to distant markets. In effect the company's operational strategy coupled urban development with hinterland productivity.

The gridiron town plan was a natural extension of the agrarian vision of the North West. By comparison, other models of town planning centered around the church, palace or guild, held little relevance in the North West. The urban counterpart of the Dominion Lands Survey, the grid-iron town was laid out in much the same pattern by the same personnel utilizing the same tools²⁰ for much the same reasons: the grid was the fastest, easiest way to subdivide and hence commoditize land and convert it from land to cash. There was no need to add curves and boulevards when buyers were at hand and the need for cash was urgent. Gridiron plans were favored by all railroad companies in the United States and Canada in the late 19th century for obvious reasons of speed, simplicity and lower surveying costs.²¹

The implications of laying out a grid of streets and lots on vacant land for town planning purposes were minimal. In Calgary's case the surveyor chose to emphasize the line of the track over the survey grid, orienting streets parallel to the line of the track. This had the effect of creating rows of odd shaped lots at the margins of the section where the town plan and the agricultural grid collided,

¹⁹ John W. Reps, The Forgotten Frontier: Urban Planning in the American West Before 1890 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981), pps. 2,3,5.

²⁰ Calgary was laid out by Dominion Land Surveyor Archibald McVittie working on contract for the CPR.

²¹ John Reps suggests that it was the Illinois Central Railroad which took standardization to its logical extreme, utilizing a standard town plat with identical street patterns, street widths, and street names in thirty-three communities. The CPR's townsite plans were somewhat less standardized, but designed with the same desire to minimize costs. J. Reps, The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 389-392.

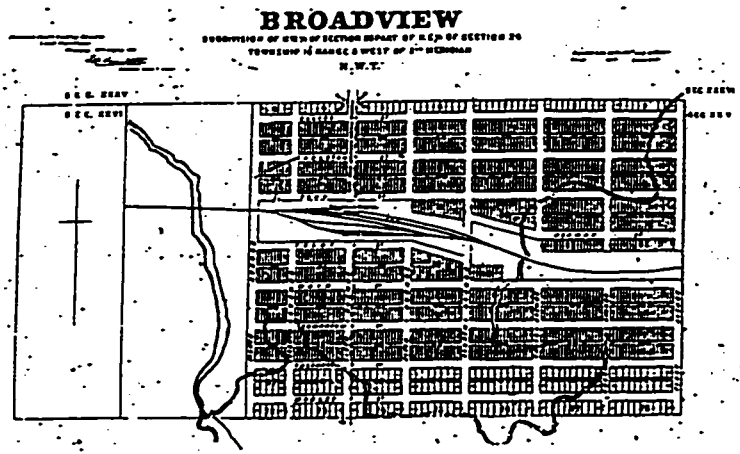
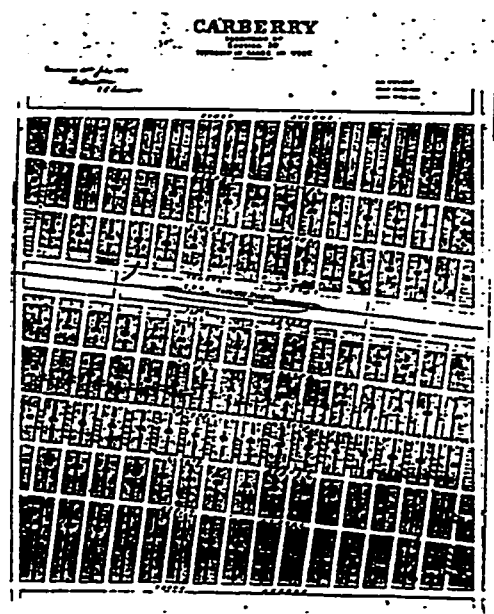
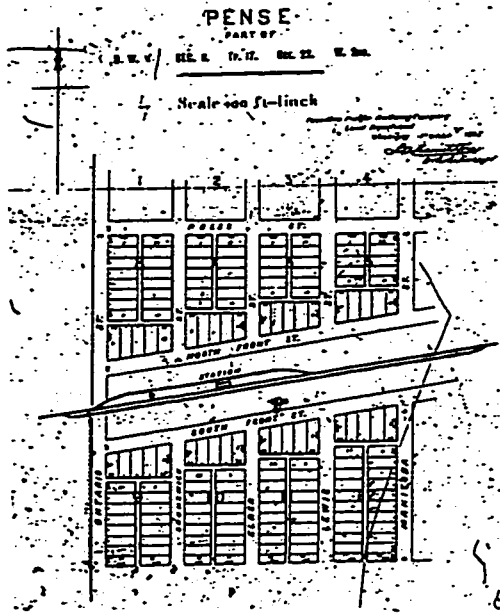


Figure Five: Examples of CPR Townsite Plans ²²

²² Canadian Pacific Railway, Official guide book to the Canadian Pacific Railway Lands in Manitoba and part of the North West Territory (Winnipeg: The Bishop Engraving and Printing Company, 1884).

but accurately reflected the meaning of the CPR as the *raison d'etre* of the new town. Calgary's was a generic plan with few distinguishing features. It was a pattern as unrestricted as the vast lands of the west, with no sense of separation between a townsite and its surroundings. The town was both of the land and of the track; the grid offered the potential for infinite expansion and growth.

In his study *New Towns in the New World* the historian David Hamer commented upon the absence of town founding ceremonies: "As for those who settled in the New World and played a part in the foundation of towns, there was surprisingly little consciousness that what they were doing was something special, historic, and never to be repeated, the founding of *new* towns for *new* societies. Actual rituals associated with the reservation of a site or the laying out of town were rare."²³ But this was true only because Hamer was searching the accounts for ceremonies typical of agrarian societies or forest lands. There are few tales of men plowing a symbolic furrow around the townsite-to-be or chopping down the first tree to mark out a new clearing. However this was not the case if the accounts of town foundings in the North West are examined on their own terms. Consider, for instance, this account of Calgary's founding by CPR engineer and future Calgary resident P. Turner Bone:

By the end of 1883, or early in 1884 the CPR had its town-site surveyed and was ready to start selling lots...I don't remember where this sale was held, but I well remember being impressed with the fair way in which it was conducted. The company, for some time previous, had been taking applications to purchase, and each applicant had been given an identifying number according to the order of his application.

At the sale, the applicant who was the first to apply was called upon to mark with a pencil--on a plan of the townsite tacked to a wall--the lots he desired to purchase. The first applicant happened to be John Glen, pioneer settler at Fish Creek, some ten miles south of Calgary. I can see him yet as he stepped forward and marked the corner lots on what is now Center Street and 9th Avenue East.²⁴

In this account, town founding was associated, not with the surveyor's stake or the arrival of the first settler in the district, but with the sale of property. The

²³David Hamer, *New Towns in the New World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 66.

²⁴P. Turner Bone, *When the Steel Went Through: Reminiscences of a Railroad Pioneer* (Toronto: MacMillan Company, 1947), pp. 61-62. A map from this period matching this description, with pencil marks in the corners of the lots, can be found in the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta.

Dominion Lands survey had transformed the "white sheet" of the North West into 160 acre homesteads with guarantees of legal title rooted in the assumptions of a permanent and stable agrarian society (at least on the part of those who devised the system, if not by the speculators who often took advantage of it). While the section could be subject of sale and speculation, it was most often made available free of charge to the genuine settler. However, when the 160 acre section was subdivided into a townsite, the idealized relationship of the homesteader to the land was altered. The CPR's town lot sale established a market value for land in Calgary: \$450 for a corner lot and \$300 for a middle. Never again would the lands of section 15 be without a price.²⁵

Moreover, the price itself quickly assumed importance as a measure of the community's success. On the open prairie the value of land was related to its presumed fertility and its proximity to the railroad (that is, to its use value, the amount of a commodity that could be produced from the land and the relative ease of shipping the produce of the land to market). Inside the town, land became another commodity to be bought and sold, a process simplified by the grid plan itself. Speculation in town lots was a general pastime. Property ownership was no longer measured in terms of a lifetime commitment but in the length of time it took to make a profit. While the premise of the Dominion system of survey was to set in motion a settlement process that would transform the vast lands of the North West into units of property, the effect of the CPR's townsite survey was to transform property into a real estate commodity.

Town growth in the decade following the sale was directed largely by private interests and might be termed as opportunistic or strategic rather than planned. Except for the limitations imposed by geography (the rivers, the north hill and the limited and self-contained nature of the townsite itself) development was geared towards maximizing gains and minimizing losses with little attention paid to the natural setting.²⁶ The location of the station--perhaps the single most significant

²⁵ This point is made with regard to Chicago by William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis, p. 54.

²⁶ Foran, for example, notes that in late 1880's east Calgary landowners "fearful of the western movement of the business center" joined forces to promote their lands for industrial usage, initiating a pattern of manufacturing in East Calgary in spite of area's scenic beauty and early residential potential. Max Foran, "Land Development Patterns in Calgary, 1884-1945", in Alan Artibise and Gilbert Stelter (ed.), The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City (Ottawa: The Carleton Library, 1979), p.297.

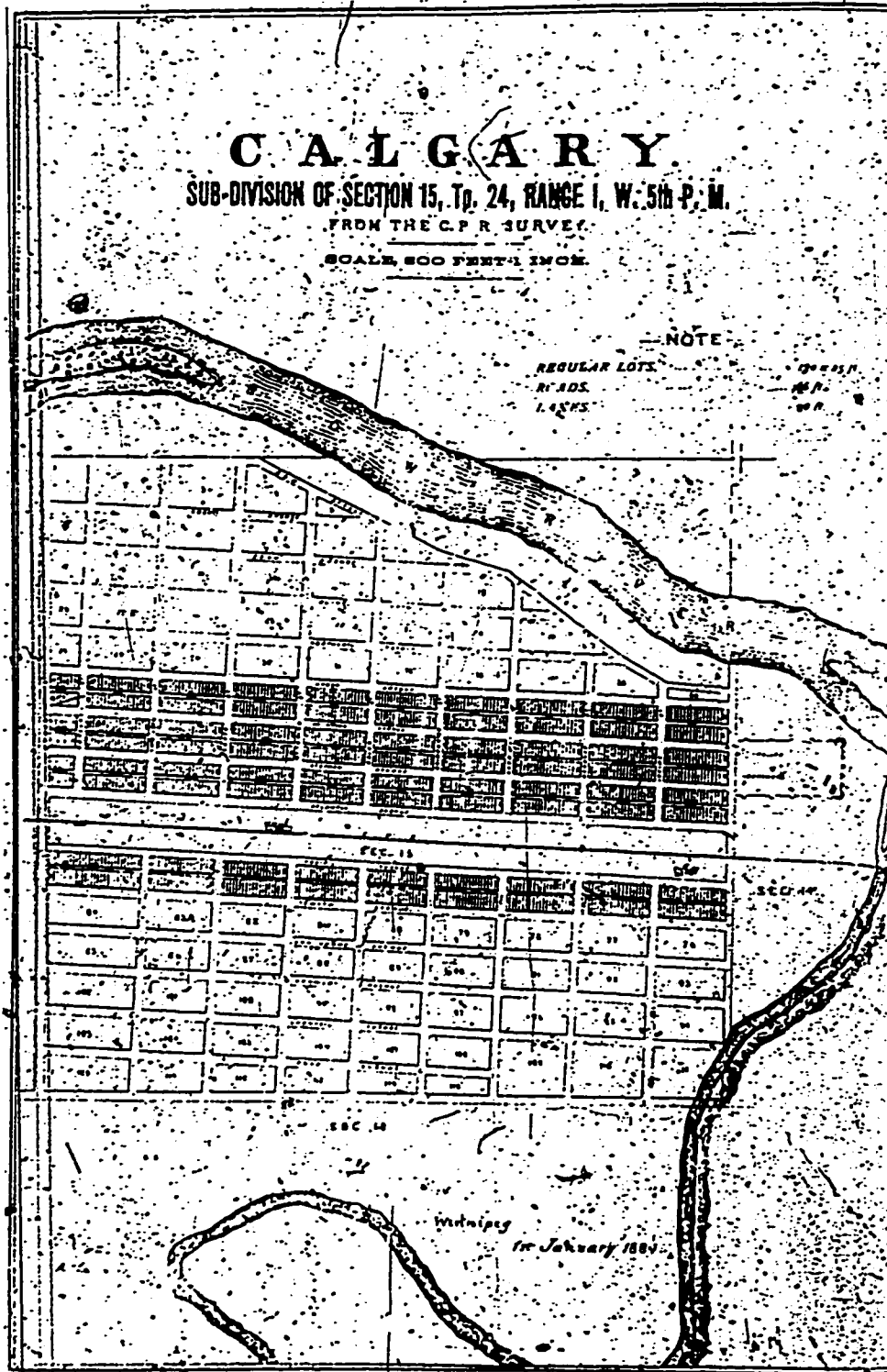


Figure Six: The CPR's Calgary, 1884.²⁷

²⁷ Canadian Pacific Railway, Official guide book.

act of planning in a CPR townsite--was to the north of the track, suggesting that the company may have envisioned a fairly small and self-contained community, tucked between the rail line and the curve of the Bow and Elbow Rivers. In the decade after the town founding, the CPR was involved in development through the donation of land for a town hall and police station (encouraging growth further east than would otherwise have happened) and the location of wholesale facilities and warehouses (which effectively blocked expansion south of the tracks). Also of consequence was the practice of setting minimum sizes for lot frontages,²⁸ a decision made to maximize the number of lots produced in any section of land. Local government possessed neither the motivation nor the power to direct the town's physical growth, particularly given the general desire among its citizens for rapid expansion.²⁹

Fream observed that although it was "not surprising to find that towns have sprung up all along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway...it is surprising to reflect on the rapidity with which some of these towns have grown in size and importance, and how neat, business-like, and well laid out many of them appear to be."³⁰ Fraser, complaining about the prairie towns in 1911, pushed the point even further when he observed that they were: "as though turned out to the same pattern in the same machine, as lacking in individuality as factory-made furniture, with no ambition to be pretty, but serviceable, workable, dollar-earning."³¹ Indeed "business-like" and "dollar-earning" were exactly what the towns were intended to be and their machine-made quality was no coincidence given that they were in fact produced in the context of a commercial corporate process.

Town and Country

In Building the Canadian West Hedges asserted that "a railway built though unsettled country exercises a profound influence not only on rural development, but also on the growth of towns...it becomes, in fact, the chief promoter of

²⁸ In Brandon, Manitoba General Rossner "decreed that the lots should be small, since more money could be made from the land in that way". Pierre Berton, The Last Spike. The Great Railway, 1881-1885 (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1971), pp. 28-29.

²⁹ Foran, "Land Development Patterns," p. 298.

³⁰ William Fream, Dominion of Canada. Pacific Railway and North-West Territories (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1885), p. 15.

³¹ J.F. Fraser, Canada As It Is (London: 1911), p. 182.

townsites."² While the expansionist writings of the pre-settlement period were devoted to banishing the image of that territory as a barren wilderness and then to recreating it as fertile (if empty) garden, the promotional literature of the CPR, the North West Land Company, and other associated interested parties, stressed instead the many resources of the region and the absolute harmony of town and country. Thus it was observed that:

The traveler who for the first time visits Calgary cannot help ejaculating: "oh! what a beautiful valley! What a pretty town site!" These and many similar expressions are naturally evoked by the situation and surroundings, and they afford an emphatic contradiction to the saying the "G-d made the country and man made the town. Of course, the explanation is that Calgary is a happy exception."³

Coates has suggested that the picturesque rose to prominence during a period of rapid change and served to pave over disruptive differences in class and circumstance. A similar point might be made regarding the use of this form in the literature of townsite promotion to mask the very real struggles involved in settling the land by imposing a sense of peace and harmony over all, often at the expense of emptying the land totally of human content. Thus Fitzgerald, clearly inspired by the eloquence of William Butler in The Great Lone Land (1872), described the approach of the train to Calgary as follows:

The weary monotony of the level plain is left behind, and snow-capped peaks and verdant foothills appear in the distance. The train crosses the historical Bow River and immediately rolls into a basin walled on either side by precipitous banks. It is an incomparable site for a town, perfect from the hands of the Creator. All who see this lovely spot soon come under the influence of its fascinating beauty. It would appear as if nature's favours, begrudged to other parts, had been prodigally showered on this spot.⁴

It is interesting to note here the transformation of Butler's words, the expression once used to evoke a great lone land never touched by the hand of man is used here to describe a landscape made explicitly for man. In both instances the references to the Creator served to naturalize or normalize the view by giving the impression that all was as it should be.

² Hedges, p. 84.

³ Burns and Elliott, p. 17.

⁴ Fitzgerald.

Similarly, the following description by the Reverend Gaetz echoes the earlier one by Macoun in its use of picturesque tropes, but Gaetz goes even further in presenting the setting as man-made and therefore innately civilized. Again the landscape is in waiting, in this case for the arrival of the new settler able to restore the buildings and fences and complete the picture:

The country may be described in general terms as rolling prairie, dotted over with bluffs of spruce and poplar, interspersed with lakes and meadows, and intersected with numerous small creeks, giving the whole a particularly park-like appearance which, in point of natural scenery, is beyond the possibility of exaggeration...I have never seen any section of country which in its natural state, could compare with this. Indeed, it is almost impossible for a stranger, looking off some commanding butte, to realize that the delightful prospect all around him is "in condition primeval." It would not seem difficult to persuade some Rip Van Winkle awakening suddenly among such surroundings that the buildings and fences had been mysteriously removed and that those beautiful bluffs in the distant landscape where the orchards and ornamental trees among which stately residences had once nestled, and that those smooth symmetrical slopes were the fruitful fields of a departed race of agricultural princes.³⁵

According to Hamer, the presentation of frontier towns typically took one of two forms, either setting the new town in the wilderness to emphasize its progress and the antithesis between urban society and primitive nature, or in the pastoral landscape to emphasize the harmony of town and country, and presenting the one developing out of the other and gradually replacing it.³⁶ Given the rhetorical history of the region and the years already spent banishing the image of wilderness, the choice of the latter mode by the CPR was virtually a foregone conclusion. However, the picturesque imagery, styling the town and country as a harmonious unit was not merely the imposition of old world tastes on a new landscape or even the appropriation of the landscape. It was also an expression of a new economic understanding of the land in which the town and its hinterland stood as the interconnected poles of the same economic and social order. That is, the picturesque landscape was also the a landscape of capitalism in which nature's bounty was easily translated into corporate profits. Resources and

³⁵ Extract from a letter of Rev. Leo Gaetz to the Calgary District Agricultural Society, Sept. 1884, cited in Fitzgerald.

³⁶ Hamer, p. 51.

landscape, both the natural and the man-made advantages, profits and beauty were typically intermingled, as in this checklist devised by the mayor of Calgary:³⁷

WHY PEOPLE SHOULD EMIGRATE TO CALGARY

- BECAUSE it is bound to grow rapidly into a large city.
- BECAUSE it has a live, influential and energetic population.
- BECAUSE people in Calgary enjoy all the advantages of a large city, viz. water works, system of sewerage, electric light for business and private houses, telephones, daily trains, good schools, etc, etc.
- BECAUSE it is bound to be the manufacturing and mining centre of Alberta.
- BECAUSE it has unlimited water power.
- BECAUSE it is immediately surrounded by immense deposits of coal.
- BECAUSE it has within sight of the town an unlimited quantity of the finest free stone for building purposes.
- BECAUSE the very best of brick can be manufactured with the corporation.
- BECAUSE it is a large centre for the manufacture of lumber.
- BECAUSE it is the distributing centre for hundreds of miles of magnificent agricultural and grazing lands.
- BECAUSE it is supported by a variety of industries, as follows: farming, stock raising, dairying and mining interests.
- BECAUSE our stock can graze year round and keep fat.
- BECAUSE the Calgary district is renown for its magnificent stock of horses.
- BECAUSE the climate is particularly salubrious and enjoyable.
- BECAUSE it is now a railway centre.

J.D.Lafferty, Mayor of Calgary, Chairman Board of Trade.

Just as ample resources guaranteed the future of the town, the town was necessary for the exploitation of the resources. The success of the farmer, the rancher, and the miner were predicated not merely on the ability to grow crops, raise cattle and find ore, but also on the ability to sell and ship these commodities. Thus the relationship between the town and the hinterland was seen to work both ways and it seemed that, as Alexander Begg claimed, "There is no greater evidence of the prosperity of a country than the rapid growth of its

³⁷ Canadian Pacific Railroad, Harvest News, (Winnipeg: The Company, 1890), p. 12.

cities and towns.¹³⁸

Insofar as the future prospects of town and country were interwoven, physical descriptions tended to present the natural setting of the city in terms of its resources rather than its landscape values. For this reason, the centrality of the city in a region of plenty was another favorite theme. The following quotation predicted the success of Calgary for exactly this reason:

Its position in the center of the greatest stock district in the Dominion; its situation in the heart of the richest agricultural country yet discovered in these Territories; its vicinity to the petroleum wells of the Red Deer, pronounced by experts to rival those of Pennsylvania; its immense coal beds, and the rich mineral deposits of the Rocky Mountains assure it a future that must necessarily be unrivaled in the Northwest....Within sight of the mountains and at the mouth of the famous Bow River Pass, washed on either side by the rushing waters of the Bow and the Elbow, and midway of their rich valley with the foothills rising and sweeping to the mountains on every side, it promises, by its beauty of site alone, to be chosen whenever practicable as a home for the future population of the district.³⁹

It was an account that gave resources and landscape, profits and beauty equal weight. Indeed beauty was merely another one of the town's assets. With such advantages the future prosperity of Calgary seemed assured, for

...as the district grows in wealth and population the town itself must make rapid strides. When every three hundred and twenty acres of this fertile district maintains its man as it must do in the early future, then, will Calgary be a flourishing city with its population numbered by the thousands and the recognized capital of the province of Alberta.⁴⁰

As historian William Cronon observed, insofar as promoters believed that the key to urban success lay in "a list of supposed 'natural advantages' that would make the future metropolis a natural outgrowth of its region...nature became the world's most reliable real estate broker. What better guarantee of profit and prosperity could one want? If a city's growth was assured by nature or -better yet--ordained by G-d, then only a fool could doubt its future promise."⁴¹

³⁸ Alexander Begg, The Great Canadian North West: Its Past History, Present Condition, and Glorious Prospects (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, 1881), p. 103. During this period Begg was acting as an agent for the CPR.

³⁹ Fitzgerald.

⁴⁰ Burns and Elliott, p. 15.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 35.

Or, as a local Calgary promoter asked somewhat rhetorically:

In what other district of the Northwest we may ask are there so many crude treasures awaiting the enterprise of the capitalist and the labor of the maker as there are in Alberta?...Great is the future of the proposed province of Alberta for within itself it possess everything that can make a state rich and powerful....Nature has been most partial to Calgary. She has been lavish in her gifts.^e

In that Nature had been converted into so many natural resources, wilderness could no longer be found in the West. Anything that stood against progress was the result, not of the land or environment, but of individual weaknesses the newcomer brought to the land. Thus the CPR announced that

Everywhere throughout the district settlers are found prosperous and contented, happy in having chosen Alberta as their new home. It would be difficult to find one who has aught to say against the country or its climate, and if such a one is found it is more than probable that the fault lies entirely in his inability to suit himself to pioneer life.^e

Responses to the controversial issue of weather were interesting in this regard. Perhaps the ultimate conversion of nature's bounty to a potential capital resource can be found in the 1895 pamphlet: "Calgary the Denver of Canada: It's adaptability as a Health Resort and as a Site for the Dominion Sanatorium for the Treatment of Consumption" which boldly celebrated the city's "aseptic atmosphere...remarkable for its stimulating and bracing character, it produces a buoyancy and elasticity apparently supplying fresh energy to the individual...the lives of many otherwise doomed to an early grave, would be saved if they had the advantages of being treated in...Calgary and...their lives would in all probability be prolonged for many years by a continued residence in Alberta."⁴ By way of comparison, consider John Glenn's dismissal of a bad weather prognosis for the publication "Information for Intending Settlers":

As regards summer frost, never experienced them, or found out that they existed, until a Mr. McEachren, the horse doctor, came along and told us we had them. The doctor got frost on the brains some

^e ibid., p.24, 11.

^e J.G.Fitzgerald, District of Alberta: Information for Intending Settlers, Ottawa, 1884, p. 7.

⁴ "Calgary the Denver of Canada: It's Adaptability as a Health Resort and as a Site for the Dominion Sanatorium for the Treatment of Consumption", Calgary, 1895.

two years ago, and has never been known to tell the truth since, at least as regards his published statements respecting the climate of this country.⁶

There was a tendency to draw a line between the innate qualities of the West and those who disparaged it. The prospect of negative outcomes was offset by blaming problems, not on the land, but on the troublesome messenger. It was, in fact, in effort to counter negative claims and to reinforce the positive image of the west that the CPR first got into the gardening business. In spring of 1890 a letter was received by the Calgary town council from Superintendent J. Niblock of the CPR, relative to the creation of a public park adjacent to the railway station. The Public Works Committee of the Council was instructed to work with Mr. Niblock and by the following year a park was laid out and fenced with the intention of providing a pleasing appearance to people arriving in Calgary by train.

Calgary's new park was one of a series of initiative undertaken by the company in the period 1880 to 1910 to create a positive image of the West.⁶ In response to the "efforts of many prominent men and newspapers to belittle the territory,"⁷ the Company conceived of the idea of establishing experimental farms and gardens along the rights-of-way in the major townsites between Moose Jaw and the Rockies. "The Directors did not undertake this work with the view of satisfying themselves as to the fertility of these lands, and the correctness of locating the line where it has been constructed." Instead "their desire was, by absolute proof to show to the many thousands of tourists, capitalists and settlers who would travel over the section of the line...that their assertions as to the value of this land were well founded; for while adverse opinions were held and any doubts remained, it would be difficult to get farmers to try an experiment in which there was the slightest chance of failure."⁸

Although the CPR supported public and private efforts to import trees to the prairies, providing rail cars full of seedlings at nominal prices, its own initiatives

⁶ Fitzgerald, "Information for Intending settlers", p.10.

⁷ Ronald Rees, New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988), p. 118.

⁸ "An Account of the Working and Results of The Canadian Pacific Railway Co's Experimental Farms, The Wise Policy of Selecting the Southern Route for the C.P.R. endorsed by facts." (Winnipeg, 1884), p. 1.

⁹ Ibid.

were directed towards experimental farms and formal gardens such as the one in Calgary. These public displays followed a prescribed standard pattern with lawns and flower beds open to view from the station and trains enclosed by borders of trees, ornamental shrubs and perennials.⁴⁹ Flowers with white blooms were discouraged as they showed the dust; on the other hand the ornamental use of produce was encouraged as a useful demonstration of soil productivity. The centerpiece of the garden at the Broadview, Saskatchewan station was indeed the word "produce" spelled out in giant heads of lettuce.⁵⁰ Although Calgarians did use and enjoy the station garden, their main purpose was "to show what the country was capable of producing"⁵¹ rather than to contribute to the quality of life in the city. That is, the CPR gardens remained tied to land sales and to the vision of the West as an agrarian rather than an urban landscape.

Beyond using the town for its own ends, CPR planning policy might be best described as one of benign neglect or indifference. There was no vision of an urban whole greater than the sum of its parts. Indeed the decision to redirect the profits of townsite land sales towards the construction of mountain resorts suggested how little long-term interest the company had in the towns it founded.⁵² For the CPR, the city remained a means to realize the profits of the land. In a 1912 address Lord Shaughnessy outlined the Company's attitude to the land and to its development:

The ultimate source of wealth is the employment of human activity upon natural resources, such as tilling the soil, clearing the forest, developing the mine. The Canadian Pacific have, therefore, devoted much of their energy to facilitating the access of the worker to the raw material from which he can produce wealth.

In our modern state of civilization the city, town, or village is just as necessary to the land as the land is to the community as a whole. The problem is to keep the growth of these to their due proportion. The abnormal growth of city life is a social disease, which can be cured, but, better still, prevented. Every state from the dawn of history has grappled with the problem--Rome, England, France, have passed and re-passed laws innumerable--in the endeavor to cure the disease of

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Edwinna von Baeyer, *Rhetoric and Roses: A History of Canadian Gardening* (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984), p.17.

⁵¹ "An Account of the Working and Results", p. 15.

⁵² Hedges, p. 86.

cities. What the Canadian Pacific Railway company are endeavoring to do in Canada is to prevent the evil, so far as possible, by providing conditions of settlement which shall induce the settler to stay upon the land...The saving of the farmer for the land, where ever that land may be, is a service to the human race for which too little credit has been given to colonizing railways.⁵³

For those who favored an agrarian vision, the train was the link between the urban east and the rural west. Abnormal urban growth was evil and the city itself was merely a means to an end, "as necessary to the land as the land is to the community as a whole." And yet a degree of ambiguity remained in the attitude of the Company towards the city, for at least some of the CPR's agents in the field saw development in a different light. Fitzgerald, for example, celebrated development and saw urbanization as a move toward civilization:

By successive steps the land has been changed from a fertile waste to a fertile granary...Given over to Nature and her savages from the time of Noah to the time of Governor Laird, it has lately become the seat of the wealth, the industry, and the learning of the territories, and it represents in its future and in its prospects, the future, and the prospects of the North west.⁵⁴

For Fitzgerald, urbanization was progress and wildness lay, not in the city or in the land, but perhaps in the unsettled transitional period when Calgary was not part of Nature or civilization:

on the near approach of the railway line a new order of things was inaugurated. Enterprising businessmen, settlers, professional men, and hotel keepers, accompanied by whisky traders, gamblers and the other enterprising spirits who make up the population of frontier towns, reached here. Everyone looking for the almighty dollar. A canvas town sprung up as if by magic. The Sabbath was practically ignored and the vocations of the traders, merchants and sporting characters were pursued without any regard to the holy day.⁵⁵

However, "as winter approached more permanent and substantial buildings were erected, order was enforced, and regard for the Sabbath began to be shown. Since that time up to the present there has been a steady increase in the

⁵³ Keith Morris, pp. 111-112.

⁵⁴ Fitzgerald.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

population and the number of buildings."⁵⁸

Perhaps the difference between the two positions was just this: one writer celebrated the resources of the region and concluded that the future prosperity of the town was the logical and desirable result of development; the other saw urbanization as a necessary evil to be contained and, as much as possible, controlled. One pointed to the wealth of the region and prophesied the future success of the town; the other used the lushness of the town garden to demonstrate the fertility of the region. In spite of differences of emphasis, both saw town and country as having been integrated by the railroad into a single economic system and both paid tribute to the power of the natural environment to influence the fate of urban man.

A final point concerning the effect of the corporation's involvement in the city might best be illustrated by quoting the following poem, published anonymously in a special 1890 edition of The Dominion Illustrated News dedicated to Calgary.⁵⁹ Like Shaughnessy, this author believed in the power of the land, but in this case a magical transformation had occurred and a city had appeared where once there had been only wilderness. Even more magical was the transformation of the land into a new commodity--town lots--that could be represented by pieces of paper, in this case snap shots. There is an emphasis on persuasive imagery here, much like the CPR's railway garden, with images of the profits to be made standing-in for the land itself.

Although it is a coincidence, one cannot help but notice the announcement, on the same page of that journal, of the impending American census. It was of course the data obtained from this census that formed the basis, firstly, of the announced end of the American frontier and, shortly afterwards, of the Turner thesis. The poem celebrating the demise of the Indian and the magical appearance of the city very much echoes these themes.

As Fitzgerald had observed "on the near approach of the railway line a new order of things was inaugurated." All of nature (including the sunshine) had been perfectly transformed into so many natural resources. Urbanization was redefined as a check list of desirable amenities and milestones and a few rows of

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The Dominion Illustrated News(Calgary Special), Vol. IV, No. 104, June 28, 1890, p. 423.

town lots for sale at a good price.

Calgary.³⁸

A vast and rolling plain, and all around
 As far as eye could see or far imagination reach,
 The same extending. Tall scented grasses waved,
 The air was sweet with perfume, and the ground with flowers.
 In an out the scent played the fleet-footed gopher,
 And now and then a badger raised his wary head.
 Coyotes slouched along unheeded, and the prairie wolf,
 With long and sloping trot, would steal along seeking his prey.
 The silver river, treacherous but fair, wound ever hurriedly along,
 Whirling and panting, as though it strove to reach its goal
 Before the appointed time; and the speckled trout and white fish
 played luxuriously.
 In the far distance the great Rockies reared their noble heads
 Undaunted through the ether. The snow flashed on their brown and
 purple sides
 And deep within lay treasures only known to gods.
 Sudden over the plain, with shout and laugh and song
 Came a bright cavalcade. At the head riding a nervous broncho
 Prancing and curveting, was the chief of the tribe of Blackfoot;
 Gay in in scarlet blanket, and beaded leggings of buckskin,
 Over his shoulder a scarf of purple, twisted his hair with ribbon and
 beading;
 Stripes of ochre and red on his face, and on his breast much
 tattooing,
 So, regal and haughty, rode the head of the Blackfeet.
 After him rode his braves, each with his squaws and ponies,
 While behind followed the patient dogs trailing along with their
 burdens.
 By the river they paused, dismounted and set up their tepees-
 Chatting and laughing the while. No one was near to molest them:
 The prairie was theirs by right, they were the Blackfeet Indians,
 This was their hunting ground, who should deny it them-
 Dashing across the plain and spearing the buffalo yonder.
 So, laying them down to rest, they slept unsuspecting,
 Waiting the sun to rise on the morrow.

A year or more with flying feet has passed away.
 We stand upon the selfsame spot, where once before we say the
 Indians file.

³⁸ The Dominion Illustrated News, June 28th, 1890.

But what a change!

In place of scented grasses, gopher tracks
 And badger lairs, stand houses, sidewalks, stores.
 The lofty poles of telephone and the electric light now intercept the
 view

"Tween us the mountains grand, and glancing as we walk we read
 "The Bank of Montreal," "Hudson Bay Company," "I. G. Baker's store."
 And so on for a mile.

"Where are we, where the Indians, where the tepees, where the
 prairie?"

We ask agape and hear the answer prompt:

"Oh, this is Calgary, the chiefest town of the North West, the Chicago
 of the prairie.

Have you money to invest? Put it in real estate.

Are you rich? Well, buy town lots. See, here's a snap.

I'll let you have it cheap." And thus until our brain is in a whirl.

Oh/ modern science, modern push and modern pluck,

Where will you end! 'Tis like a chapter in th' Arabian Nights-

"He claps his hands. Hey, presto! Here's a city with railways,
 waterworks and churches."

We marvel and admire.

CHAPTER FOUR: A CITY BEAUTIFUL

A Town Planning Expert Comes to Calgary

In the early years of the twentieth century Thomas Hayton Mawson, Hon. A.R.I.B.A., landscape architect and civic arts expert developed the first plan for the city Calgary had become. In presenting his proposal to the local planning commission, Mawson described his work as preliminary: "no attempt has been made to settle small details. The aim has been rather to dig around the subject and so promote a healthy interest and discussion of the great question: What Can City Planning do for us?"¹ Mawson's answer was a masterful presentation of the principles of city planning practice as they were understood at that time.

Mawson was very cognizant of the challenges preparing a plan for Calgary entailed, and he observed that

This opportunity is perhaps in its way greater than has ever been before in the history of cities. Never before has there been such a phenomenal development and such rapid peopling of the hitherto waste places of the earth under the conditions provided and imposed by modern civilization, as in the great West of Canada at the present time.²

His observations were well founded: from 1905 to 1912 Calgary was the fastest growing city in Alberta and one of the fastest growing in North America. During this period the city expanded from a population base of 4,000 to one of over 74,000 people.³ More than ten thousand new buildings had been erected.⁴ But for Mawson, the town planning of Calgary had a two-fold importance: "First as to the result it will have to Calgary itself as a city, and secondly the molding influence which it must have in the whole district for which your city stands as center and virtually a capital."⁵

Born into a poor family, Thomas Hayton Mawson had risen from nursery man, to gardener, to landscape architect and town planner in "an age that favored the man of vision; a time when town planning and architecture had not

¹ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., Calgary: A Preliminary Scheme For Controlling the Economic Growth of the City (Calgary: The City Planning Commission of Calgary, 1914), p. xii.

² Ibid.

³ Bryan Melnyk, Calgary Builds (Regina: Alberta Culture/Canadian Plains Research Center, 1985), p. 21.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., p. 1.

been overwhelmed by the technical and academic apparatus of economic, statistics, sociology, building science and by the convoluted legal scaffolding that supports ... current notions of a profession.⁶ Although Mawson was largely self-taught, his combination of talent, vision, promotional skill and business savvy were well recognized in his day and he built up one of the largest international practices of his time.⁷

While not a particularly strong theoretician, Mawson was an enthusiastic lecturer. By 1910 he held a position in the newly established Department of Civic Art at the University of Liverpool, had a best selling book (The Art and Craft of Garden Making) to his credit and a second book (Civic Art) at the printer. That year Mawson was one of the speakers at prestigious London Town Planning Conference. Two years later he was invited by Lord Grey to make a lecture tour of Canada to promote the civic arts. Mawson spoke in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Saskatoon, Regina, Medicine Hat, Calgary and Vancouver. His lectures in Calgary were particularly well received and the following year he was hired as "a town-planning expert"⁸ to prepare a comprehensive scheme for the future development of that city.

Mawson was a transitional figure, not fully a professional perhaps, but with more knowledge of the urban form than the engineer/surveyors who had preceded him, and with more practical planning skills than the amateur gentlemen planners of most modern utopias. Mawson's approach to city

⁶ Dr. Michael McMordie, "Thomas Mawson's Calgary," in A3 Magazine (Calgary, 1983), p. 6.

⁷ Max Foran, "The Mawson Report in Historical Perspective," Alberta History, Summer 1980, p. 34. Mawson noted in his autobiography that he had been brought to Calgary to "give a series of lectures as part of a propaganda campaign under the auspices of the Citizen's League." (T. H. Mawson, The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect (London: Richards Press, 1927), p. 201.) His lectures "were attended by large and enthusiastic audiences," according to The Morning Albertan (April 10, 1912) the room "was completely filled and extra places had to be made at the already overcrowded tables." The elite citizens of Calgary were interested in planning for a number of reasons: in part to validate their emerging sense of self-importance but also because of the business advantages that would accrue to them as residents of a forward looking city. Foran noted that the City Planning Commission had suggested that engaging a well known man would "in itself be of great value to us from a publicity standpoint." (Foran, p. 34.) Practical considerations were also a factor as the recent boom had increased urban congestion, pollution, and noise, raising the possibility that Calgary might one day soon confront the well published problems of the other large cities. Graphic accounts of slums, disease, pollution and social problems faced by metropolitan centers in Britain, Europe, America and even Canada received widespread coverage. The fate of the modern city was well known.

⁸ The Morning Albertan (April 10, 1912)

planning must be examined in the context of post-Darwinian evolution and environmentalism and the horrors of the late Victorian city. By the late nineteenth century industrialism, urbanization and public indifference had combined to produce dreadful slums and ghettos in the centers of large cities where workingmen, the poor, immigrants from foreign lands and the migrants from the countryside all congregated. The "great cities of the earth", wrote Ruskin, had become "loathsome centres of fornication and covetousness--the smoke of their sin going up into the face of heaven like the furnace of Sodom; and the pollution of it rotting and raging the bones and the souls of the peasant people round them, as if they were each a volcano whose ashes broke out in blains upon man and upon beast."⁹ The horror of these slums aroused a mixture of fear and compassion in the hearts of the middle class and came increasingly to the forefront of public debate in England and elsewhere from 1880 on as editorial writers, reformers and finally a Royal Commission sought to understand and then defeat this "ominous threat to civilization".¹⁰

By the turn of the century new concerns emerged that the city population, condemned to live, reproduce and die amid the squalid and congested conditions of these slums, was becoming biologically unfit. Recruitment for the Boer War revealed that out of 11,000 young men in Manchester, 8,000 were rejected and only 1,000 were fit for regular service. From this fact certain assumptions were made and it was soon argued that city people and thereafter the whole population would fail to reproduce itself. Charles Masterman suggested in particular that the Londoner was unstable:

The England of the past was an England of reserved, silent men, dispersed in small towns, villages and country houses....The problem of the coming years is just the problem of...a characteristic physical type of town dweller: stunted, narrow-chested, easily wearied; yet voluble, excitable, with little ballast or endurance--seeking stimulus in drink, in betting, in any unaccustomed conflicts at home and abroad.¹¹

Some observers, like Masterman, yearned for a return to the innocence of the countryside. But, as Paul Rutherford has argued, "not so the urban reformer:

⁹ Hall, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34. Cited from Charles Masterman, The Heart of the Empire, 1901.

though subject to bouts of nostalgia, he recognized that the new order was a fact of...life, which no back-to-the-land movement could hope to change. More to the point, the reformer...saw the urban crisis as a challenge to man's ingenuity, not simple as a cause for national lamentations. The reformer was a child of the age of progress, when all things seemed possible to the stout-hearted race of Britons...Not having been disillusioned by two world wars, he could still assume that man was destined to march ever forward, overcoming any obstacles that might block his path. More specifically, the reformer was convinced of the omnipotence of science, its ability to tame the world for man's use."¹²

The particular branch of reform Mawson subscribed to was the City Beautiful Movement, a monumental tradition of city planning that sought to "restore to the city a lost visual and aesthetic harmony, thereby creating the physical prerequisite for the emergence of a harmonious social order".¹³ As William Wilson noted in his excellent study, those who endorsed the school of planning called City Beautiful were

late-nineteenth or twentieth-century people who believed less in beauty's restorative power and more in the shaping influence of beauty. Darwinism had compromised the old belief in man as a natural creature made in the image of G-d, who shared some of G-d's attitudes and who require a beautified, naturalistic reprieve from his imprisonment in an artificial city. Man became remote from his Creator, more manipulable and malleable, a being conditioned by his environment. Therefore, the whole urban environment and the entire human experience within it were critical ... When they trumpeted the meliorative power of beauty, they were stating their belief in its capacity to shape human thought and behavior....¹⁴

As Mawson observed in the introduction to his plan for Calgary: "the human inhabitants of this world, are first of all, an embodiment of all the principal characteristics of our ancestors, immediate and remote, and secondly, the reflex

¹² Rutherford, p. xvi-xvii.

¹³ Hall, p. 179.

¹⁴ William H. Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 79. Mawson was one of the first planners to use the term "City Beautiful" in the United Kingdom. John Freeman, "Thomas Mawson: Imperial Missionary of British Town Planning," RACAR, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1975, p. 39.

image of our surroundings and environment.”¹⁵ Beginning with this theoretical basis, planners determined that contemporary social problems had their origins in the structure of the city and developed from the chaos of the modern urban form. Indeed this widely shared conviction formed the centerpiece of the inaugural address to the 1910 London Town Planning Conference delivered by the key sponsor of Britain’s new town planning legislation, the Right Honorable J. Burns, M.P. :

The mean streets produce the mean men, the lean and tired women, the unclean children. It is not an accident that the beautiful manor-house, the restful vicarage, the stately homes of England, and the beautiful public schools and colleges have turned out the Ruskins, the Kingsleys, the Morrises, the Nelsons, the Newtons and the Darwins. Environment in youth has an enormous influence on the personal and civic education of future citizens. . .

Everyday we see children’s characters spoiled, their natures stunted by the depressing circumstances in which they live. . .

We cannot avoid disease unless we let in the sun and air into our houses and our streets. So long as casual labor broods in squalid lairs, in sunless streets, and ugly dwellings are its only habitation we shall continue to turn out nervous manikins instead of enduring men. Motherhood, childhood, youth, society, and the race demand the demolition of the soul-destroying slum. They ask for the pleasant town, the comfortable yet dignified city; they want architects, and they will not be happy till they get them.¹⁶

The message was clear: modern man’s spiritual poverty was but a reflection of the poverty of his physical environment. And the corollary to this was equally obvious: improvements made to the physical environment under the guidance of trained experts would strengthen the social order. That is, insofar as “city-making and citizen-making were the same,”¹⁷ beauty and nature had become operational concepts. A noble environment would not only reflect

¹⁵ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., p. 1.

¹⁶ Mawson dedicated his book Civic Art to Burns, best known as the sponsor of the 1909 British Town Planning Act. Royal Institute of British Architects, Transactions Town Planning Conference, London, 10-15 October, 1910, pps. 64-65. The conference, at which Mawson spoke, was attended by the leading planners of the day, including Stubben and Eberstadt from Germany, Mulford Robinson and Burnham from the United States, and Geddes, Unwin, Parker, and Howard from United Kingdom. It was a unique gathering, the first of its kind in the emerging field of urban planning.

¹⁷ Christine Boyer, Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1983), p. 44.

the greatness of man, it would help to make men great.

If the logic of environmentalism pointed to the city as a source of social unrest, it also held out the hope of a cure, for as long as the city was seen as an organic, flexible entity, subject to growth and change, a planning expert could use his knowledge of history and the laws of city growth to direct urban evolution towards a desirable end state. Through the medium of a comprehensive plan the expert could impose order on chaos and bring harmony to the fragmented metropolitan experience. An improved urban environment would exert a "harmonizing and refining influence ... favorable to courtesy, self-control and temperance".¹⁸ The city itself would engender a civic loyalty that would counter the possibility of social insurrection. The miserably poor "who render no useful service and create no wealth," who "degrade whatever they touch", the undeserving poor "shiftless, hand-to-mouth, pleasure loving", and the working poor, victims of competition, "struggling, suffering, hopeless,"¹⁹ would be surrounded in a harmonious physical envelop, a "City Beautiful" in which physical form would point the way towards a higher moral state and indeed would help to bring it into being.

A generation earlier, the city was considered an organism governed by natural laws. This understanding formed the basis of boosterism and gave rise to competing claims of civic greatness guaranteed by Nature. Since no mere human power could alter these forces, human labor was deemed less important than natural advantage and regional resources as predictors of future greatness. In booster theory, city growth was all but predestined by Nature; and "nothing remained for man but to gather up the gifts so profusely showed upon him."²⁰ By Mawson's time, the city still seen as organic but now the organism could be regulated and controlled by an expert. Wilson argued that this belief in the flexible organic city offered City Beautiful planners "secular salvation for humans...The city was susceptible to reform because it was akin to a living organism. Thoughtful citizens could control and direct its growth somewhat as

¹⁸ Frederick Law Olmstead in Hall, p. 44.

¹⁹ These descriptions of the various classes of the poor of East London appeared in the Charles Booth Report, 1887-1888, cited in Hall, pp.28-30.

²⁰ Cronon, Nature's Metropolis, pp. 35-36.

they could manipulate other organisms genetically and environmentally.”²¹ In the face of urban decay, juvenile delinquency, poverty, disease, substandard utilities and inadequate housing the comprehensive city plan presented itself as a possible solution to urban ills. Through the mechanisms of planning, urban growth would be redirected towards the achievement of other goals.

The desire to use planning as a vehicle for social control is clear but it should be emphasized that, rhetoric aside, City Beautiful planners such as Mawson understood the process to be normative rather than coercive. The goal was the creation of a sort of social religion, or what Mawson referred to as “the fellowship of the noble aim.”²² Through the inculcation of an “idealized transcendental bond,”²³ City Beautiful advocates “sought cultural hegemony by asserting control over the definition of beauty and the manipulation of civic symbols.”²⁴ They preferred “inward” internalized systems of control to outward coercion.²⁵ For this reason the importance of the comprehensive plan was not merely in its scope and detail, but also in the grandeur of its vision. Mawson himself fervently believed in the power of the ideal to effect change. Thus in his 1912 address to the Calgary Club he proposed that:

we must awaken in the soul of the citizen a high desire for civic art. This dormant pride can only be aroused by setting before the people tangible vision of what your city is capable of becoming. And this can only be accomplished by the careful preparation of a comprehensive policy showing a great ideal towards which man can gradually work ... There is not a city counselor or an architect, of spirit, who will not feel a new incentive when he thinks that he is directing or planning buildings that are part of the city of the future. Not a landscape gardener who will not plant with greater care, because of the vision. Not a sculptor who will not throw himself more devotedly into the modeling of the civic monument that is to be the city’s ornament. Likewise the man of culture, engineers, surveyors, professors or workers, the men who give commissions, and those who execute them, all will feel the spur of the dream, the hope and the goal.²⁶

Or, as a member of the audience to Mawson’s 1910 London address

²¹ Wilson, p. 78.

²² Thomas Mawson, Civic Art (London: B. T. Batsford, 1911), p. 6.

²³ Wilson, p. 81.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The Morning Albertan (Calgary), April 10, 1912.

succinctly put the matter: "It seems to me that Mr. Mawson was perfectly right in suggesting . . . You need to get into people's heads the acceptance of an ideal in order to create the want".²⁷

According to Mawson, this ideal had been reached before, in the days of Athenian glory, for "Among the ancients, a civic pride and civic ideal existed beyond anything which we find in a modern town. This is evident by the fact that the civic crown, though formed only of oak leaves, was considered more honoured than any other."²⁸ In his embrace of classicism, Mawson was proposing a model of public order whereby the people, like the buildings, would conform to an overall plan; where order and harmony were valued over chaos; where everyone had their proper place and the individual restrained and disciplined himself for the greater public good. It was an ideal which "could only and truly be evolved by those who have risen above the ignoble strife and

²⁷ RIBA, pps. 451-452. Mawson's statement certainly calls to mind the famous motto of the American architect and planner Daniel Burnham: "Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood, and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty." It is interesting to note that Burnham's son later recalled that a member of Burnham's staff had assembled the motto from Burnham's address to the London Town Planning Conference for use on the office Christmas card. It was widely circulated at that time and has remained a popular aphorism ever since (at least among architects and planners). Journal of American Society of Architectural Historians, Vol 14, No. 1-4, January-October 1944, p. 3.

In view of this account, it is interesting to return to the original and examine the text of Burnham's actual address: "But the question always arises when a given town is under consideration whether it would be wisest to limit suggestions to present available means, or, on the other hand, to work out and diagram whatever a sane imagination suggests. If the first be made...your... work will be tame and ineffectual and will not arouse that enthusiasm without which nothing worth while is ever accomplished; it is doubtful, indeed, if even the meager things proposed will be carried into effect....Not that the obvious and commonplace are to be neglected, far from it; but to realize them one should seek for more. Moreover, there is the other way of looking at this question--namely, the one mentioned in the beginning of this paper, and that has to do with the growth of man's knowledge, of his perceptions, and, finally, of his desires. It is the argument with which I began, that a mighty change having come about in fifty years and our pace of development having immensely accelerated, our sons and grandsons are going to demand and get results that would stagger us. Remember that a noble logical diagram once recorded will never die; long after we are gone it will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency, and, above all, remember that the greatest and noblest that man can do is yet to come, and that this will ever be so, else is evolution a myth." R.I.B.A., p. 378. Burnham makes explicit, in his reference to evolution, themes that were implicit in Mawson's writing. To what extent Mawson was influenced by Burnham remains unclear. Mawson greatly admired Burnham and was at the conference where Burnham had made his address.

²⁸ Mawson, Civic Art, p. 3.

selfishness of personal aims.”²⁹ The style of the architecture corresponded to the particulars of the social vision: “The classic, whether viewed morally or materially, is enlightening...It is...a profound and little understood type of beauty, corresponding to the quality so much needed in the individual in a city, and in its architecture, in fact, in everything, namely, that of self-effacement for the public good.”³⁰

In Civic Art Mawson offered several excerpts from Ruskin to further emphasize this point: “Throughout the world, of the two things, liberty and restraint, restraint is the most honorable.” “It is restraint which ever characterizes the higher orders and creatures of life, and betters the lower.” “A butterfly is much freer than a bee, but the bee is more honoured because it is subject to certain laws which fit it for the bees’ colony or town.” “The sun has no liberty--a dead leaf much.” “The power and glory of all creatures, and all matter, consist in their obedience, not in their freedom.”³¹

Against these benefits of classicism Mawson set the evils of commercial culture. Here was nature red in tooth and claw, the raw Darwinian struggle for supremacy which had impoverished the soul, and destroyed the glories of civilized life. Thus

the right idea as to what the city as a whole should be and what its corporate spirit should express...is by no means the vision which is conjured by in our minds at the thought of the modern manufacturing town with its all-pervading atmosphere of commercial stress, punctuated at every point by sordid poverty, and still more sordid wealth with all its accompanying gilded artificialities. Such low ideals of civic life...must be entirely eradicated before progress can be made.³²

The social and economic struggle for existence too often resulted in the survival of those with the least desirable, the least worthy human characteristics. Through natural selection and the process of evolution put a premium on those qualities which the Victorian moralists “could only deplore: cunning, brute force, ruthlessness, ferocity. Its laws were the laws of the jungle. It rewarded the

²⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

³¹ Ibid., p. 28.

³² Ibid., p. 3.

wicked and punished the righteous, and was altogether an unedifying and even horrifying spectacle. Civilized man could learn from it only what to avoid and condemn.³³ If society was to evolve towards higher ends, the competitive struggle had to be pacified, domesticated and subjected to rational control.³⁴

The solution for Mawson was the comprehensive plan, a plan which would not only pervade and unify the urban fabric, but “combine into an artistic whole circumstances and features which individually are antagonistic,³⁵ offering “the attainment of complete convenience and plan of streets, spaces and parks in harmonious accord with the surrounding erections, the duly proportioned solid alternating with the void, massive or light, great or small, each demanding consideration in relation to its place and to the whole.”³⁶

Although Mawson was willing to rely upon the vision of the ideal to command the resources necessary to implement the plan in most cases, he thought that coercion might be necessary to ensure the cooperation of non-resident landowners who “have no local patriotism and no interest in the city beyond that which suggests the creation of enhanced value to the land they own.”³⁷ The true spirit of civitas was not, apparently, to be expected from those who saw property as a means to profits, thus Mawson proposed that “until a civic conscience has been created in these matters, reasonable powers of expropriation by fair terms seems advisable.”³⁸

In summary, the narratives of evolutionary theory were very much present in Mawson’s thinking: in the presumed effects of the urban environment, in the belief in an evolving organic city, and in the conflict between the true values of higher civilization and the selfishness, individualism and competition which had destroyed the fabric of the society and set adrift its weakest citizens. Wildness was no longer something “out there” in the barrens of the Far North West. It could be found within the city and in the hearts of its citizens, in the chaos of the urban form, and above all in the incapacity of man to come terms with the

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.

³⁴ Gertrude Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds: A Study of Intellectuals in Crisis and Ideologies in Transition (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 1968), p. 326.

³⁵ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., p. 18.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

socially provided world.³⁹ Planning, through the controlled use of nature and the inspirational power of classicism, would restore order to the city and rehabilitate its citizens. Moreover, creating a spirit of civitas was as critical as physical change in reforming the city, for although "it is difficult to define this moving spirit, this haunting presence, which baffles description, but which enters into all beautiful, truthful and coordinated design,"⁴⁰ lasting results were not possible without it.

Repeatedly Mawson set the ephemeral achievements of commerce against the lasting accomplishments of the true civic spirit: "if the desire is merely to create an ornamental, social or massive appendage, the highest expression will not be realized, and its artificiality will stultify its presence and will not be what a civic monument ought to be--the crowning point of the faithfully performed function of each member, small or large, and the sacrifice of those who occupy positions of honour."⁴¹ Achievements like the White City of the 1893 Columbian Exhibition were mere "ephemeral display."⁴² Although it might be possible to "succeed in securing the grand external, in driving wide avenues and boulevards through narrow-ed up selfishness and squalor... if a high ideal be not evidence in their design, purpose and arrangement, all will crumble into dust, and all the temples, fanes and palaces vanish like wayfarer's tents."⁴³

The Calgary Plan: Civitas on the Plains

Although the problems of urbanization were more obvious in the larger cities of England and America, they were not insignificant in Canada. The period immediately prior to the First World War saw a considerable backlash against immigration and urbanization. The rapid growth of cities, the appearance of urban slums, pollution, and congestion were less extreme in Calgary, but they were not unknown and certainly the fear that the cities of Canada's West faced a future of urban unrest, moral and physical decay was

³⁹ White, p. 179.

⁴⁰ Mawson, *Civic Art*, p. 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

present.

Calgary, in the midst of tremendous commercial boom, seemed an unlikely spot for Mawson to realize his vision. But for Mawson a city plan was not merely a Utopian vision but an eminently practical solution. It was the means, not just to civic grandeur, but to civic reform. Thus at the outset of the Calgary report Mawson noted that

The first necessity in the preparation of a City Planning scheme is of course an examination of the site as it exists at the present time, and, still more important, the study of the history of the town or city to be planned. . . [we must] make a careful study of all the evolutionary influences which have worked for the good or ill of Calgary in the past, so that we may use them and direct them in the future to the best advantage. ⁴⁴

Mawson's examination of Calgary's history took the form of a critique aimed at the gridiron street plan, the impact of the railroad tracks, and the under utilization of the natural setting. The gridiron, although apparently a highly ordered system, was not compatible with civitas. In Civic Art Mawson complained that the gridiron or chessboard plan upon which so many American and colonial towns were modeled "often without the least thought to contours or the disposal of buildings of varying size and importance...has proven so inconvenient and so unsuited to the placing of fine monumental buildings that the introduction of diagonal lines is now proposed."⁴⁵ Looking at Calgary he further observed that development was "being influenced and warped by the presence of the tracks in a way it should not be,"⁴⁶ since someone walking about the city would discover development proceeding upon entirely different lines on either side of the track.

In singling out these features for criticism Mawson revealed certain preconceptions. After all, the chronology of Calgary's development was such that the tracks were built before the town. The gridiron plan actually predated settlement. The railroad, far from distorting the land use patterns, had brought the city into being and established many of its land use patterns, albeit according to its own needs. However, for Mawson the forms of the railway town

⁴⁴ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., p. 7.

⁴⁵ Mawson, Civic Art, p. 66.

⁴⁶ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., pp. 7-8.

were not those of civic greatness, indeed their presence such that ideal no longer entirely possible.⁴⁷

In Civic Art Mawson had written that “the first essential in hastening the evolution from chaos to order is to realize fully how much we already possess that is beautiful,”⁴⁸ an intriguing observation that suggests the role given to reason in giving the raw matter of the urban form civic status. In Calgary he found the potential of the artistic side of his preliminary survey encouraging, but little realized. He decried the growth of industrial and commercial development along the river banks and proposed to restore them to “a type of beauty more suited” to their urban surroundings,⁴⁹ observed that an amazing mass of material already existed for the formation of foliage effects “growing in hidden and forgotten corners,”⁵⁰ and urged further research into the species of trees, shrubs and flowering plants best suited to the district.⁵¹

Although the diagnosis was grim, the prognosis was favorable: Mawson claimed that his plans would “direct” the evolution of Calgary, bringing it closer to the ideal. He insisted that “city planning is not the attempt to pull down your city and rebuild it at ruinous expense. It is merely deciding what you would like to have done when you get the chance, so that when the chance does come, little by little, you may make the city plan conform to your ideals.”⁵²

Mawson proposed replacing the uniform blocks of the grid-iron plan with a hierarchy of streets, civic spaces and parks, in effect creating a new history for Calgary, one in which public order reigned supreme. Mawson relied upon a series of systematic ordering devices in his design. Compared, for example, with the existing gridiron, he strove to create a highly articulated urban fabric, transforming the city into a series of monumental buildings and open spaces connected by grand boulevards and carefully orchestrated vistas. At the heart of the plan was a tremendous civic center, a largely symmetrical, self-contained composition in the Neoclassical style stretching over eight blocks of the inner city, reclaiming the waterfront and refocusing the entire downtown area on the

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁸ Mawson, Civic Art, p. 54.

⁴⁹ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., p. 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵² Ibid., prologue.

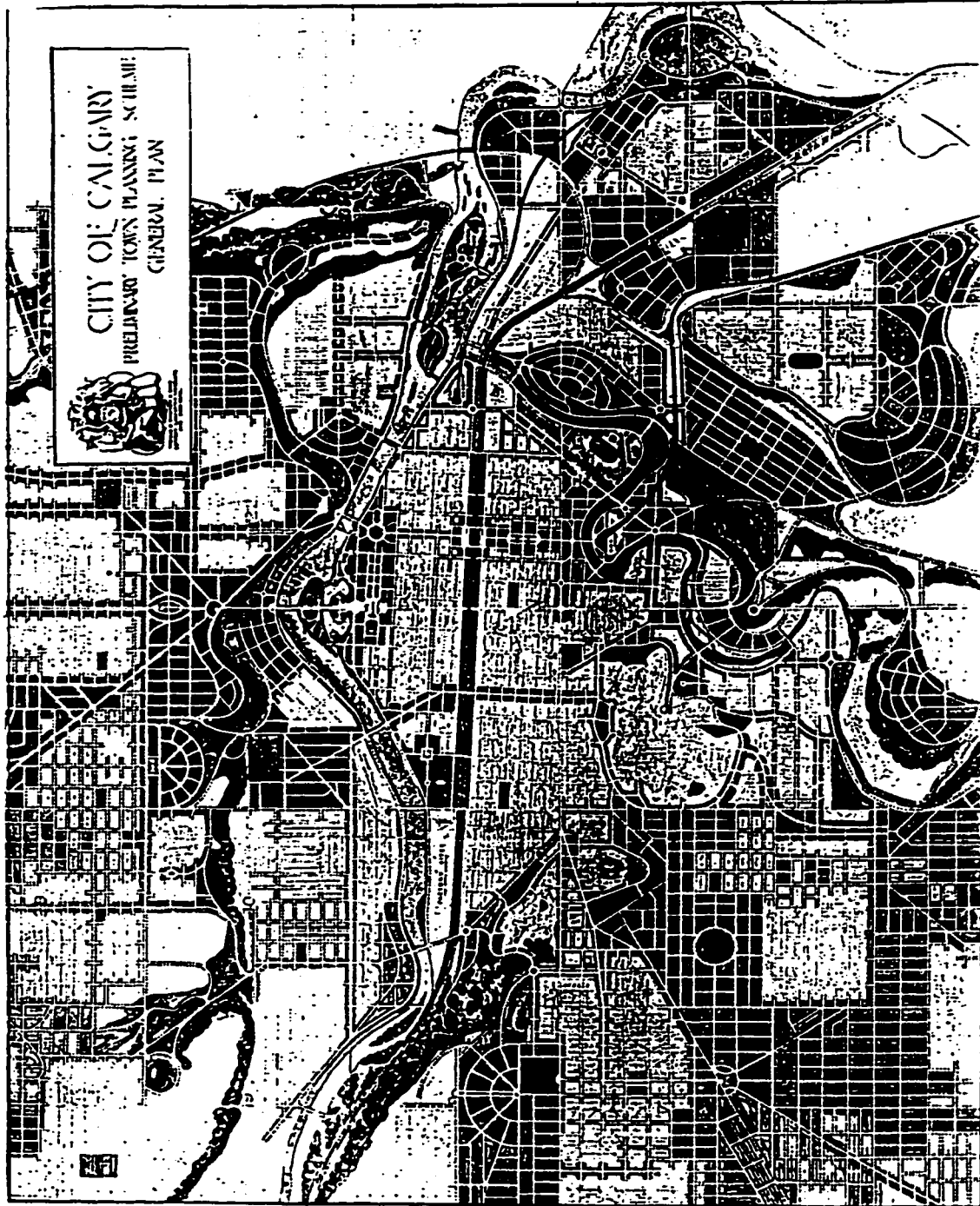


Figure Seven: General Plan for the City of Calgary, Thomas H. Mawson, 1914⁶³

⁶³ Thomas Mawson and Sons, Ltd., p. xi.

ceremonial grandeur of the public order.

In his report Mawson remarked that “A question that will naturally occur to you as you look at our plans for this portion of the work will be—What are the names of these various buildings shown and to what purposes are they to be dedicated?”⁵⁴ But after raising the issue he proceeded to dismiss any concerns:

Some of these are indicated... but we would point out again that this is a preliminary town planning scheme, and that to enter into full detail even on this subject of the civic center is not possible at the present time. It is sufficient if we say that undoubtedly before very long you will have to build a new City Hall, a new Post Office, and several other public buildings....When the time comes, a proper scheme in greater detail will be necessary for the whole of this center, showing provision for the public buildings and banks and other semi-public places of resort, including a museum, a library, and an art gallery, and that whatever buildings you need at the moment should be erected according to this plan, leaving the others to follow, so that every part may balance against every other part.⁵⁵

The form of the civic center had a purpose beyond the practical functions to be housed within its buildings. As the “visual idealization of civic harmony”⁵⁶ it would command the allegiance of the citizenry and legitimize the authority of the state, as well as to broadcast the political power and financial strength of the growing city. By providing Calgarians with a clear statement of an idealized social order the civic center would help to bring that order into being.

While the civic centers were the soul of the community, Mawson acknowledged that “[j]ust as in the human economy, it is no good providing food and fresh air and the other necessities of life unless their active principles can be conveyed to every part of the body by means of the circulation of the vital fluid, so in exactly the same way it is no good erecting large and beautiful buildings and storing them with the riches of modern civilization unless we also provide the means of collection and distribution which are essential to their effective use....”⁵⁷ In order for the civic center to be effective, for the city to be healthy, other reforms would be necessary.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Wilson, p. 282.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

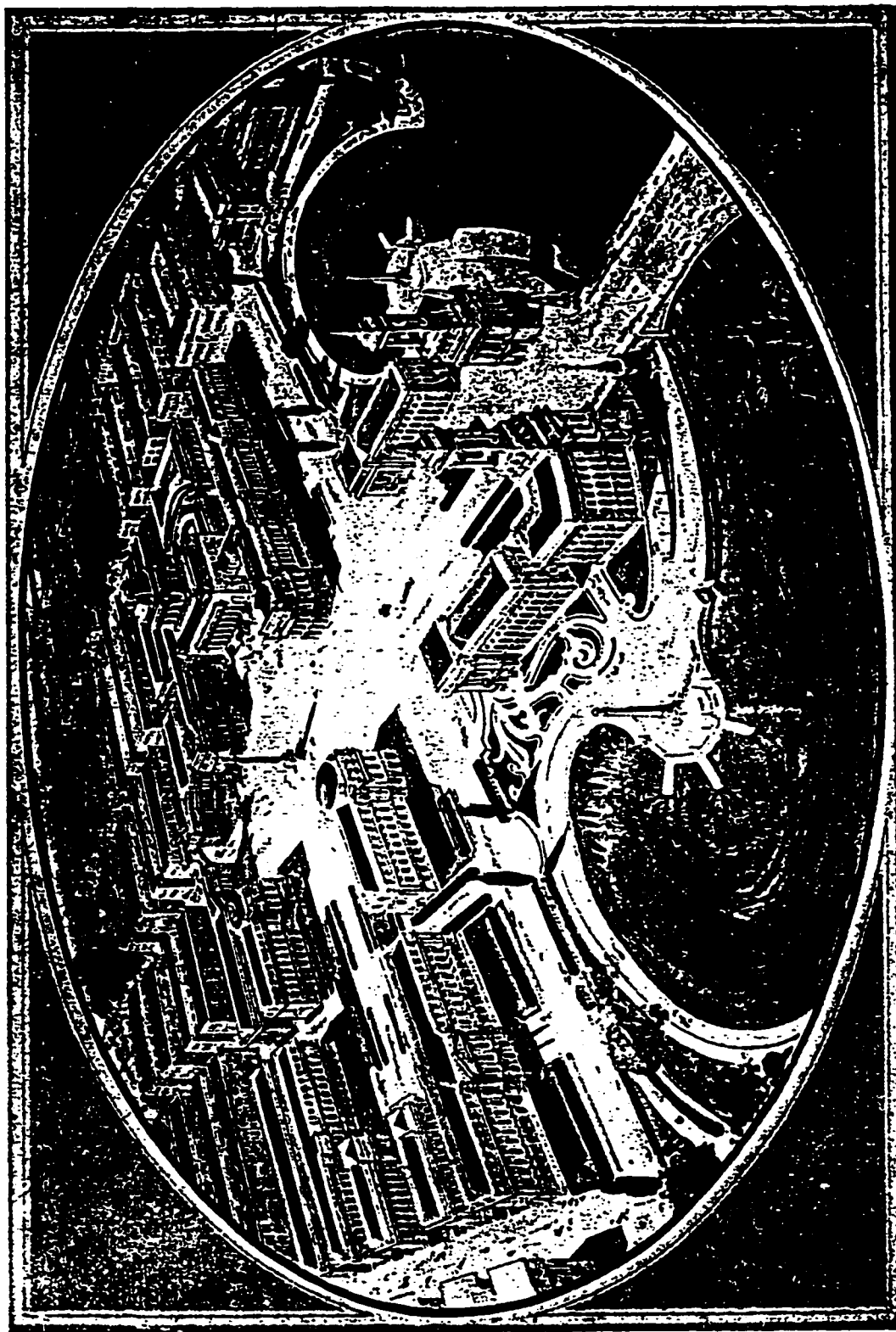


Figure Eight: The Calgary Civic Centre, Thomas H. Mawson, 1914.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons, Ltd., Frontispiece.

“A city’s traffic is its life blood” wrote Mawson in the Calgary plan.⁵⁹ He had already objected to the overall uniformity and consistency of the gridiron. Now the remedies he proposed would introduce hierarchy to the fabric of the city by enlarging some streets while reducing others. In the inner city diagonals were not possible but corners could be rounded to open up vistas and sidewalks could be set back under buildings in the form of continuous arcades, allowing the former sidewalk area to be added to the major thoroughfares. In residential areas, the width of less travelled roads could be reduced and the margins given back to the homeowners on either side of the street for replanting. In new areas of construction such remedies could be avoided by building properly right from the start, adopting a street plan with radiating boulevards infilled with a smaller network of residential streets.

While traffic was the lifeblood of the urban form, parks and parkways were “physiologically speaking, the lungs of the city.”⁶⁰ Towards this end, Mawson recommended a complete regional park system which, like the systems of streets, squares and civic centers would be comprehensive, orderly and hierarchical. The civic state remained man’s highest accomplishment, but the re-energizing power of Nature was also granted a vital role. During the late 19th and early 20th Century, an extended discourse concerning the importance of urban parks had taken shape, calling attention to the disorders of urban life, alerting the social conscience to the dangers of congestion and crowding, and elaborating a theoretical plan for a system of parks that would include a network of linear parks on a regional scale to allow fresh air into the heart of the city, as well as neighborhood parks, supervised playgrounds, gymnasiums, and waterfront promenades all linked by wide tree-lined boulevards.⁶¹ The problem, as the noted American city planning expert Charles Mulford Robinson, described it, was that

congestion...meant a lack of privacy, which led to moral deterioration; inadequate lighting, ventilation, and sanitation which created disease and physical deterioration; and insufficient recreational facilities, which created an inability to study and improve one’s mind and in turn caused mental deterioration and the large number of backward

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Mawson, Civic Art, p. 86.

⁶¹ Boyer, pp. 36-37.

children. As society advanced, as people were increasingly alienated from nature, the artificial urban environment became the cause of social sicknesses.⁶²

Frederick Law Olmstead, another planner whom Mawson liked to quote and one of the great park designers of the period, also put the matter directly in a report he prepared while working as a design consultant on Mount Royal Park in Montreal:

It is a great mistake to suppose that the value of charming natural scenery lies wholly in the inducement which the enjoyment of it presents to change of mental occupation, exercise, and air-taking. Beside and above this, it acts in a more directly remedial way to enable men to better resist the harmful influence of ordinary town life, and recover what they lose from them. It is thus, in medical phrase, a prophylactic and therapeutic agent of vital value; there is not one in the apothecaries' shops as important to the health and strength or to the earning and tax-paying capacities of a large city.⁶³

Mawson's own emphasis was often economic: "THE CHILD WITHOUT A PLAYGROUND IS FATHER TO MAN WITHOUT JOB" announced the bold face headline above the Calgary News-Telegram report of Mawson's address.⁶⁴ "I am afraid that unless you take steps soon you will have a large employment problem before you" he added. If the stability and strength of the urban work force were to be maintained, mental and physical discipline were vital, for it was "this attention to the health and physique of posterity that is to ensure the continuity and prosperity of commercial enterprise, and it is this consideration which places the provision of public parks and open spaces in the first rank of progressive municipal enterprises."⁶⁵

"I often wish," Mawson had observed elsewhere, when extolling the benefits nature for the city bound lower classes,

that some philanthropist would get his heart warmed to the sight I

⁶² Charles Mulford Robinson, The Improvement of Towns and Cities (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), p. 9. Robinson's ideas were much admired by Mawson and the two men carried on a regular correspondence. Mawson, Life and Work, p. 253.

⁶³ Geoffrey Simmins (ed.), Documents in Canadian Architecture (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1980), p. 79. Mawson "long corresponded" with Olmstead and visited his home while on a trip to the United States. Mawson, Life and Work, p. 163.

⁶⁴ News Telegram (Calgary), April 10, 1912.

⁶⁵ R.I.B.A., p. 434.

once saw in Victoria Park, London, which skirts the congested East End. It was a few minutes to five--the evening bathing hour--and ranged round the large pond were hundreds of boys and men waiting, or rather, straining the moments, until the bell should ring for the plunge. Almost before the first stroke of the bell could vibrate, the youngsters, who had every garment ready for slipping off, were tumbling head over heels into the cool water, and in less than a minute it became a seething mass of buoyant life and hilarity, a delightful interlude of brightness in the in dull, sordid conditions under which young life labors in these hives of activity and toil.⁶⁶

In short it was clear by the time of Mawson's 1912 address to the Town Planning conference that "[t]here are many standpoints, economic and aesthetic, from which civic parks may be viewed, but there is one upon which most people now agree, which is that they are not only a luxury but also a necessity."⁶⁷ Thus it is interesting to note that Mawson seemed to feel subterfuge would be necessary to lure the urban poor into parks. After reporting that the London Board of Education had allowed schools to cut out elements of the standard school curriculum in order to organize the children and teach them "old-time games and dances," Mawson went on to suggest that "you cannot improve the physique in the national or civic sense if you occupy people with physical development as an end in itself. You must divert them by pleasant surroundings and draw out their interests along other lines, and so mask the true issue."⁶⁸

Burnham had made a similar point when discussing the importance of parks for Town Planning in a Democracy:

The elders themselves are more orderly and self-respecting than they used to be when they were not under observation outside their own homes: they are afforded opportunities to know and practice good manners, to come up to a standard...But the effect on childhood and youth is far stronger. By the delightfulness of fields and walk, of games and pastimes, they are lured into the open, where most of their waking hours outside of work and school are spent, and where they form habits, fresh and healthful, of mind and body; they grow up before the eyes of the community and escape those practices that lurk in secret places--practices that before the young are aware have poisoned their lives and

⁶⁶ Mawson, *Civic Art*, p. 79.

⁶⁷ R.I.B.A., p.434.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

made good citizenship impossible. These play parks are the promoters of sanity, and in city planning they should be placed before everything else, and they will, in another generation, return ample dividends in the shape of happy, self-controlled men and women. In the city of the future there should be no home not within easy reach of such a public park. A friend recently asked an urchin in one of these parks if he had learned anything there. The boy hesitated a moment and then said: "Yes, I have learned to wait my turn." This shows that he knew that the institution was intended to be a breeding-place of law and that he had himself taken a long step in learning it. Make many little parks like these, allure all your youngsters into them, and you will have attained what Lycurgus sought in every law he promulgated. Environment does not change the kind of an individual, but it does modify him for good and evil.⁶⁹

Once in public parks and playground people were subject not only to the curative benefits of nature but also to the watchful eye of the community. Since the environmentalist believed that morality "was not independent and divine but environmentally conditioned,"⁷⁰ parks were perceived as an effective mechanism of socialization. The use of nature in the city was subject to specific rules. Mawson indicated that five different kinds of open spaces were needed "to bring the town into harmony with the actual needs of the populace."⁷¹ These were a quadrangle and circus for magnificence and grandeur; small recreation parks and playgrounds in or near populous centers; public parks for spacious effects, rest and sunshine; reservations situated on the confines of the open country to be left, as far as possible, in a state of nature; and finally, connecting parkways, drives and boulevards.⁷² Taken together these would provide ventilation, mental stimulation, venues for socialization (both in the playgrounds and civic open spaces) and the cultivation of physical strength and mental discipline (taking turns, waiting for the bell) that prepared the child for the work force and good citizenship.

In Calgary, Mawson proposed the creation of a complete system of parks, playgrounds, park-like avenues and waterfront promenades. Ideally the various open spaces would connect each part of the city with every other part. He particularly urged Calgarians to seize the chance to create a belt of green

⁶⁹ R.I.B.A., pp. 377-378.

⁷⁰ Wilson, p. 82.

⁷¹ Mawson, *Civic Art*, p. 79.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

around the city and a network of drives and promenades along the rivers, recommending that the city acquire three large sites to anchor the system (Prince's Island in the center of city, Bow Bend to the east and the Shaganappi area to the west) and compel owners to reserve 66' right of way along the rivers to form nucleus of the scheme. A radiating network of broad parkways and tree-lined boulevards would act as connective air-ducts leading from the heart of the city to the open country. Such "wedges of greenery would not defeat slums altogether, but would stem them."⁷³

Mawson also recommended the development of a series of smaller recreation grounds. These parks were to be linked by attractive boulevards and located so that there would be at least one small open space within easy reach of every dwelling in the city located so "that even quite small children can go to and fro between their homes and the playground without danger or fatigue."⁷⁴ He further suggested that the city should "very carefully consider whether it would not be possible to insist that all subdividers dedicate a minimum proportion of their holdings to the provision of open spaces of some kind."⁷⁵ This proposal represented a significant shift from the power and rights of the individual land owner to the interests of the community.

In concluding the recommendations for parks, it was noted that "taken as a whole, what we propose to do is to expropriate all the ground which is too low and marshy to be healthy and convenient for building upon, and also all ground which is too steep for the purpose. It is fortunate that these are the very pieces of ground will make the finest and most picturesque parks."⁷⁶ There was an essential difference in the character of the open spaces of civitas and the open spaces of nature. Grand civic centres were not to be placed amid "untamed nature." Instead, Mawson envisioned a highly ordered transition from the roughness of the country to the grandeur of the city. The natural landscape would give way first to "dressed public parks, then to the town garden, in which art predominates, and finally to the public square in which art is supreme mistress" so that as one approached a town "the elemental quality of the rural

⁷³ R.I.B.A., p. 436.

⁷⁴ T.H. Mawson and Sons, City of Calgary, p. 51.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

outskirts would become increasingly stately and restrained.”⁷⁷ “When we come...to the designing of public parks and gardens” he explained, “we find that we can rely less and less upon nature as we approach densely-populated areas with their smoke or chemical-laden atmosphere, and in proportion as we lose the help of nature, so much we seek the aid of art and invention.”⁷⁸

Proposals for working class neighborhoods were developed in a subsequent section on Garden Suburbs. Although Mawson “venture[d] to state that these plans for Calgary possess the distinction of being the first attempt to solve, theoretically, the particular housing problems of the West which are becoming day by day increasingly persistent and urgent,”⁷⁹ his designs were variations of current ideas in England and the United States. The accepted approach was to present the suburbs as a potentially ideal synthesis of town and country, an attitude that Mawson was not entirely comfortable with.

Mawson’s Calgary proposals consisted primarily of seven storey walk-up flats for single working-class men and groupings of semi-detached and row houses for artisans. The steeper slopes of each neighbourhood were to be reserved as natural areas to balance the higher density housing. Additional parks and playing fields for sports and exercise would be located on the flatter lands and Mawson also suggested that a few beauty spots could be developed and “maintained by the older boys of the school, under the direction of the City Gardener.”⁸⁰

Each suburb would contain a small social centre, an echo of the vast civic centre in the heart of the city. These centres would contain an “assembly room for public functions and parochial teas and the like together with a club house, a branch library, and such recreational facilities, for use specially in the winter, in addition to tennis lawns, bowling greens, etc., for the summer months”.⁸¹ Mawson strongly recommended that these centers be developed in conjunction with schools rather than places of worship, as the facilities would be less likely “to become the property of a narrow clique.”⁸² He envisioned them as “a rallying

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸¹ Thomas H. Mawson and Sons Ltd., p. 43.

⁸² *Ibid.*

point round which the life of each suburb will center, and so help to create a spirit of citizenship and *esprit-de-corps*.⁶³

Although Mawson tackled the problem of suburban design, it was as a subset of city planning. "The suburb", he warned, was not a "country of homes...nor is it the place to reproduce the striking achievements of the city."⁶⁴ Indeed in the design of suburbs it was particularly crucial to balance the relative proportions of town and country. "It all comes back to the old unsolved problem of how far restraint should be exercised and how much of liberty allowed, how much of art and how much of nature admitted. Too much restraint is as dismal as the restraint of a prison, if there is too much liberty, the result is our present patchiness and individualism."⁶⁵ He very much objected to "the New World pattern" in which working men either preferred or were compelled to own their own houses, each built singly on its own plot without any variety in mass or unity in design. "Do what we will we cannot express any great civic ideal in terms of cottages however few we allow to the acre."⁶⁶ The housing problem was important, but if a proper expression of civic pride was to be realized, housing would remain as only one element in the total composition.

"I look backward that I may the better press forward"⁶⁷

In characterizing the Calgary plan as a "series of studies for the better ordering of your city," Mawson hit upon an essential truth in his vision. The ideal city was to be built up from its constituent parts. It would grow, not by adding more and more of the same kinds of units, but by incorporating large spaces into elaborately balanced and articulated schemes.⁶⁸ Streets, neighborhoods, parks and markets, civic and social centers were arranged hierarchically, in the awareness that "every factor or feature has its bearing upon every other factor or feature."⁶⁹ Individually each element would retain its

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ T.H. Mawson and Sons, City of Calgary, p. 52.

⁶⁵ Mawson, Civic Art, p. 28.

⁶⁶ Walter Creece, The Search for Environment. The Garden City Before and After. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 133.

⁶⁷ Mawson, Life and Work, frontispiece.

⁶⁸ Donald Olsen, The City as a Work of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 11.

⁶⁹ T. H. Mawson, Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect (London: Richards Press, 1927), p.207.

independence but it would also be balanced in a total composition, attainable only “by the architect who can picture the whole before he designs its several parts.”⁹⁰ It was particularly important for the effective plan to be comprehensive. Mawson’s recommendations for Calgary included the relocation of electrical wires from main streets to back alleys. Sections of Civic Art discussed the design of mail boxes and garbage bins. There must be “no partial attempts which in their incompleteness or inconsistency are worse than no attempt at all.”⁹¹ Moreover, because it was impossible “to resuscitate the evolutionary processes” by which civic greatness had been created in the past, modern cities would have to gain their aesthetic value by “the logical expression of the satisfaction of a need and by the staging of the components, public buildings, roadway, greensward, foliage and statuary, as one masterly whole,”⁹² in effect simulating the final result of evolution through artistry.

For Mawson the process of urbanization was fundamentally linked with the forward course of history. Like other City Beautiful designers he saw a close connection between urbanization and civilized progress.⁹³ He believed that the metropolis drew the best from the city, as the city drew from the town and the town from the country.⁹⁴ “To the city”, Mawson wrote

men bring the best of their products. Their talents, their research and their every quality find there their own level and market value. As in the material sphere so in art, the town absorbs the best of the country, moulding and refining it to its purpose, systematising and standardising it and eliminating the rugged and uncouth to fit it for its surroundings both aesthetic and material.⁹⁵

Clearly Mawson’s vision of the metropolis was not anti-urban, however he did have serious reservations about the city of his day: its poverty and social unrest, its sheer physical ugliness and disorder. The idea of wilderness had become associated less with nature than with the urban form. Somehow the competitive spirit of commercialism had unleashed forces which had been kept

⁹⁰ Mawson, Civic Art, p. 24.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁹³ Wilson, p. 19.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Mawson, Civic Art, p. 22.

THE LIFE & WORK OF AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT



"I LOOK BACKWARD THAT I MAY
THE BETTER PRESS FORWARD."

*An Autobiography by
Thomas H Mawson F.L.S*

*Corresponding Member of the Royal
Fine Arts Commission ; Past
President of the Town Planning Inst ;
Late Lecturer on Landscape Design
Liverpool University ; Corresponding
Member of the American Society of
Landscape Architects ; Etc. Etc.*

Figure Nine: Crest and Motto Devised by Mawson for Himself⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Mawson, Life and Work, frontispiece.

under control, loosening the disciplinary structures and threatening the carefully cultivated social virtues which had allowed man to rise above his original primitive state.

Moreover, as the numbers of people moving from the country to the city increased and the populations of the cities continued to grow, the future progress of civilization would depend increasingly upon the environmental influences which men's characters would be subjected to in the urban centers. The urgency of urban reform was beyond dispute. The solution for Mawson lay in the past, both in the idealized behaviors and civic rituals of ancient Greece and in the power of Nature, particularly when used against its opposite, the power of the city itself.

Mawson's attitude towards Nature was clearly ambiguous: it was a source of considerable power to be used in controlled ways, to ventilate the congested urban core, to cut through the slums, to provide venues for physical exercises and mental relief that would re-discipline and re-socialize urban man. And yet the "go-as-you please ways of the country" were not compatible with the highest developments of civic life. The "country roughly hews the picturesque material, which is imported into the town to be shaped and built into its formation. It is the baser scion upon which is grafted the noble refined stock, and here the finer chisels are applied and its wayward tendencies curbed."⁹⁷ The planner, working in the context of classicism, would elevate this source material even further, directing its progress to the highest ideals of civilization.

Although the classical style represented the epitome of the civic arts, Mawson still insisted that "the classical needs the quickening touch of nature."⁹⁸ The achievements of technique and science, the tabulation of facts, the collection of exemplars and a study of classic formulae were "all incomplete without those lessons which nature alone can teach us in the open country."⁹⁹ Because it was "possible...to refine too finely," the artist and the planner required "constant infusions of the more rugged artistic material, with its constant variety."¹⁰⁰ The systematizing and standardizing of professionalism

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

alone were able to “progress so far and no further...There must be ambidexterity...in the blending of the seeming haphazard with the systematized. We must have or acquire a strain of thought which accords with nature’s language.”¹⁰¹ Without it, the designer might give way to “a kind of lifeless geometric formality” marked by a “dreary pedantry.”¹⁰² That is, true civic design was only possible when scientific knowledge was correlated with “the added touch of inventive genius.”¹⁰³ Mawson’s two cures had to be used together, not only to reform the city but also to establish a sort of balanced equilibrium which could be maintained in the future. Ultimately, “the rural spirit of individualism” would have to be subordinated, but “the problem is how, without exterminating the desirable, to weave this quality of freedom into its place in the monumental.”¹⁰⁴

Hayden White has grouped beliefs similar to Mawson’s under the rubric of “archaism,” noting in them a certain repressed desire to escape present obligations. Mawson’s personal maxim, looking to the past and the future but not at the present, confirms this tendency. Yet Mawson denied that the act of planning was utopian. Instead he argued that the planner was engaged in a battle between expediency and the practical. He objected that

the persistent attempt to disassociate the ideal and practical on the part of many persons undoubtedly often arises from inability to differentiate between the ideal and the unattainable. This generally results in their designating the whole as “Utopianism,” which, as Ruskin so truly says, is one of the Devil’s pet words. ‘Whenever you hear a man dissuading you in the attempt to do all on the ground that perfection is Utopian, beware of that man, cast the word out of your dictionary altogether, there is no need for it. Things are either possible or impossible--you can determine which in any state of human or social science.’¹⁰⁵

Mawson insisted that, “If we are to realize the greatest good, the ideal must be ever before us, urging us to our highest achievement, the ideal and the practical equally inspiring the civic designer and acting and reacting, the one on

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

the other, at every turn, or his work can never rise above the mediocre."¹⁰⁶

By creating a vision of the ideal the planner could help society move forward, beyond the urban jungle. The wilderness could be tamed by changes in the physical environment of the city. The present, however, remained an incomplete and imperfect place, a constant struggle with expediency and the practical. In making a distinction between the present and the ideal Mawson indicated that

the ideal differs from the practical in this, that, whereas in the latter you build in infinitesimal quantities, and so perhaps compass the whole, the former, Minerva - like, springs adult and fully armed from the mind, and nothing can be added to or taken from its collective glory. This need not forbid expediency in dealing with practical matters, for the practical will ever be a lifelong struggle with expediency, and this very quality of completeness, which is the outstanding attribute of the ideal, makes its presence the more necessary to counteract the tendency of expediency to degenerate into inefficiency and incompleteness.¹⁰⁷

Mawson saw that the role of the planner was to oversee this struggle, to study his idealized ancestors and to use the forces of the primitive past, to direct the forward movement of civilized progress to its ultimate resolution. When the ideal was reached, the process of evolution and the relentless lifelong struggle it implied would be over.

¹⁰⁶ ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ ibid., p. 6.

CHAPTER FIVE: PLANNING THE MODERN CITY

When planning resumed after World War II it brought with it the rational techniques of wartime planning and also a wartime sense of crisis. The tremendous demand for housing and the sprawling urban conurbations that appeared seemed to confound the planning experts. Some enjoyed the changes, but many were repulsed. Planners in particular seemed to find the uncontrolled nature of the changes disturbing and distasteful. In typical fashion the keynote address to the 1954 Provincial Conference of the Alberta Division of the Community Planners Association, asserted that

The undeniable fact is that metropolitan growth, like a disease, knows no boundaries, let alone municipal boundaries which are man-made and often quite artificial. All citizens are affected by the difficulties which arise or will be affected sooner or later...[T]he disease has been described under a number of "catch-phrases": "suburbanitis", "metropolitanitis", the decline of cities, and so on. Whatever the description, the symptoms are identical in general and the diagnosis is clear. What proves to be extremely difficult is the prescription or the treatment and the ability of the patient or patients to face the logical outcome of the facts of their disease.¹

Although this writer did not elaborate on the symptoms, others did: it was as if an explosion had "scattered the functions of the city throughout the metropolitan area."² "The differences between city and country have been attenuated almost to the vanishing point. The movement of people, goods, and messages has become so rapid ... as to create a new situation. To put it bluntly, the urbanization of the whole society may be in process of destroying the distinctive role of the modern city."³ Mankind was "reshaping its habitat" at a rate and scale that marked "a break with the past."⁴ Modern technology had

¹ Albert Rose, "The Challenge of Metropolitan Growth," Community Planning Review, Vol. IV, 1954, p. 97. This article was based on Rose's address to the Provincial Conference of the Community Planning Association of Canada, Alberta Division, June 18, 1954.

² William H. Whyte Jr., editor of Fortune Magazine, coined the metaphor in The Exploding Metropolis (New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1958), cited here by Humphrey Carver, pp. 6-7.

³ Oscar Handlin, "The Modern City as a Field of historical Study" in Oscar Handlin and John Burchard (ed.), The Historian and the City (Joint Center for Urban Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University: M.I.T. Press and Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 24.

⁴ Jean Gottman, "Mankind Is Reshaping Its Habitat" in C.Elias et al (ed.), Metropolis: Values in Conflict (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 3, 5.

released new “urbanizing forces”.⁵ The “rhythm of urbanization and industrialization” had “accelerated” and the “on rush of industrialism” was “fast making any urban-rural dichotomy patently unrealistic.”⁶ The city was seen to have broken “out of the old bounds, walls, boulevards, or administrative units which set it apart, the city has massively invaded the open country”.⁷ It had become an “abstract continuum like an infinite non-objective painting without recognizable shape or focus”, a “plasma in which individuals and families float in a kind of unattached suspense.”⁸ Urbanization was now “so widespread, so much a part of industrial civilization, and gaining so rapidly, that any return to rurality, even with major catastrophes, appears unlikely.”⁹

The disappearance of the traditional division between the country and the city, as well as the apparent suddenness of these changes, were clearly extremely disturbing to observers. As René Dubos had explained to the American Institute of Planners:

The population avalanche and the universal trend toward urbanization will, needless to say, affect all aspects of future life. By the end of this century most human beings will be born, will live, and will reproduce within the confines of megalopolis. Until now, cities have grown and renewed themselves through the influx of people originating from rural areas or from primitive countries. Very soon, however, and for the first time in history, this transfusion of new blood will come to an end....To a very large extent, the future will therefore depend upon our ability to create urban environments having the proper.... qualities.¹⁰

In his article “The Death of the City” the economist Kenneth Boulding gives some indication of why so many intellectuals found this daunting:

Civilization, it is clear from the Latin meaning of the word, is what goes on in cities...the traditional view of civilization is that it represents a higher state of mankind than the precivilized or savage society which preceded it and that it is indeed a state of mankind which has never been fully realized....We are now passing through a period of transition in the state of man quite as large and as far reaching as the transition

⁵ Kingsley Davis, “Origin and Growth of Urbanization” in C. E. Elias et al (ed.), p. 15.

⁶ Handlin, p. 24.

⁷ Gottman, p. 7.

⁸ Carver, p. 68.

⁹ Davis, p.17.

¹⁰Dubos, pp. 20-21.

from precivilized to civilized society...This idea is shocking to many people who still think that what is going on in the world today is a simple extension of the movement from precivilized to civilized society. In fact, however, I think we have to recognize that we are moving towards a state of man which is as different from civilization as civilization itself was from the precivilized societies which preceded it...There is something ironic in the reflection that just at that moment when civilization has, in effect, extended itself over the whole world and when precivilized societies exist only in rapidly declining pockets, post civilization is stalking on the heels of civilization itself and is creating the same kind of disruption and disturbance in civilized societies that civilization produces on precivilized societies.¹¹

Moreover, as Boulding also observed, as the city disappeared, so did its rural counterpart.¹² If civilization could no longer be simply associated with the city, planners, firmly bound to the values and processes of urbanization, growth and productivity, could no longer simply relocate those values to the country. Instead urban reform was necessary to manage the city and reinvent it as a safe place for civilization.

Would it be possible to “cultivate and preserve the intrinsic values of the city against the debasement that follows unlimited urban growth”?¹³ Since the “old approaches will not do,”¹⁴ the early fifties began with the search for new solutions. It was a time of surveys, Royal Commissions, calls for further study and faith in reason, as expressed by the editorial in Canada’s new journal, the Community Planning Review: “Planning is a methodical way of coming to decisions...[but] the people in authority over our communities cannot do a valid job until their advisers know more about the life history of that novel biological organism, the mechanized human agglomeration. If our Universities must rely on wealthy cities for the means of their survival, so must our cities look to the Universities for the clues to theirs.”¹⁵

Most studies began with some attempt to gain control over change by

¹¹ Kenneth Boulding, “The Death of the City: A Frightened Look at Postcivilization” in Oscar Handlin and John Burchard (ed.), pp. 133,138.

¹² Ibid., p. 143.

¹³ Gertler, “Why Control the Growth of Cities?,” Community Planning Review, Vol. V, No. 4, December 1955, p. 151.

¹⁴ C. E. Elias et al (ed.), p. 2.

¹⁵ Community Planning Review, Vol.1, No. 3, August 1951, Editorial note.

naming the new phenomenon. In 1957 Professor Jean Gottman published a study describing the continuous band of urbanization along the New England sea board that he saw as prototypical of things to come. His term for this new city, Megalopolis, gave the new urban form its popular name. Megalopolis, however, was something that planners loved to hate. While Gottman dubbed the immense city “the Main Street of the nation”, cultural critic Lewis Mumford called it “urban pathology” and “sprawling gigantism”. Planner Victor Gruen commented that “I...have difficulty sympathizing with those who, as Jean Gottman does in his book *Megalopolis* are willing to accept the disorderly, cancerous growth that occurs along the East Coast of the United States as the present and future form of urbanization.”¹⁶

Gruen’s term for the new phenomenon was the anti-city of “Amorphia.” Amorphia was the “cancerous growth” of urban fallout.¹⁷ Gruen asked “If we feel that cities are worthwhile human inventions, that they establish strongholds of national health and wealth, that without them urban culture—and therefore, culture as such—cannot exist...what can we do to stop their destruction, their transformation into Amorphia?”¹⁸ The answer, he indicated, would “be found only if we are willing to understand and apply the science of planning.”¹⁹

Others saw Gottman’s Megalopolis as the inevitable harbinger of things to come. Professor and planner Constantin A. Doxiadis observed that “we are gradually moving to the point where we shall have one basic network of human settlements covering the whole earth, a network which will incorporate within it small and large parts of the countryside.”²⁰ Because this trend represented “the most probable, logical and practical solution” it “cannot, and should not, be reversed.”²¹ Doxiadis branded attempts to do so as “escapist” and concentrated instead on the systematic study of human settlement, a science he proposed to name ekistics. The natural outcome of ekistics was Ecumenopolis, “the World

¹⁶ Victor Gruen, The Heart of Our Cities: The Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 182.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁰ L. O. Gertler, Making Man’s Environment: Urban Issues (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., 1976), p. 31.

²¹ Constantin Doxiadis, “Ecumenopolis, World City of Tomorrow” in Richard T. Le Gates and Frederic Stout (ed.), The City Reader (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 458.

City of Tomorrow”, and Doxiadis challenged planners to demonstrate the “necessary courage to conceive and build” it. The “real challenge does not lie in whether or not to create the world-city [because this will happen anyway]...it lies in creating it correctly, taking into account the human factor, so that man who, at present sees his values disintegrating around him, may be able to find them again.”²²

The common threads were sprawling growth, the challenge to human values and the need for planning. Solutions typically focused on one of two separate areas: examining either urban sprawl at the fringes of the city or urban blight at its core. Regional planners contended that the cause of problems was that “city people don’t stay neatly inside municipal boundaries”;²³ they spread out over the surrounding open spaces. The countryside was no longer “a still picture of farms and trees and motionless figures in the landscape; it is an intense magnetic field with a powerful focus on the metropolitan center.”²⁴ Because the growth of metropolitan cities seemed to take the form of continuous expansion around the outside edges, a belt of land in the process of conversion from rural to urban use surrounded the city. This transitional zone between urban and rural land uses, the so-called “urban shadow,” became a focus of general concern: “The blight of the city’s shadow is seen in the fields of unmown grass, untended fruit trees, and blowing weeds, and in the crop of commercial signs sprouting on the roadside.”²⁵

One solution was regional planning, which sought to examine the whole region of inner and outer zones “as the total setting of urban life.”²⁶ However, as one planner warned, “the widely scattered, loosely-knit distribution of urban segments” was not to be confused with a regional city. The megalopolis was a “no-city,” a “decadent expression” which needed to be overcome.²⁷ Regional planning, on the other hand, sought to “point out the dangers lying in wait for civilization as a result of the treatment of its material and human resources” and

²² *Ibid.*, p. 465.

²³ Carver, p. 52

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁷ Humphrey Carver, “Planners’ Concert” in L.O. Gertler (ed.), Planning the Canadian Environment (Montreal: Harvest House, 1968), pp. 111, 110.

tried to “replace it with a social aspiration towards integration with nature, mutual help and a more peaceful stability of life...Regional planning sees a change of outlook as a prerequisite for the continued existence of civilized life....[and] ‘the most immediate function of the regional planner[is] to take sides in this coming conflict of human values against values of an exotic mechanized civilization’.”²⁸ Regional planning addressed the apparent destruction of the country/city binary by redefining current planning problems in a manner that would either breathe new life into the old terms and allow for their continued use or by attempting to reconstruct the relationship between man and nature at some more basic level.

While one group of planners concentrated on the urban-centred region as “the crucial habitats of our time, where the struggle for environment is most intense--and perilous,”²⁹ another saw the same plague of blight in the urban core. Inner city blight, like urban sprawl, was considered the result of growth. In the rural lands farmers stopped farming because they believed that their lands would soon be taken over by the city or because rising levels of taxation had driven them away. In the urban core landlords and owners refused to upgrade older buildings because growth was coming soon. When the “invasion” of the new uses was long in coming, or when it never came at all, repairs and renewals were neglected and progressive deterioration set in.³⁰ This was blight: an area which had become a “social and economic liability to the community”.³¹ Although slums and blighted districts comprised only 20% of the metropolitan residential area, they accounted for 33% of the urban population, 45% of the major crime, 55% of juvenile delinquency, 50% of disease, 45% of the city service costs and only 6% of its real estate tax revenue.³² The urban heart, “the seat of the urban brain and of the urban spirit”, the location of “the city’s soul”

²⁸ Ralph Rockwood, “International Trends in Urban and Regional Planning”, in L.O. Gertler, Planning the Canadian Environment, p. 301. Rockwood was the Director of Town and Rural Planning for the Province of Alberta in the late 1950’s.

²⁹ L.O.Gertler, Regional Planning in Canada: A Planner’s Testament (Montreal: Harvest House, 1972), p. 11.

³⁰ L.O. Gertler, “Economic Problems of Urban Redevelopment” in Community Planning Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, February 1951, p.31.

³¹ ibid., p. 30. A slum was defined as an area in an advanced stage of blight.

³² ibid., p. 36.

was clearly diseased.³³ The solution was urban renewal and rehabilitation. The task of the planner was to reassert control over the city which, in spite of its degradation, remained the site of civilization and those higher values referred to by Boulding.

Christine Boyer has suggested that the disorder and apparent chaos of the industrial city triggered two responses in planning discourse dating back to the turn of the century.³⁴ The first (of which Mawson's plan for Calgary might be considered an example), saw the city as an organism operating according to a sort of environmental logic. These planners attempted to reform the city and uplift its people by altering the built forms of the urban environment. The inspirational power of Neoclassicism and the raw force of Nature were to be used to "cure" the diseases of modern urbanism, industrialization and commercial strife, diseases which afflicted both the physical and spiritual well-being of the urban population. For a number of reasons, not the least being the high cost of the proposals and the absence of administrative mechanisms to realize them, few of these plans were ever realized.

During the same period a second group of planners emerged whose aim was not to "cure" the city but to discipline it. The city was no longer seen as subordinate to the logic of environmentalism but as something that operated according to internal laws of organization and development. The role of the planner was to overcome the impending urban crisis through the development of knowledge and the enactment of appropriate regulatory mechanisms. Urban forms would be reorganized in more efficient and economical patterns through state intervention, resources would be rationally allocated, traffic flows untangled, systems of sanitation extended, and better housing and recreational opportunities provided to release stress and prevent social disintegration. The chaos of formless growth would be given structure, the unruly fringes disciplined, and the decaying and unproductive lands in the inner city core revitalized. Post-war planning in Canada emerged from this second stream of practice.

Michel Foucault has drawn attention to the measures to be taken when the

³³ Gruen, p. 83.

³⁴ Boyer, pp. 61-62.

plague appeared in a town. Sprawling urban growth in the 1950's and 1960's was greeted in much the same way. Like the plague stricken town, the form of the city was to be transformed by the introduction of hierarchy, observation, mapping, zoning and the imposition of numerous restrictions and standards. "The plague is met by order: its function is to sort out every possible confusion...against the plague, which is a mixture, discipline brings into play its power, which is one of analysis...Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be read the haunting memory of 'contagions'...of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, live and die in disorder." ³⁵ In the utopia of the perfectly governed city, the plague stands for all forms of confusion and disorder. In the modern city, as in the plague ridden town, techniques were devised for measuring, supervising, controlling and correcting disease. The separation of mixed uses, the hierarchy among transportation systems, the segregation of pedestrian from vehicular movement, the imposition of building standards, the establishment of elaborate mechanisms to ensure compliance, echoed the earlier desire to "sort out every possible confusion" and thereby ensure that discipline would reign over the city at last.

In Calgary, planners sought to control the "metropolitan problem," firstly by controlling the region, by preserving and making clear again the distinction between rural and urban lands, by redefining the city to enable planners to extend their control over that which was urban and keep them distinct from that which was rural. Within the city, planners sought to bring clarity and efficiency to the urban form by establishing standards to ensure regional parity and control future growth. A second burst of energy in the mid 1960's saw the same desire for order turned to the urban core, where planners sought to impose order on the utilitarian aspects of the city, organizing the urban form to maximize productivity and opportunity and to eliminate restrictions on personal movement. Control of the urban environment, whether by law or reconstruction, was the ultimate objective.

³⁵Antony Easthope and Kate McGowan, A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 81-83.

Regional Planning: The Calgary District Planning Commission

After the Leduc oil discovery, Alberta became the fastest growing province in a fast growing country and Calgary and Edmonton became “in sober fact the fastest growing cities in Canada.”³⁶ The magnitude of local growth and the problems it engendered, particularly when seen in the framework of the worldwide trend towards urbanization, were a source of confusion and concern.

In 1950, a series of amendments to the Alberta Town Planning Act, made provision for the formation and establishment of a series of District Planning Commissions authorized to prepare general plans and zoning by-laws for member municipalities, and to offer advice on planning matters that were of a general nature or involved two or more municipalities (eg. annexation, boundary adjustments, and the co-ordination of land use planning). These District Planning Commissions were voluntary associations, centered around the largest cities in the province. The Calgary District Planning Commission (CDPC) was established in 1951.³⁷ Although work began immediately on the preparation of a general plan, the post war building boom was in full swing and “the realization soon came that the planning program ... must make provision for some direction to current development. Otherwise there was the danger that this development through lack of direction would, because of its volume, soon make many of the General Plan proposals meaningless.”³⁸ It was also obvious that, although the area coming under its jurisdiction was large, most of the applications new development and land subdivision were concentrated in a relatively small area immediately adjacent to the City of Calgary. The CDPC identified this metropolitan fringe area as the primary source of local “planning problems.”³⁹ In view of “the apparently uncontrolled and uncoordinated nature”⁴⁰ of this development, a new study was launched to determine the optimum size of the Metropolitan area in terms of population and physical extent and to identify the problems that stood in the way of the realization of a good plan of

³⁶ Alberta, Report of the Royal Commission on the Metropolitan Development of Calgary and Edmonton, (Edmonton, 1956), Chapter One, p. 2.

³⁷ Calgary, Calgary District Planning Commission, Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on the Metropolitan Development of Calgary and Edmonton (Calgary, December 6, 1954), p. 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

development. The results were initially presented at a district planning conference in April of 1953. A subsequent attempt to set up a Metropolitan Planning Board was preempted by the creation of a Provincial Royal Commission to examine the Metropolitan Development of Calgary and Edmonton. The findings of the CDPC study were reworked into a brief which was presented to that body. In effect this brief was the culmination of early efforts to see the city of Calgary in the context of regional planning.

The CDPC brief discussed "The Metropolitan Problem" as "not one but many interrelated problems which develop and become more complex as rapidly expanding metropolitan communities seek to adjust out-grown forms of organization and administration to new situations".⁴¹ Because urbanization had occurred without regard for political boundaries the first concern was one of government, for without control and administration there would be no order.

It was noted that, in the past, cities had often been described as organisms. It was proposed to extend this analogy to the entire metropolitan area. Summoning the authority of the the Oxford English Dictionary, the authors noted that an organism was an "organized body with connected interdependent parts sharing common life," while the word "organize" meant "to form into an organic whole" and "to give orderly structure to". "To what extent", it was then asked, "has the development of the Calgary Metropolitan Area conformed to these ideas of organization?"⁴²

The analysis which followed revealed that the origins of current problems lay in the uncontrolled subdivision and development which took place prior to World War One when "optimism and speculative fever unrelated to any plan"⁴³ had shaped growth patterns. Since then imbalances in land use had resulted in an uneven tax base and even greater disparity in the provision of services and utilities. Much of the brief was spent in a detailed analysis of regional inequities in the distribution of sewerage, water, power and natural gas, and the availability of police, fire and transit services. Standards of construction and improvement varied considerably throughout the region, with relatively low

⁴¹ Ibid., p.8. This definition was actually borrowed from the report of the Committee on Metropolitan Problems produced by the Civic Advisory Council of Toronto, 1948.

⁴² Ibid., p. 10.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 4.

standards in the suburban clusters, especially “when compared with corresponding development in the city.”⁴⁴ As the City of Calgary was the only jurisdiction to offer a full complement of urban services, the final diagnosis was a forgone conclusion: “The area was never conceived of as an organic whole and was therefore never subject to conscious direction as a unit.”⁴⁵ Moreover, in the absence of “adequate administrative machinery” to co-ordinate growth, or if necessary, to stop growth altogether, the CDPC predicted a future of sustained neglect in which existing problems would become increasingly complex.

In order to address these problems in an economical fashion, mechanisms would have to be put in place to regulate future growth. The CDPC proposed to extend the boundaries of the Metropolitan area. In effect, the problematic fringe areas which were neither country nor city would be eliminated by redefinition. Once the new metropolitan boundaries were established and made co-determinant with the boundaries of the planning authority, the fringes would be bound to the city in a series of logical steps and the entire region moved towards homogeneous standards in utilities, services and construction. The new approach would be comprehensive rather than “piecemeal”⁴⁶ to ensure that all the inhabitants of the Calgary Metropolitan Area would derive the maximum social, economic and recreational benefits from the available resources through a policy of coordinated development, the region would grow its way to organic conformity.

Throughout the brief it was clear that the definition of the region was driven less by geography or cultural identity than by functional uniformity. The metropolitan area was not a city surrounded by suburban municipalities but a “center of activity” for a much larger community of people with similar social

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.12. For example, the brief examined and mapped existing sewerage facilities, commenting that “To see the metropolitan sanitary problem in its true magnitude it is necessary to mention two aspects of it. The first of these is the dependence on septic tanks and out houses for waste disposal in areas which depend on wells for their water supply...Such method of waste disposal might be suitable in rural or semi-rural communities with acreage properties but it is simply not compatible with urban living.” The second aspect of the sanitary problem was the staggering cost involved in providing adequate disposal facilities, a cost further increased by the lack of compactness in the developments and unnecessarily long utility lines and streets. Essentially analysis of each section followed this format, comparing the utilities, services of the substandard fringe areas with those of the city. Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

ideals and economic aspirations.⁴⁷ The inhabitants were “so closely linked” as to form “for all practical purposes a single community” that served as a focus of activity within the larger region.⁴⁸ Planned growth would make optimum use of provincial and municipal investments in infrastructure and extend new services in a logical and cost effective pattern from the existing core to ensure that an adequate supply of serviced land was available to accommodate growth. Living conditions throughout the new Metropolitan area would be compatible with accepted standards for people living in urban communities. What these standards were to be was not specified, but the need to establish standards was apparently vital to the planning process. Standards were the means to create an “organic whole”.

The City’s Technical Planning Department, as the only body with a “full complement of departments” and “a tradition of experience” to handle urban development and administration, would assume control of the metropolitan areas. Meanwhile the CDPC, relieved of the onerous task of “directing development in the fringe areas,”⁴⁹ would be free to concentrate on district planning. Unfortunately the brief was rather vague as to what this might be. Unable to elaborate in detail, the authors resorted to the solution typical of their time by recommending a programme of study to determine the logical size of the region and to develop appropriate land use regulations. Indeed regional planning was of such prime importance that the Commission urged the creation of a research center at the University of Alberta to carry forward additional investigations in regional development. Pooling all of this information, it was hoped, would “bring out the particular requirements and optimum size of a particular Metropolitan Area and the best locations for decentralization” of population and industry in the region.⁵⁰ Calgary and its surrounding districts would be consolidated as a single urban area. The possibility of locating future growth in urban pockets scattered throughout the rural district was a consideration for the future, but one which lay outside the mandate of the CDPC. In either case, the “in between” fringe lands were to be eliminated.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

The Royal Commission

The Calgary brief was part of the city's submission to the Province's Royal Commission on the Metropolitan Development of Calgary and Edmonton. Often referred to as the McNally Commission,⁵¹ this body was established by the Government of Alberta to investigate and make recommendations on the orderly development of Calgary and Edmonton and their surrounding areas, including civic and school finances, boundaries, and forms of government. Whereas the CDPC document identified the source of Calgary's problems as speculative sprawling uncontrolled growth, the outcome of previous as well as the present boom, the Royal Commission concluded that municipal difficulties were caused by the "growing pains" of expansion and prosperity and the pressures this had put on operating budgets and tax revenues.⁵² Moreover, the Commission, perhaps because it was primarily composed of public figures rather than professional planners, took a uniquely positive attitude to the crisis: "We should not forget that perplexing as some of the problems may appear to be, they have their cheerful side. They are not caused by depression or a contracting economy, like the problems of the "hungry thirties", but arise from expansion, and the prosperity of our people."⁵³

Although strictly speaking the mandate of the Royal Commission was metropolitan rather than regional development, considerable attention was given to the issue of regional planning. The Commission used its mandate to initiate a broadly based discussion of planning in Alberta at both the regional and metropolitan levels because it believed that "planning as a normal and accepted function of local government is comparatively new, and ... not widely understood by the public."⁵⁴

In seeking to define the terms of reference the Commission observed that "although greater cities have been listed in the census since 1931, the classification of " 'metropolitan area' was unknown to the Census of Canada before 1951."⁵⁵ The term metropolitan area, "a useful phrase which is coming

⁵¹ "after its genial and respected chairman Fred McNally" noted in H.B. Mayo, "Joint Planning for Metropolitan Regions", Community Planning Review, Vol. VI, No. 3, September 1956, p. 125.

⁵² The Royal Commission, Chapter One, p. 5.

⁵³ Ibid., Chapter One, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Chapter Five, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Chapter One, p. 1.

into common usage nowadays,” was defined as “a large number of people...mainly urban in character, with considerable economic and social interdependence.”⁵⁶ For the purposes of planning the metropolitan area would include the city, the built-up fringe communities just outside the city boundaries and the rural or small-holding territory within a few miles of these built-up fringes. The government and administration of such an area was “almost invariably” divided among a number of municipal councils, however, despite such fragmentation, the metropolitan area was still in many ways “a closely-knit community.”⁵⁷ In defining the nature of the metropolitan region, the Commission cited “the well-known phrase of John Donne: “no man is an island” adding the observation that “it is just as true that no municipality within a district planning area is an island “entire unto itself”.⁵⁸ For in such a region,

There is a community of economic interest: people living in any part of the area may work in any other part, the area as a whole is affected when industries move in or out, the city is the commercial and financial center of the area, and a network of roads binds the whole together. The area is bound together also by its utilities, as when the fringe communities obtain from the city their telephone service and water supply; or when the company which serves the city with natural gas or electricity may extend outside the city limits....There are also many social ties: for example, the outlying parts make use of the city schools, hospitals and medical services; and cultural and recreational ties, as when the concert halls, theaters or sports stadia serve the entire hinterland....Nor is the influence all one way, radiating outward from the city. The city is dependent the upon the trading area, upon its “milk-shed”, upon parks and other outdoor recreational facilities beyond its borders.⁵⁹

Although definition of region was largely functional, the Commission noted that, even in such a region, “orderly development does not happen by chance, but comes about only through forethought and planning, and by the use of legislative and other machinery adequate to carry though the plans.”⁶⁰ All this in spite of the fact that

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Chapter Five, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Chapter Five, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Chapter Five, p. 1.

in this day and age...the gains from planning are manifold. They are economic, for example in the industrial expansion of the area, or the maintenance and enhancement of property values; financial, in that planned public works, incorporated in capital budgets, usually save the taxpayer money; while there are also many intangible benefits in the numerous amenities which planning promotes and maintains. In short, planning exists to make the community the 'best possible' place in which to work, live and bring up families. The notion of what is 'best possible' will change through time, but at any given period the plan will be the resultant of a number of forces: of the planners' ideas, of what the council and the taxpayers want, and of what they are willing and able to pay for. Although planning may sometimes affect the individual adversely, there can be no doubt that it promotes the public welfare in general.⁶¹

Like the CDPC, the Commission expressed concern over the problems of the fringe communities,⁶² particularly their lower standard of services and reduced revenue streams when compared with the central city. However, the cause of the fringe problems was seen as "essentially city and metropolitan"⁶³ and the solution to all of the problems, in the fringes and the metropolitan area, was to draw up, adopt and make effective a plan that would be effective over more than one municipality.⁶⁴ For this reason the Commission's final recommendations were to extend the boundaries of the city to amalgamate the fringes and take in a wide strip of rural land sufficiently large to give the city control over orderly metropolitan development for a period of fifteen years or so, with the whole area was to be governed by one enlarged city council.

The final report of the Commission had as its frontispiece a quotation from Oliver Wendell Holmes--"When I pay taxes, I buy civilization"--an interesting choice for an epigraph insofar as it implied that civilization was something which could simply be bought, that government could make this happen, and that the purpose of this review of metropolitan development was in some way geared towards the production of civilization. Every tax payer bought into the system and was therefore entitled to the benefits of civilization. Although these benefits were never clearly stated, the Commission's vision seemed largely to

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Chapter Five, pp. 3-4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Mayo, p. 125.

imply certain material advantages and urban amenities: satisfactory systems of health and education, water and sewerage facilities, flowing traffic, orderly administration and responsible systems of government with clear lines of authority.⁶⁵

The key to the provision of these attributes was the institution of comprehensive planning. The Commission believed that “nearly all planning rested upon control of the uses to which land may be put.”⁶⁶ Since the existing system of District Planning Commissions were voluntary with only a limited advisory role, revisions were made to the Planning Act in 1957 to give Planning Commissions executive authority. Once a general plan governing land uses for the entire district was in place and accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of a Regional Planning Commission, no municipality could take actions inconsistent with the plan. With the passage of this law, the power for “authoritative regional planning was thus in place.”⁶⁷

The Calgary Regional Planning Commission

The Royal Commission recommended the immediate preparation of preliminary plans to guide regional development until full development plans could be devised. With this goal in mind the newly reconstituted Calgary Regional Planning Commission (a somewhat larger version of the old CDPC), encompassing the City of Calgary, the Towns of Bowness, High River, Okotoks, Three Hills and Trochu, the Villages of Cochrane and Airdrie, the Municipal Districts of Rocky View and Foothills, and Improvement District No. 46, began work on a preliminary plan. The CRPC defined its role as encouraging both the utilization and the conservation of the area’s natural resources in such a way as to secure “the orderly and economical development” of the member municipalities and the Regional Planning Area as a whole”.⁶⁸

In preparing a preliminary regional plan the Commission sought to offer a general framework to guide regional development. The CRPC saw its role as

⁶⁵ Ibid., Chapter Twelve, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Chapter Five, p. 8.

⁶⁷ Graham Murchie, David Stuart and Neil Taylor, Planning in Alberta: a guide and directory (Edmonton: Inter-Agency Planning Branch, Planning Services Division, Department of Municipal Affairs, 1978), p. 2.

⁶⁸ Calgary, Calgary Regional Planning Commission, Preliminary Regional Plan (Calgary, July 29, 1964), p. 3.

one of mediating between rural agricultural land uses and urbanized industrial areas in a period of “marked transition,” when an increasing variety and number of demands were being placed upon rural lands by “ever-growing” urban population.⁶⁹

According to the CRPC’s understanding of the situation, the high cost of urban development had traditionally encouraged tight clustering within urban complexes and a clear demarcation between town and country, limiting the demands placed upon rural lands. Small parcel development had not been considered compatible with the general rural economy given the relatively poor land quality and high cost of servicing rural properties. However, new growth pressures combined with improvements in the Provincial and Municipal Highway systems, rural electrification and telephone, gas services, centralized schools and school busing programs had begun to alter this situation. That is, technological changes had reduced the cost of development and had also reduced or eliminated many of the hardships traditionally associated with rural life. Moreover, as these factors of “resistance” to the uncontrolled penetration of urban activities into rural area had begun to decline, the urban demand for rural recreational amenities had begun to increase. As a result the CRPC identified significant potential for long term change in the rural land use patterns of the region.⁷⁰

In spite of this, the CRPC took the traditional land use patterns as “implicit”⁷¹ in its development and subdivision policies. Believing that there were “essential differences”⁷² between urban and rural purposes of municipal organization and development, the Commission set out several key development policies intended to regulate the development of the planning area as a whole.

Essentially these policies were geared towards maintaining the difference between urban and rural land uses and preserving the agricultural character of the rural landscape. Densities greater than one person per acre were declared urban. Subdivision of rural land into parcels of less than one person per 20

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

acres was discouraged. Urban municipal boundaries would be increased to include a sufficient large area to allow the municipal government to plan and direct growth. A large "protective belt"⁷³ around the urban municipality would preserve the rural character of the area but also serve as a city in waiting zone. The development of land outside but adjoining urban boundaries should not conflict with the anticipated future needs of the expanding urban area.

Rural small parcel subdivisions were not to be considered as urban alternatives. Subdivisions for the purposes of country residential development or resort use were to be located a reasonable distance from the urban boundaries and were to be designed to preserve those natural amenities (be they privacy, scenery, or water resources) which had originally led to the development of those particular sites. Other rural development was to be in keeping with the rural agricultural economy. No rural subdivision would be permitted in excess of need, and a number of rules of thumb were established to determine when additional subdivision would be appropriate (eg. no more than two new parcels of land could be subdivided until construction has begun on existing parcels of land⁷⁴). Development in and adjacent to water resources and country recreational areas was to be carried on in such a manner that the value of the resource would "accrue in time to the benefit of the people of the region".⁷⁵ The further expansion of existing townsites would be allowed only when reasonable need could be demonstrated. In general, excessive subdivision was seen as contrary to the principles of orderly development.

Essentially, the plan, which consisted of a series of land use regulations and a map dividing the region into land use districts⁷⁶ sought to entrench the principle that rural and urban classes of land use and development should be kept clearly defined and separated and set the stage for a city centered region with small towns scattered on the perimeter of the district and open fields in between.⁷⁷ The Commission shied away from a policy of regional urbanization and resisted pressures to blend the urban and rural areas of the region into a

⁷³ ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁴ ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁵ ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁶ These were low density agricultural, ranchland agricultural, parkland agricultural, special development, highway development, extended urban area, urban area, and Indian reserve.

⁷⁷ Calgary, Calgary Regional Planning Commission, Calgary Regional Plan(Calgary, 1982), preface.

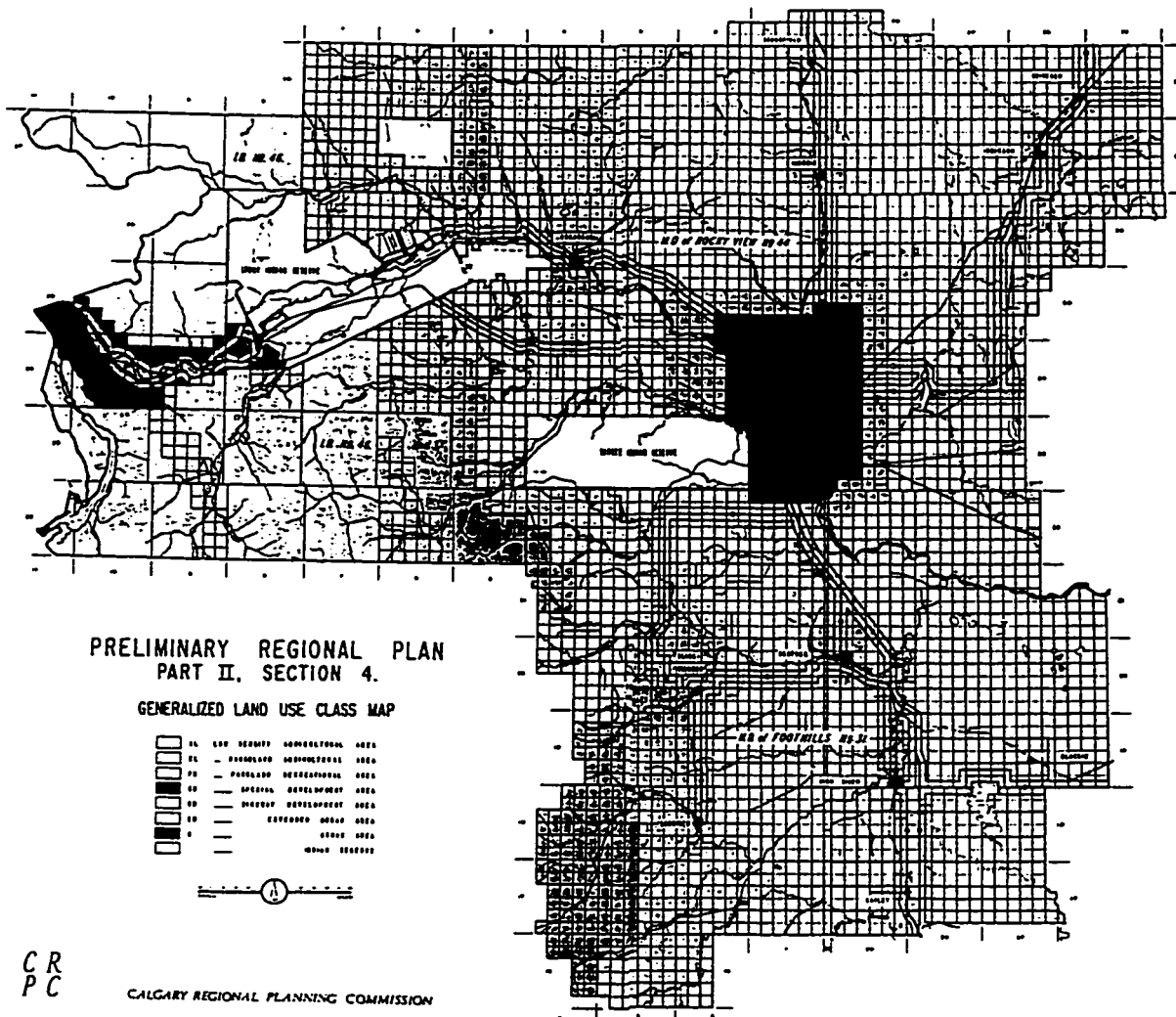


Figure Ten: The Preliminary Regional Plan, 1964⁷⁸.

⁷⁸ Calgary Regional Planning Commission, Preliminary Regional Plan.

single unit. Instead the city, the mixed use fringes, and a large quantity of new land would be bound together and given to the City of Calgary to administer, while the CRPC would, as much as possible, work to retain the rural agricultural character of the outlying lands. In spite of the apparent flow of history, the town and the country would be maintained as separate entities, distinguished by the uses that were made of the land rather than the lifestyles of the inhabitants. However, insofar as every acre of land was coded and labeled, the entire range of landscapes, both natural and man-made, had received equal treatment as the subject of planing and the entire region was now incorporated in the domain of the planner.

Planning the City

The Calgary General Plan, 1963

In accordance with the statutes of the Alberta Town and Rural Planning Act, a General Plan for the "orderly, economic and convenient development and use of land"⁷⁹ in the City of Calgary was prepared under the direction of qualified planning officers beginning in 1951. The complete amalgamation of all municipal units in the Metropolitan area together with the acquisition of several large tracts of raw land between the years 1957 and 1962 gave the newly enlarged planning department control over the entire area of projected urbanization. This gave the planning department the ability to incorporate all of the proposals contained in the brief to the Royal Commission⁸⁰ in the Calgary General Plan of 1963, the first plan to be adopted by a major city in the Province of Alberta.

In keeping with the recommendations prepared almost a decade earlier for the McNally Commission, the new plan sought to co-ordinate the extension of existing patterns of utilities and roads to accommodate anticipated growth and to minimize costs to the municipality. Rational management of these extensions would move the entire metropolitan district towards the standards deemed appropriate for urban life.

⁷⁹ Calgary, City of Calgary Planning Department, City of Calgary--General Plan 1963 (Calgary, 1963), unpaginated.

⁸⁰ A.L.Martin and N.S. Trough, "Land Development in Calgary", Habitat, Vol. V, No. 3, May-June, 1962, p. 17.

The role of the Planning Department was technical rather than visionary insofar as it saw its role as one of facilitating generally accepted public goals. "As the physical expression of the City reflects the characteristics, traditions and history of its people, so must the physical plan for the City's future growth reflect the characteristics and aspirations of the citizens expected to form its populace during the period of the plan."⁸¹ Population projections carried out by the Department indicated that three dominant features of the City's attributes which "demanded recognition." These were the youth and rapidly increasing size of the population and the relative newness of the City, which was seen to preclude the redevelopment of lands already in use. In this way newness, youth and growth became the touchstones of good planning in Calgary while that which was old was no longer seen as in keeping with the aspirations of the people.

The purpose of the General Plan was to set out the overall sequence of development to be followed. More specifically, the plan indicated that the objective of projected land uses was to "recognize and reinforce those established characteristics which have contemporary validity and plan for the progressive replacement of those parts of the City which are functionally and physically obsolete."⁸² Because suburban development was "the form of residential development which has become universally accepted in Calgary," it was expected that "vast areas of raw land" would be needed for primary development during the plan's 20 year period.

The General Plan made the point that, although the rate of development might change, the sequence of future development would be based upon the economic extension of existing utilities. Even if its growth projections were off, "a change in the rate of land absorption will not invalidate the sequence of development proposed." The direction and extent of future growth would thus be strictly under the control of the Planning Department. Within the context of these general guidelines, the Planning Department would prepare an annual development programme setting out progressive extensions for industrial, commercial, and residential development. Land development, and hence the production of new homes, would be coordinated with the orderly extension of

⁸¹ Ibid., Section B-1.

⁸² Ibid., Section C.

service and utilities to ensure that all new subdivisions met the City's standards.

Nature was neither a force to be used in achieving particular ends nor a force to be overcome. Instead topography was given equal consideration in the decision making process along with water works, storm and sanitary sewer systems as "Factors Affecting Development" to be taken into account when seeking maximum efficiency and cost effective growth. The historic influence of topography on the placement of rail lines, roads and bridges, the presence of steep slopes and their potential impact upon drainage patterns and the feasibility of future development, the effect of changes in elevation on water pressure, and the presence of topographical opportunities for residential developments with attractive views were duly noted and considered along with the location of sewer systems and major road ways. In this way the natural and man-made features received equal, although matter-of-fact, consideration as a part of the "given" environment of planning. Utilities and services would grow progressively outwards from the "logical core" already existing in the city to secure compact, orderly and cost effective patterns of growth.

The design of individual subdivisions was left largely up to the developers involved; the Planning Department saw its role as one of co-ordination and enforcement. The urban infrastructure would be extended in the most cost efficient manner possible while individual developments would be made to comply with current civic standards. The Department assumed the essential role of "central clearing house" for all projected development, establishing routine channels of co-ordination among the civic departments, boards and utility companies involved.⁶³ A rigorous set of procedures was initiated to control the outcomes of the land subdivision process. As Martin described it, the city planning staff examined each proposal to

ensure compliance with the general plan requirements, including provision of school sites, parks, playgrounds, location of shopping centers, the segregation of traffic flow as between major and minor streets and general design standards...When these requirements have been met, the revised plan is submitted to the Technical

⁶³ For residential expansions these included: the City Planning Department, the Engineering Department, the Electric Light Department, the Gas Company, the two Schools Boards, the Technical Planning Board, the Provincial Planning Advisory Board, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Board of Commissioners and City Council. Martin and Trouth, p. 18.

Planning Board which accepts it for circulation to the various authorities having responsibility to supply utilities, e.g., sewer, water, telephone, gas, etc. Secondly, the plan is reproduced in the required number of copies and circulated by the Planning Department among the agencies previously mentioned [see footnote 5 below], each of which returns the plan with comments and suggested revisions. This part of the approval procedure is intended to ensure particularly the detailed technical requirements for all utilities...When all of the requirements have been reconciled, the plan is again revised by the surveyors and resubmitted to the Technical Planning Board in the form of a "tentative plan" for approval. Upon approval by the Technical Planning Board the surveyor prepares a plan of survey which when complete is submitted to the City for signature by the Director of Planning for the Technical Planning Board, the City Engineer, the City Clerk and the Mayor. The Planning Department then sends the plan of survey together with a copy of the "tentative plan" to the Director of Town and Rural Planning for his signature and the signature of the Director of Surveys. Following these signatures, the plan is sent to the Calgary Land Titles Office for registration.....⁸⁴

This was only one phase of the approval process! As undeveloped areas were transformed from an agricultural land use to residential development they required rezoning. Certificates of compliance and building permits would not be issued until both the new plan of the site survey had been approved and a new zoning by-law was passed to establish the appropriate land-use zone (eg. single family, two-family, multiple-family, or local commercial). And finally, as the guidelines for development also indicated the construction specifications of surface improvements such as curbs and gutters, street and sidewalk paving, street lighting, sanitary and storm sewers, an informal committee comprising the City Engineer, the Director of Planning, and the City Treasurer "scrutinized each development agreement" to ensure their future compliance with these standards.⁸⁵

Clearly the plan placed tremendous emphasis on the control and co-ordination of the process by which land was transformed from "agricultural" to "urban" usage. To a great degree these standards were arbitrary. The Calgary Planning Department was not particularly interested in devising these

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

standards but was content to adopt them from a number of sources (eg. water main standards were based on the recommendation of the Fire Underwriters Association). Similarly, the particulars of subdivision design were left to the initiative and creativity of the individual developer and his desire to compete in the residential marketplace. Enforcement was the particular interest and obsession of the planning department.

An additional report prepared for the plan on Parks and Recreation offers an example of how these standards were used. The Department noted that “there is surprising unanimity of opinion amongst land use authorities as to the desirable minimum provision of open space”,⁶⁶ citing the standard of 10 acres for each 1,000 persons, exclusive of school playing fields, endorsed by the American city planner Harland Bartholomew in his recognized standard work “Land Uses in American Cities” and also by the British New Towns Committee, an advisory committee to the Minister of Town and Country Planning. Although the report noted that in practice few cities, either American or British, achieve the recommended standards, Calgary’s current ratio of 11.6 acres of open space per 1,000 population compared favorably with these accepted standards. Regulations requiring that 10% of any area subdivided be allocated to Community Reserve would be adequate to secure school sites and local recreational facilities in the future. However, the Department urged that if this tradition of favorable open space distribution was to be maintained “in the excitement of Calgary’s projected expansion,” it was imperative that the City consider consolidating some of the areas which accrued at the time of subdivision and augment them with municipal initiative in the acquisition of land along the river valleys and perhaps the slopes of Fish Creek. Following these principles would “ensure that an acceptable proportion of park and open space is provided to keep pace with the city’s anticipated expansion” and “maintain a proper balance of open space to urban area” in the years to come. The value of parks and open spaces per se was not addressed. Instead the aim of the report was to suggest policies that would ensure that the standards set by “recognized land use authorities” would continue to be met.

What was all this state power with its impressive display of administrative

⁶⁶ City of Calgary Planning Department, City of Calgary—General Plan 1963, section F.

technique intended to control? As a whole the plan was clearly focused on the need to introduce economy and order (ie. the art of government) into the management of urban growth. Foucault has explained how norms were used to systematically create, classify and control anomalies, but the standards of the Planning Department served a somewhat different purpose, serving to cast out or include, to differentiate between “them” and “us”, and then to bind the disparate parts of the urban conglomeration into together into a homogeneous whole.

It is interesting that the issues driving the flight to the fringes were virtually swept aside in the rush to control development. Why was growth, rather than housing, the focus of so much attention? The City’s brief, the Royal Commission and the General Plan acknowledged that the flight to the suburbs and particularly to the fringe areas was driven by the desire, not merely for more space, but for affordable housing, especially by young families. Each document mentioned this problem in passing, urged provincial and federal governments to take action, and then returned to the issue at hand: devising methods to control the urban form. Indeed Habitat ran a commentary by N.S. Trough, past president of the Urban Development Institute and a Director of the National House Builders Association, in counterpoint to Martin’s description of the Calgary General Plan. Trough objected that the new standards were driving up the price of serviced lots and hence the cost of new housing: “Ten years ago municipalities provided sewer, water and light gravel roads in new areas. As the residents wished they could petition for sidewalk, paving, street lighting and other amenities. These they paid for by local improvement taxes...Municipalities did not promote the work because it required heavy financing. Slowly, as private development became more prevalent, developers, endeavoring to better their competitive position, promoted early installation of pavement and sidewalks. The cost was being carried by the purchasers.”⁸⁷ But with the imposition of across the board standards, standards in which concrete and paving strengths and road widths continually increased, the price of the serviced lot “has been spiraling upward” and the opportunity for choice diminished. It was something of a paradox then that, while planners agreed that

⁸⁷ Martin and Trough, p. 22.

people were being driven to the fringes because of the high costs of housing in the inner city, they sought to control development in the fringes by imposing standards which further drove up the costs of housing.

At best one might say that the tools available to planners allowed them to control the symptoms of urban wildness without addressing its causes, much like the officials in charge of stricken city described by Foucault sought to control the spread of the plague. That is, control and order seemed the best response to an out of control situation in which the true causes of disorder and disease remained hidden or lay in areas of society which the planners were unable or unwilling to enter into.

At worst, one might suggest that "the end of good government is the correct disposition of things--even when these things have to be invented so as to be well governed,"⁸⁸ that is, the techniques of control were devised for their own sake rather than to allow the achievement of other goals. The comparative lack of interest in the specific of the standards planners adopted, particularly when compared with the energy which went into enforcing compliance, suggests that they sought to control that which could be easily measured and rationally managed and identified that act of exerting order and control as itself the stuff of civilized life, and therefore their own acts of imposing order on the imperfectly formed urban fabric which surrounded them as the measures needed to guarantee the triumph of civilization over wildness.

Reconsidering the Urban Core

The Future of Downtown Calgary

The Plan for the Future of Downtown Calgary, saw the same desire for standards, efficiency, newness and productivity turned towards the core of the city. The Mayor and the head of the Planning Advisory Committee announced these objectives clearly: "there is very little in Downtown Calgary that is exciting or interesting. There is much that is drab and depressing. The east end of the retail core has too many old and out-dated buildings, the fringe residential areas to the east and north of the core are mixed with industries and business.

⁸⁸ Michael Foucault, The Foucault Reader, Ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 21.

The Belt Line...is in the process of transition..and in adjoining Victoria Park the old homes are becoming older and are *not* being replaced...the lack of Downtown Parks and breathing spaces...have been the subjects of recurring complaints by citizens.”⁸⁹ The plan would make provision “for the elimination of old and worn out parts,”⁹⁰ for more open spaces, full public enjoyment of the Bow River and good access to Downtown by both private vehicles and public transit. The “girdle of blight and misuse” that surrounded the core would be eliminated. Moreover, future growth would be controlled and orderly. “Within twenty years, we may expect the equivalent of one and one-half Calgarys in terms of bricks and mortar, roads and parks--to grow within and around the existing city. Under these circumstances, it is our responsibility to plan to ensure that the new schools, new roads, new parks...go in the right places and that our money is well spent.”⁹¹ In making choices between alternatives, the Planning Advisory Committee (composed of non-professionals) noted that it had been “guided by considerations of orderliness, economy and convenience, not only in terms of densities, circulation and land use, and municipal expenditures, but also in terms of livability, and those things and arrangements in Downtown Calgary that will give pride and pleasure to Calgarians”.⁹²

The approach taken by the planning professionals was much more rigorous. Modeled on the methodologies devised by the American planner and architect Victor Gruen, the Calgary Plan adopted his metaphors of health and cardiac care.

The epigraph to the Calgary Plan’s “Concept” chapter was taken directly from Gruen’s The Heart of Our Cities:

from a practical point, two sets of measures have to be planned and implemented: those that will make movement to and from the city center as convenient, speedy and comfortable as possible, and those that will lift the environmental qualities of the urban core to the highest attainable level. The aim here must be to reshape the heart of the city into a place that offers more than an opportunity for merely one type of activity such as earning one’s livelihood; it should be a

⁸⁹ Calgary, Calgary Planning Department, The Future of Downtown Calgary (Calgary, 1966), Statement of Objectives.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., Forward, The Mayor of Calgary.

⁹² Ibid., Statement of Objectives.

place where opportunities for self-fulfilment are multiplied a thousandfold.⁸³

The Calgary Plan summarized this even further, observing that, in order to improve the health of the Downtown Calgary, it would be “necessary to strengthen the desire to get there while reducing the obstacles that stand in the way of fulfilling this desire.”⁸⁴ Gruen wrote with great authority and directness and it is worth quoting at some length from his account of creation to clarify his views on the task of the planner:

In the beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without *form* and void; and the darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of G-d moved upon the face of the waters.

And G-d said, Let there be light; and there was light;

...and *G-d separated the light from the darkness...*

And G-d said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.

And G-d made the firmament, and separated *the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament...*

And G-d said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to *separate the day from the night...*

The story of Genesis contains all the elementary tasks of the planning profession. From the very beginning of time, we find the urge to *separate* disparate functions from one another, and to organize them into a meaningful pattern of greatest diversity.

In the beginning was chaos; and the very act of Creation was the conversion of chaos into meaningful order. Out of everlasting, monotonous fog and dusk, the Lord created the wonder of morning, the day, the evening, and then the night...The Lord separated the water from the dry land, and heaven from earth, and on the earth He created mountains and valleys, oceans and continents...

Whether one is a believer, taking the Bible literally and asserting that G-d shaped man in His image, or whether one takes a more liberal outlook and considers the Bible as a beautiful story--believing conversely that man created G-d as the ideal of his own image--the fact remains that creation, or planning--the making of order out of chaos--appears to man as a most worthy goal.

In spite of this, since the beginning of human history mankind has

⁸³ Victor Gruen cited in The Future of Downtown Calgary, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

been busy undoing the divine work; blurring the clean edges of the borders He set up; leveling the differences; watering down characteristics and, in an unholy conspiracy with the powers of evil, nullifying the six days of creative labour and recreating chaos where there was order.⁹⁵

The Calgary plan followed Gruen's prescription closely, using the modes of analysis and jargon he had developed, paraphrasing or lifting points of discussion, and using examples of his projects to illustrate their own publication. Improved circulation was the cornerstone of a Gruen plan, and the first objective of the Calgary plan was to efficiently be able to convey twice as many automobiles into the downtown by 1986.⁹⁶ A network of limited access, high capacity roadways would feed into a high speed ring system that would encircle the Downtown. In the same way that the General Plan sought to logically extend existing major thoroughfares to the outer edges of the city, the Downtown Plan sought to rationalize the pattern heading into the city, smoothing traffic flows, reducing bottlenecks and eliminating grid lock until traffic could move simply and swiftly across the entire city. The high-speed network would surround the inner core, collecting and distributing traffic using an unspecified "sorting-out procedure." Within this outer ring was an inner network of one way roads that would "frame and protect" the Core by directing automobiles into large parking structures on the periphery of the Core Area. The separation of automobile traffic from the city was vital, for, as Gruen rather melodramatically put it: "There is a murder plot afoot against our highly urbanized areas. The method the killers have chosen is that of slowly poisoning the urban body by the injection of foreign particles into its bloodstream in ever-increasing doses. These particles, in the form of automobiles and trucks, cannot be absorbed by the urban body, and therefore

⁹⁵ Gruen, The Heart of Our Cities, pp. 32-33.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.2. Gruen favoured the metaphors of cardiology in his diagnosis of urban ills, for example: "Blood is the substance that brings the nutrients and energy necessary for the maintenance of life to every cell...without blood there would be no life, and without the functioning of the heart, which steadily pumps reoxygenated blood, the life-giving substance would not reach the cells and tissues...if stagnation or congestion sets in, if the arteries or veins harden, then the heart cannot function properly and serious diseases result, with the danger of coronary thrombosis always present."

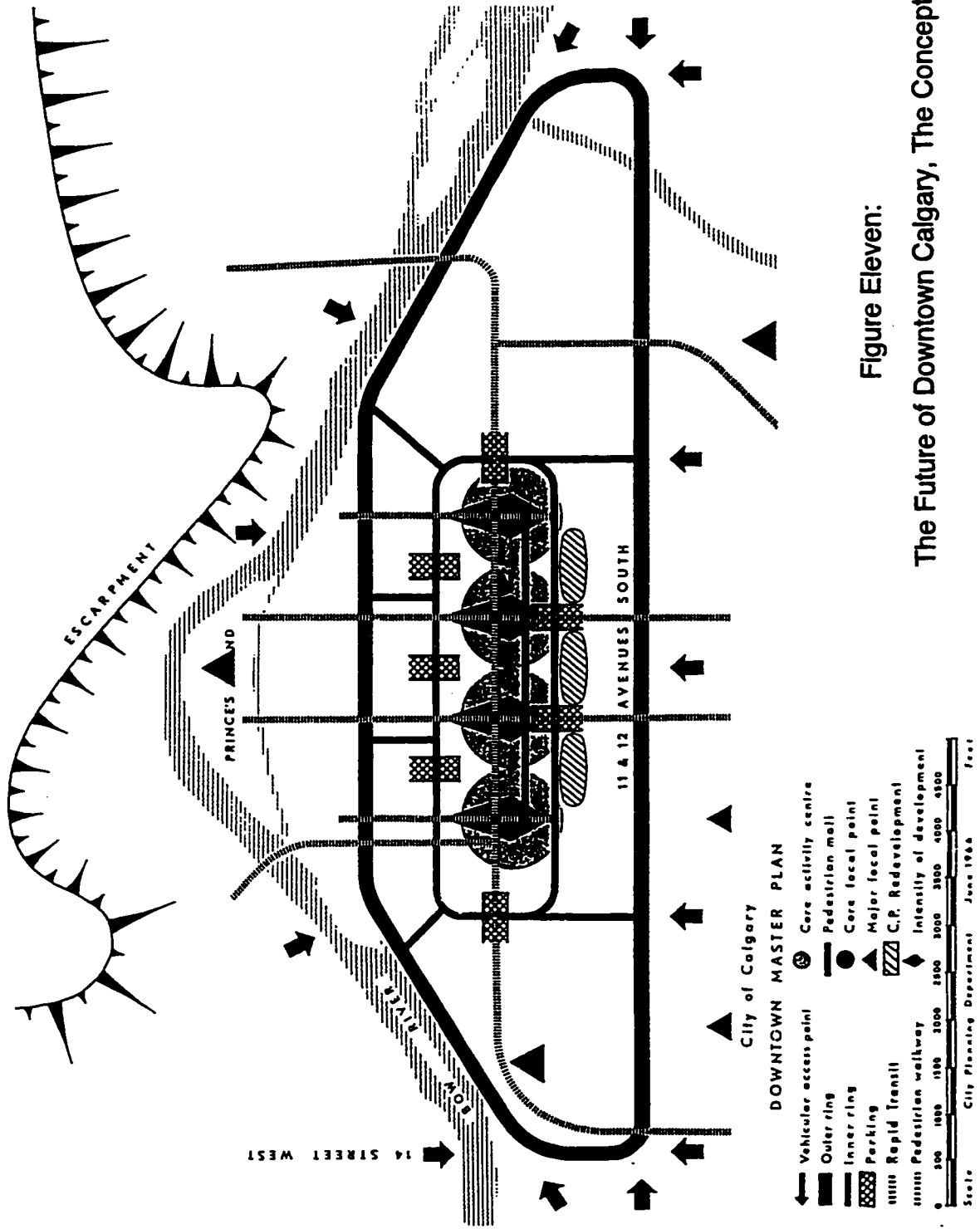


Figure Eleven:
The Future of Downtown Calgary, The Concept⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Calgary Planning Department, *The Future of Downtown Calgary*, Plate 1.

cause circulatory diseases.⁹⁸

The separation of automobile and pedestrian traffic was the prerequisite for the improvements to follow. Enormous parking garages would be constructed around the perimeter of the core to store cars, and from these parking structures the motorist would emerge “a pedestrian”. Within the core the full street capacity would be utilized for moving vehicles. A new system of rapid transit would be located either above or below grade--the precise choice seemed less important than the fact of separation, although Gruen favored a raised system. The pedestrian would be confined to his or her own world of +15 walkways reaching from the parking structures to the key interest areas in the core and also stretching down to Prince’s Island and the Planetarium and into the Belt Line, perhaps as far as 17th Avenue. The new Downtown parkway, a “logical” and purpose designed multi-lane highway, would skirt the downtown along the riverbank to conduct traffic around rather than through the congested inner city. (This would obviously have cut the city off from the river, which would then only be accessible through a series of underpasses, but the formal and functional integrity of the inner core was given precedence over the possible link between an urban and a natural setting.)

The primary function of downtown was “to house all of those uses which required a reasonably accessible central location”: culture, finance, special purpose retail and government. The planning concept for the area would see each of these functions consolidated in separate cores. There would be a retail core, a financial core, an office core, and the civic center. Cultural facilities, such as the Public Library, the Glenbow Museum and the Allied Arts Center, were already beginning to group together and this pattern of consolidation would be further encouraged. (The plan noted that although these cultural facilities would be concentrated in one spot they would continue to serve the entire city because they were, by definition, “community” activities).⁹⁹ The trend to separate uses is particularly clear in a map showing the progression of land uses from 1957 to 1965 to 1986 when clarity would reign in the inner city.

But before detailed planning could begin it was necessary to measure the

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 114.

⁹⁹ The Future of Downtown Calgary, p. 27.

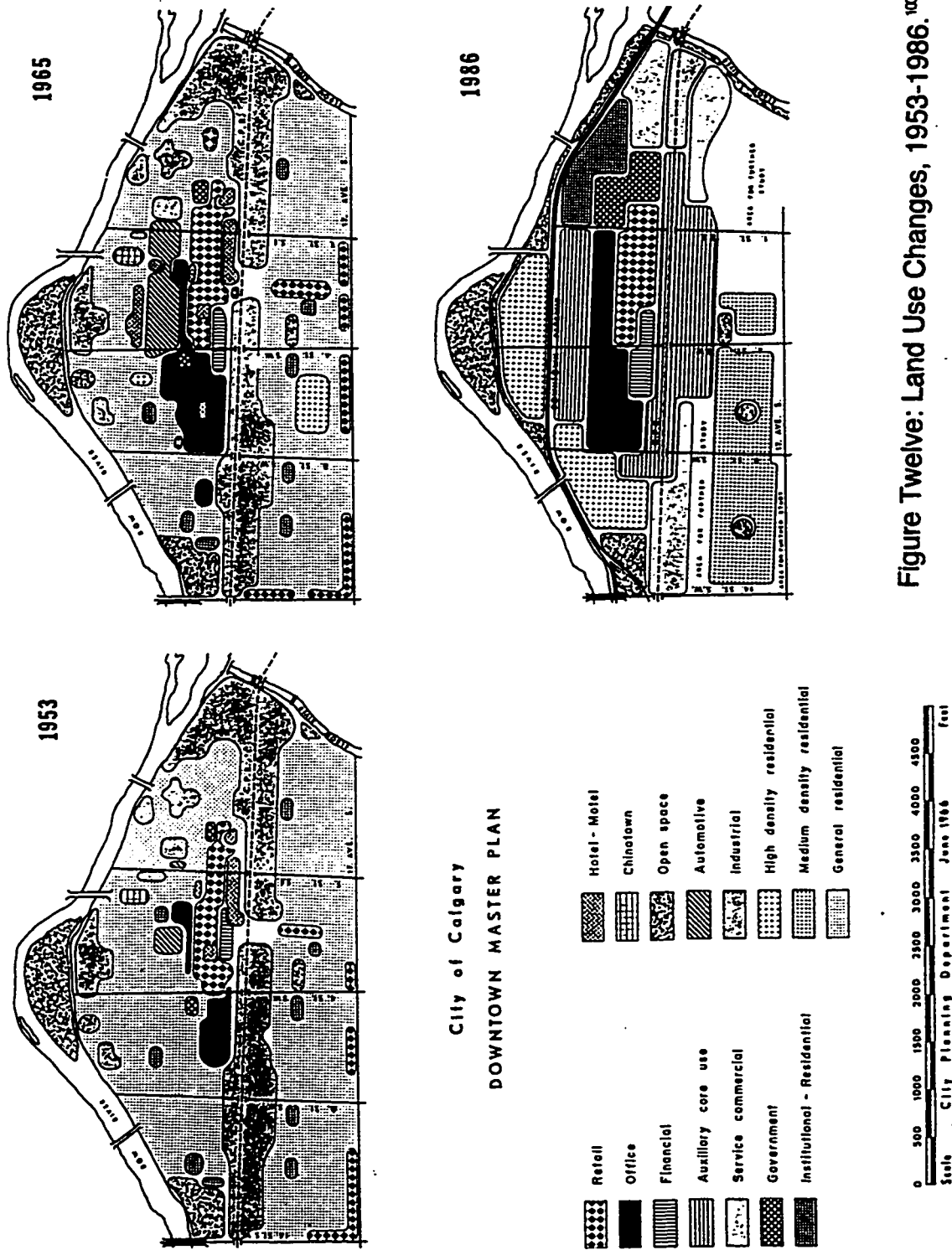


Figure Twelve: Land Use Changes, 1953-1986.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Calgary Planning Department, The Future of Downtown Calgary, Plate 13.

health of Downtown. In order to make a comparative assessment of the viability of existing conditions, a sieve map technique was used “whereby a series of negative factors are given weighted shades of colour and then superimposed, to pin-point the most undesirable or under-used blocks”. Conversely, the areas left in white or a pale colour... [were] more acceptable.”¹⁰¹ Physical and functional obsolescence was measured in terms of conflicting land uses (particularly any sort of mixed use), as well as by the factors of age and condition, floor vacancy, the under-use of land and poor maintenance. The attributes of good health were not specified, although one could infer from the list of negative values that these would be related to productivity, newness, and clearly defined single purpose buildings. Another map, similarly noted areas of “underused of land dominated by car sales and parking”, “structural decay,” incompatible mixed uses, declining tax revenues, social problems, and zones of “piecemeal developments” and “uncoordinated transition”.¹⁰² In both cases the goal of planning was presented as one of removing problems rather than prescribing solutions. Such maps were then used to plot potential zones for rehabilitation and redevelopment.

Urban renewal was described in the Calgary Plan as “an invaluable tool” which could be used “not merely to correct blight and substandardness but to make the correction in such a way as to enable the area treated to fulfill the role assigned it in the Plan”.¹⁰³ As has been noted, the focus of urban renewal was to eliminate blight. In Downtown Calgary blight and substandardness were “evidenced by such factors as overcrowded homes, inadequate nature of schools, parks and playgrounds, unsatisfactory mixture of homes and business, worn out buildings, inadequate water and sewer services, traffic congestion, poor visual environment, a use of land that is unreasonable within the overall framework of the neighborhood or of Downtown.”¹⁰⁴ These conditions were found in varying degrees in six areas and urban renewal schemes were started or proposed for all of them.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁰² Ibid., Plate 5.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 9. The Churchill Park urban renewal plan, for example, was “conceived of as the means of remedying the problems of obsolescence and incompatibility and of fulfilling the role that this area should play in revitalizing Downtown”.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

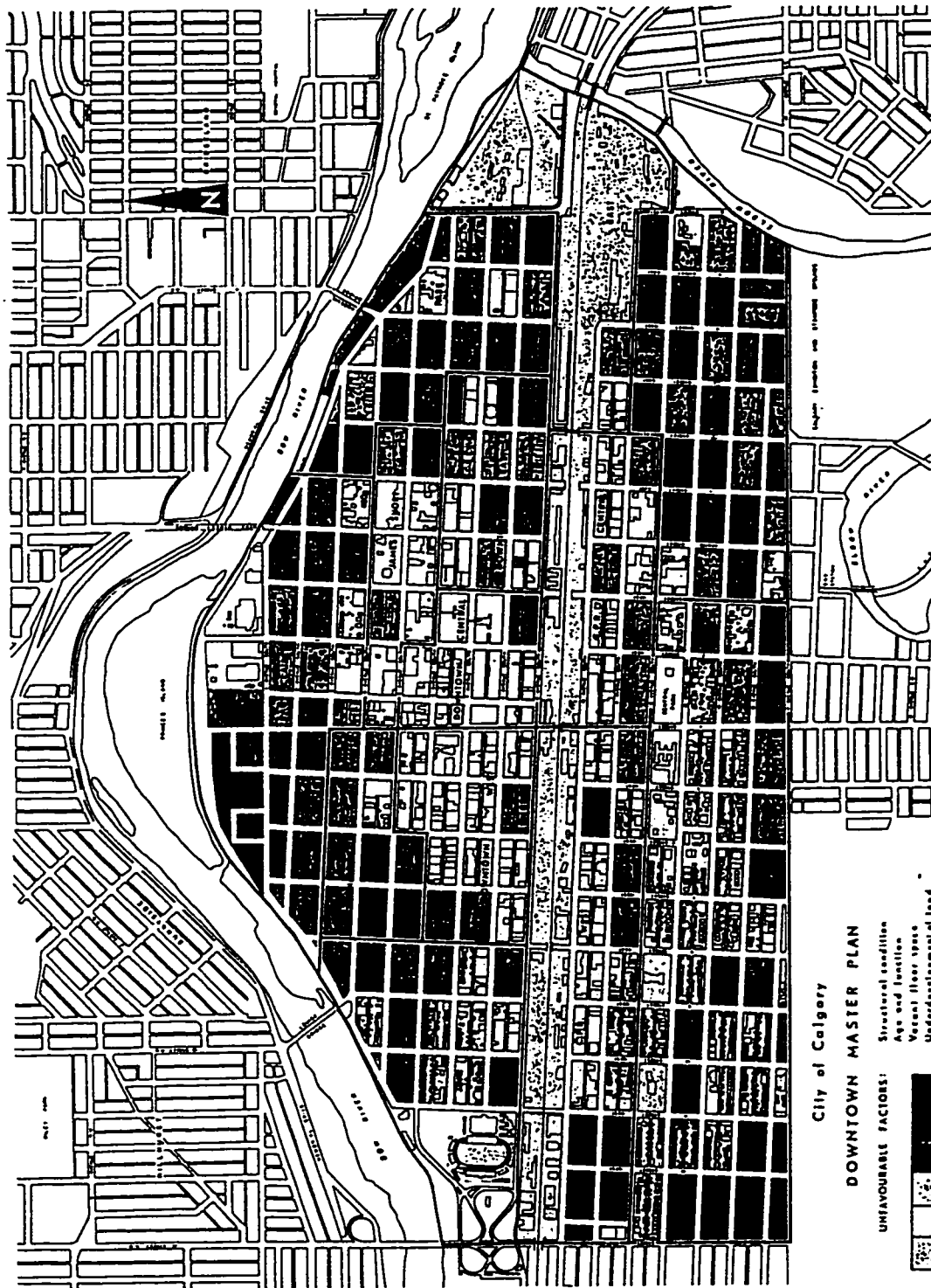


Figure Thirteen: Health of Downtown, A Measure of Use and Environment¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Calgary Planning Department, *The Future of Downtown Calgary*, Plate 7.

Renewal projects were either residential or commercial in character. Neighborhood rehabilitation techniques were demonstrated in before and after images of the plan of a typical four block area of the inner city neighbourhood of Belt Line. Essentially, lots were regrouped to allow older neighbourhoods to attain the standards of the suburbs, revealing how pervasive the new suburban ideal had become. Blocks were re-plotted to introduce cul-de-sacs and eliminate through traffic. A new park was created by combining the leftover bits of former streets and the lots of now demolished houses. Larger houses were set in the middle of yards created by consolidating the sites of buildings which had been removed. Public housing was to be discretely integrated into the neighborhood in smaller pockets of redevelopment where it could be inserted without the psychological stigma attached to large projects (and without marring the suburban imagery.) The plan offered no discussion of why these strategies would be good--rehabilitation seemed to be a conclusion that emerged naturally as a response to the health maps demonstrating the mixed use, obsolescent, tumble down, non-productive character of the existing neighbourhood. In this manner uniform standards resembling those recently adopted to control suburban development would be imposed over the historical forms of the core area.

The requirements of the plan dominated existing land use patterns. For example, insofar as it was necessary for rehabilitation and redevelopment to "be in the interests of the city as a whole," it was "evident that nothing less than the complete redevelopment" of the Eau Claire area, including buildings, roads, services and landscaping, was necessary to "enable its full potential, and that of a healthy Downtown" to be realized.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, thoroughfare requirements would "dictate" the removal of Chinatown ("a small but colorful component of the Downtown scene which has remained relatively intact in the Center Street area over the past several decades"),¹⁰⁷ and necessitate that the lands of Victoria Park be cleared: with the introduction of rapid transit, it was predicted that "several thousands of commuters could be encouraged to "park and ride", leaving their cars in the expanded facilities that would replace the decaying

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

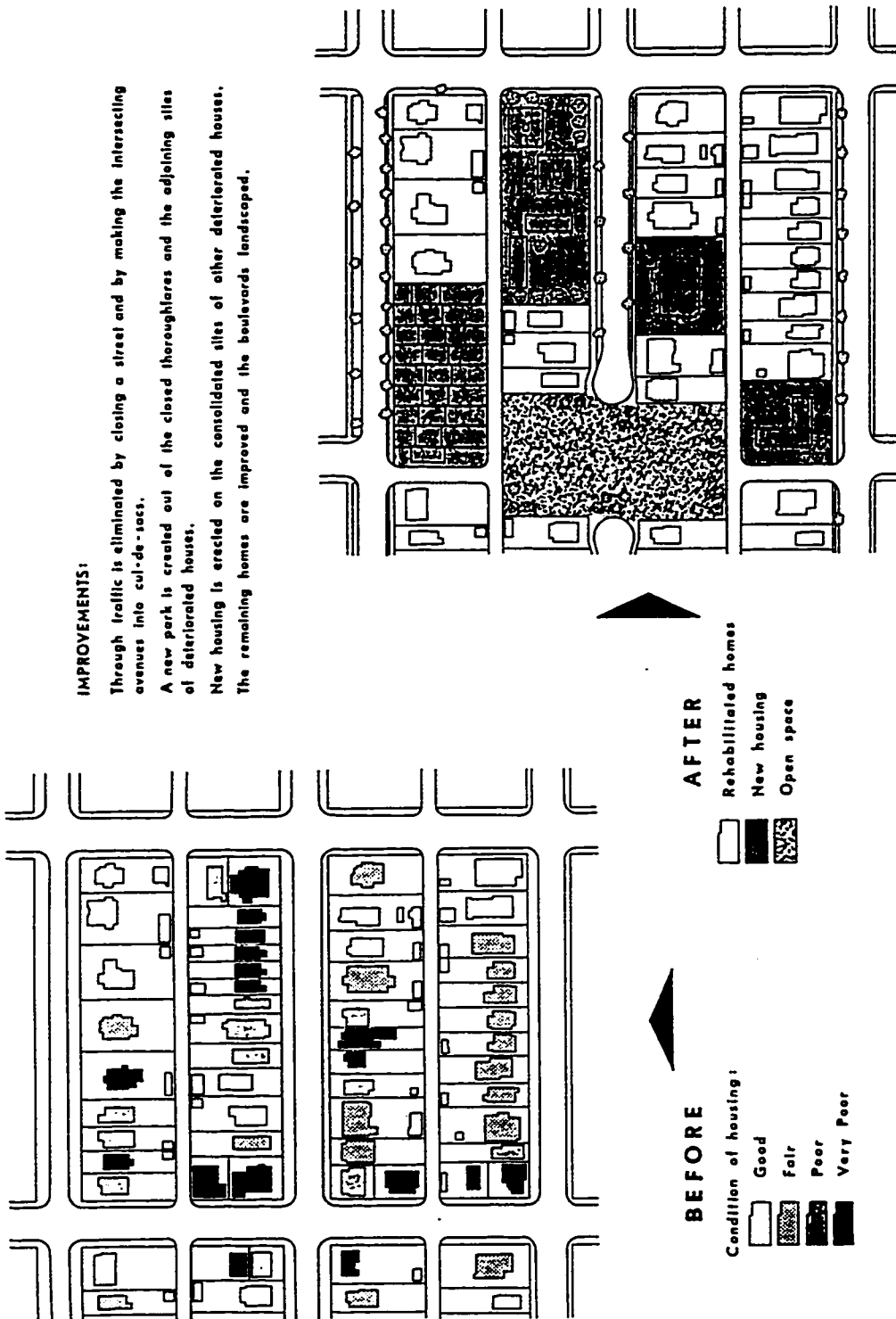


Figure Fourteen: Neighbourhood Rehabilitation Techniques¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Calgary Planning Department, *The Future of Downtown Calgary*, Plate 32.

homes.¹⁰⁹

Urban Renewal Scheme 1B

An even more extensive program of urban renewal and public works was prepared by the architectural consultants Affleck, Desbarats, Dimokopoulos, Lebensold and Sise, of Montreal for each of the twelve parcels of land in the central Downtown Area. The most important feature of this project, referred to as Urban Renewal Scheme 1b, was “its provision for the first comprehensive separation of pedestrian and vehicular movements.”¹¹⁰ The establishment of an enclosed mall and a system of enclosed pedestrian links at the +15 level, would dramatically express the goal of separation through the creation of “an environment in which all structures and facilities will cater specifically to the needs of the pedestrian, with protection from inclement weather and freedom from traffic hazards.”¹¹¹ This was to be the first stage in a long range program that would ultimately provide Calgary with a multi-level Downtown with “each level being design specifically for a particular function” to avoid “the undesirable conflicts that now exist Downtown.”¹¹²

The proposed outdoor pedestrian mall, the center of the scheme in the City’s publication, seems to have been the subject of lingering reservations on the part of the architectural consultants. While they agreed that the new 8th Avenue Mall, was “the most significant feature of the Plan”, there was concern that “the pedestrian, being fully exposed to climatic, physical and psychological conditions of environment” would require “substantial improvements” in the urban environment if his experience of Downtown was to be pleasant. The designers felt that “a pattern of great interest must be formed on 8th Avenue by providing a series of open plazas and squares, bounded by colonades, arcades and malls to create a change of pace and atmosphere within the heart of Downtown.”¹¹³ This was the only place in the core where mixed uses were not only approved of but indeed required, for the function of the mall was to link the

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 73.

¹¹⁰ Calgary, Calgary Planning Department, Development Manual 1b (Calgary, 1965), p.2.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 1.

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 2.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 1.

other functions together. The concept was again drawn from Gruen, for after the act of separation, it was necessary to carefully and selectively meld the elements of the city back together in order to create new opportunities for human experience.

An article written two years later by Affleck indicates some of the thinking behind the scheme. Discussing the "*City as Process*" Affleck called for a new view of the city on that emphasized "process orientation" rather than "goal orientation."¹¹⁴ He suggested that the modern city was less something to be looked at than a place of "happenings".¹¹⁵ The goal of architectural design was not to make objects in space but systems of movement with total sensory involvement. Increasing the exposure of people to a variety of environmental settings and potential interactions would provide choices and also increase people's sense of the possible and level of aspiration.¹¹⁶ It was "no longer acceptable to separate out the visual from the other senses."¹¹⁷ Indeed Affleck proposed that "a sense of the psychic environment must begin to impinge on architectural creation. We cannot continue our aloofness from the problems of the expansion of consciousness or the invisible environment--issues which currently occupy many of the more creative minds in art, philosophy, and science."¹¹⁸

Perhaps Affleck was thinking of Teilhard de Chardin (an author very popular with architects at the time), who described the world as unceasing process and unfolding, where nothing was static and the cosmos itself was in gradual but constant evolution. Affleck seems to allude to de Chardin's concept of ultrahominization, in which mankind would continue to develop in ways that would eventually lead to self-transcendence. Or perhaps he was influenced by Huxley's widely discussed view of man evolving away from the restrictions of biology and towards new patterns of mental organization which would eventually see "mind enthroned above matter" and "quantity subordinate to

¹¹⁴ Ray Affleck, "The city as process", *RIBA.J.*, June 1968, p. 258.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Stephen Carr "The City of the Mind" in W. Ewald (ed.), *Environment for Man*, p.220.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

quality".¹¹⁹

In any case Affleck proposed that radical changes in the actual process of planning and implementation were necessity to solve the urgent urban problems of the day.

The act of planning and design should be recast as an open-ended process of discovery, "intimately and continuously related to the operations of programming, scheduling, budgeting and constructing."¹²⁰ New approaches characterized by "a total information milieu, simultaneity of interaction, and a totally professionalized operation"¹²¹ were necessary to deal with the complex environment of decision making. Extensive planning regulations such as those Al Martin had instituted would no longer be necessary. Working in an environment of instant feedback, the architect would effectively become self-monitoring, instantly responsive to restraints which had been internalized in the design process. Moreover, the perfect discipline of the process and the separation of utilitarian from aesthetic concerns would free the architect to channel his energies into the compelling issues of urban design as art form and the expression of the values of civilization.

At the same time Affleck related this process of design and planning back to the ideal of the "total environment", for the *Architecture of Movement* was by necessity an architecture of control. Affleck suggested that the linkage between the two ideas was the concept of fluidity or "process," but in fact the ideas parallel each other in a number of ways. When describing the *City as Process* Affleck insisted that two basic changes were necessary: "one is the separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic (for obvious reasons of safety and breathable air)--the other is a degree of environmental control...this basic adjustment of environment is a vital part of the equation... In contrast to the familiar *terra firma* of our recent agricultural past, I submit that the ground has in effect become an artifact. The establishment of the ground has become an important decision rather than a given condition."¹²² The pedestrian system gave physical

¹¹⁹ Himmelfarb, pp. 330-331. (The citations date from works written in 1959 (de Chardin) and 1960 (Huxley).

¹²⁰ Affleck, p. 259.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

¹²² *Ibid.*

expression to the ideal of total environmental control. Within the system, all would be orderly and the power of the environment reduced to mere memory and a visual presence; outside of the system all was wilderness. Both mentally and physically the planner would, by definition, be in complete control of the terrain of civilization. The places where he was not in control were not civilized.

The economically determined city, where people lived close together to meet the contingencies of production and transportation, was obsolete. Affleck insisted that the main business of the new city was information, not production. The form of the city was to be radically altered to facilitate the exchange of information and to increase the opportunity for human experiences. Future urban environments would include The Leisure City, The Fun City, The City as Exhibition, The Metaphysical City, The University City, and The City as a Work of Art.¹²³ In short, the urban form would become the site of consumption rather than production; the division between nature (the site of resources and raw materials) and the city (the site of culture and leisure) would become complete.

When Affleck asserted the power of the architect/planner over the very notion of ground, while at the same time insisting upon the necessity of environmental control to separate and protect people from both the natural and the man-made environment, he pushed the argument of wilderness and civilization, wildness and control to a logical conclusion. Insofar as disorder existed in both the city and nature, the solution lay in the cultivation of the mind, through total sensory immersion and evolution, to transcend man's physical limitations. Until that time, total environmental control would be a necessary attribute of civilization.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 260.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Raymond Williams concludes The Country and the City with the observation that “To reduce the contrast of country and city to purely archetypal symbolic significance” is to “fall back on modes of thought which seem able to create the permanence without the history.”¹ Instead, Williams suggested that it was the co-existence of persistence and change which was truly striking. He insisted that “we have to be able to explain, in related terms, both the persistence and the historicity of concepts...persistence depends upon the forms and images and ideas being changed, though often subtly, internally and at times unconsciously.”² While the persistence of certain words indicates some permanent or effectively permanent need to which the changing interpretations speak, it is their ability to change and take on new meanings that accounts for their longevity.

The Label of Wilderness

In the context of planning, the concept of wilderness persisted as that which resisted civilization, as a formlessness which threatened to elude control, as that which was non-productive or threatened productivity or the structures that society perceived as necessary to ensure productivity. Although the vocabulary of order and chaos persisted, the physical and temporal location of what was “wild” and what was “civilized” changed dramatically from era to era. That is, the labels were used differently by each planner.

Before settlement, the North West was seen as a barren land, a place of innate wilderness, physically and morally unsuited to settlement. It was necessary for this image to change before settlement could begin. All pervasive wilderness was incompatible with planning because, insofar as planning purported to set out a physical framework for civilized living, there was no place for civilization to gain a foothold in the North West. Redefining the land from wilderness to garden was the first step towards planning, necessary to create a place for civilized settlement to occur.

In the course of this transformation, the “wildness” of the West was

¹ Williams, The Country and the City, p. 289.

² Ibid.

reassigned. From a quality of the land it became an attribute of the inhabitants, freeing the land itself for use by civilization. Increasingly the lands of North West were seen to have qualities that would provide, not just the possibility, but the attributes necessary for civilized life: fertile soil, favorable climate and the familiar scenery of the British homeland.

That the lands of the North West would be surveyed and subdivided and that the system of survey would be roughly rectangular in form were foregone conclusions. However, the particulars of the system actually adopted were unique in many respects, not the least of which were scope, scale and regularity. Surveyors Dennis and Russell devised a system to convert a vast and unknown but largely benign landscape into thousands of 160 acre homesteads. The land was fertile but it could not be made bountiful without the hand of man. It was necessary to bring farmers to the waiting garden.

Beyond this, the system of survey was designed to tie the vast lands of the North West into the fundamental order of civilization: an order that reached from the stars to the snails and from biblical times to the discoveries of modern science. The projected lines of the survey reflected an order that was all pervasive and stable. The laws of nature, once revealed, were fixed. The grid was a projection of civilization and scientific knowledge, but civilization in this context did not imply urbanization. While no longer a place of wildness, the North West was also not a place of cities.

That the pattern of survey excluded both the open commons of the native population and the city with its faceless urban masses was no coincidence, for the method of land division was used as part of a larger process of making distinctions between social forms labeled as "wild" or "civilized". The order of civilization was the order of the individual head of household and his family on the homestead, it was a single productive unit of society, multiplied a hundred thousand times but still a distinctive unit, quite different than the tribe or the mob. Each acre of land was labeled and fixed within a vast network of imaginary lines, soon to be given physical form in fences, hedgerows, and concession roads. The illusion of order was strengthened by casting out the extremes and locating them elsewhere, outside of the grid in the distant East or in the past

through the use of that comfortable phrase "a dying race". Neither the natural nor the man-made wilderness had a place in the North West and without these extremes the territory was destined to become a vast pastoral landscape -- a middle without ends.

At first glance the CPR gridiron offered only a variation on this pastoral landscape, but where the survey grid was dispersed, the corporate system was focused along the narrow line of the track and the townsites strung along it. While the survey system divided the land into small productive units and assigned each acre of soil to the head of a household, the CPR recast nature as resource and commodity, organizing the land for shipping and exchange with the town as the center of a district. Calgary lay at the apparent center of a region perceived to be overflowing with the bounty of nature: fertile soil for growing things, a free range for grazing cattle, coal reserves and possibly other mineral wealth in the nearby mountains, fresh air and sunshine for good health. In the CPR's vision the town and region would develop together: the prosperity of the town was dependent upon the resources of its hinterland while the value of the hinterland's resources was dependent upon the ability of farmers to convert them into cash. There was no dividing line or frontier between the town and the country; the entire region was an integrated, productive unit.

The CPR was less interested in the land as a basis for society than as a source of revenue. The gridiron plan reflected the corporation's approach, turning the land itself into a commodity. There were no boundaries to limit growth or to separate the town from the surrounding countryside in which its future was tied. There was also no designated public domain beyond the streets of the city and railroad station necessary to complete the link between the town, its hinterland and their distant markets. Nature was bounteous, future prospects apparently unlimited and the land and all its resources were for sale. The gridiron carried this understanding into the town, making the land there also available for purchase in conveniently packaged units. And, just as the train did not disrupt the dream but enabled it, the town did not oppose the region but belonged to it. Through the town the region would realize its productive potential.

There was no place for wildness within this corporate system: naysayers and doubters became social outcasts. The possibility that the land might resist cultivation, that there were resources which might not be brought on stream, was largely suppressed. A series of demonstration gardens were created to establish that productivity was possible wherever the corporation sought to work the land. The station gardener who spelled out the word "Produce" in heads of lettuce understood his function. As Nature was transformed to resource and commodity, wilderness was reduced to memory and a metaphor used to measure progress.

At the turn of the century wildness reappeared at the center of the city, where men had been turned into "nervous manikins" and moral depravity unleashed. The popular image of the congested slum, dirty and disease-ridden, breeding social unrest in the hearts of London, New York, Montreal and even Winnipeg, would have confirmed the worst fears of those men who had, a generation before, undertaken to guide the settlement of the North West. This was the city which they had sought to avoid.

While the surveyors had been able to banish this city to the East, Mawson brought the vision of urban wilderness to Calgary. It was the logical outcome of urban growth, a state which could only be avoided by sufficient forethought and a sound planning policy. The Mawson Plan was actually the first plan designed for a city of Calgary. As an expert town planner and staunch imperialist, Mawson sought to extend the truths of planning to this remote part of the empire. Calgary was seen as a metropolis at an earlier stage of development; by intervening at this stage with an appropriate plan, Mawson hoped to direct the growth of the city towards an ideal and thereby escape a future of disorder and decay.

The premises underlying Mawson's approach to planning were virtually the opposite of those used during the survey. Whereas the Dominions Land System had excluded the ends to create an extended pastoral landscape, the Mawson Plan sought to use the ends and bring them to bear on the city as an antidote and counter measure to urban decline.

The virtues of the pastoral landscape were dismissed by Mawson:

country life was not compatible with the highest achievements of civilization. Instead, he thought to rely upon the power of Nature and the inspirational example of Classical culture to restore the city to its past glory and facilitate even greater accomplishments. Both the survey and the Mawson Plan relied upon the logic of environmentalism to make their respective visions operational. The surveyors set out a grid and made homesteads available, hoping that immigrants would come to occupy this niche. Mawson sought to actively mold the citizens of the city, to use environmental changes to alter and improve their physical and mental habits.

Forty years later the idea of wildness remained associated with the urban form. But in the post war era wildness, no longer confined to the inner city, had spread across the land. The context for planning was no longer the world of nature "straight from the hand of the creator," but the world of cities made by men. Unleashed by modern technology, the metropolis was sprawling out of control, an agglomeration of disparate parts scattered in an apparently random pattern across the region, a tangle of mixed uses, awkward traffic patterns, inefficient utilities and underused land.

There were two locations where this disease seemed to have particularly taken root: the periphery and the core. The metropolitan and regional plans of the late 1950's and early 1960's emphasized the functional unity of Calgary with its surrounding district, arguing that the region was in reality a single unit, linked together by commonly held social values, communication and transportation networks. In an attempt to reorder the sprawling metropolis, a strict line was drawn between rural and urban functions. Land use regulations were enacted to preserve the distinctiveness of each zone and the control of all things urban was given over to the city. Planners had determined that the root of the current urban crisis was neither in the city nor in the country but in the transformation of one to the other, a process which cast a shadow of blight across the entire region, warping the normal processes of growth and development.

The Future of Downtown Calgary Plan and Urban Renewal Scheme 1b were also intended to cure urban blight, focusing this time on the drab and

decaying buildings of the inner core. Mixed uses, vacant spaces, and obsolete buildings would be replaced by the planner's orderly composition. Different functions would be divided into separate core areas and arranged, whenever possible, on different levels of the city.

Both the regional and the downtown plans attempted to protect the citizens of Calgary, not from the possible future (like Mawson) but from an unruly past. It was the legacy of speculative overexpansion from earlier boom periods followed by years of neglect which had left the city in disarray. By the mid 1960's Calgarians also needed to be protected from the vagaries of the natural environment. Believing that it was up to man to make his world (and that by making the world man had the power to make himself), planners sought to exert complete control over an environment they feared was out of control. They sought to bring order to the metropolis by imposing discipline on the city (through regulations), by eliminating the urban past (through demolition and renewal), by controlling the impact of nature (through the creation of a separate pedestrian environment in the downtown). The notion of ground was proclaimed an artifact, the result of a planning decision rather than the intentions of G-d.

Wilderness, disorder, chaos, formlessness--these were what the planner ostensibly sought to control. In the course of one hundred years of planning history, the location of wildness had moved from a barren land in a "far corner of the Empire" to the heart of the city and ultimately into the land and across the globe in the form of a sprawling cancerous growth, simultaneously able to gnaw at the heart of civilization and destroy the land. In the eyes of the planner both nature and the city had the potential for wildness. Nature could be barren and inhospitable, but it could also offer the prospect of fertility, productivity and abundance. Nature might be construed as open space or as a powerful cleansing force. Similarly, the city could be the seat of civilization and learning or a place of savagery where man's worst qualities were set free. At issue was not the location of wilderness but the essence of each place.

The terrain of planning was typically redefined in the early stages of the planning process to provide an appropriate field for the planner to operate in.

The definition of wildness and the design of a planning solution were two separate aspects of an interactive process in which the problem became more clearly defined as the solution evolved. For example, what Calgarians saw as ugly, run down, and drab, was to the planner the pathology of urban blight, a disease which called forth a particular set of curative procedures.

In each period the landscape which formed a backdrop to the plan was the creation of ideology not geology (it was landscape and not raw land) and, as such, it was always "of a kind" with the order of the plan. The vision of the planner was comprehensive and specified the background as well as the foreground of each design. (For example, fertile land required a system of survey to make farms while urban decay required urban renewal.) To a considerable degree the background landscape was already inscribed on the so-called "white sheet" of paper the planner used to record his intentions. The paper, after all, was never really white: a particular vision of the environment was already inscribed on each drawing, carefully sketched-out with the invisible ink of belief.

Although the motivation of each planner was ostensibly to prepare for the future, the particulars of each planning initiative were typically driven by hindsight. Planning presented itself as a process that would lead to an ideal. It clothed itself in the jargon of "progress" and appeared to concern itself with the transformation of the past to the future. The planner always sought to move from wildness to civilization, from what was formless to what was orderly. Hayden White has suggested that the terms wildness and civilization were used to dictate a particular attitude between lived reality and some area of problematic existence.³ In these plans wildness was often a symbolic label applied to real problems (eg. the presence of the Indians, the uncertainty of the corporate enterprise, the variability of land quality, sudden population growth), to raise them to the level of epic struggle. In a sense each planner used the concept of wilderness to help define his goals. The plans were always designed to move society away from a state that was problematic and towards something more stable.

³ White, pp. 151-152.

Techniques used to Banish Wildness

The planners examined in this paper used several strategies to accomplish their goals. Firstly, they used redefinition: wildness was relocated, it was moved to the past, or to the East, or focused in a people and not the land or, conversely, in the fabric of the city and not its citizens. Wildness was redefined in order to eliminate it or to make it easier to cure and control. After wildness was eliminated new comprehensive systems of order were projected to prevent its return.

Through redefinition the image of the North West was changed from a wilderness to a vast garden and then from a garden to a thousand potential homesteads by 1882 even though only the most minimal changes were made to the physical landscape: really only the survey markers, a few patches of cultivation, a partial line of track, and some dirt roads. Even the order of the CPR and the reconfiguration of Calgary as a town in the center of a district involved very few changes to the land itself, at least in the early stages of settlement. The notion of the city-centered region was largely a mental construct, an idea that changed the land into resource and commodity. Mawson changed the town of Calgary from a small, albeit bustling, prairie town to a future seat of industry and manufacturing in order to provide a rationale for his design. At the same time the surrounding countryside was changed from fertile field to Nature and given the power to sweep away slums and restore vigor and stability to the working classes. After the Second World War, the land supply of Alberta was suddenly perceived to be in danger, apparently diminished by the presence of the man-made environment. Regional planners threw a web of restrictions across the district in attempt to establish and maintain distinctions between rural and urban territory. And finally, in the Future of Downtown Plan, "Nature" was reduced to mere Open Space, an amenity which the planner might or might not choose to include in a city where the location of ground level had become just another design decision. In each case these transformations were made largely on paper and in the minds of men, although they opened the door to certain physical changes.

Secondly, wilderness could be cast out or suppressed. There was, for

example, no place made for cities in the survey grid. In other plans projects were undertaken (like the railroad gardens) to establish the non-presence of wildness in the landscape of the plan. Similarly, pedestrians could be protected from car fumes and weather in a custom-designed environment fifteen feet above grade level, removed from the restrictions nature or other men might impose on their freedom of movement.

Thirdly, wildness could be transformed to civilization by planners who could give structure to chaos by separating and untangling mixed uses, designing more efficient systems for transportation and utilities, and imposing order on disorder through the use of building standards and land use maps. Complex administrative systems were set in place to ensure compliance. Powers of expropriation (with appropriate compensation) were enacted to force "holdouts" to accept the discipline of the plan.

And finally, wildness could be cured. By altering the physical environment and exposing man to certain countermeasures and correctives, the planner could mobilize the civilized aspect of man's personality. (The methodology in Mawson's case bordered on homeopathy--exposure to classical architecture would transform the slum dweller into a model citizen; like would beget like.)

Civilization and Productivity

In The Country and the City, Williams makes the point that planners serve "in an economic system which is capitalist in all its main intentions, procedures and criteria. The priorities of capitalism are built into each plan from the beginning."⁴ In that Calgary's planners were typically employees of government or corporations, they sought to make changes without altering the basic relations of ownership and power. Certainly these plans were largely ameliorative, seeking to reform and renew rather than change the norms of society. The principles of private property and democracy were accepted, although the planners in every period struggled to balance the freedom of the land owner with their own ability to control development. Appealing to the civic spirit and philanthropy, discouraging speculation, legalizing expropriation (with compensation), enacting compulsory zoning (with the opportunity for appeal),

⁴ Williams, p. 294.

establishing uniform standards (to be enforced for public good and personal safety) were some of the solutions they resorted to, but the consequences of the system of private property initially used to order the West quickly became one of the factors which lead to disorder in the urban setting.

Capitalism also coloured the attitudes of planners to the land itself. It was the expansionist movement, driven by the desire for empire, for new land and new markets, that changed the wilderness into a garden. It was the survey grid which then turned this fertile but vacant land into property. As an early survey text had noted, the system created property: "the basis of the wealth of the world."⁵ But the homestead was also the means to an end, a lure to bring immigrants westwards to work the land. In the CPR townsite the drive towards land ownership was redirected towards the urban plot, but in both town and country land was explicitly considered as a source of profit, whether to be realized directly through land sales or indirectly through the sale of the products of the land. In spite of its grandeur, the goals of the Mawson Plan were fairly limited. It would defeat urban chaos by controlling and redirecting growth, laying out parks in which to strengthen the mental and physical health of the working classes, and fashioning civic spaces that would inspire citizenship. It was a plan with the avowed aim of strengthening the civil order and securing the future productivity of the work force. Similarly, in the 1960's planners determined it was crucial to renew the inner city, but in Calgary the wilderness which threatened to overwhelm the city was perhaps not so much urban violence as declining property values, rents and retail sales.

Through the imposition of order the planner sought to make the wilderness productive. The land was taken from a natural state and subdivided to encourage cultivation. The district was organized to facilitate the extraction of raw materials and the delivery of goods and services. People were united by common social aims expressed in monumental civic centers and re-energized by exposure to a tamed nature. A regional plan was devised to make the urban system operate more efficiently, with less waste and enhanced overall performance. The component parts of the city were identified, separated and

⁵ William Gillespie, A Treatise on Surveying: Comprising the Theory and the Practice (New York: D. Appleton and Company, first issued 1854, reissued 1890), p. 2.

logically recombined to improve their functioning, services and utilities were rationalized, sequences of growth were predetermined. Freedom from disorder and disruption was to be maintained by increasing respect for authority and through the institution of new rules that required obedience. Total control was exercised over the environment. In every case the imposition of order also led to increased productivity.

But was productivity an end in itself? Clearly the planners did not think so. Progress for them was towards a higher, better state of civilization and their task was to facilitate the advancement of intellectual, cultural and material development in human society. With few modifications the goals of the Canadian Institute were shared by each generation of Calgary planners, their profession remained one of "the arts of opening up the wilderness and preparing the country for the pursuits of the agriculturist, of adjusting with accuracy the boundaries of properties, of improving and adorning our cities and the habitations of our fellow subjects, and...otherwise smoothing the path of civilization."⁶

Clearly capitalism was inextricably inter-wound with the motives and approaches of these planners. Where did the desire for order end and the need for orderly systems to ensure a smooth production process begin? Both goals directed the planner towards similar strategies and confirmed the value of similar choices.

⁶ Sanford Fleming, "The early days of the Canadian Institute", Transactions of the Canadian Institute, Vol. VI, 1898-1899, p. 11.

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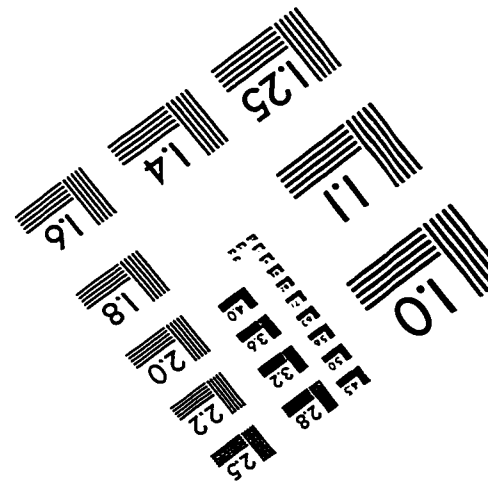
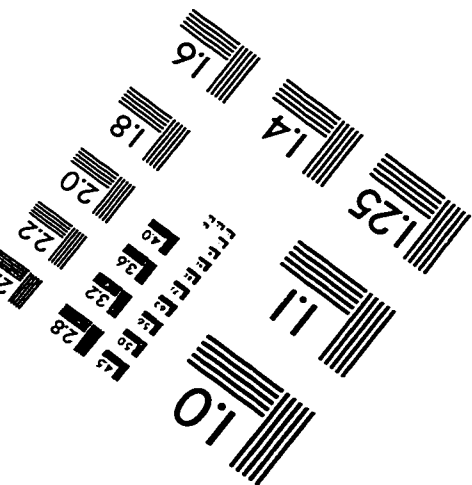
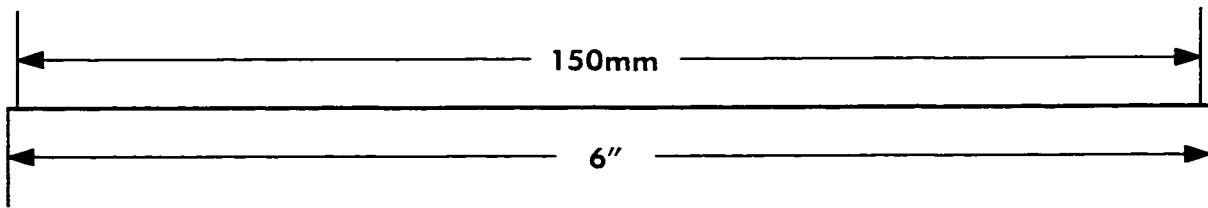
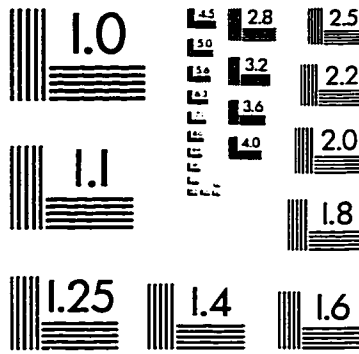
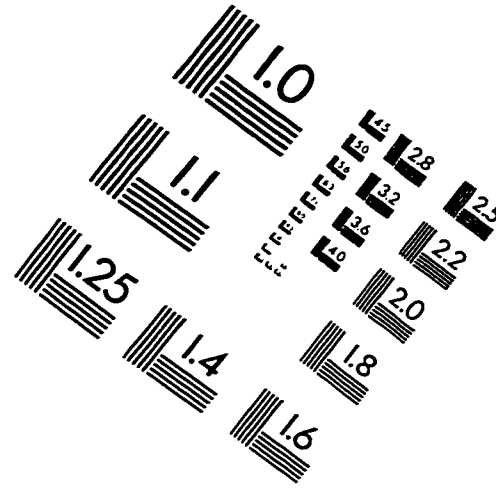
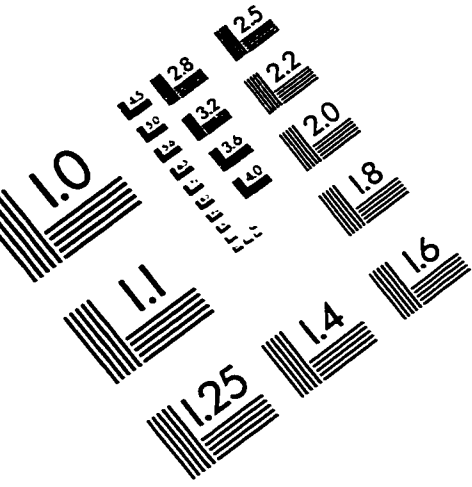
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