

Morrow, E. Joyce. "*Calgary, Many Years Hence*": *The Mawson Report in Perspective*, Calgary: City of Calgary and University of Calgary, 1979. Pp. 46. Illustrations [Limited edition of 1,000 copies]. \$4.95

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Volume 8, numéro 3, february 1980

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019366ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019366ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Foran, M. (1980). Compte rendu de [Morrow, E. Joyce. "*Calgary, Many Years Hence*": *The Mawson Report in Perspective*, Calgary: City of Calgary and University of Calgary, 1979. Pp. 46. Illustrations [Limited edition of 1,000 copies]. \$4.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 8(3), 160–161. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019366ar>

BOOK REVIEWS

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Morrow, E. Joyce. "Calgary, Many Years Hence": The Mawson Report in Perspective. Calgary: City of Calgary and University of Calgary, 1979. Pp. 46. Illustrations. [Limited edition of 1,000 copies]. \$4.95.

Thomas H. Mawson was a British Town Planner who was commissioned by the City of Calgary in 1912 to prepare a comprehensive report for controlling the city's future growth. His preliminary report, published in book form in 1914, represented the first detailed town planning study in Canada and as such attracted national interest. Its grandiose scope reflected an architectural splendour that far exceeded the wildest expectations of Calgary's fledgling City Planning Commission. In the ensuing dark days of economic depression and World War I Mawson's Report was shelved; its most publicized recommendations were never implemented, and over the years it faded into obscurity. The published Report itself with its beautiful baroque flavour became somewhat of an oddity and at best an historic testimonial to the wild optimism of a bygone era. Now with the current interest in urban planning which has accompanied Calgary's rapid growth, interest in Mawson's work has revived. E. Joyce Morrow in her short but worthwhile study entitled "Calgary, Many Years Hence": The Mawson Report in Perspective has attempted to show how an ambitious nineteenth century town planner combined his love of classical architecture with a vision of an ordered beautiful urban environment to produce a grand design for Calgary's growth.

Morrow's study has many merits. One striking feature is her use of illustrations. Historical and contemporary photographs are interspersed with architectural sketches and reproductions from the Mawson Report to give the reader more than just a pictorial chronicle. These illustrations are accompanied by detailed commentary which directs the reader's attention to pertinent details. Morrow's prose is clear and straightforward. She avoids both simple narrative and detailed analysis, and concentrates instead on explanation. Her relevancies include placing Mawson in an architectural and imperial tradition, and a practical appraisal of the Report's strengths, deficiencies and pertinence to contemporary planning strategies.

However, Morrow omitted details that could have added to the historical relevance of her work. Though she did comment on the fortuitous aspect of Mawson's arrival in Calgary during a surge of interest in town planning, she did not attempt to account for this phenomena. Neither did she dwell on Mawson's relations with members of the Planning Commission, particularly with William Pearce whose contribution to the Report may have been considerable. Morrow's treatment of events following the publication of Mawson's Report is inadequate. She terminates her historical commentary with the issuance of the Report in the Spring of 1914. The Report, in fact, was received favourably. Indeed there were indications that Council believed it was

implementing the recommendations of the Report in its bridge construction and boulevard plans in 1914. It was the tremendous financial burden which fell on Calgary after 1914 which effectively shelved any planning scheme, particularly one as costly and ambitious as Mawson's. Finally, it could be argued that Morrow was too uncritical of Mawson. While his qualifications were undeniable he was also a persuasive self-advertiser, higher on visionary ideas than on practicalities. In this sense Morrow is a little misleading when she refers to Mawson's inclusion of financial considerations in his Report. At best these were sketchy and paid no attention to the relationship between bonded debt, assessment strictures and taxation revenues. Certainly Calgary City Council by 1913 was beginning to learn of these intricacies rather painfully through the clearly enunciated statistics prepared by its Controller.

These above points aside, this is a good book. Mrs. Morrow's frame of reference was to place the Mawson Report in perspective by explaining its nature and implications, and to suggest that it may have some relevance for modern planners. In fact it is possible that future historical studies of Calgary may show that Mawson's Report was never really abandoned by those who directed Calgary's growth after 1914.

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Pressman, N.E.P., editor. New Communities in Canada: Exploring Planned Environments. Waterloo: Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, 1976. [a special issue of Contact: Journal of Urban and Environmental Affairs].

This book, an in-house publication of the Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, offers a variety of materials interesting to anyone concerned with urban studies. The articles included in the volume, some of them drawn from a conference on new communities, deal with the problems of "new towns," both near existing urban communities and in remote areas. Unfortunately, the book--in common, it seems with a growing number of publications like it--is carelessly put together and falls seriously short of reasonable scholarly standards. It is a great pity, because much potential valuable scholarship, in this volume and in others, is being lost through slipshod editing and writing. I shall return to that point.

New Communities in Canada is marred by unprofessional, inattentive editing, indifferent research, and inadequate documentation. Various of the articles are difficult to read, uncritical, and/or poorly documented. The articles are not planned so that they complement each other, with the result that the book is incessantly repetitive.

The most serious single problem--one which offers dramatic testimony to slipshod production--shows up in the final section of the