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The Prairies and Plains: Prospects for the 80s.

Edited by John R. Rogge. Manitoba Geographical Studies no. 7. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, Department of Geography, 1981. Tables, graphs, maps, 148 pages. \$6.00.

This volume contains the proceedings of the annual meeting of the Prairie Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers, held at Delta Marsh, Manitoba, in September 1980: six invited papers and two "student papers," the latter included for their "interest and because of their Prairie orientation."

The invited papers provide several viewpoints on a core of overlapping themes: the future of agriculture in an environment where climatic and market uncertainties together with economic costs and price-squeeze pressures have thinned out the farming communities over the last sixty years; the environmental

transformations resulting from the imposition of agricultural production systems upon the parklands and grasslands of the prairies and the present and future management problems thus created; and finally the impact of the new concern for energy supplies upon the socioeconomic development of these relatively rich prairie provinces.

John C. Hudson opens the volume with an overview of the American Great Plains, stressing the impact of energy conservation policies on the development of activities as varied as the westward movement of the slaughter houses and the innovation of "boxed" (boneless) beef shipments, the coal mining boom on the plains, the rationalization (i.e., reduction) of railroads and grain elevator facilities, and the promotion of soil conservation through no-till farming. William J. Carlyle predicts that prairie agriculture in the 1980s will generally continue to show the trends already established, namely, fluctuating production still mainly at the mercy of the weather; decreasing numbers of farmers and increasing farm size, often of rented land; increased mechanization and even videotape viewing of cattle for sale; possible on-farm cropping for gasohol fuel supplies; and an increasing amount of foreign ownership despite restrictive legislation. Hansgeorg Schlichtmann provides a brief preview of a larger study of the documentation of changing patterns of rural settlement from the 1930s onward, with abandonment and relocation of residences associated with farm amalgamations; the re-emergence of community pastures from the bankrupted farmlands; and continued successes of at least some group settlements such as the Hutterites. Carson H. Templeton decries the lack of a Canadian federal energy policy and predicts that political instability might be one result. Richard C. Rounds provides a comprehensive review of the background to the current crisis in wildlife conservation on the prairies and notes the frustrations of the bureaucracies, whose difficulties are only partially offset by the limited success of private conservation institutions such as Ducks Unlimited (Canada), a company managing Canadian

wetlands for, among others, American hunters. Finally, J. Keith Semple provides an overview of the Canadian prairies to balance Hudson's introductory paper on the Great Plains. The parallel themes are noted—for example, the export-oriented crop and livestock production and the westward shift of mining. Canadian innovations include the use of the "provincial heritage funds"—investments from government resource royalties—to fuel further income-producing activities, and political muscle-flexing by provincial governments who are convinced of their exploitation by the eastern power structures, whether of government or business.

Glen Suggett documents the environmental impact of settlement upon the Delta Marsh area, while Brian Glover provides evidence from Quaternary terraces along the Athabaska River that an ice-free corridor existed in western central Alberta in the latter part of the Wisconsin glaciation.

The volume provides a valuable, if rurally biased, view of the prairies in the early years of the 1980s. For this reviewer the book brought home again the parallels between Canadian, American, Australian, and New Zealand resource development systems from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Still, many unanswered questions remain, such as the rationale behind the changing role of central government in resource management, the problems of defining and maintaining viable settlement in economically and climatically marginal locations, and the problems of "core and periphery" development within nations.

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