

gon Historical Society is to be congratulated for the choice not only of editor and illustrator, but of those involved in every facet of production. Moreover, at the price which this volume is offered for sale it is one of the bargains of the decade.

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The Egg Marketing Board: A Case Study of Monopoly and its Social Costs. Vancouver: Fraser Institute.

This book is one in a series of studies sponsored by the Fraser Institute on the effect of government regulation on the Canadian economy.

The B.C. Egg Marketing Board, and its national counterpart the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, possess supply management powers — powers to restrict supply and set farmgate prices. According to Dr. Borcharding, the egg agencies maintain prices above free market levels by restricting supply through a quota system. To produce and sell table eggs in British Columbia a farmer has to hold a quota, issued originally by the marketing board, which entitles him to produce and sell a specified number of eggs. The author calculates that because of this supply management system B.C. consumers paid 11¢ more per dozen eggs in 1975 and 21¢ in 1980 than they would have under free market conditions.

The positive dollar value for quota is accepted by the author as proof that excess profits are to be earned by getting into the egg business. According to his logic, potential producers would not be willing to purchase quota and join the cartel unless there were benefits to be derived.

Based on the existence of monopoly power and a resulting “excess profit” in the production of eggs, the author proceeds to calculate a variety of associated “social costs” that would not exist in a system of perfect competition. As pointed out in the introduction, the nature of social cost measurements requires use of the economist’s more technical tools. The “unanointed” are reassured that skipping over the measurements — the $W_T = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{n}{n/\sigma' - 1} \right) \left(\frac{\bar{P}}{P_M} \right)^2 E$, for instance — does not leave one incapable of appreciating the argument.

In spite of his conclusions that higher prices and inefficiencies result from supply management, the author is reluctant to call for the disbanding of the egg marketing system. He acknowledges that there may be

values which cannot be assessed using the economist's cost/benefit analysis.

The writer, one of the unanointed, found it impossible to follow the specific calculations, but remained uncomfortable with them. An evaluation of the quantitative analysis by interested economists, preferably of a different school of thought from the one the Fraser Institute is associated with, would be helpful.

The egg marketing system under a supply management scheme with price setting and quota allocation powers is less than a free market. The question is why the Fraser Institute has chosen to focus on the farm sector, the egg marketing board in this study and the milk board in another. What about the farmer's suppliers, and his customers?

As early as 1939 a Royal Commission on Price Spreads concluded farmers were being exploited because of the corporate concentration in the secondary sector of the food industry. There are less than a dozen corporate giants which effectively control processing, distribution and retailing in Canada's food industry. Marketing boards represent farmers' efforts to add a certain amount of balance to the less than perfectly competitive market they must operate in. Without marketing boards — and this is where the "all other things being equal" logic of the economist's perfect competition model has to be seriously questioned — there is no reason to assume, as the author does, that a more efficient seventy egg producers would exist in the province. Without political sanctions why should we not expect consolidation to occur until the structure of the farm sector matches that of the secondary? The author applauds Britain as a case where an egg marketing board was disbanded because of consumer pressures. He fails to explain to the reader that 15,000 British producers were forced out of business, a few giants became larger, and the price of eggs did not fall.

Perhaps the most serious question raised by this work is a broader one than whether marketing boards are good or bad. The Fraser Institute is a self-proclaimed member of a particular school of economic thought, that of Milton Friedman. The study does not purport to be an unopinionated, value-free piece of social science. However, the Fraser Institute claims to have published it in the interests of public education. According to the author, once consumers appreciate the costs of marketing boards they will be in a better position to decide whether they are willing to continue to pay these costs. Before a consumer is asked to make a decision, however, it is only fair that he or she be made aware of the benefits of marketing boards. This dilemma is not the worry of the social scientist

who has long been concerned with the philosophical problem of whether or not a study can be value-free. It is a concern about the harm that can be caused if countervailing studies adopting various value perspectives on regulation in a mixed economy are not completed and given the publicity in the popular press this one was.

B.C. Federation of Agriculture

KAREN JACKSON

Canada's Urban Past: A Bibliography to 1980 and Guide to Canadian Urban Studies, edited by Alan F. J. Artibise and Gilbert A. Stelter. Vancouver and London: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp. xxxii, 396; \$42.00.

The 1970s were a decade of experimentation, innovation and diversification in the field of Canadian history. Previously concerned about political and constitutional issues, scholars in the past decade redirected historical inquiry into long-ignored areas of Canadian life. Subjects such as the working class, Indian-European relations, women and the structure of rural society pushed traditional themes from the centre of Canadian historical interest. So did urban history, an area of Canadian studies whose solid beginnings date from the emergence of the *Urban History Review* as a newsletter early in 1972. Enthusiasm for urban history was in full bloom by mid-decade, marked by the recruitment of a solid core of urban-minded historians into Canadian history departments across the country. A broad range of new work relating to Canadian cities followed, shifting the field far from its traditional focus on urban biographies and local histories. *Canada's Urban Past: A Bibliography to 1980* provides a fitting celebration of Canadian urban history's first decade as a recognized field of study.

Edited by two of Canada's most energetic urban historians, this mammoth bibliography incorporates over 7,000 entries. The interdisciplinary nature of urban history has led the University of Victoria's Alan Artibise and Guelph University's Gilbert Stelter to bring together a wide range of urban and urban-related materials. Rather than just an historical bibliography, *Canada's Urban Past* is thus a reference guide to the many areas that constitute Canadian urban studies: history, economics, planning, political science, geography, architecture, sociology and public administration. Entries are divided first into an introductory section organized by themes such as Population, Urban Environment, and Muni-