

Electoral Reform in Local Government: The Case of Winnipeg*

JAMES LIGHTBODY *University of Alberta*

The analysis of Canadian urban politics has not led to the appearance of a reasonably satisfactory theory of the local electoral process. It is perhaps the most significant omission in the area for, as James Lorimer has commented: "The way electoral boundaries are drawn has a lot to do with who can win elections. So there is nothing closer to the hearts of a group of politicians in office than a discussion about how the boundaries of the constituencies they represent should be changed."¹ Less colloquially, Douglas Rae commences his study of electoral law by noting that "[a]ny law has some consequences, whether good or ill, for all of the groups which enter the sphere of life to which it applies."² The laws of the electoral process bear particular relevance to any political system, for by their mechanisms are filtered the incumbents of decision-making roles from the aspirants.

This essay explores the thesis that the reform of local election systems has had a profound impact upon Canadian local government. An examination of the reform tradition during the earlier part of this century suggests strongly that its emphasis upon 'at-largism' was in large measure responsible for the apparent conservatism of urban municipalities subsequently. Winnipeg provides an excellent arena in which to test the thesis for it has experienced not only the traditional electoral reform but also a major response, in 1971, from a provincial government of the left. My aim is to place both into their political and ideological context.

While any translation of norms into formal mechanisms will normally reflect an advantage to some groups at the expense of others, the

* I am grateful to John Meisel, E. R. Black, Meyer Brownstone and the JOURNAL's assessors for both critical comments and helpful suggestions about an earlier draft of this work.

1 James Lorimer, *The Real World of City Politics* (Toronto: James. Lewis and Samuel, 1970), 37.

2 Douglas Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (Rev. ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 3.

fundamental premise underlying this study conforms with an observation made by E. E. Schattschneider some years ago. He has argued:

All forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organization is the mobilization of bias. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out.³

Approaching the subject of local representation in this fashion rejects any attempt to examine institutional change in a political vacuum. Too much of the writing concerned with municipal government, in Canada as abroad, has been characterized by an obsessive pre-occupation with the development of *ideal* administrative structures suited to the *best*, implicitly value-neutral, municipal model. The unfortunate attempt to insulate local government from the pernicious aspects of organized politics, an effort disguised by describing it as separating 'politics' from 'administration' and aiming to sacrifice 'political' guidance in the pursuit of 'technical' information, has led to an institutionalized 'status quoism.' In analysis, as well as practice, the conservative ideology dominant in Canadian local government has tended to limit radical innovation.⁴ The one significant recent exception to this statement has been the reform of Winnipeg's municipal institutions by the Schreyer New Democrats in 1971 which not only produced a unitary form of government for the metropolitan region but also revised the pattern of local representation radically.⁵ The study of these latter changes can best be begun by directly confronting the myth that any change in political structures may be evaluated exclusively on the basis of 'technical' merits or disadvantages.

Briefly, we may understand the *election system* to be a pattern of interactions whose immediate consequence and manifest function is the provision of incumbents for certain decision-making roles specified by the larger political system.⁶ While including an evaluation of its principal actors, the study of the election system directs our attention toward these relevant mechanisms: (a) the magnitude, that is the number of representatives per constituency, and the number of electoral constituencies or wards; (b) the method by which votes are cast and counted; and (c) the restrictiveness of the franchise, or the privileges

3 E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 71.

4 On this whole question, note the author's "Adapting Urban Institutions: The Reform of Winnipeg, 1971," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Queen's University, 1977, 25-46.

5 For a more complete picture of the Winnipeg reforms consult Meyer Brownstone, L. D. Feldman, D. C. Hefferon and T. J. Plunkett, *Politics and the Process of Reform of Urban Government: The Winnipeg Experience* (Ottawa: Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, mimeo, 1971).

6 T. H. Qualter, *The Election Process in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1970), xii.

La réforme électorale au niveau municipal: le cas de Winnipeg

La recherche en politique urbaine au Canada s'est peu intéressée à l'analyse comparative des systèmes électoraux locaux. Ceci s'explique en partie à cause du désir d'objectivité des analystes et de la prééminence de la non-partisannerie comme idéologie politique municipale au Canada. Mais lorsque la communauté urbaine est fortement divisée socialement et politiquement, il est impossible de découvrir la déformation partisane à l'oeuvre dans le système électoral, en particulier dans le découpage des circonscriptions.

Cette étude du cas de Winnipeg, inspirée par les initiatives du gouvernement provincial néo-démocrate en matière de réformes urbaines entreprises en 1971 (Unicity), analyse la rationalité qui sous-tend l'organisation des élections municipales à trois moments différents: avant et après la grève générale de 1919, et à la suite des changements de 1971. Chacun des trois systèmes est analysé en relation avec l'idéologie de la classe politiquement dominante. En conclusion, l'auteur fait une évaluation des résultats de 1971 dans les petites circonscriptions à partir de l'analyse du succès politique des candidats locaux dans la première élection sous le régime de l'Unicity.

and limitations of the list of electors.⁷ In the Winnipeg case, the ward system has been the mechanism most visibly employed to affect the partiality of elections. It is upon this that we will focus.

The absence of theory in the explanation of the Canadian local election system in part reflects the general absence of theorizing on a comparative, cross-polity basis in this country. But, to evaluate the institutions of a 'representative' democracy, there must be a minimum understanding of the role of the election system in structuring political influence. Traditionally, the study of Canadian local government has emphasized the historical roots and legal definitions of elections rather than their relationship to the overall political process. The political environment of the total realm of local government has been consistently characterized as fairly nondivisive and consequently apolitical. One early text devotes limited attention to the election system producing but a simplified statement of the broad principles of municipal law.⁸ Even the more serious study of K. G. Crawford is similarly restricted to a largely descriptive discussion of the law.

In examining the question of local constituencies, Crawford does, to be sure, attempt an evaluation of ward systems vis-à-vis elections at large, satisfactorily encapsulating the common sense of the time by observing that the former generally produces guaranteed representation for all areas of the city, or block groups, and permits the election of

7 Note also the general discussion of electoral law by D. Rae, *The Political Consequences*, especially chapter II, 13-46.

8 Note D. C. Rowat, *Your Local Government: The Intelligent Canadian's Guide to Local Government* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), "The Ships of Local Government," 26-29, and "The People Who Sail Them," 41-47.

locally known personalities.⁹ The 'general vote,' on the other hand, enables "a substantial man in the community who has no strong personal following in any one section [to] draw enough support from citizens of all sections to assure his election, because of widespread public appreciation of his achievements. . . ."¹⁰ On the basis of his experience Crawford concludes that, on balance, for "more efficient administration and better government . . . the standard of performance appears to be higher under a general vote system."¹¹ In a classic liberal reform statement, he further details the premises: "Those elected at large can afford to take a community rather than a sectional view, for they are compelled . . . to support measures designed to benefit the greatest number; dividing the city into sections . . . is detrimental to the best community spirit. . . ."¹² This may be an acceptable formulation for a local system where a socially homogeneous and property-owning electorate believes the task of local government to be simply the efficient management of widely-agreed-upon service chores. But, for a community not possessing these attributes exclusively, the construction of the election system may play a great role in the promotion or protection of specific class or group interest.

At-large elections have also been legitimized by their inclusion as part of the reformist package of the early twentieth century.¹³ Since the 1920's, the election systems of the larger western Canadian cities have been oriented toward at-large or quasi-general elections.¹⁴ Vancouver's ward system, for example, had led to a city council split along social and economic lines which eventually prompted its 'reform' in 1936: "The at-large election was a tool for de-politicizing the city."¹⁵ Curiously the

9 K. G. Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), 83-84.

10 *Ibid.*, 84.

11 *Ibid.*, 86.

12 *Ibid.*, 84-85.

13 Western Canadian cities, for instance, initially adopted the Ontario practice of local wards. From 1906 until 1920, Winnipeg elected two aldermen from each of seven wards; the original charters of Calgary (1893) and Edmonton (1904) specified three aldermen from each of three wards and two from four respectively; Saskatoon from 1906 until 1920 and Vancouver from 1886 until 1936 both employed small wards. The move away from the ward system in all these cities was advocated as a device to prevent 'sectional' (that is, labour) interests having guaranteed representation, generally by local parties of the type "formed by business men fearful of socialist, communist and other extremist elements. . . ." Note J. G. Joyce and H. A. Hossé, *Civic Parties in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, 1970), 17.

14 Crawford uses the terms 'at-large' and 'general' synonymously. The expression 'quasi-general' may apply to those communities whose election systems, while technically divided into wards, are so constructed that the wards represent in themselves miniature at-large contests. Edmonton, since the reintroduction of its ward system in 1968, would constitute a prime example. Note the reasons for this in this author's "Edmonton Politics: Business as Usual," *Canadian Forum*, 52 (1972), 8-9.

15 W. G. Hardwick, *Vancouver* (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan, 1974), 30.

practice of manipulating the election system has not been seriously questioned within the burgeoning literature on Canadian urban politics until recently, much of which reflects the view that such matters are technical (that is, politically neutral) once basic principles are established—if such principles exist!¹⁶ Recent challenges from the left to the logic of the at-large gerrymanders of the twenties and thirties forces an evaluation of the basic positions as prelude to the examination of the Winnipeg case.¹⁷

It can be hypothesized that there will be clear advantages to specific groups in the at-large or quasi-general option. It has been satisfactorily demonstrated that other features of the reform package in the United States, such as local nonpartisanship, have produced a general decline in the electoral participation of working or lower class groups.¹⁸ Through increasing the costs of political information, at-large elections have a similar consequence and work to the clear advantage of individuals and groups who are dominant in social and economic spheres. Banfield and Wilson, for instance, summarize their conclusions by noting:

Typically, businessmen, upper-class civic leaders, and reformers oppose small districts. Such people are invariably placed at a disadvantage by them; this is true in part because they are minority groups, in part because the resources they command (social status, expertise, corporate wealth) are not effective in influencing small-district councilmen, and in part because they feel that a politics of personal influence and neighborhood interests is wrong and inefficient. They will favor large districts or, even better, at-large elections. . . .¹⁹

There are direct implications for the question of the structural mobilization of bias within this contention, for those with both the legal and political power to alter structures will not normally do so to their electoral disadvantage. Either proposed revisions or defence of existing institutions will, notwithstanding the technical virtues advanced on their behalf, be premised upon an appreciation of the respective political resources of the groups concerned. In Vancouver, for example, Robert Easton and Paul Tennant reveal the considerable reluctance of activists in the centre-right municipal coalitions to endorse a ward system for that city, views which contrast sharply with the posture of progressive civic

16 Even two of the more important recent American textbooks (which in the usual case may be assumed to be composites of the significant literature) turn a blind eye to the politics of electoral adjustment. Thus note Murray Stedman, *Urban Politics* (Cambridge: Winthrop Publishers, 1972), 68-74, and W. O. Winter, *The Urban Polity* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1969), 249-62.

17 For example, note James Lorimer, *A Citizen's Guide to City Politics* (Toronto: James, Lewis and Samuel, 1972), 110-14.

18 R. L. Lineberry and Ira Sharkansky, *Urban Politics and Public Policy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 88-92.

19 E. C. Banfield and J. Q. Wilson, *City Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 92.

politicians.²⁰ The 1969 struggle in Toronto between advocates of strip (quasi-at-large) and block wards appears to have had a parallel ideological dimension.²¹ Similarly, the 1973 attempt of the Saskatchewan NDP government to introduce a city ward structure in Saskatoon and Regina provoked the anticipated negative reaction from city councils and Boards of Trade.²²

Recently, in Canadian city politics, reformers of the left have generally favoured a reduction of at-large tendencies and the installation of smaller-scale, compact, block wards. The more conservative interests have advocated an electoral system designed to promote the wider 'good of the community.' If a set of reforms is seriously to attempt a decentralization of power from the groups now dominant in city politics, the electoral apparatus provides a logical first target.²³ In this context, the important question of local constituency was integral to the Unicity reform of 1971.

The Adjustment of Municipal Electoral Divisions

The Winnipeg area provides an instructive example of the role electoral boundary adjustment may play in urban reform. Our interest lies first in assessing the tactics of ward manipulation in the pursuit of the grander strategy of maintaining Liberal-Conservative 'nonpartisan' dominance. The community's social history clearly indicates that the general strike of 1919 marks a watershed by cleaving working interests from the dominant consensus;²⁴ "the Winnipeg strike was a most significant occurrence in Canadian history, if for no other reason than that it was the first and only time in Canadian history that a major city was split clearly into two opposing classes."²⁵ Prior to the strike, labour, albeit organized, had not been able to gain representation on city council; A. F. J. Artibise calculates that, for the period 1874-1914, only three of the total of 515 aldermen elected could be considered labour

20 Robert Easton and Paul Tennant, "Vancouver Civic Party Leadership: Backgrounds, Attitudes and Non-Civic Party Affiliations," in J. K. Masson and J. D. Anderson (eds.), *Emerging Party Politics in Urban Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 118.

21 Lorimer, *The Real World*, 37-52.

22 This is discussed by Ned Powers, "Ward System Bill Becomes a Hot Potato," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), April 28, 1973.

23 Note, on this point, the discussion by J. F. Hough, "Voters' Turnout and the Responsiveness of Local Government: The Case of Toronto, 1969," in Paul Fox (ed.), *Politics: Canada* (3rd ed.; Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 295-96.

24 Kenneth McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 99-153, and D. C. Masters, *The Winnipeg General Strike* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950). See also M. Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour* (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, 1968), 180-87 and 203-06.

25 McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics*, 99.

representatives.²⁶ As A. B. McKillop has also observed, the post-strike polarization was not only political and economic, it was also geographic: "Dafoe and his colleagues lived without exception on the south side of the Assiniboine; and Radical-Labour representatives could all be found on the north side."²⁷ Nor are the antagonists in Winnipeg city politics difficult to identify. The first electoral opportunity to test respective strengths was provided by the 1919 municipal election. McKillop notes, with slight exaggeration, that "the 1919 civic election campaign began with a vehemence and polarization which was to make it one of the most fiercely contested municipal elections in the history of twentieth century Canada. . . ."²⁸ On the progressive side were the leadership cadre within the Independent Labour Party; their mayoralty candidate was S. J. Farmer. The dominant community interests were vested in the remnants of the Citizens' Committee against the strike, represented by incumbent Mayor C. F. Gray. Gray retained his office by a vote of 15,679 to 12,563.

Significantly, a continuously well-organized labour voice in Winnipeg's civic arena from this point forward (by means of the Independent Labour Party to 1943, the CCF to 1961, and later the NDP) required conservative and commercial elements in the city to react more visibly and with more persistence as municipal partisans than has elsewhere been the case in Canada. If Nigel Harris is correct about British Conservative party ideology, in asserting that it endeavours to reflect the ideology of the dominant interests in that society particularly in the face of a 'radical' challenge to the status quo,²⁹ then the succession of anti-labour electoral organizations established by Winnipeg's commercial community since 1919 conforms to this model.³⁰ In Britain, Harris argues: "Conservatives themselves can achieve a 'non-political' situation where administration of a *status quo* that is taken for granted is all, and controversy over the nature of the *status quo* is eliminated. In this context, important questions can be 'taken out of politics', that is, no longer seriously debated from different perspectives."³¹ Developing a similar 'situation' has been the central thrust of municipal non-partisanship in Canadian local politics, with Winnipeg no exception. Of the 'non-partisan' party representing the dominant commercial ideology

26 A. F. J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth, 1874-1914* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), 27.

27 A. B. McKillop, "Citizen and Socialist: The Ethos of Political Winnipeg, 1919-1935," unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1970, 60.

28 *Ibid.*, 51. See also Robin, *Radical Politics*, 203-04.

29 Nigel Harris, *Beliefs in Society: The Problem of Ideology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 99.

30 This kind of local party has been fairly typical of the response of western Canada's commercial elites to organized labour's own municipal electoral initiatives. Note Joyce and Hossé, *Civic Parties in Canada*, 17-18.

31 Harris, *The Problem of Ideology*, 99.

in Winnipeg, for example, veteran CCF-NDP councillor Lloyd Stinson has observed: "The C.E.C. [Civic Election Committee] never had a specific program. Everyone knew that the major group at City Hall was Establishment-oriented and favored real estate and business interests as opposed to those of Labor. What their specific policies were could easily be surmised, although this lack of precision did allow C.E.C. aldermen freedom to move in any direction and claim that they were not tied to any political party."³² The public ideology of the city's commercial interests has remained preeminent, municipally, into the 1970's.

From the original Citizens' Committee of 1,000 developed the Citizens' League of Winnipeg, 1919-1921.³³ In 1922, this became the Citizens' Campaign Committee which flowed into the Winnipeg Better Civic Government Association of 1923 and 1924. The depression years witnessed the chameleon changes to Civic Progress Association (1929-1932) and Citizens' Group (1932-1935). An unexpected election of a labour plurality on council in 1934 produced both a new overt vitality and a reorganization as the Civic Election Committee in 1936, an association unchanged until 1966 but for the addition (in 1959) of another face to tackle the additional governmental tier of metro—the Metro Election Committee.³⁴ Stinson writes accurately of the CEC that although "the names of its members were never published . . . it was generally understood to consist of business and professional people whose objective was to prevent Labor from gaining control of City Hall."³⁵ From 1966 to 1971 the associations merged to be known as the Greater Winnipeg Election Committee. The consolidation of local government structures prior to the 1971 municipal balloting forced the alignment of these like-minded conservative interests on a city-wide basis named, with limited imagination, the Independent Citizens' Election Committee.³⁶ Across the half century from 1919, then, the civic electoral battle lines had been clearly defined between these associations and the labour-left groups.³⁷ Lloyd Stinson summarizes the situation in the 1970's well:

32 Lloyd Stinson, *Political Warriors: Recollections of a Social Democrat* (Winnipeg: Queenston House, 1975), 300.

33 Masters provides a list of the prospective financial backers of the League which is composed exclusively of the largest financial institutions, and the professional societies, of Winnipeg (*The Winnipeg General Strike*, 64). Of the composition of the original committee, McNaught quotes 'liberal lawyer' J. W. Wilton: "I sized up the personnel. There was not a returned soldier there. Newspaper editors, bankers, manufacturers and capitalists abounded" (*A Prophet in Politics*, 106).

34 For much of this historical record note McKillop, "Citizen and Socialist," 64ff. See also Paul Barber, "Class Conflict in Winnipeg Civic Politics: The Role of the Citizens' and Civic Election Organizations," mimeo., University of Manitoba, 1970.

35 Stinson, *Political Warriors*, 253.

36 Note Lorimer, *A Citizen's Guide*, 105. For press coverage of the founding convention and policy 'positions' of the new nonpartisan party note also the *Winnipeg Free Press*, September 11, 1971, 5, and September 13, 1971, 3, 15.

37 Prior to the 1973 provincial election the chairman of the ICEC, William Palk, attempted, with the "Group for Good Government," to replicate the municipal success

“when decisions were made, the ICEC ran true to form and was just as pro-business and anti-labor as the GWEC ever was. The spirit of the Committee of One Thousand still hovered over City Hall.”³⁸

The history of adjustments to the city of Winnipeg’s ward system supports an argument that struggles to alter a distribution of political power will initially come into focus in realignments of the election system. The selection of the city proper as the sole area for our study is a consequence of its prominence within the metropolitan area until the post-war period. The significant amendments to local electoral constituencies are illustrated by Maps 1 and 2. We are confronted with two major boundary adjustments: the move to quasi-general elections in 1920 and the return to neighbourhood wards in 1971.

The Introduction of Three Wards (1920)

The City of Winnipeg was incorporated in November, 1873, making provision for the election of three aldermen from each of four wards. Subsequent growth of the city through annexation obliged an increase in wards to six in 1882, coincident with the taking over of the Fort Rouge area. In 1884, the number of aldermen per ward was reduced to two, a move precipitated by the city’s powerful Property Owners’ Association as an ‘economy measure.’³⁹ Finally, in 1906 the city annexed the Elmwood community of Kildonan municipality and designated it as ward seven. For the period from the 1918 revision of its charter until 1971, the city followed the not unusual practice of electing one-half of its membership annually; from the civic elections of December, 1920, until 1971, balloting was by a modified Hare system of proportional representation.⁴⁰

The important change, however, lay in the reduction in the number of wards in 1920 from seven, with two members each, to three with six. The initiative appears to have been generated within the law amendments committee of the provincial legislature while considering reform of the city charter. But the political significance of the move to three wards has not been noted by students of the period, despite an alignment of those involved that was parallel to the strike-initiated polarization.

of his party in keeping the NDP from power. By endorsing particular Liberal or Conservative candidates the “Group” hoped to “rid Manitoba of socialism” (*Winnipeg Free Press*, March 5, 1973, and May 1, 1973). Mr. Palk was unsuccessful.

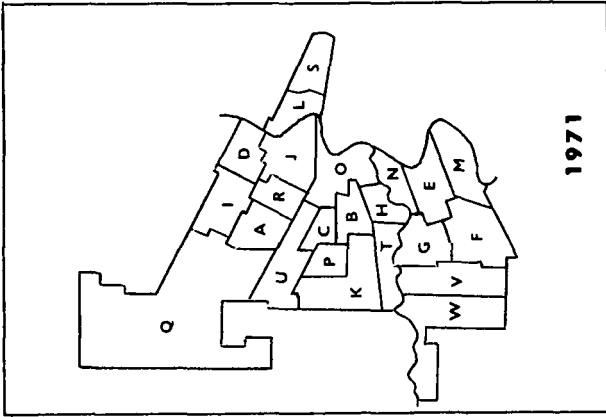
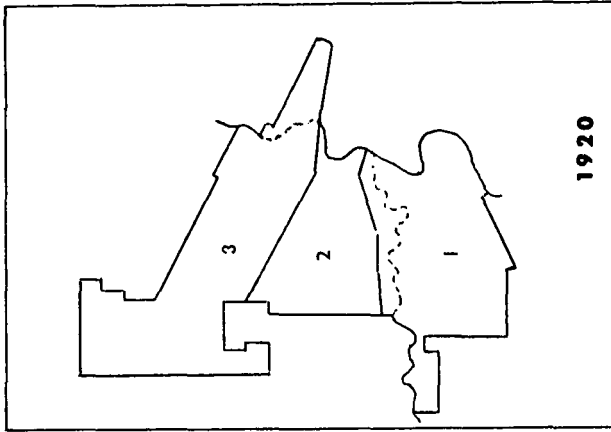
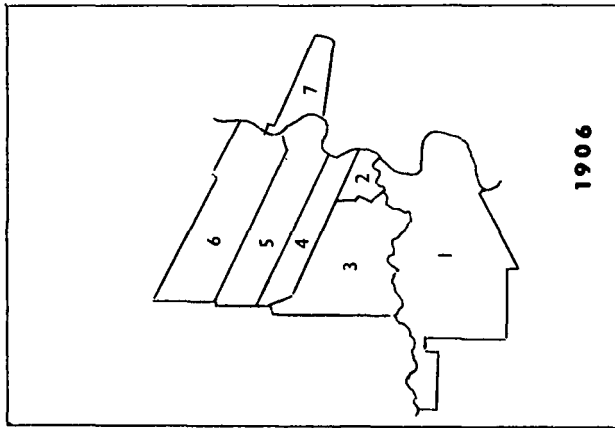
38 Stinson, *Political Warriors*, 338.

39 Artibise, *Winnipeg*, 47-48.

40 For a discussion of the system and Winnipeg, see Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government*, 148-50, and the comments about proportional representation in Canada’s western provinces by Qualter, *The Election Process*, 130-42. A summary of the qualifications of municipal electors for this period is found in the Royal Commission on the Municipal Finances and Administration of the City of Winnipeg, *Report* (Winnipeg: King’s Printer, 1939), 15ff. See also the short statement in the souvenir brochure of the city’s Jubilee (1874-1924), *Winnipeg—Know Our City* (Civic Social and Athletic Association, 1924), 21-22.

MAP I

CITY OF WINNIPEG WARD BOUNDARIES, 1906, 1920, 1971



Prior to the War, the entire thrust of reform by the city's commercial elite had been to centralize civic administration in the hands of a salaried, full-time executive committee to be elected at-large, not on a ward basis.

In theory, City Council, as the legislative body, could still reject the Board's recommendations. But in practice this never happened, for few aldermen had either the time or resources to challenge the powerful and prestigious Board. A restricted franchise, plural voting, and a centralized form of government assured Winnipeg's businessmen that their conception of desirable public policy would prevail.⁴¹

The heightened labour political consciousness engendered by the general strike had produced both a council deadlocked with seven labour and seven citizens' aldermen, and a controversy between advocates of adult suffrage (the labour group) and the defenders of plural voting and the property franchise (the citizens' committee). The rurally dominated legislature was clearly no friend to labour; moreover, this was the era of nonpartisanship. In defence of the reform proposal the *Manitoba Free Press* editorialized: "some system is needed in which partizanship [sic] will be eliminated from the council."⁴²

The proposal, introduced to council by a Citizens' League alderman, George Fisher, was presented as deferring to labour's representations: "Ald. George Fisher . . . stated that it [was] . . . a fair compromise between the Citizens' League proposals and adult suffrage. He advocated it's [sic] adoption on the grounds that at present the civic representation was unequal and unfair."⁴³ The labour group on council, although apparently taken by surprise at the introduction of the motion,⁴⁴ nonetheless perceived its intent correctly.

Ald. Queen declared that the 7-7 situation was at the bottom of the scheme, that the Citizens' League was afraid of the growing power of labor in the council, and this redistribution was intended to make it certain that labor could never gain a majority.⁴⁵

Acknowledging the haste, Fisher defended his motion by observing that the provincial legislature had "only decided on this measure last Friday, and had informed him that if the city wished anything done this year that this was what the legislature was prepared to give them."⁴⁶ Despite a

41 Artibise, *Winnipeg*, 58.

42 "The Three-Ward System Adopted," *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg), March 17, 1920.

43 *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg), March 16, 1920.

44 At the regular meeting of the Trades Council the night following the council meeting, "Ald. Robinson . . . stated that he knew absolutely nothing of the proposed change until its introduction on the night it was endorsed. Such a change, he said, should have been brought befor [sic] the legislative committee for proper consideration" (*Manitoba Free Press* [Winnipeg], March 17, 1920).

45 *Ibid.*, March 16, 1920.

46 *Ibid.*

series of delaying tactics, including an attempt to introduce a six-month hoist, the proposal was carried on a vote of eight to six by the Citizens' League councillors abetted by the defection of labour's Alderman Wiginton.⁴⁷ The provincial government acting with requisite haste passed the necessary amending legislation within a fortnight.

To the pleasure of the *Manitoba Free Press* the move to three wards represented a rejection of adult suffrage; it was, rather, a "reasonable beginning in franchise reform." Refusing to acknowledge any advantage whatever in a universal franchise, the *Free Press* supported its position by arguing that reforms must aim "not at the elevation of any special class of citizens into a position of control, but at the just representation at City Hall of all classes of our civic community."⁴⁸ The 'citizens' coalitions were to remain so strong that the city was not to encounter any form of universal adult franchise until the wartime civic elections.⁴⁹

Alderman Queen had, of course, been correct in his assessment. While on the one hand the reduction in the number of wards did restrict the practice of plural voting it was not eliminated.⁵⁰ Nor were steps taken to extend the local franchise to other than property owners or, in other words, to labour's realm of potential support. On the contrary, the new ward alignment would severely disadvantage the labourites for at least two reasons. First, the location of the wards guaranteed a complete contingent of propertied representation from Ward One which encompassed the wealthier, developing and British part of the city. Second, although each of the wards comprised a roughly comparable number of electors,⁵¹ the lists were based upon property ownership.⁵² Coupled

47 *City of Winnipeg, Minutes of the Council* (March 15, 1920), 205-08. The defection of Wiginton was essentially irrelevant to the outcome of the vote since Mayor Gray would have voted, as he had in the past, with the Citizens' group in the event of a tie.

48 *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg), March 17, 1920. 'Just representation' had been something of a problem in Manitoba. For example, Lionel Orlikow notes that in 1914 F. J. Dixon's "personal vote of 9200 was greater than the total of 8900 of the cabinet of seven men." Note his "The Reform Movement in Manitoba, 1910-1915," in Donald Swainson (ed.), *Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 226.

49 Although extending the vote to British subjects was approved by referendum November 22, 1940, it was only with the election of November 27, 1942, that the reform became operable. Note the *City of Winnipeg, Municipal Manual: 1971* (Winnipeg, 1971), 24. It is important to note that John Queen was the city's mayor for this wartime period (1938-1942) of franchise reform, although it did not ensure his re-election. See also Stinson, *Political Warriors*, 249-53.

50 In simplest terms plural voting results from the practice of permitting property owners to vote in each ward in which their property is located. Therefore, reducing the number of wards naturally reduces plural voting.

51 See *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg), March 16, 1920. For the elections that fall, Ward One would have 20,466 electors, Ward Two would have 21,070 and Ward Three 18,728.

52 At the extreme, Artibise notes that in the earlier election of 1910, when there were 72

with a transferable ballot guaranteeing representation to sizeable minorities, this property restriction would mean at least a single Citizens' alderman from labour's potential stronghold in Ward Three.⁵³ In retrospect, we can conclude that the 'Citizens' were cognizant of the campaign advantages accruing from political resources applied to large-scale constituencies, especially when contrasted with labour's demonstrated advantages in localized campaigns. Winnipeg's election system was to remain as described here for a half a century without serious challenge.

The Metropolitan Corporation Divisions (1961)

It is not essential to dwell upon the Metropolitan corporation's (1961) election system, except inasmuch as it constitutes a ratification of the representation then existing. The record suggests that the election system was not a matter of considerable concern to the provincial legislators nor, as evidenced by the public hearings before the legislature's law amendments committee, to local municipal councils.⁵⁴ The local councils were markedly docile despite facing a direct election of Metro councillors contrary to the widely-acceptable Toronto experience which had local councillors, some of whom acted also as delegates to the metropolitan council. Unquestionably the work of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission had facilitated the acceptance of the provisions for direct election.⁵⁵ In its *Report*, the Commission had argued that "the area as a whole can benefit most by not setting up a form of council which can best be described as 'city versus suburbs.'" Its recommendation had been for a 14-man council with six members elected directly plus the already elected heads of the proposed eight largest area municipalities. It was a scheme, incidentally, rediscovered

polling stations, ex-mayor Andrews was registered at 66 and a Mr. D. E. Sprague at 60 (*Winnipeg*, 40).

- 53 On occasions when working-class turnout would be atypically low (that is, in those elections without a mayoralty contest), the proportion of the Citizens' vote would swell, the labour vote being swamped by the larger turnout rate of the middle-class across the large-scale constituency.
- 54 Introduced to the legislature by resolution on February 12, 1960, Bill 62, "An Act to Establish the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg," moved quickly through its legislative phases to passage on March 21, 1960.
- 55 The Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission in itself constitutes an interesting case of the differing roles set for royal commission investigations by a parliamentary administration. See D. G. Mitchell, "Royal Commissions as Executive Instruments," unpublished B.A. (Honours) thesis, University of Alberta, 1973. Although reluctant, the provincial Liberal administration responded to repeated requests by the area's municipalities to appoint (and fund) an inquiry in 1955. Among the five commissioners were included the mayors of Winnipeg and the area's two largest suburban cities, St. James and St. Boniface. All of the commissioners had been selected from a list of nominees submitted by the municipalities. See Greater Winnipeg investigating Commission, *Report and Recommendations* (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1959), 19.

as the appropriate metropolitan representation formula by the Local Government Boundaries Commission in 1970 and rejected by the new NDP provincial government.⁵⁶

In his public statements concerning the metropolitan government legislation, Premier Duff Roblin presented singularly little defence of his decision to opt for a ten-man directly elected council.⁵⁷ He maintained this stance despite the widely shared but never publicly voiced speculation that the specific intention of the plan was to restrain Winnipeg's aggressively pro-amalgamation mayor from an institutionally defined but politically destructive role in the new regime. Nor was there much questioning of the proposals by the official Opposition (Liberals) in the legislature. Their major concerns were that a non-partisan commission strike the electoral boundaries and that there be a referendum on the legislation.⁵⁸ The CCF members of the house (including backbencher Ed Schreyer) endorsed the legislation completely.⁵⁹ Final division on the legislation found but five rural members and the liberal MLA for St. Boniface (Laurent Desjardins) in opposition.

It is important to note that the Metro scheme instituted constituency divisions of roughly 50,000 population (see Map 2). Their completely artificial construction purposely transcended any bounds of neighbourhood or community. These electoral lines, when coupled to the quasi-at-large size of the divisions, virtually guaranteed a conservative dominance of Winnipeg's metropolitan government through an election system biased in favour of the types of political resources most easily mobilized by the urban middle class and specific business interests.⁶⁰ The Conservatives argued that the resultant small council would encourage both 'efficiency' and 'area-wide' thinking.⁶¹ What is remarkable is the significant absence of opposition to the electoral components of the legislation, particularly by the CCF, but this certainly reflects the general lack of controversy surrounding the new form of

56 Local Government Boundaries Commission, *Provisional Plan for Local Government Units in the Greater Winnipeg Area* (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1970), 69-70. This scheme would have seen one municipal representative for each area's 50,000 population, plus ten directly elected members, at least six of whom would have directly represented city of Winnipeg constituencies.

57 It is important to observe that the Act also specified that each electoral division was to encompass a portion of at least two area municipalities. Note Manitoba, *Debates and Proceedings*, February 17, 1960, 665.

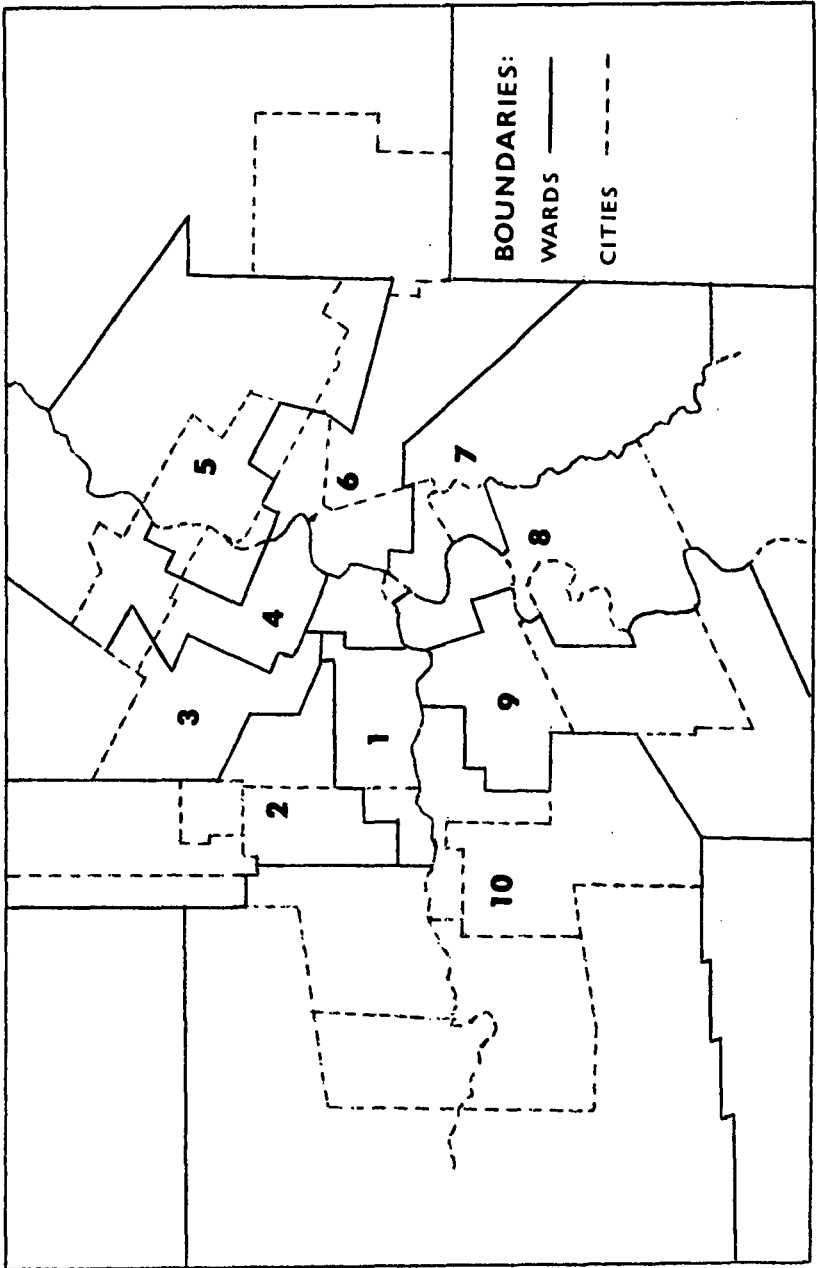
58 On this point note the comments of the leader of the Opposition (former Premier D. L. Campbell who had struck the Investigating Commission) in Manitoba, *Debates and Proceedings*, February 24, 1960, 881-84 and March 21, 1960, 1801.

59 *Ibid.*, February 25, 1960, 906-10.

60 For example, for the four years immediately prior to Unicity the metro council was comprised of three New Democrats and seven Liberals and Conservatives. All were to stand as candidates in 1971, but only the four nominated as official ICEC candidates were to win seats on the new council.

61 Brownstone, et al., *Politics and the Process of Reform*, 23.

MAP 2
METROPOLITAN CORPORATION OF GREATER WINNIPEG, WARD
BOUNDARIES, 1961-1971



government. The legislation did not disturb local boundaries and generally reflected local councillors' thinking on 'reorganization.' Consequently the debate was easily directed toward mechanisms rather than aspects of bias inherent in the institutional changes.

Unicity Electoral Changes (1971)

In the summer of 1969, the new provincial NDP regime faced a local system producing 112 councillors for the various metropolitan municipalities and Metro (see Table 1), only 12 of whom could be identified as New Democrats.⁶² The reaction from these local officials to *any* adjustment in the election system would be rooted in considerable suspicion of the government's partisan motives. The province's original proposal to reduce the total number of local councillors for Unicity from 112 to 48 was said to be based upon the opinions of "most current thinking of urban planners in other jurisdictions who suggest that the appropriate base for effective popular representation is one councillor for every 10-12,000 people."⁶³ But both Sidney Green (Minister of Energy and Resources) and Saul Cherniak (Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Urban Affairs) had been city of Winnipeg as well as Metro councillors. From the outset of the revision process and on the basis of this experience, they had wanted small, single-member, wards: "I had had experience of being one of six [aldermen] from a large ward: people must be able to perceive their representatives clearly; we wanted one person from each ward so they would be visible."⁶⁴ That this aspect of unification would be key to the new organization's political structure was decided in cabinet November 5-6, 1971, and ratified by caucus on November 14. Actual size of the wards was also contingent upon the decision to retain former municipal boundaries for the community committees; with three or four councillors per community committee this meant constituencies of 10,000 to 12,000 population.

The government also sought publicly to allay the worst of the parochial fears: "It cannot be emphasized too strongly at this point that no effort would be spared in making the boundaries of these wards—which would be subject to review at regular intervals by an independent review commission—as accurately as possible a reflection, not merely of existing municipal boundaries, but of the established local, historical, traditional—that is, natural and familiar—community groupings."⁶⁵ The first public reaction of local councillors was based

62 Bill Burdeney, "Party Politics and Regional Government," in Lloyd Axworthy (ed.), *The Future City* (Winnipeg: Institute for Urban Studies, 1971), 34.

63 Province of Manitoba, *Proposals for Urban Reorganization in the Greater Winnipeg Area* (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1970), 11.

64 Personal interview with Hon. Saul Cherniak, August 25, 1971.

65 Province of Manitoba, *Proposals*, 13.

TABLE 1

REPRESENTATION ON GREATER WINNIPEG COUNCILS: 1969

Municipality	1969 Popu- lation	No. of wards	No. of aldermen	Ratio of ald'n to population	Average ward population
Charleswood	8,838	4	4	1:2,210	1:2,210
E. Kildonan	28,586	3	6	1:4,764	1:9,529
Fort Garry	22,934	3	6	1:3,822	1:7,645
N. Kildonan	14,175	3	4	1:3,544	1:4,725
O. Kildonan	1,532	4	4	1:383	1:383
St. Boniface	45,370	6	12	1:3,781	1:7,562
St. James-As.	66,710	—	14	1:4,765	1:66,710
St. Vital	31,101	—	6	1:5,183	1:31,101
Transcona	21,135	—	6	1:3,523	1:21,135
Tuxedo	3,100	—	4	1:775	1:3,100
W. Kildonan	23,277	—	6	1:3,880	1:23,277
Winnipeg	249,886	3	18	1:13,882	1:83,295
Metro	516,644	10	10	1:51,664	1:51,664

Source: Columns one through five are derived from the report of Local Government Boundaries Commission, *Provisional Plan for Local Government Units in the Greater Winnipeg Area* (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1970), 13.

upon the premise that the New Democrats intended to destroy their political constituencies,⁶⁶ and, in the more elaborately constructed suspicions, that the NDP sought to impose its will upon the entire urban area by legally institutionalizing party politics into the new local structures. Such concerns surfaced in the legislative debate on second reading of the Unicity bill. The Conservative urban critic argued:

Bill 36 will introduce party politics into the civic scene and this is wrong. It's already happening. . . . There are meetings going on all over the city. I would say that I'll get the usual type of chatter about C.E.C. but only the N.D.P. party caucuses before meetings of city council. . . . The party politics in our cities have not been there between the other two parties and shouldn't be, but this will create it.⁶⁷

This theme struck a responsive chord among the suburban constituents of Winnipeg's Conservative MLAs:

What concerns me most is the fact that really behind Bill 36, behind the move towards total amalgamation lie clear, crass and cynically political motives. . . . I

66 So, to some extent, Tom Axworthy's quip has substance: "their very existence was at stake and hell hath no fury like a politician about to lose his job." See his "Winnipeg Unicity," in Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *A Look to the North: Canadian Regional Experience* (Washington, D.C.: 1974), 106.

67 J. Frank Johnston, Manitoba, *Debates and Proceedings*, June 9, 1971, 1656.

don't think this government is necessarily correct in its assumption that amalgamation will do for it in political terms what it is its ambition to achieve insofar as establishing centralizing power and control and authority in the hands of the New Democratic Party. . . . Despite all the disclaimers of the Minister of Urban Affairs and others in the administration I believe that the procedure being proposed in this bill is basically and fundamentally a partisan political one. . . . [I]t is a design which the government feels will permit it to strengthen its position insofar as it represents a specific political party in this area.⁶⁸

Suburban Liberals had earlier voiced, albeit less stridently, similar concerns.⁶⁹ As a consequence, at the 'founding' convention of the Independent Citizens' Election Committee some months later, considerable pains were taken to prevent identification of the association as a political party and to differentiate its activities from those of the municipal wing of the NDP.⁷⁰

The data in Table 1, column 5, were used as the basis of the more sophisticated arguments against the new government's redefinition of the local electoral system.⁷¹ In hearings on Bill 36 (the Unicity legislation) before the legislature's municipal affairs committee, West Kildonan Mayor D. A. Yanofsky, presenting this information, argued that suburban residents were well represented by one alderman to every four or five thousand population and that only the average citizen of Winnipeg proper was not adequately represented.⁷² Arguing directly against the bill's 50-ward proposal, Yanofsky concluded: "It is obvious therefore that in practically all of the areas other than the city of Winnipeg, the average elector will be at least twice or thrice more removed from his elected representatives than he has been up to now. *Is this the way to bring local government closer to the people?*"⁷³ These conclusions are not, in fact, that obvious. If the data in the table are corrected to take into account the size of the electorate for each councillor, a more accurate perception of each constituency (column 6) can be established for Winnipeg's local election systems. Based on this, it is more obvious that local councillors throughout the Winnipeg area (except in the smallest municipalities) had been campaigning for the support of much larger

68 L. R. Sherman, *ibid.*, June 10, 1971, 1688.

69 Steve Patrick, Liberal MLA for Assiniboia, *ibid.*, June 7, 1971, 1569.

70 The NDP municipal convention had resolved that its policies would be binding upon its candidates. The ICEC convention (150 delegates meeting in a suburban curling club) unanimously resolved that its policies were not binding but merely "guides to good administration" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, September 13, 1971).

71 As indicated, the table is adapted from the Local Government Boundaries Commission. It is, incidentally, a direct replica of work done by the Investigating Commission a decade earlier, which had generated a similar uncritical appraisal of representation by associating such with the ratio of elected officials to citizens. Note tables and discussion, *Report and Recommendations* (1959), 99-101.

72 City of West Kildonan, *Submission of the City of West Kildonan to the Municipal Affairs Committee Concerning Bill 36, 'The City of Winnipeg.'* July 14, 1971, 28-29.

73 *Ibid.*, 29. Emphasis in the original.

electorates than those proposed for Unicity. Pre-Unicity representation had been most conducive to the political resources wielded by the social class comprising the backbone of the succession of Citizens' Committees. That the councillors were happy with the existing arrangements was evident through their earlier meetings with the Boundaries (Smellie) Commission during which only the cities of Winnipeg and St. Boniface, and the Metropolitan Corporation (for its existing large wards), were prepared to endorse any form of ward system for the area.⁷⁴ After setting aside the rhetoric of citizen participation, plans for compact wards must be interpreted as the substitution of a new institutional pattern of political bias. The government was sensitive to these considerations: "Even those [business interests] in favour of an amalgamation wanted large wards."⁷⁵ While quickly attempting to defuse overtly partisan jibes of gerrymander by appointing a conspicuously nonpartisan commission (chaired by a Liberal citizenship judge), the government had no intention of altering its basic design.⁷⁶ In his introduction of Bill 36 to the legislature, the minister had openly identified representation as one critical problem to be tackled:

There were areas in Greater Winnipeg . . . where people felt that they were close and were indeed close to the government in policy-making apparatus within local government, and others where they were removed, where they were alienated, where they just didn't know how to have a voice or voice an opinion on matters that were of such importance. We agreed that there were large sections in Greater Winnipeg where there was alienation, where there was disinterest, and where there was this real feeling of helplessness, lack of involvement of so many people in Greater Winnipeg.⁷⁷

The fundamental problem defined here by the government, the institutionalizing of a 'voice' for their constituents in municipal affairs, was markedly different from that which its opponents perceived; to rectify it would require significant adaptation of the pattern of representation. In consequence, considerable attention was paid in the Act to the

74 See "Synopsis of Comments at Meetings of Metro Municipal Councils Between October 3 and November 26, 1969," Local Government Boundaries Commission, Internal File #4703, n.d.

75 Interview with Mr. Cherniak. Note also the statement in support of at-large elections by C. J. Rogers, spokesman for the Winnipeg Downtown Business Association, *Tribune* (Winnipeg), January 26, 1971.

76 The other members of the commission were the retired clerk of the Legislative Assembly and the retired president of the University of Manitoba. Note the *Report of the Greater Winnipeg Electoral Boundaries Review Commission, 1971* (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, April 15, 1971). The Commission was provided restrictive terms of reference exactly paralleling the government's *Proposals*, and a working period from accepting these to presentation of final report of 21 days. The government also maintained a close liaison through the person of Cherniak's special assistant, Mrs. E. Gallagher, who "was instrumental in researching and drafting the report" (Brownstone, et al., *Politics and the Process of Reform*, 72).

77 Cherniak, Manitoba, *Debates and Proceedings*, June 3, 1971, 1466.

details of election and representation. The entire nature of the debate over the bias inherent in 'mechanisms' of elections was to be considerably different from that in 1961.⁷⁸ Whether the proposals have met the intent of the reforming authorities is a question that now commends itself to our attention.

The Unicity Candidates

The Unicity election of October 6, 1971, was again a contest between the traditional antagonists in Winnipeg city politics, the "Independent Citizens" (ICEC) and the New Democratic party (NDP). The latter was the first to enter the campaign, adopting its policy positions at a municipal convention held August 21-22. As noted above, the ICEC reconstituted its Liberal-Conservative coalition some three weeks later. The issue of partisanship was itself central to the campaign. In its full-page advertisements, the ICEC announced that its candidates were dedicated to "reject political party loyalties and vote according to conscience in the best interests of city government. . . . I.C.E.C. candidates answer to no party. . . ."⁷⁹ The *Free Press* editorialized on election eve: "One factor that will have some influence on the voting is whether voters wish to introduce party politics in a formal way, through the NDP, into municipal politics, or whether they wish to retain a non-party political structure in the operation of the new city, on the basis that a man or woman with no formal political ties at this level can more effectively represent his area than can a candidate who is formally tied to a political platform. . . ."⁸⁰ As they had in the past, the NDP candidates directly challenged the criticism of party politics.⁸¹ But Premier Schreyer was not himself convinced of the desirability of party intervention⁸² and was not surprised by the outcome.⁸³ Further, the local effort was bedevilled by shortages of workers, money and campaign material. Finally, many of the traditional civic leadership in the NDP had been either elected to the legislature or were employed by the government, which left local candidacies to newcomers unable to compete with the established

78 On the particular matter of change in the system of representation consider also Lloyd Axworthy and Jim Cassidy, *Unicity: The Transition* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, 1974), 195-206.

79 For example, see the *Winnipeg Free Press*, September 18, 1971. On the city council of Winnipeg, however, its predecessors had normally caucused prior to important meetings. For the period 1960-64 the CEC maintained a majority of 11-7 over opposition councillors, from 1965 to 1971 a majority of 10-8. Nonetheless the majority on *all* six standing committees of council from 1961 to 1971 was from the CEC-GWEC caucus. Of the 60 annual committee chairmanships available for this period, the CEC-GWEC caucus retained 53.

80 *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 5, 1971.

81 Stinson, *Political Warriors*, 300-09.

82 *Winnipeg Free Press*, September 29, 1971, 1.

83 *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 7, 1971, 3.

'names' of the ICEC.⁸⁴ The ICEC was also able to capitalize, to some extent, upon the residue of the struggle against Bill 36; the results of the vote showed 37 of 48 ICEC candidates elected, 7 of 39 NDP, and 6 of the 69 other candidates elected.⁸⁵

The re-election success of incumbents was to have been expected, particularly within a system strongly imbued with the mythology of non-partisanship, but also given the pattern of politics in which NDP 'newcomers' battled electorally with entrenched local mayors or aldermen whose candidacies were legitimated by ICEC endorsement. The 1971 Unicity election firmly established suburban, and conservative, control of the new city council in alliance with the returning GWEC faction in the core city.⁸⁶ As had happened in the Greater London reorganization of 1963, the bitterest opponents of the plan assumed immediate control of the new apparatus.⁸⁷ Table 2 provides part of the story; ICEC incumbents were successful, in many instances defeating NDP officeholders. Political newcomers were largely unsuccessful for either party, but three-quarters of the NDP candidates were newcomers, and only a third of the ICEC. Four of the six successful independents had also been incumbent councillors.

TABLE 2

INCUMBENT RE-ELECTIONS, UNICITY ELECTIONS, OCTOBER, 1971

	Elected		Defeated	
	Incumbent	Novice	Incumbent	Novice
ICEC	29	8	0	11
NDP	1	6	10	22

As has been observed in other jurisdictions, local electoral politics is usually a middle class activity. Robert Dahl, for instance, observes

- 84 Personal interview with Wally Johannson, MLA (NDP caucus chairman and campaign manager for veteran Alderman Magnus Eliason, who was defeated in 1971), August 26, 1975.
- 85 The election also produced, at 60.7 per cent, the highest voter turnout since civic records were maintained (1920) (*Winnipeg Free Press*, October 24, 1974).
- 86 The previously suburban wards returned 26 ICEC, three like-thinking Independents, and no NDP councillors.
- 87 Frank Smallwood, *Greater London: The Politics of Metropolitan Reform* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 287-88. "[H]alf the newly-elected GLC Labour councillors formerly served as members of the LCC, including all key committee chairmen and leaders. . . . Hence, the elections had the practical effect of expanding substantially the geographical jurisdiction of the former LCC while leaving its former leadership patterns virtually intact" (287).

that "a wage earner is rarely appointed or elected to any of the city's leading offices."⁸⁸ Kenneth Prewitt's research in the San Francisco Bay area demonstrates that the local councillor's role is generally perceived as a 'middle-class' responsibility although the status of the individuals elected will vary with the general class composition of the community.⁸⁹ This latter point is better substantiated in work by Bryan Downes, even though he further notes that varying the social class composition of communities did not significantly affect the policy preferences of the local legislators.⁹⁰ Downes's research also deals with elected officials. In Great Britain too, local politicians tend to germinate within middle-class ranks: "In all boroughs except one the middle-class element on the council is at least twice as great as the middle-class element in the local population. . . ."⁹¹ The limited evidence available in Canada suggests that this is also the case with our own urban politics.⁹²

TABLE 3

CIVIC CANDIDATURES (1971), BY PARTY AND ETHNICITY, BY ELECTORAL SUCCESS

Party and Ethnicity	Elected	Defeated	% Elected	Total	% of total
<i>Independent Citizens' Election Committee</i>					
British	21	1	95.5	22	45.8
Slavic	6	4	60.0	10	20.8
Other Europe	9	6	60.0	15	31.2
Others	1	0	100.0	1	2.1
No Information	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Totals	37	11	77.1	48	99.9
<i>New Democratic party</i>					
British	2	17	10.5	19	48.7
Slavic	0	6	0.0	6	15.4
Other Europe	3	9	25.0	12	30.7
Others	1	0	100.0	1	2.6
No Information	1	0	100.0	1	2.6
Totals	7	32	17.9	39	100.0

88 Robert Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 230.

89 Kenneth Prewitt, *The Recruitment of Political Leaders: A Study of Citizen Politicians* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), 31-49.

90 B. T. Downes, "Municipal Social Rank and the Characteristics of Local Political Leaders," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 22 (1968), 514-37.

91 L. J. Sharpe, "Elected Representatives in Local Government," *British Journal of Sociology* 13 (1962), 201.

92 See, for example, Easton and Tennant, "Vancouver Civic Party Leadership," 112-13.

TABLE 4

CANDIDATURES BY GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL AND ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	Federal %	Provincial %	Civic %	1971 Census %
British	60.6	60.6	47.1	42.9
Slavic	10.0	18.9	18.4	19.0
Other Europe	27.5	19.6	31.0	36.6
Others	1.7	0.3	2.3	1.5
No Information	0.0	0.6	1.1	n.a.
Totals	99.8	100.0	99.9	100.0
N	120	317	87	

Tables 3 and 4 present our data concerning the ethnic backgrounds of local candidates for the two major contenders in 1971, contrasting these with federal and provincial candidacies for the period 1958-1972.⁹³ For the cumulative slates there are insignificant differences between the ICEC and the New Democrats; however with the former, electoral success is strongly associated with British ancestry (roughly 57 per cent of ICEC councillors). Despite this, it is at the civic level that the pattern of candidate offering most closely approximates ethnic cleavage within the urban area. In this sense, and importantly, the new ward system does not represent a barrier to the electoral aspirations of ethnic minorities.⁹⁴ Wards, half the size of provincial constituencies and one-ninth of the federal, would appear to better facilitate the electoral expression of relevant neighbourhood social attachments.

Nonetheless, the continuing middle class bias of Winnipeg's city politics is shown clearly through candidate occupational backgrounds presented in Tables 5 and 6. The notable differences between the NDP and the ICEC relate to the staggering proportion of the latter's candidates drawn directly from business vocations (nearly two-thirds) and to the former's espousal of candidates from a union or labour background. Business and professional backgrounds have also predominated among the Winnipeg area's federal (70 per cent) and provincial (61.6 per cent) candidates. But, while 'only' 53.9 per cent of our civic candidate group were drawn from these categories (there thus appears an inverse ratio between governmental level of the contest and this particular occupational preponderance), they comprise 70.4 per cent of those elected.

93 For a discussion of the federal and provincial candidate data see this author's "Adapting Urban Institutions," 140-55.

94 Banfield and Wilson have observed, for example, that in Boston the change from wards to at-large elections in 1949 had effectively eliminated ethnic minority representatives from the council (*City Politics*, 94-96).

TABLE 5

CIVIC CANDIDATURES (1971), BY PARTY AND OCCUPATIONS, BY ELECTORAL SUCCESS

Party and occupation	Elected	Defeated	% Elected	Total	% of total
<i>Independent Citizens' Election Committee</i>					
Law	7	0	100.0	7	14.6
Business	22	9	70.9	31	64.6
Other professions	2	0	100.0	2	4.2
Teacher	3	0	100.0	3	6.3
Clergy	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other white collar	1	1	50.0	2	4.2
Blue collar	0	1	0.0	1	2.1
Others	2	0	100.0	2	4.2
No information	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Totals	37	11	77.1	48	100.1
<i>New Democratic party</i>					
Law	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Business	0	4	0.0	4	10.3
Other professions	0	3	0.0	3	7.7
Teacher	1	6	14.3	7	17.9
Clergy	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other white collar	3	7	30.0	10	25.6
Blue collar	2	10	16.7	12	30.8
Others	1	2	33.3	3	7.7
No information	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Totals	7	32	17.9	39	100.0

That the overall blue collar proportion of civic candidatures is roughly equal to the provincial distribution is almost exclusively the consequence of NDP nominations. Middle class candidacies account for 80 per cent of those nominated by the two major civic contenders in 1971.

Did, in fact, the electoral revision of 1971 make much difference? The evidence in Table 7, comparing the Unicity major party candidacies with civic nominations in three other jurisdictions of roughly comparable size,⁹⁵ provides one aspect of the answer. In all four cities, professionals and businessmen account for between 54 and 62 per cent of the candidates; Winnipeg is at the lower end, however, with the fewest candidates from the professions of all cities. The strength of her 'business' party, the ICEC, establishes the greatest preponderance in this

⁹⁵ Vancouver's 10 aldermen are elected at large. Toronto elects 2 in each of 11 large block wards and in Edmonton 3 are elected in each of 4 quasi-at-large strip wards.

TABLE 6

CANDIDATURES AND MALE LABOUR FORCE, BY OCCUPATION AND GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL

Occupation	Federal %	Provincial %	Civic %	1971 Census %
Law	23.3	22.1	8.0	0.9
Business	25.0	24.6	40.2	7.6
Other professions	21.7	14.9	5.7	9.6
Teacher	5.0	8.2	11.5	2.9
Other white collar	8.3	10.7	13.8	23.8
Blue collar	7.5	15.1	14.9	45.7
Others	9.2	3.2	5.7	9.5
No information	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Totals	100.0	101.1	99.8	100.0
N	120	317	87	

TABLE 7

CIVIC CANDIDATURES, BY OCCUPATION AND SELECTED JURISDICTIONS

Occupation	Winnipeg	Vancouver	Vancouver	Toronto	Edmonton
	1971 %	1972 %	1974 %	1974 %	1974 %
Law	8.0	12.0	9.1	9.3	7.5
Business	40.2	24.0	27.3	26.7	35.8
Other professions	5.7	26.0	20.5	24.4	18.9
Teacher	11.5	8.0	2.3	3.5	9.4
Other white collar	13.8	18.0	15.9	11.6	13.2
Blue collar	14.9	10.0	9.1	9.3	7.5
Others	5.7	2.0	15.9	13.9	7.5
No information	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0
Totals	99.8	100.0	100.1	99.9	99.8
N	87*	50	44	86	53

* The Winnipeg data describe only the candidates for the two major civic parties, the ICEC and the NDP.

category for the cities compared. Winnipeg's system now appears the most conducive to blue collar, labour, and educator nomination although such nomination does not ensure election. If, however, we include in Winnipeg's totals those candidates not affiliated with the civic parties, her total of 156 aspirants to office is considerably greater than the other cities considered.

Analysis of the 1971 civic election results, an election fought largely between the NDP and the Liberals and Conservatives in coalition, reveals also a strong correlation between the former and the less privileged sectors of the community.⁹⁶ Where concentrated, this support was translated into formal representation. But while the institution of small wards did encourage the candidacies of nonprofessionals and increase the overall number of aspirants, it could not counteract the myth of 'non-partisanship' personified in the ICEC. This, plus the accrued advantages of a well-organized and entrenched local business party, permitted ICEC councillors to be returned from wards outside their areas of greatest class support. One question posed but not confronted by this study will have to be answered by substantive analysis of local policy decisions: will the decentralization of electoral power through the ward system produce councillors responsive to the local expectations of their wards?⁹⁷ Comparative evidence suggests that this *will* increasingly occur, but that it will still be a case of middle class gladiators acting *for* working class constituents.⁹⁸ If the scheme was intended as a social democratic reform to enhance working class power in local politics, then tinkering with the ward system provided at most a modest advance on the road to city council.

- 96 The (Spearman) rho test between NDP support and census areas ranked by highest average income is $-.881$. For a discussion of variables and method note this author's "Adapting Urban Institutions," 100-02, 259-64.
- 97 In reviewing the operations of the first Unicity council, provincial bureaucrats did observe one tendency, that being to "spend [tax] money for personal credit, hence log-rolling and the budget sky-rockets"—more so than with the previous Metro regime. Personal interviews with senior officials, Department of Urban Affairs.
- 98 Note, for example, the developments relating to the emergence of a new reform movement during the 1974 civic campaign in The Editors, "Reform Politics in Winnipeg: Opening Things Up," *City Magazine* 1 (1975), 28-36.