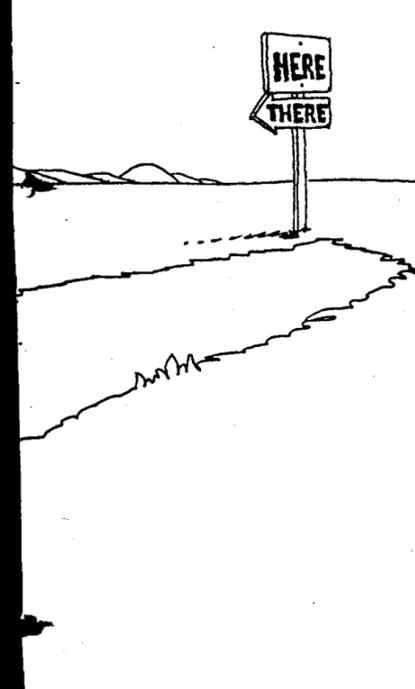


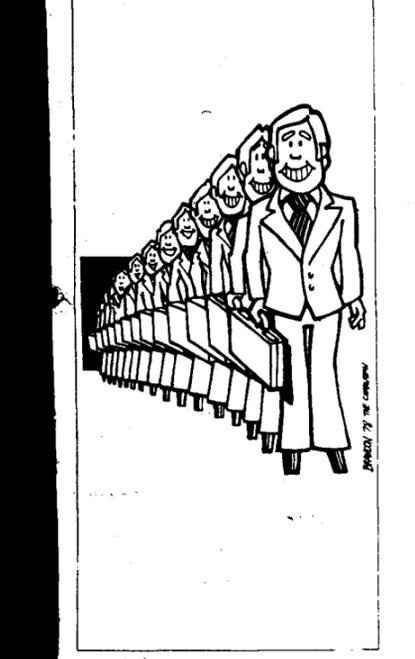
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welders and communication electricians. These jobs had been popular since 1974, when it became apparent that skills for constructing Syncrude and other tar sands projects were sadly lacking in Alberta. The push was on and by 1976, Alberta had a trained labour force, necessary for completion of the Syncrude project.

With the overwhelming success of the Syncrude project, and the fact that the Alberta government was able to transform its post-secondary education system into a training ground for the oil consortium and other businessmen, the Lougheed Team began taking bids for expanding tar-sands operations. Projects came quickly, Cold Lake, Athabasca, and heavy oil extraction around Lloydminster. These are projected for the early 1980s. Already Cold Lake will need primary construction crews (carpenters, plumbers, electricians, heavy duty mechanics, motor mechanics) for the 1981 projected starting date. Akin to the Syncrude project, two years later, 1984, a secondary push on construction will happen. The original Tar-Sands project has proved the Lougheed Team can make good at least some of its promises. But what about the much lauded promise of secondary industries and manufacturing. This isn't as easily done. The fact has been that once you have developed a skilled labour force for a resource industry, you must also be willing to produce the much needed secondary labour force, not in manufacturing but in administration; both public and private.



Again the post-secondary system has been directed by the 'need for employable skills and manpower needs of the province' to develop more courses aimed at accounting, management arts, administration, to meet the growing need for oil related service industries. While between 1974 and 1976 the Manpower division of Advanced Education dealt mainly with technical training at the colleges and technical schools, by 1977 it began to influence even the funding, courses and directions of the universities.

While the Manpower Policy Act was passed in Nov. of 1972, the government has been considering amending it for the past year. However these amendments would in no way change the basic objectives of the policy. It has worked too well in promoting 'education for employment.' What the government has been lacking, and is not even considering developing in the light of the fact that the Department of Advanced Education is now merely an adjunct arm of Manpower, is a policy reflecting the needs of Advanced Education. Surprising for a province that prides itself on its innovative Manpower Policy and training programs, no equivalent policy exists to protect the universities and post-secondary educational system liberal arts character.

"Advanced Education policy is established by legislation and annual reports of the department. These cover what we are doing, what we intend to do and of course our budget which has a major impact on the development of all institutions in the province. But no we don't have a separate policy for Advanced Education like we do for Manpower, I don't see why we should have."

School vs jobs

Jim Horsman, Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower Aug. 79. "My government will continue to emphasize quality post-secondary education programs, with particular reference to new programs which respond to demands for highly skilled manpower.

"The expected stability of enrolments in universities and colleges will provide an opportunity for those institutions to examine ways in which the quality of program offerings can be further enhanced and new priorities established." Peter Lougheed, Speech from the Throne, May 24, 1979.

If Alberta has no real policy covering Advanced Education, beyond current legislation (as outlined in the Speech from the Throne) and annual reports from the department, then wouldn't it seem that a Manpower Policy Act, which has changed the nature and composition of the department over the last seven years, is the guiding force behind all department decisions? Quite true, is the response of civil servants in the department (though doing their best to downplay Manpower's influence). But the current Minister, Jim Horsman denies it. Unfortunately for Mr. Horsman his predecessor and his premier don't deny it. Dr. Hohol for all his faults and inabilities to look much more than a buffoon, did play an integral role in developing the Manpower bureaucracy to meet the aims of the Manpower Policy. While he was unable to function well as an education minister, he functioned well in allowing the Department to develop an infrastructure geared to Manpower. Manpower was his portfolio previously and his task had been to separate it from the Labour portfolio and graft it onto Advanced Education. This he did, and did it well. When he resigned, it was not only because the position had become a hot seat over differential fees and tuition increases, but because the Manpower infrastructure was in place and functioning on its own accord. Did Hohol

by Eugene Plawiuk
Freelance Legislative reporter

get a job teaching, as he is qualified to? No. In return he was given a position as chairman of the Workers Compensation Board, a position that he as a 'Manpower' minister was qualified for.

Jim Horsman on the other hand has walked into a smooth running machine. The Department of Advanced Education, with its infrastructure of Deputy Ministers, Directors, and its heavy emphasis on 'manpower,' tell the Minister what to do. The only real challenge Horsman has offered to the department in the last six months of his being in office, was not to use abbreviations or initials in government documents. When faced with the question of just what kind of new priorities universities must face Horsman hedges. He talks in generalities about meeting the needs of Alberta's economy. But refuses to admit that the majority of that 'economy' is based on oil. Within the Minister's office in the legislature, his staff ponder the eternal question: which came first the chicken or the egg?

"It's really a chicken and the egg question. With enrolments steady or declining, are students taking more employment related courses instead of liberal arts courses because jobs are more available or because the universities are changing their priorities? Is it because students are demanding these courses or because of the Alberta economy?" Randy Fisher, Executive Assistant to Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower.

"Blissful ignorance"

The oil boom in Alberta was about as unexpected as winter, it was planned and executed by both the Lougheed Team and the oil companies. Along with their five-year and ten-year plans for developing all the potential tar sands, and not merely Syncrude, came other well thought out plans; based on five and ten year projections. One of those was the Manpower Policy, which would change the face of education in Alberta for the next ten years. A push to develop training centres, vocational components in colleges, apprenticeship programs, and of course management and administration courses in the universities. One section of the Manpower Policy even suggests that; 'There must be more co-ordination and exchange among all the types of educational institutions and agencies (eg. Why should it not be possible for a philosophy student at the University of Alberta to have as part of his curriculum a course in computer

programming from NAIT?'). Of course a philosophy graduate with some computer experience would find it easier to get a job than with just a philosophy degree. And that job could very well be with anyone of the service offices or head offices of the oil industry or government.

To claim blissful ignorance of the change in post-secondary education in the province is the Tories' favorite past-time. They brought about the change in a coldly calculated, well planned seven year program. And for all of Jim Horsman's talk about "oh yes liberal arts is very important to us," providing skilled workers for the Tories' business associates is the real purpose of post-secondary education, and will remain so for years to come. Hidden behind the skirts of some fragile 'institutional autonomy' Jim Horsman reveals that he is even more a puppet of the Lougheed Team in the Legislature, and the Manpower bureaucrats in Edmonton, than his predecessor was.

The Manpower Policy explicitly states that as new employment skills are needed, education and training will change to fill that need. Not the need of Albertans, but of 'the industrial community.' Special programs with extra grants will be given to universities willing to sacrifice one or two humanities courses for an engineering or accounting course. Under the current structure of the department, the much lauded autonomy and liberal arts aspect of Alberta's universities and colleges is a joke. He who pays the piper calls the tune, and in this case the Lougheed Team not only pays but they have created the piper; the Manpower Policy Act. The tune? Bare bones budgets for post-secondary education with special grants for employment-manpower training courses, big bucks for construction projects, since that provides jobs between tar-sands projects. But no money for expanding the social sciences, humanities, or providing staff for the new buildings unless the universities and colleges can adjust to being 'manpower training components' for the business interests in Alberta.

While the Manpower Policy Act claims to try and 'provide jobs for people and not just people for jobs,' the reality speaks much differently. Like the Queen told Alice; 'I say what I don't mean and don't mean what I say.' To be more honest the Lougheed Team should have renamed Dr. Hohol and Jim Horsman's portfolio to The Department of Manpower Training.

