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Gap In Our Economic Development

If Canada, as a nation, is to keep pace with the modern technological world, it must do something about its present programs of scientific research. This is the inevitable conclusion of any investigation of the present systems of handling the business. For the Canadian nation has fallen behind the major Western nations, and according to D. G. Coxe, "in the long run, Canada's place in the world will depend to a great extent not merely on being in the (technological) race, but on how well we keep up with the leaders". When, in terms of gross national product, it is discovered that the U.S.A. spends 2.5% the U.K. 2.1%, and France 1.5% on scientific research, compared to Canada's less than 1% expenditure, it becomes apparent that we cannot hope to compete properly. Furthermore, it may be seen that even if this statistic is disregarded, we are still in trouble, for in living beside a giant in the field, it would need a major effort to keep

our graduate talent in this country, when they are tempted by the higher salaries and greater volume of research south of the border.

However, it is not, as might be supposed, the government which is most lax in the field. Instead it is private enterprise, who in 1960 contributed less than half the amount of government allotments in research. But herein enters the hidden drain and drag on progress. Industry complains that the government does not give sufficient support to their research programs, which permits their stagnation. This is not in the field of taxation (where there is a very liberal 150% deduction for increases in development expenditure); it is rather in the field of contracts, with industry claiming that the government gives most projects to its own laboratories. And this is the heart of the matter. For no company will put up a satellite for the sake of a tax writeoff, but they will attempt advancements for the sake of added business,

added efficient, added utilization of their resources, etc.

One industrial scientist put it this way: "If we don't improve our technical competence, we won't get more government contracts; if we don't get more government contracts, we won't improve our technical competence: it's the chicken and the egg."

There seems to be yet another drag on development if this field, and that is the lack of a central agency to co-ordinate scientific research. The general impression that the National Research Council fulfills such a function is not totally valid. There are six agencies, subject to four different jurisdictions. Within these agencies sums of money are allotted for research, yet this money is not co-ordinated by any one committee, not even the committee of the Privy Council on Scientific and Industrial Research. Each agency maintains its own apparatus and installations.

Perhaps the major fault lies in an attitude of mind by the

Canadian people. This attitude of mind is that scientific research is either for drastically expensive long range development such as satellite construction, or else for the improvement of techniques in fields which have no immediate application to their day-to-day lives, such as the search for a cancer cure. While not deprecating such worthwhile undertakings, or minimizing the role of pure science, it must be pointed out that scientific research has a key role to play in a general scheme of economic planning. Such projects as national resources utilization, improvement of industrial processes, maximization of the uses of industrial wastes, and refinement of physical standards have a very immediate need for investigation. Industry and research, aided by government, must work hand in hand to reach the ultimate in the exploitation of this country's development.

So what is needed?

1—Some form of central control body over the expedi-

ture of funds for all forms of scientific research, preferably the National Research Council, switched under the jurisdiction of the Department of Industry.

2—A highly concentrated campaign by the Department of Industry to encourage private enterprise participation in an overall scheme for research, co-ordinating it to the objectives of the Canadian economy.

(Here we mean grants for product improvement to companies wishing to become more competitive in world markets, or, for another example, grants for industrial environment study to aid in selection of fertile areas in placing new business in presently depressed areas.)

3—A greater diffusion of government contracts in this field from their own laboratories to private concerns; also less haphazard distribution of grants to individuals for isolated work;

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EDITORIAL

THE MISSING REFORMERS

It is not very often that I (forgive the non-use of the editorial "we") admit this, but right now I am at a loss to find an explanation to reports I have been hearing from universities across Canada. These reports have been to the effect that the Liberal Clubs have been losing ground and having their appeal dulled by the New Democratic Party. Reports of Model Parliament elections this year both confirm and deny this. On the one hand, Liberals continue to win the overwhelming majority of these votes, yet on the other hand, the N.D.P. have two victories so far this year, two more than they had last year. Choosing then to interpret this as at least some gain in strength, it still remains a puzzle to me as to why.

Is the N.D.P. an honest party? In the sense that it has never been chosen by the people to spend their money, it has had no opportunity for graft and is honest in that sense. But there is another sense of honesty, more in line with integrity, and here is the quarrel with the N.D.P. If the N.D.P. is the successor of the C.C.F., it has not made the changeover smoothly. The C.C.F. ceased to exist in favour of the N.D.P., but the New Democrats did not retain the old spirit of the Prairie revolt, the principles of an honest socialist party, which represented a definite segment of opinion, both regional and philosophical, which was an alternative to other parties, which gave the voter a true choice.

No, instead the N.D.P. decided to ally itself to the trade unions, never a hotbed of radicalism, and make its appeal to the great centre of the Canadian country. In short it became middle class and, what is worse, bourgeois. No choice here. The N.D.P. doomed itself, if not immediately then eventually, to

the same role filled by the Labour Party in England from 1900-1918. This position is that of an advanced wing of a major party representing a special interest group which in reality is represented by the major party. What is amusing here is that the Labour Party in England realized this to be its weakness and changed its position to gain strength, which it did. However the N.D.P. has tried to gain success by reversing the process. The New Democrats have tried to gain national success, not by offering the voters an alternative to anything, but by trying to become a second Liberal Party.

It was said that, faced with Roosevelt and Truman, the policy of the American Republican party became "Me too, but less". It might be said that the policy of the N.D.P. is "Me too, but a bit more." If Mackenzie King could say that the C.C.F.ers were just Liberals in a hurry, then surely we today can claim that New Democrats are just Liberals in a huff. In fact, personal feuds and personal grudges give birth to a lot of New Democrats.

If the N.D.P. wants to achieve the same results as happened in England, I suggest it address itself to the task of writing another Regina Manifesto, a new blueprint for tomorrow. The present hodge-podge of a platform won't do. No one will deny that major parties need a third force to prod them along the road to reform. But the N.D.P. is not fulfilling that role. At times, its objective seems to be obstruction and opposition even to progressive policy, merely for their own sake. As a matter of fact, if the present Canadian nuclear deterrent is replaced with non-nuclear weapons systems, as seems likely in the near future, the major policy plank of the N.D.P. will be gone.

So the N.D.P. is not honest. Nor is it capable of avoiding this accusation in terms of governmental pragmatism. Never having had power in Ottawa, it cannot say that socialist or radical doctrines are unworkable because it does not know. These schemes are untried.

What then is the N.D.P. appeal on campus? Perhaps it is merely the emptying out of traditional student opposition to authority; in this case, the government in power. It is the place for young radicals (a healthy sign) to gather to build the New Jerusalem. In which case, it serves our youth poorly, for it is not interested in moving further left but prefers to move further right towards middle class centrist prosperity, indistinguishable from the big parties. Further the control of labour leaders indicates that the student idealist can go farther in the Liberal party which wants to win him than in the N.D.P. which isn't interested in hearing him. Just as the N.D.P. refuses to serve the voter by giving him an honest third choice, so the N.D.P. refuses to serve the young radical by giving him a haven to protest the world as he sees it.

So without honesty, integrity, and a proper role to play, the N.D.P. on campus becomes a place for frustrated power-hungry demagogic young politicians to congregate. The chief accusation hurled at Liberal clubs is seen to turn back on the accuser.

Where's the appeal? The appeal to reformers and radicals? The appeal to intellectuals? The appeal to honest men? The N.D.P. is said to have it. But I'm at a loss to find it.

Join the F.L.Q., anyone?