

**FEATURE
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During the famous pipeline debate in 1956, all the media helped publicize what was essentially a highly complex and technical issue and a Gallup Poll survey taken at the time found that 73% of those interviewed were aware of the debate.²² The unfavourable evaluation of the Liberal Government's handling of the pipeline issue with respect to parliamentary traditions, propagated in large measure by the media, undoubtedly contributed to the defeat of the liberals in 1957.²³

In all five areas of input, the influence of the economic elite is strong. Through media they can influence public opinion; through interest groups they can pressure the civil service and members of the Cabinet to implement legislation; through the weight of their financial contributions, they can influence particular parties' platforms; through role exchange and the maintenance of social affinity ties, they can insure access and affinity to their own interests from the upper ranks of the civil service and the parliamentary elite. Yet we know that this elite is dominated by American interest, which means that the great amount of influence is being exercised by an outside authority. Should anything be done about it?

Solutions ...

Or is it a problem?

At the beginning of this essay two surveys were quoted citing surveys which reflected a public opinion of the conclusions which were drawn above. If these are the commonly held attitudes and people accept them, then there can be no real reason to change, if we are to remain in keeping with the democratic theory. It seems, however, with the advent of such vocal groups such as A Committee For An Independent Canada, and Save Tomorrow, Oppose Pollution (STOP) that at least some portion of the people would like to see the situation changed. If we wished to reduce that influence there are really only two plausible solutions: the first being to

reduce the influence of the elite, and the second to reduce the influence on the elite.

The method of reducing the influence of the elite is probably just to produce a public awareness of its extent, and to allow the social ties in civil service and government to be taken away by a more proportional occupational parliament. However, then you might be faced with replacing one elite with yet another. If it is, as Schumpeter asserted, that "Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them."²⁴ it would seem then, that we must choose between the American-dominated elite from the economic elite or from the labour elite.

And if the people decide that neither are reasonable, there is either the choice of collectively buying ourselves back or following Mexico's example.

1. Manzer, Ronald, *Canada: A Socio-Political Report*, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd. (Toronto 1974) Meisel, et al. covered at length pp. 304-320, important survey of the 1968 Federal election, showed in response to the comment: "Some people who are high in government pay more attention to what big interests want rather than give everyone a break." Breakdown of response on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) of political efficacy was 1-91%, 2-92%, 3-88%, 4-86%, 5-87%. Also, the Canadian Institute Of Public Opinion national survey's average for the years 1945-1960 show that 60% of Canadians believed that "big business" had "the most influence on the laws passed in this country."
2. John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic* University Of Toronto Press, (Toronto 1965) p. 231.
3. *Ibid.*, the definition employed here and in Appendix I is wholly extracted from pp. 231-264 and pp. 570-579.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 580.
5. Underhill, Frank, *In Search of Canadian Liberalism* McLelland and Stewart (Toronto 1966) p. 118.
6. Mosca, Gaetano, *The Ruling Class*, McGraw-Hill Co. (New York 1939) p. 57.
7. Presthus, Robert, *Elite Accommodation In Canadian Politics*, The MacMillan Co. of Can. (Toronto 1973) pp. 99-211.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
11. Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 216.
12. Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
14. Ward, Norman, *The Canadian House Of Commons: Representation*, University of Toronto Press (Toronto 1950) p. 132.
15. Kornberg, Allan, *Canadian Legislative Behavior*, Holt Rinehart, Winston, (Toronto 1967) p. 45.
16. Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 216.
17. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Little Brown (Toronto 1965). van Loon, Rick, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, September 1970.
18. Thornburn, Hugh G., *Party Politics In Canada* Prentice-Hall of Can. Ltd. (Toronto 1963) quote from E.E. Herrill, "Money In Canadian Politics" pp. 60-69.
19. Harrill, E.E., "A Study In Party Financing" quoted from K.Z. Paltiel, *Political Party Financing In Canada*, pp. 251-252.
20. Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-152.
22. Canadian Institute of Public Opinion Survey #247 March, 1956.
23. Meisel, John, *The Canadian General Election of 1957*, University of Toronto Press (Toronto 1962) p. 179.
24. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, (London 1961) p. 285.

APPENDIX III

American Influence Over "Canadian" Unions

In supposing that union and labour leaders would encroach on and act as a check to the political activities of the economic elite, one would also suppose that it was because the wishes of labour are not the wishes of the elite. Is this true for the Canadian labour situation?

One must first understand that most members of labour unions in Canada do not belong to Canadian unions - only 24.5% of organized workers belong to national unions. Instead, 70.8% belong to "international" unions.¹

After the expulsion of British-affiliated unions from the annual Trades and Labour Congress in 1912, it became clear that "international" meant "American." The issuance of charters and executive control of the Congress by the American Federation Of Labour was brought about in the following year and the domination of a Canadian organized labour movement by the American movement has remained ever since.² Understanding this American domination, we can now question the role of labour unions as opposing the wishes of the economic elite.

Once you remove the national boundaries from an economic struggle, the struggle may disappear. This is what has happened with the action of labour versus management in this country. Samuel Gompers, long-time president of the AFL, wrote in 1898:

The nation which dominates the markets of the world will surely control its destinies ... Neither its gates (the Philippine islands) nor those of any other country of the globe can long be closed against our constantly growing industrial supremacy.³

Obviously the most likely country to expand to was America's neighbour to the north. Gompers's disregard for social consequences aligned him closely with the corporate elite expanding to Canada. It was only a few years later that such people as Upton Sinclair in Chicago and Jack London in San Francisco were to make just those same accusations of the AFL for promoting its own interests, and not those of the people.

To expand and grow was the wish of the American unions:

It was the urge to grow, rather than the search for "profit" as such, that the expanding American-controlled unions in Canada showed many of the same motivations as the expanding American-controlled industries ... To ambitious union executives, like their counterparts in the ranks of management, Canada has seemed a logical extension of the American market.⁴

Charles Lipton argues that international unionism has been a major link in the system of American domination of Canada. Citing the conscription crisis of 1917 and the Winnipeg general strike of 1919, he states "the system of international unionism has operated as a major reserve of reaction to defeat the working class."⁵

The precepts of growth and expansion beyond national boundaries, and the consolidation of highly-paid powerful union management, links the movement of international labour with the movements of international corporate executive. Yet even if the conservative and manifest-destiny attitudes of the international unions did not exist⁶ there is little to show that an international labour union can deal with domestic labour problems. That is, what may be good for labour in the United States, is not necessarily good for unions in Canada. The lobbying the labour union does is usually restricted to particular economic interest, and it is probable that these interests will differ in the existence of a different environment.

An interesting public reaction to the international labour movement in Canada is that few people believe unions should engage in political activity (only 20% of Canadians in 1967 believed so). Strangely enough, this view is shared in similar proportions, 60 versus 58%, by members of unions themselves.⁷ It is possible that this feeling has been brought about by a public cognizance of labour's American affiliations and a desire for American interests to remain removed from the mainstream of Canadian political activity.

One of the most important political activities of labour has been its involvement with the CCF/NDP.⁸ Such political situations as the NDP balance-of-power in the last Parliament have been seen by some as a check to American corporate interests. Regardless, with regards to interest group lobbying, media influence and social inter-action with a political elite, the situation has been that labour has not acted as a check to economic political influence. As long as international union affiliation remains, it is unlikely that it will do so in the future.

Appendix III

1. Department of Labour, *Labour Organizations In Canada*, Queen's Printer (Ottawa 1966).
2. Roger Howard and Jack Scott, "Class Collaboration" in *Capitalism And The National Question In Canada*, University of Toronto Press (Toronto 1972) pp. 73-74.
3. Gompers, Samuel, *American Federationist*, September 1898, p. 239.
4. Howard and Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
5. Lipton, Charles, "Canadian Unionism", Teeple *op. cit.*, p. 117.
6. Lipton, *ibid.*, pp. 106-116.
7. Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-353 and Presthus, Robert, *Elite Accommodation In Canadian Politics*, The MacMillan Co. of Canada, Ltd. (Toronto 1973) p. 178.
8. Horowitz, Gad, in his book *Canadian Labour In Politics*, argues that party line is only a resultant of competing pressure and that as long as the NDP remains a "third" party labour remains unheard. "Labour men are so few in numbers in the old party caucuses that they are swamped by the business-oriented majorities," p. 51. Refer also to last chapter discussion of future for labour.

FORUM



**the
synerude
project**

part one
Thursday MARCH 4 12:30 pm SUB-THEATRE

THE POLITICS OF SYNCRUDE

with Prof. Larry Pratt, author of *The Tar Sands*

part two
Friday MARCH 5 12 pm SUB-THEATRE

ITS PROGRESS AND IMPACT

a slide presentation and open forum with

Frank Spragins,
Chairman of the Board, Syncrude;
Dr. Ron Goforth,
Director of Environmental Affairs;
Ron Gray,
Director of Engineering; and
John Barr,
Manager: Public Affairs

**STUDENTS' COUNCIL
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Applications are now being accepted for the position of STUDENTS' COUNCIL SPEAKER, 1976-77 term.

Forms are to be obtained from and returned to Students' Union Receptionist, 2nd Floor West, SUB.

The Council Speaker is responsible for:
a) calling to order meetings of Students' Council
b) chairing meetings of Students' Council
c) preparing the agendas and publishing the official minutes of Council Meetings.

The Speaker earns a fee of \$25/meeting. For more information contact Kevin Gillese, 75-76 Council Speaker, Office Rm. 259 SUB. Phone 432-4236 office, 454-1847 Residence. Also: Students' Council Speaker By-law available from Receptionist upon request.