

# STUDENT EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

The following employers will be interviewing at the Canada Manpower Centre the week commencing November 6th November 6th and 14th, 1972:

MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. _____	Nov. 9, 10
Union Oil Company _____	Nov. 8, 9, 14, 15
London Life Insurance Co. _____	Nov. 14
Arthur Andersen & Co. _____	Nov. 14, 15, 16
Defence Research Board _____	Nov. 15, 16, 17
Calgary Power Ltd. _____	Nov. 15, 16,
Riddell Stead & Co. _____	Nov. 16
Schlumberger of Canada _____	Nov. 16, 17

pre-screen	
Bank of Montreal _____	Deadline Nov. 16
International Nickel Co. _____	Deadline Nov. 10
National Research Council _____	Deadline Nov. 21

For further information, please contact the Canada Manpower Centre, 4th Floor, SUB.

## HASSLED ?

## TERM PAPERS ?

SUB 142                      11:30 am  
MON. - FRI.                      12:30 pm

NOV 6 - 10

COME AND FIND how to locate  
information for term papers in the  
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FILED AND NARRATED  
BY EDDIE HUNTER

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STUDENTS UNION THEATRE U of A  
Wed. Nov. 8th - 8:00 p.m.  
ADM. \$ 1.75 at door.

## theatre

### 'The V.P.' citadel's power play

If the recent productions in Edmonton Theatre are any indication, Canadian drama is on the upswing.

Within the past month, Edmonton theatres have presented two productions by Canadian playwrights. First, was Theatre 3's somewhat confusing production of 'Invitation to a Beheading,' an adaption of the Vladimir Nabokov novel by Edmonton Experimental Theatre presented its production of the two act-one man-play, 'That time of the Month', by another Edmonton playwright, Tom Whyte.

In the wasteland of Canadian Drama, the production of a single Canadian play is a phenomenon worthy of note. The simultaneous production of two Canadian plays in the same city suggests a band-wagon. And where there's a band-wagon, you'll invariably find the Citadel's invincible artistic director, Sean Mulcahy in the driver's seat.

The Citadel's current production of 'The V.P.' is no exception. For not only is it a play by a Canadian Toronto playwright, Alexander McAlister; it is as well a Canadian play about Canada.

'The V.P.' is based on the rage and frustration which playwright, McAlister, personally experienced as the Canadian head of advertising and public relations for the Prudential Insurance Company of 'Amerika'. Like his secondary protagonist, Bob Hammersmith, McAlister, was fired from his position because of a memo in which he allowed his concern for his country to get in the way of the alien objectives of his 'Amerikan' corporate employer.

Had he been 'Amerikan', one could well imagine the scatological response which this experience might have evoked in the playwright. Because he is Canadian, McAlister views his unfortunate experience with bi-partisan subjectivity not quite prepared to despise the Americans with the intensity with which they despise themselves, and yet crucially aware that the predatory instinct of our neighbour to the South is, in its own way, a kind of evil. In this respect, it is significant that McAlister himself has insisted that 'The V.P.' is not anti-American that instead it is a play about "what happens when a person's loyalties are divided."

McAlister's dramatic solution to the conflict between his awareness of what the Americans are doing to Canada and his inability to despise them for it is a kind of cultural morality play in which the good guys (us) are so good that they are slightly ridiculous and the bad guys (U.S.) are so bad that they are almost likeable.

Dr. Ivor Roberts as Chicago, the controlling voice of AMERICAN ELECTRIC of Canada and David Brown as Sam Cook, the aspiring American president of the Canadian subsidiary, respectively bluster and sputter with the exaggerated force of a couple of resurrected 'Old Vices.' Lawrence Benedict as Douglas Marshall, the brilliant Canadian Engineer--The V.P.--, except for the re-occurrence of an old football injury, struts about with the affable self-confidence of a

domesticated Johnny Canuk. And last but not least, there's Robert Haley as Bob Hammersmith, the brilliant Canadian p.r. man who, with his three kids, a fourth on the way, epitomizes the greatest (at least the most useful) of Canadian virtues: The ability to populate.

Beyond their respective goodnesses or badnesses the characters, however, have no existence. They are either too good or too bad to be true. And this, to a great extent, detracts from the overall impact of McAlister's main theme: The tragic effect that the American Corporate presence in Canada has on our country's main resource--the talents and invention of her people.

The play and its message centre around the respective reactions of the two Canadian protagonists, Bob Hammersmith and Douglas Marshall, to the insidious 'castrating' influence of the American corporate presence in Canada, the latter being symbolically represented by AMERICAN ELECTRIC of Canada.

When AMERICAN ELECTRIC orders its Canadian subsidiary to celebrate the anniversary of the American war of independence, Bob Hammersmith composes a memo in which he points out to his 'Amerikan' corporate employer that Canada was, at the time, the enemy of the new republic and that the Canadian public would not, therefore, be entirely sympathetic to the campaign. In a rash moment of Canadian nationalism, Hammersmith goes further and indicates that many of the American victories during the war were, for Canadians, atrocities. The memo is brought to the attention of 'Chicago' and Hammersmith is fired--ironically enough, by his fellow compatriot, the V.P., Douglas Marshall.

Hammersmith is a skilled p.r. man--one of the best. In this context, his dismissal from AMERICAN ELECTRIC represents Canada's loss as well as that of the company. Because of the cultural imperialism of the States, Canada is deprived of one of her major resources--the talents of her people.

The play then concentrates on the efforts of Doug Marshall to work within the system. Perhaps because he is the scion of Empire Loyalist stock, the son of a Supreme Court judge--Douglas is more adept at getting along with the American corporate

establishment. When AMERICAN ELECTRIC refuses to employ his airplane detection device for the good of humanity however, he too finally rebels. He resigns his prestigious position with the company, leaving the plans for his invention behind. Because his airplane detection device is superior to that developed by AMERICAN ELECTRIC for the U.S. military complex, it is clear that it will never be used. Thus, Canada loses the second of its major resources--the invention of her people.

The 'V.P.' as a play, has two major flaws. The first has to do with McAlister's definition of Canadian. His characters in confronting Uncle Sam to the South, commit the now unpardonable sin of defining their identity in terms of John Bull to the East. Hammersmith's perspective of the war of 1812, for example, is a peculiarly British one. The atrocities which he cites are not so much events in the history of Canada as events in the history of the British Empire.

In addition, the play refuses to recognize--even in passing--the ethnic dexterity which forms the backbone of the Canadian identity. For McAlister, the struggle for Canadian identity seems to be confined to one between Eagle and WASP. The Beaver, as always, remains unobserved.

The second major flaw with 'The V.P.' is that as a drama it makes a good T.V. play. The divisions between scenes, for example, instead of lending dramatic significance to the preceding events are mere fade outs, adding nothing to the play except perhaps the somewhat clumsy opportunity to further advance the plot. On television this works. If a fade out is especially bad, you merely insert a commercial--a technique which is not available to the playwright of living theatre. In this respect, it is significant that 'The V.P.' is McAlister's first attempt at live drama and that previous to it, he had written 'several hundred' T.V. plays.

'The V.P.' is nevertheless an interesting and sometimes entertaining play which focuses on one of the major problems that Canadians face today. Just how crucial the problem is can be illustrated by Sean Mulcahy's cryptic comment: "Thank God I'm an Irishman."

From this it appears that the situation is serious indeed!

"The V.P." will be playing at the Citadel until November 25th. Performances are Tuesdays to Saturdays, 8:30 p.m.; Sundays, 7:30 p.m. Tickets can be obtained by phoning the citadel box office at 424-2828.

W. Callaghan Jr.



"Doctor" Duane Credico throws up his hands in the Edmonton Experimental Theatre's recent production for 11 to 15-year olds, Zip, Zam, Swoosh. photo by Tony Goodearl