# National News

## Last Post links Saulnier, Laporte to underworld

TORONTO (CUP) — The Quebec government has carried out a "Cover-up attempt to prevent the exposure of high-level corruption and links with organized crime," according to the **Last Post.**

The Toronto-based national magazine says the cover-up has been the main reason that serious questions surrounding the death of former Quebec Labour Minister, Pierre Laporte, have remained unanswered and, until recently, unasked.

The allegations appear in a copyright story in the **Last Post's** September issue by the magazine's Quebec editor, Nick Auf de Maur. The story is the first complete summary of "L'Affaire Saulnier-Laporte," the scandal that has received more attention than Watergate in the French-language press of Quebec but has been greeted with almost total silence in English Canada.

"L'Affaire Saulnier-Laporte" concerns the underworld connections of Laporte and former Montreal police chief, Jacques Saulnier. Quebec Premier, Robert Bourassa was aware of Laporte's contacts with the underworld when he appointed him to the cabinet after the Liberal election victory in April 1970, says the **Last Post.**

Recent investigations by Ronald LeBel and Robert McKenzie of the **Toronto Star,** the only English language reporters to pay serious attention to the Saulnier-Laporte scandals have revealed that after Laporte was kidnapped by the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) on October 10, 1970, police failed to follow up leads that could have led to his being saved.

Auf der Maur says that "one **Last Post** source says that at least three high-ranking police officers knew where Laporte was being held."

The story says that "one of the most disturbing theories, shared by many of Laporte's former associates, is that the Quebec government wrote off Pierre Laporte. It is felt that Laporte, alive, represented a potentially great source of embarrassment to the provincial Liberals. Dead, he was a martyr for Confederation and a distinct political asset."

Laporte's Mafia contacts have come out in a series of police reports leaked to Quebec newspapers. The leaks started appearing after police investigators became dissatisfied with political interference in the Quebec government's crime probe.

These reports, which Auf der Maur describes as being "the tip of the iceberg," are summarized in the **Last Post** story.

"Quebec Police Force sources," reports Auf der Maur, "say that they several times informed Premier Bourassa and his special counsellor Paul Desrochers that there was evidence linking at least two cabinet ministers, including Laporte, two Liberal MLA's, three of the party's principal organizers and at least two judges with the underworld."

One RCMP report said that "before the last provincial election, through D'Asti (Nicolas Di Iorio and Frank D'Asti, both known underworld figures) gave money to help Pierre Laporte's election campaign....They felt that they could obtain favours from Laporte if the Liberals won. They were hoping that Laporte would become Minister of Justice.

Premier Bourassa has refused to comment on why Laporte was named Minister of Labour instead of Minister of Justice, an appointment which he was widely expected to get.

Jacques Saulnier's underworld contacts have also come out in leaked police reports. Among these leaks have been part of a confidential report prepared for Justice Minister Jerome Choquette by a Montreal Police investigating team as well as tapes that the investigators were not allowed to hear.

Auf der Maur concludes that "Premier Bourassa's disastrous weakness as a leader and inability to control his party have led to the Quebec Liberal government's becoming a nest of corruption and seamy relationships, probably unequalled since the worst days of the Duplessis and Taschereau regimes," and terms the Bourassa government "one of the sorriest chapters in recent Quebec history."

## Oil giants charged with monopoly

WASHINGTON (CUP-PNS) — During the first six months of 1973 corporate profits for the petroleum companies in the United States climbed to all time highs. At the same time, anti-monopoly and price-fixing lawsuits filed by governmental agencies reached unprecedented levels.

Second quarter profit increases for 1973, according to most recent corporate reports range from a 'low' of 37 percent for Standard of Indiana to a staggering 174 percent for Commonwealth Oil.

Coming at the peak of the 'energy crisis', Federal and state officials are apparently convinced that some questionable practices are responsible for this embarassment of riches within the petroleum industry. Not since the 1911 Supreme Court decision breaking up the original Standard Oil Trust have so many monopoly and price fixing lawsuits been filed against the oil companies.

At issue are charges of monopoly control of the industry by the right integrated oil giants (Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Gulf, Shell, Standard of California, Standard of Indiana and Atlantic-Richfield). These integrated compantes control the flow of oil from the wellhead to the service station, and allegedly 'fix' prices by controlling the gasoline supplies.

Exxon's profits increased by 54 percent in 1972, Texaco's by 45 percent, Gulf's by 82 percent and Shell's by 54 percent.

Several major legal assaults have been filed against these companies. During June, the State of New York and the United States Department of Justice filed suit, respectively against Exxon for raising prices in breach of contract, and against Texaco for alleged actions aimed at forcing independent dealers out of business.

On July 8, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission released a study showing efforts by the oil majors to manipulate prices, and thus increase profits. On July 10, the Cost of Living Council announced that the Internal Revenue Service would begin an audit of the major oil companies to detect price control violations. And on the same day, five of these firms were issued subpoenas by a Federal Grand Jury in Los Angeles to produce documents related to alleged unfair pricing and marketing practices.

A week later, an unprecedented Federal Trade Commission report accused the eight major U.S. firms of having conspired to monopolize the refining of petroleum products over a period of 23 years.

According to the FTC study, these practices forced American and Canadian motorists to pay unreasonably high prices, and led directly to the current sky rocketing profits in the industry. Other anti-trust actions have also been filed by the Attorneys General of Florida and Connecticut and many more lawsuits by other state and municipal agencies are being prepared.

State and municipal governments are smarting under the impact of increases lately demanded by the major firms. Standard of California has recently agreed to supply gasoline to the city of Los Angeles but only at a 40 percent price hike. And the latest price offered by Shell to the highways department of St. Louis County, Missouri, is an increase of 73 percent.

It is not clear why the petroleum industry, so long protected by the government and its agencies is suddenly facing such a massive assault. Rising prices are partly responsible, but the general national mood of distrust of big business and government have undoubtedly had their effect.

But as cracks are appearing in the protective armor which has, in the past, shielded the petroleum companies from public scrutiny, even men like Senator Henry Jackson are questioning this once sacred cow. Jackson, never before an opponent of the oil companies, and a prime advocate of the Alaskan pipeline noted, 'the growing and increasingly widespread conviction that the fuel shortage is a deliberate, conscious contrivance of the major integrated petroleum companies to destroy the independent refiners and marketers, to capture new markets, to increase gasoline prices, and to obtain repeal of environmental protection legislation'.

In the face of such criticism, the oil companies continue to lament the fact that they do not have sufficient profits to operate efficiently. Texaco, the largest marketer of gasoline in the U.S. expressed disappointment over its 44.5 percent profit increase for the record breaking period in the first part of this year. Said Maurice F. Granville, Chairman of the Board of Texaco: 'In our judgement, Texaco's consolidated earning are not yet yeilding a satisfactory return on total assets and they are not yet adequate to generate the funds required for the company's steadily growing capital requirements.' In other words, the energy crisis will continue to worsen.

## Foreign students get a good break

OTTAWA (CUP) — Foreign students, legally in Canada before January 1, 1973 who are seeking employment will be exempted from the requirements of Canada Manpower certification that Canadian citizens or landed immigrants are not available for the job they seek.

All other foreign students are required to obtain employment certification in the ordinary manner.

The concessions offered to these foreign students is the result of pressure, particularly by the Ontario Federation of Students, on the federal government. But these concessions will apply only until these students have successfully completed the academic course in which they are registered and will not apply to more recently immigrated students or to those illegally in the country before the cut-off date.

A federal government pamphlet says foreign students must give "evidence of sufficient funds for full maintenance and tuition. Some Canadian students finance their studies by working part-time and during their vacations. Foreign students, however, must not anticipate financing their studies in this manner."