

THE LAST POST

70063

NOVEMBER 1979/\$1.00

THE
ALBERTA
QUESTION

Hans Blumenfeld on:

THE DEVELOPERS



THE
WIRED CITY

SCIENCE
ON TRIAL

10 years of the Last Post

Dear Reader:

Over the past few issues, we have been asking our readers to contribute to the *Last Post's* 10th Anniversary Fund to help sustain the magazine at a time of rising costs and to help provide the means to start our second decade with increased frequency of publication and with better and more systematic coverage.

We wish again to thank those of our readers who have responded by sending us \$10 (and in many cases more), \$1.00 for each of the 10 years we have been publishing. And we wish again to ask those who may have thought of contributing, but who have not gotten around to it, to give us what help they can.

This is not an easy time for the press in this country. Even such a giant of the commercial media as the daily *Montreal Star* folded recently, leaving some 1,000 employees without work. Most Canadian magazines have long had problems, having to compete, not only with each other, but with a flood of U.S. publications as well.

Nevertheless much survives, and must, if this country is to have any way of taking a serious look at itself and at its problems as we approach the decade of the 1980s.

The *Last Post* intends to be one of those voices. We think that we've had lots that was important to say in the past and will have in the future.

And any help, any vote of confidence that we can get from our readers, will make the realization of that intention better and more certain.

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Nov. 1979, Vol. 7, No. 6

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The developers
by *Hans Blumenfeld*



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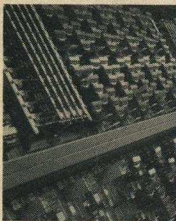
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We wish to thank the Ontario Arts Council for its financial assistance under its periodicals program.

The Last Post is produced by an editorial board.

Production this issue: Fred Adler, Hans Blumenfeld, Wendy Boyd, Drummond Burgess, Robert Chodos, Ralph Cook, David Cubberley, Russell Hunt, Myron Johnson, David Lloyd, Patrick MacFadden, Rae Murphy, Norman Penner, Paul Peters, Glenn Schneider, Doug Smith.



Published by the Canadian Journalism Foundation Inc., 454 King Street West, Suite 302, Toronto, Ont. M5V 1L6. Phone: (416) 366-1134. Address all editorial and business correspondence to the Last Post, 454 King Street West, Suite 302, Toronto, Ont. M5V 1L6. Managing Editor: Drummond Burgess. Business Manager: Elsie Murphy.

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'The Developers' — they've been much praised and much maligned, but little understood as they have gone about changing the face of Canada. In a review article of James Lorimer's recent book on the subject, Hans Blumenfeld, one of our foremost urban planners, gets to the heart of the matter.

THE DEVELOPERS

by Hans Blumenfeld

The Developers, by James Lorimer. James Lorimer & Co./Toronto. 256 pp. \$14.95 cloth.

James Lorimer, scholar, teacher, writer and publisher, is best known as the eminence grise of the "reform" government at Toronto City Hall, and as the fiery preacher of the crusade to liberate the Holy Land of Canada from the infidels, the "Developers".

After their victory some of the more thoughtful crusaders took the trouble to study the defeated enemy — and found that he had no horns.

Something similar happened to James Lorimer. The book opens with the sentence: "I have finished this book with a quite different attitude toward Canada's urban land developers than I had three years ago;" and on the following pages he says "the developers' achievements are real and in many ways admirable" and "failings are not so much the responsibility of the developers themselves as of government . . . and of financial institutions."

This does not mean, however, that on his return from Damascus Paul has turned into Saul. The book is an indictment on many counts, which can be summarized in two main points. First, the developers

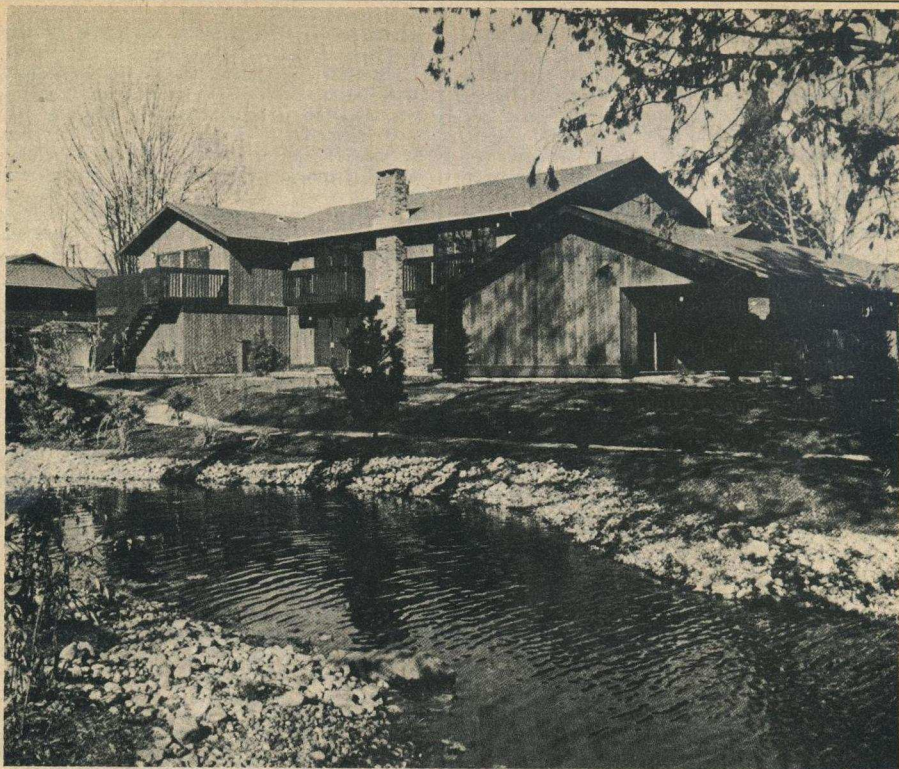
have made unconscionable super-profits; this is due to "market power" or "oligopoly". Second, they have produced a "corporate city" which does not respond to the demands of the people; this is due to their concentration on developing five new products: "corporate suburbs", "high-rise" apartments, industrial parks, downtown office projects and shopping centres.

While these two themes are intertwined, I will try to deal with them separately.

Lorimer displays the skill and tenacity of a Sherlock Holmes in unravelling the complex financial operations and connections of the development industry. The book is full of fascinating stories about money. It is therefore passing strange that it never mentions the most important fact about money in the last 30 years — inflation.

Inflation transfers value from the creditor to the debtor. Developers, as Lorimer explains in detail, work with two types of borrowed money, mortgages and deferred taxes. In both cases they receive good dollars and pay back in bad ones.

There is another well-known aspect of working with borrowed money: it is risky. If a developer has invested 10 percent of project cost and 90 percent



Suburban municipalities, enthusiastically supported by neighbourhood groups, use their powers to keep out moderate income housing.

mortgage money in a project, anticipating an 11 per cent return, and it returns two percent more, he makes a whopping 40 percent; but if it returns two percent less, he loses his capital.

There are spectacular losses as well as spectacular gains in the development business. As the former do not improve the developer's credit rating, he does not care to crow about them as loudly as about his successes. No doubt that the latter predominated until the last two years — even if one does not, as Lorimer does, equate 1960 and 1975 dollars.

Another peculiarity of the real estate business is well known to students of housing. Housing is consumed over a much longer period than are other consumer goods. The annual addition to the housing stock averages three to four percent; but the variations in demand are much greater, mainly following the business cycle. If, as in Canada in the early seventies, on top of a boom a belated understanding of the nature of inflation leads to a massive shift of investment from savings accounts, bonds,

etc. into housing, the increase in demand becomes spectacular. With the resulting bandwagon effect, it becomes fantastic — and so do profits, on old as well as on new houses.

Lorimer rejects this explanation. He says: "the classic response expected by economists [is] a substantial increase in supply and only a moderate price increase." This is indeed what the textbooks have been saying since Adam Smith. But how is it supposed to work? If, because of reduction in production cost and/or an increase in demand, profits in one industry rise above normal, capital will rush into that industry and cause overproduction; then, in order to get rid of their products, sellers will lower their price.

But Adam Smith also noted that whenever businessmen get together, even for merriment, they will agree not to undercut each other's prices. With present means of communication and information, they do not have to get together physically "even for merriment".

Everyone knows the established price, and he

would be foolish indeed to sell below it. If he does, he is certain to reduce his profit per unit. It is highly uncertain that he can compensate for this loss by increasing his volume. But *if* he succeeds in doing this, it is certain that his competitors will lower their prices, and he will end up with a greatly reduced per-unit profit and, at best, a slightly increased volume. He must be very foolish — or entirely desperate — to act that way.

An interesting corollary is the conclusion that the free enterprise, or businessmen's economic system can only work "normally" if, when, and as long as businessmen do not know their business. They do, and the system does not work as the textbooks say it does, as we all know only too well.

To call this "oligopoly" is stretching the term beyond reason. Lorimer, like all adherents of the oligopoly theory quotes Peter Spurr's finding that a few large development companies hold 103,092 acres around 22 Canadian cities. The figure is impressive, but how many acres suitable for development do these companies *not* own?

Generally speaking, the area 10 to 15 miles from the city center is the area of suburban development. For the 22 cities this area comprises a total of almost 7 million acres. Of course, much of this consists of water, steep slopes, etc., much is already developed, much is reserved for forests, farms or other purposes. But certainly at least 15 percent of it, over one million acres, or ten times the amount owned by the companies, is suited for development.

The big developers have made huge profits not because of oligopoly or of some mysterious "market power", but because they have skillfully exploited a situation of explosive demand, combined with interest rates lagging behind inflation, and a tax structure extremely favourable for expanding firms.

Big Canadian developers now shun Canada

This situation, as Lorimer recognizes, has now come to an end. Big Canadian developers now shun Canada and invest in the United States. Even more telling is the fact, also well documented by Lorimer, that their stocks are traded at very low prices, reflecting anticipation of low profits and high risks.

The halcyon days of the developers are over. As for Lorimer's first theme, super-profits, he tries to close the stable door after the horse has been stolen.

As for his second and more significant theme, the form of the "corporate city", it is evident that the five "new" forms cited by Lorimer are new variants of ways to satisfy old demands. They can be evaluated only by comparing them with variants

offered previously and/or now offered by the small developers favoured by Lorimer.

The older single family houses, still numerous in most Canadian cities, are typically built on narrow lots, attached, semi-attached, or detached from their neighbours by a strip three to six feet wide. They are usually built on or close to the street line, depriving ground floor front rooms of privacy from sight and sound. The family car has to find space at the curb; or, where midblock-alleys are provided, in the backyard, thus further reducing the size and amenity of the residents' only private outdoor space.

These shortcomings have led to the popularity of the detached single family house on a larger lot, usually 50-60 feet wide, with a fairly generous front yard and accommodation for the family car. Many thousands of these have been provided in the suburbs, mostly by small developers, in the twenties and thirties, and also in the postwar decades. In the twenties municipalities all over North America were willing to install streets and utilities on almost any piece of property on request, confident that they could collect the cost from the future homeowners by special assessments. When, during the Depression, they could not collect, they went bankrupt.

Once burnt, municipalities in Ontario and most other provinces changed their policies when building resumed after the war. They shifted the cost and risk of installing the infrastructure to the developer.

But this was not the only lesson they drew from their experience of bankruptcy. They instituted fiscal planning. Proposed developments are evaluated not on the basis of their utility for their future users but on the basis of a "cost-benefit" calculation — will their tax yield exceed the cost of the services which they will require? The answer is easy — yes to commercial, industrial, and apartment buildings which contain few or no children, and no to family houses, except those for the very rich.

Suburban municipalities, enthusiastically supported and pushed by Lorimer's beloved neighbourhood groups, use the formidable array of their powers, such as zoning and building codes, but in particular subdivision control, to keep housing for moderate income families out of their territory.

In more than one case they have made approval of residential subdivisions dependent on the condition that the developer provide two dollars of non-residential assessment for every three of residential assessment.

Getting a subdivision approved in Ontario and other provinces is an obstacle course, frequently requiring years of negotiation conducted by highly paid appraisers, planners and lawyers. The small developer runs out of breath, only the big developer can make it — maybe.

Lorimer brushes aside the well-documented responsibility of local fiscal planning for the short-

age of "affordable" family housing by stating that the development companies have adapted to it by submitting their applications years in advance of anticipated demand. This is hardly an adequate treatment of this crucial aspect.

Interestingly, most suburban municipalities in Quebec still use the pre-Depression method, giving the developer easy approval and relieving him of the risk and cost of providing the infrastructure. The reasons for this difference warrant a thorough study. Lorimer does not touch on them. He is satisfied with stating, correctly, that this policy has enabled and encouraged a multitude of small developers to respond quickly to the jump in demand by putting many more lots on the market, at very moderate prices, in contrast to the fantastic prices in other provinces.

He does not compare the product of this process with the "corporate suburb". The small developments are scattered haphazardly, leaving odd-shaped pieces of undeveloped land, ill-suited for either agriculture or recreation. This pattern is more wasteful of both agricultural land and of travel time and energy than the compact corporate suburb.

The street pattern is generally a grid, providing no protection against through traffic. In the corporate suburb, residential streets are carefully differentiated from traffic arteries and frequently supplemented by foot and bicycle paths.

The small development gives no thought to the community facilities required by its residents. Schools, playgrounds, parks, commercial and community services come in after the fact, if at all, and



For most childless households, an apartment in a 'high-rise' is the most desirable form of accomodation.

* have to scramble for sites wherever they can find them. Often they are lacking altogether. The corporate suburb provides them on carefully selected and well accessible sites. It also provides a much greater variety of housing types, including apartments and town houses.

There can be no doubt that the quality of the physical environment created by the corporate suburb is vastly superior to that resulting from the competitive scramble of small developers. This does not mean that it is above criticism. It shares with the small development its main defect, too low density resulting from too large lots.

Single family home still the dream house

It is to Lorimer's credit that he, different from most vocal critics of "suburbia", recognizes that the detached single family house on a large lot is indeed the dream house of most Canadians.

He also recognizes that the fulfillment of this dream has consequences which are neither anticipated nor desired by the dreamers. Low density removes beyond normal walking distance almost all trip destinations, in particular the stops and stations of public transportation, making transit service unfeasible. As a consequence, those residents who have a car at their disposal drive an excessive number of miles; those who don't are stuck in their neighbourhood. Children growing up in middle class suburbs never see how the other half lives.

Regrettably, Lorimer adds to these valid and weighty arguments against low density suburbs several trendy but phony statements:

- "Suburbs threaten our food supply." But two million houses at the standard suburban density of five per gross acre cover 400,000 acres, one-half of one percent of Canada's 80 million acres of cropland.
- "Suburbanites will be forced to give up driving because of energy cost." But the pre-1973 wellhead price of oil accounted for less than five percent of the annual cost of owning and operating a car. A 300 percent increase can easily be offset by trading in 15 mile per gallon gas guzzlers for 50 mile per gallon cars presently available on the Canadian market.
- "Suburban fathers cannot spend enough time with their children because they have to spend too much time on travel to work." In large metropolitan areas, work trips average 30 minutes, with no significant or consistent differences between suburban and city dwellers. If they are so inclined, contemporary fathers, working about 2,000 hours annually, can spend far more time with their children than could fathers of

previous generations, who worked over 3,000 hours per year.

Lorimer's attitude toward low-density single family housing is curiously ambivalent. On the one hand, his strongest indictment is that they "cost too much" and that there would be many more of them if the developers had not fiendishly used their "market power" to limit the supply. On the other hand, he accuses the developers of absorbing too much land, as well as too much Canadian capital, and of having "over-built". It is damned if you do and damned if you don't.

The second type created by the developers is called in their jargon "high-rises", a nonsensical term which Lorimer, like everybody else, has adopted. It is nonsensical because no one has ever seen a high building that does not rise nor a low one that does. I will therefore refer to buildings of ten or more stories as "high".

High apartment buildings respond to the demand for rental housing which was previously, and to some extent still is, met by a great variety of other housing types.

Their mix varies greatly from city to city. In Toronto the most typical one is the three or four story walk-up apartment house, built on or close to the building line, covering 50 to 100 percent of the lot, with a resultant floor space index (F.S.I.) of 1.5 to 4.0 (the same as is found in the developers' "high-rises").

In these apartments many rooms are without adequate light, air and sunshine and/or inadequately protected from sight, sound and smell. There is no space for cars and little, if any, for grass or trees. In all these respects the new high apartment houses are vastly superior.

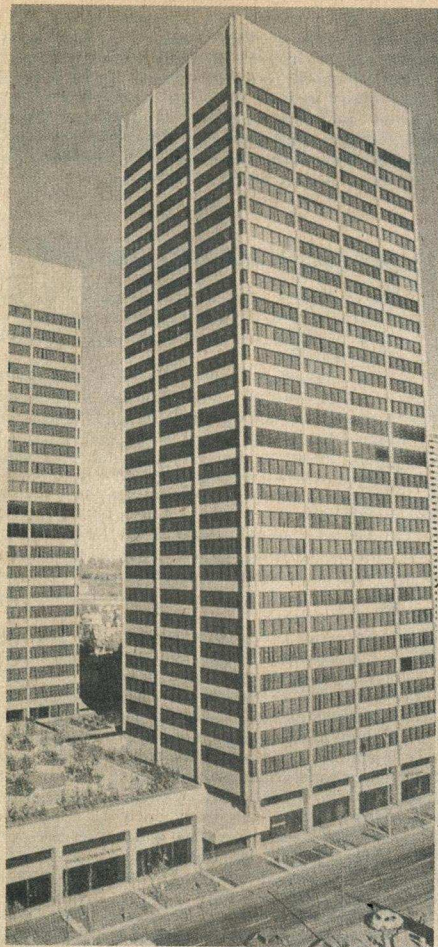
In addition, many of them offer wide views, janitor service, stores and restaurants on the ground floor, and communal laundries, saunas and swimming pools.

Lorimer says "privacy, adequate space, a private yard, private parking, and quiet [are not] available to the high-rise tenant." Having been one of these unfortunates for the last 24 years, I know that this is simply not true, except for the private yard; but there is the substitute of a large balcony with far more privacy than is available in most private yards, plus a very attractive large lawn, widely used for communal sun-bathing.

It is, of course, true that apartments are ill-suited for raising children, but in this respect there is at most a marginal difference between living on the fourth, or on the fourteenth, or fortieth floor.

Lorimer completely ignores the most important change in housing demand in the postwar period, the enormous increase in one and two person households, which now constitute almost half of all households in large metropolitan areas.

For most of these childless households, an apartment in a high building is the most desirable form of accommodation. This is why developers build them; there is no reason to believe that they could



Big Canadian developers now shun Canada and invest in the U.S.

not have made, and are making, just as high profits out of "medium height, medium density" buildings which Lorimer prefers, in conformance with current fashion. I do not conform; 70 years of following and participating in the never-ending "low-versus-high" debate have led me to the conclusion that residential buildings with four to nine stories show most of the disadvantages of both lower and higher ones and few of their advantages.

Lorimer accuses the developers of giving the people only a Hobson's choice between detached houses — good, but not affordable; and "high-rise"

apartments — affordable, but not good. It is true that poor people have little choice in housing — as in anything else. But people who can afford an apartment in a new high building have many choices: various types of older, and cheaper, single-family houses, and rental accommodation in converted houses, apartment houses, du-, tri-, quadru- and sexu-plexes, and other forms.

While the tenants of high buildings are there by choice, this is not true of their neighbours who may be adversely affected by shadows, high winds, or simply by huge bulk dominating their visual field. These negative effects can be prevented easily by legislation limiting the F.S.I. and the horizontal (rather than the vertical) extension of buildings and requiring adequate distances from the lot lines. The current fashion of wholesale denunciation of high buildings is as silly as the preceding wholesale adulation.

Lorimer objects rightly to the destruction of houses by redevelopment projects in the central city, but it is erroneous to say that they have "done little more than replace the housing demolished." The stagnation and decline of city populations is the result of shrinking size of household and increasing floor space per person.

The one housing type which is in short supply is the row or town house. This is due to the fanatical opposition by neighbourhood groups and small municipalities, which has only occasionally been overcome by the combined power of large developers and large centralized governments.

If both were eliminated, as Lorimer urges, there would be even fewer of these houses, which are eminently satisfactory both to the families who live in them and to the larger community because of their sufficiently high density.

As for Lorimer's third new form, industrial estates, it is hardly necessary to explain their superiority over the scattered industrial sites which they have replaced. While their development has been facilitated by the suburbanization of industry, it has not caused and hardly accelerated it.

Even less have industrial estates caused the increased use of trucks instead of rail for short-distance goods transportation. Lorimer makes the absurd statement "rail transportation does not have the same built-in suburban bias." The opposite is true: an inner-city factory can be served by rail only by pushing spur lines through existing neighbourhoods.

Equally biased is the treatment of downtown office projects. What evidence is there for the statement that office rents always rise faster than operating expenses? What is the "market value" of streets and lanes if they are *not* sold for redevelopment, but have to be retained (and maintained) by the city? While it is true that the federal government, when it rents a private office building, gets no net income from the corporate income tax, what tax income does it get when it owns the building?

Lorimer is opposed to the concentration of office

buildings downtown and proposes several alternative locations. All are used now — and all of them generate far more vehicle trips per-unit of office space than does the downtown — hardly an advantage.

The book also discusses the shopping malls and galleries which have been included in some large, downtown office projects. These are successful adaptations of their predecessor and competitor, the suburban shopping centre, the only one of the five forms which is genuinely new — for the West. In the Islamic orient it has long existed and still exists under the name of bazaar or suq.

In the bazaar, shops are lined up on both sides of wholly or partly weather-protected paths, reserved for pedestrians, while the vehicles (mostly donkeys or camels) park on the periphery. It is vastly superior to the Western shopping street which lines up stores and their pedestrian users on both sides of a heavily traveled arterial street.

From its inception in the 16th century, this misshapen hybrid has been met with well-founded violent protests against the “insolent chariots” which endanger, disrupt, and inconvenience pedestrian life. The adaptation of the principle of the bazaar to modern western conditions is a long overdue, enormous improvement in serving the shopping function.

Lorimer objects to the fact that the private police of the shopping mall tends to prohibit activities which the public police tends to permit on the shopping street. So do I; if most people do, this can easily be remedied by the public assuming the responsibility (and cost) of policing the mall, or by public regulation of the rights and duties of the private police.

Shortcomings

A more serious shortcoming of the suburban shopping centre is its isolation from all the other activities which contribute to the life and attraction of city centres. Attempts are now being made to remedy this by the creation of “secondary downtowns”, usually called “suburban town centres”. They have not achieved their goal because they do not offer low rent space which many of these activities require. Lorimer does not discuss this; his objection to suburban town centres seems to be derived from the maxim “what is good for the developer is bad for the nation.”

The five new forms with which the book deals have been highly successful and have yielded huge profits to their developers because they satisfy the demands of their users better than do other forms. But their composite result, the “corporate city”, satisfies no one.

What is unsatisfactory is not the character of the parts, but their relation — or lack of same — to each

other and to the road, rail, pipe and wire lines that tie them together. This is inevitable when every actor pursues his own objective without regard to other effects of his action. People like to drive to their office; they get there, but in the process they create congestion which they *do not want*. People like to have large lots; they get them, but in the process they create low densities which preclude the transit service which they *do want*.

Central planning needed

The only actor who can foresee and, at least in part, prevent these unwanted effects is a strong centralized planning and governing body — which Lorimer rejects.

In a concluding chapter the book deals with broader questions of Canada's future, such as foreign ownership, industrial strategy, and the regional distribution of industry. Lorimer accuses the developers of absorbing too much capital. But their extraction of profits from other pockets is a transfer payment which does not affect the total amount of capital available in Canada. It does affect income distribution. It would be preferable if these profits flowed into the public pocket. But Lorimer objects as strongly to development profits made by a Crown corporation, such as CN, as to those made by private developers.

In discussing “rival urban futures” he advocates decentralization of industry into smaller cities in all parts of Canada. He does not present a rationale for his statement: “Whatever the new strategy is for the Canadian economy, settling the question of the development industry's future . . . is a key element in this strategy”. As the book illustrates, development companies operate as profitably in small as in large cities; it seems that they could easily adjust to any new strategy.

The nine “key elements” which Lorimer proposes as “radical and far-reaching”, are rather vague and unspecific on the key issues of taxation and public land ownership.

Despite its many shortcomings, this information-packed book is well worth reading. On one level, it is a whopping good detective story. But it is much more interesting than Simenon, because it deals not with some recondite crime, but with the crime which every red-blooded Canadian tries to commit every day of his life: to get something for nothing. Hence the general fascination with the few guys who succeed and the curious mixture of admiration and moral indignation which sets the tone of this book.

On a higher level, the book is an example of what the late Gyorgy Lukacs called “apologetic criticism”, a passionate and profound critique of one aspect of capitalist society, without questioning its base. Lukacs refers to Flaubert and to Nietzsche. So Lorimer is in pretty good company.

Wanted: a refugee policy

by FRED ADLER

photo: David Lloyd

The 'boat people' were coming to Vancouver and they were creating shock waves in the city long before most of them arrived.

In July 1979, under pressure from the United Nations, Conservative Employment and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey lifted the ceiling on refugees allowed into Canada. The refugees had been pouring out of Vietnam since early 1979 at the rate of 40,000 per month.

Canada, Atkey announced, would now allow a maximum of 50,000 refugees to emigrate to Canada in 1979, raising the figure from the 12,000 previously allowed, itself an increase from 8,000.

While Canada could pat itself on the back for its generosity, its attitude on the world stage clearly smacked of hypocrisy.

At the United Nations' conference on refugees held in Geneva, Switzerland in late July, Canada's Conservative External Affairs Minister, Flora MacDonald, condemned Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, for "gross violation of human rights." Yet Ms. MacDonald said nothing about the way U.S. armies and planes had laid waste to the lands and peoples of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam between 1965 and 1975. Nor did the new External Affairs minister admit that Canada had sold the U.S. weapons to carry out its aggression.

While Canadian reporters scoured Asian ports looking for Vietnamese refugees with horror stories to tell about life under communism, U.S. navy and air force planes flew provocatively over Vietnam waters, supposedly to look for shipwrecked 'boat people'.

Meanwhile, Western nations halted desperately-needed aid to Vietnam, on the grounds that the



External Affairs Minister Flora MacDonald condemned Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, but said nothing about what the U.S. did there between 1965 and 1975.

country's government was practising racism, since over 75 per cent of the boat people were of Chinese ethnic origin.

But to many Vancouverites, these international issues were beside the point. To most of the city's residents who thought about the problem, the whole thing boiled down to one of two positions. "Let the boat people in" or "Send the bastards back where they came from!" Behind the whole con-

troversy, lurked the old B.C. fear about coloured Asians.

For racism is no stranger to B.C.'s shores.

Whites rioted twice in Vancouver before 1914, smashing up Japanese and Chinese communities. In 1914, white pressure forced the ship *Komagata Maru* anchored in the Vancouver harbour and carrying 350 Sikhs, all of whom were British subjects, to go back without unloading its passengers.

All Japanese-Canadians were interned in camps in B.C. during World War II, on the grounds they threatened national security. All the Japanese-Canadians' property, such as homes, small businesses and vegetable farms was never returned to the former owners, most of whom received no compensation.

In the early 1970's, as more Asians came to Vancouver, some white youths attacked East Indian immigrants in South Vancouver and sometimes stoned their homes.

The impending arrival of the Vietnamese refugees ripped open the old racial sores once more. Fortunately, the controversy now erupted not in the streets, but in the 'Letters to the Editor' section of the *Vancouver Sun*.

"We have received over 120 letters on this topic in July and August," a spokesman from the *Sun* observed. "Usually we get a dozen letters on any subject. But I have never seen such a response."

What were the first letters like? Not too encouraging for those who believe in racial harmony.

"I wish to protest the bringing of any more refugees into Canada," wrote one Vancouverite on July 18. "They should be sent back to their own homeland — and the bill sent to Russia."

"I oppose most strongly any effort of the Canadian government to encourage immigration of Vietnamese refugees," insisted another. "Immigration on the scale currently being considered . . . must surely lead to a further decline in the standard of living of all Canadians."

Two days later, on July 20, another letter writer asserted that if Canada admitted 10,000 refugees, 90 per cent of them would end up in Vancouver. "With their tremendous high birth rate," the writer continued, "they will double their numbers within a couple of years, perhaps less. At the moment, 350,000 refugees in Southeast Asia are reproducing at the astounding rate of 10,000 a week."

These incredible statements ignored a number of points. The federal government's formula of allowing one immigrant in for every one sponsored by an organization



Immigration Minister Ron Atkey: Generosity for the boat people, but what about other refugees?

could hold the proposed number of 50,000 immigrants to well below that number. Less than 10 per cent of the refugees who arrived would be allowed to settle at first in Vancouver since, as an official from the department of Employment and Immigration pointed out, "immigrants are assigned to places on the basis of population distribution. And since Vancouver has less than 5 per cent of the country's population, there is no way 90 per cent of the immigrants could end up on the Lower Mainland — at least in their first year here."

And nowhere in the world as one letter implied is any country's people reproducing at the rate of 3 per cent a week! Three per cent a year, maybe, but not 3 per cent a week.

The anti-immigrant letters inevitably prompted the counter-response in the pages of the *Vancouver Sun*.

As one woman letter writer put it, the letters against the Vietnamese refugees made her "realize that there really are people who [would] stand by and watch others get drowned or get mugged and robbed, and as in the Bible story about the

Good Samaritans, pass by on the other side."

Another accused two anti-refugee letter writers of lacking "hearts and brains."

Certainly, the anti-refugee attitudes contrasted sharply with official statements, since all levels of government welcomed the boat people. On the prompting of city council, Vancouver Mayor Jack Volrich set up a special fund to aid the refugees and the British Columbia legislature passed Bill 32 to help the new arrivals.

Yet even here hypocrisy and double-dealing was rampant. The same Vancouver city council that had endorsed a special fund to sponsor incoming refugees voted 8-2 in August against the motion of left-wing alderman Harry Rankin to raise money for medical aid to Nicaragua.

In February 1979, the council by a clear majority axed the city's equal employment opportunities program set up to bring more minorities into city hall, and fired the program's director, Shelagh Day.

The reason? Supposedly to save

the \$58,000 a year the program cost. Yet as *Vancouver Express* staff writer Judy Lindsay pointed out just before the axe fell on the program and Ms. Day, "the upper ranks at city hall include not a single Asian, black, East Indian, native nor disabled person, and only one woman."

More women, Lindsay pointed out, show up in the city's middle ranks. Yet there were no minorities at all in management.

While the B.C. Social Credit government passed a bill to help incoming refugees it showed little concern for the province's present minorities.

Present minorities

In late 1978, then-Human Resources Minister Bill Van Der Zalm said something should be done to help the boat people. Yet in the same year, he suggested that all the native Canadians living in downtown Vancouver should be shipped up north.

Meanwhile, the 10 men and two women, all of whom were appointed by Socred Labour Minister Allan Williams to sit on the province's Human Rights Commission, had raised the ire of many groups.

The commission was supposedly set up to promote human rights and awareness in B.C. and show leadership in the field of human rights.

Had it done so? Most felt that under the Socreds it had done exactly the opposite. The five people appointed by the NDP had spoken out loudly in the field of human rights. Yet, as Stephen Hume pointed out in April in the *Victoria Colonist*, the present members of the Socred appointed commission had "not produced one educational paper on human rights, or adopted one concrete human rights program, or taken a public stand on a human rights issue."

Women's groups and gay activists demanded the members of the commission resign after an April commission meeting had degenerated into anti-homosexual and anti-women jokes.

One commission member, Jock Smith, who was supposed to have made several anti-women jokes, was chairman of the Surrey School Board in 1976 when the school

board was found in violation of the B.C. Human Rights Code for using religious restrictions to hire principals.

If the provincial government's stand was not as clear-cut on the refugees as it looked, neither was the anti-immigrant bias of all Vancouverites.

For could all the anti-refugee sentiment be classed as outright racism?

Not so, for many letter writers zeroed in on the economic problems faced by British Columbia. Bill Bennett's proud boast that his government had "got B.C. moving again" fell on many a deaf ear.

In the midst of a supposed building boom, seven per cent of Vancouver's work force was officially jobless. Some observers put the true figure as 50 per cent higher. The housing vacancy rate has shrivelled to less than one per cent. A recent city housing report pointed out that the city needed 40,000 affordable housing units for low-income people, a task that the mayor and a mostly reactionary city council would never vote the funds for.

Broader action needed

Margaret Mitchell, the newly-elected New Democratic Member of Parliament from Vancouver-East, had urged the federal government to lift its ceiling on Vietnamese refugees.

Yet in August she held a conference in Vancouver's Chinatown area, to talk about the incoming refugees. "I was trying to prevent the growing concern about the incoming immigrants," she says about the conference. "450 out of the 500 Vietnamese who have come already have settled in the Chinatown area which is in my constituency. They settle in the area because many people there speak their language and because they are also close to government services."

The present residents of the Chinatown area, says Ms. Mitchell, are nervous about more people coming, because of the area's high unemployment rate and the lack of decent housing.

"We must make sure that the federal government does something for everyone, refugees included."

But will that happen? It seems unlikely. In the grip of a Conservative and conservative fiscal government, Ottawa is slashing the funds that go to the poorest 50 per cent of Canadians.

The unemployment rate in Margaret Mitchell's constituency of Vancouver-East stands at an incredible 18 per cent. The riding, by the way, includes many ethnic groups.

'Canada Works' cutback

Employment and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey welcomes the Vietnamese refugees saying, "They are all going to need housing, food and clothing. That's an economic benefit." Maybe, but in 1979, under Liberal pork-barrelling, Vancouver-East received 60 Canada Works projects, probably because the constituency had a Liberal Member of Parliament named Art Lee and an election was in the offing. And how many Canada Works projects will Atkey's Employment and Immigration department funnel into Vancouver-East in the coming year? Exactly one project worth \$35,000!

When she was elected on May 22, Mitchell pointed out that the residents of her riding were perhaps suffering more than those in any other area in the Lower Mainland from all the government spending cutbacks.

While Ron Atkey's department of Employment and Immigration welcomed the Vietnamese refugees, it was refusing a visa to a Chilean called Galindo Madrid who did not want to return to his homeland.

Bruce Eriksen, the feisty president of the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA) has become an outspoken advocate for the forgotten poor living in Vancouver's downtown core.

In his letter to the *Vancouver Sun*, Eriksen urged that all levels of government build needed housing and put the unemployed back to work in the process.

Such a solution, he wrote, "would be a much more realistic and acceptable approach to the problem [of the refugees] than berating Canadians for their fears and frustrations."

As we face up to the 'Energy Crisis,' we look to science for the answers. But scientists have axes to grind like anyone else. They're not neutral. And neither is the prestigious Science Council of Canada, appearances to the contrary. Here's how and why.

SCIENCE ON TRIAL

by David Cubberley

Canada shares with the other industrial capitalist nations a belief in the viability of limitless economic growth. Our enterprise economy and governments have achieved widespread acceptance of this goal through the growing availability of consumption goods. Continuous economic expansion has been established as the means to uninterrupted satisfaction of the citizen's needs. And the citizen has been taught to identify access to consumption goods as the path to satisfaction of his needs.

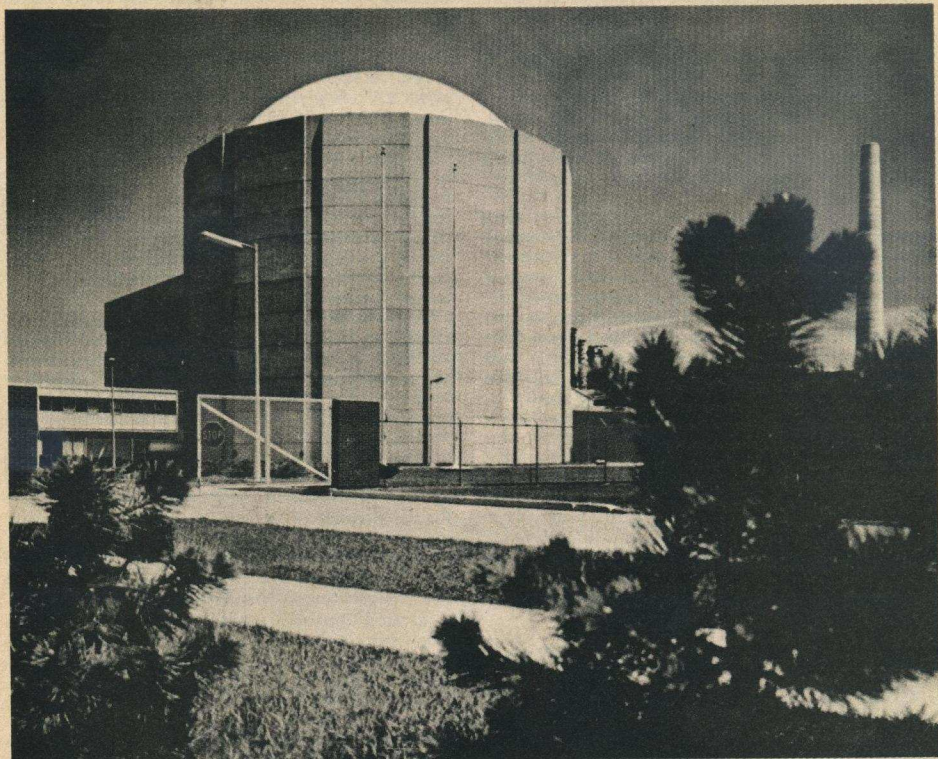
The buoyant prosperity of the capitalist world in the post-war epoch produced a general acquiescence in the ideology of growth. To the average John a place at the trough, or its promise, was sufficient proof of the pudding; gourmands that we are, we were lulled by the sheer weight of material affluence generated by the formula and learned very quickly to pass on judging its ultimate effects on the world. For a quarter of a century we have been largely content to consume.

Until recently there were apparently no contradictions for the majority of those lucking into the urban milieu thrown up by the growth process: all one had to do was light the barbecue, rip the cellophane off the eats and there it was — paradise.

The classical problems of capitalist expansion seemed to drop permanently out of the picture. The fear of depression associated with the old business cycle was whisked away by a state-administered capitalism with a steady momentum. The new industrial state arrived, and life was full and secure.

When the pressure of waste-based production began to tear visibly at the environment, a few began to question the ethics of the "throw-away" society. However, the damages inflicted upon nature by the industrial machine, which should have forced a questioning of growth, were disguised or explained away by government.

Quick to divine the need to forestall anxiety over



Douglas Point nuclear power station: if the growth imperative reigns unchecked society will become dependent upon fuels of which little is known and much is to be feared.

environmental consequences, government handily established itself as custodian of society's interests and as negotiator between mother nature and the needs of the industrial machine. All problems were soluble by administrative means; there was no need for society to trouble itself unduly — we could just tend to the barbecue and make sure that the steaks weren't overdone.

Finally the 'endless summer' of consumption petered out. The growth of industry and consumption goods that were the stuff of the good life turned out to depend on an intermediary: the existence of cheap energy in growing quantities, chiefly oil and gas. It was the superabundance of fuel, exploited by science in the employ of industry, that allowed the creation of the machine base that churned out the goodies.

The sense of security arising from our control over seemingly limitless supplies of cheap oil was rudely disturbed by the creation of the OPEC cartel, the sub-

sequent rise in oil prices and the faltering of the major capitalist economies. Suddenly our much-vaunted sophistication in energy use showed an uglier side — our complete dependence on increasing amounts of it to fuel the fires of growth.

Enter Science

The 'energy crisis,' the nickname we give to the dilemma, is forcing a painful awareness of the nature of our economy — namely that growth has its own peculiar dynamic and that, at a certain point, it demands that society pay a price for its benefits.

We are at that point now. If the growth imperative reigns unchecked, pushing energy consumption ahead at breakneck speed, society will traverse a threshold leading it to dependence upon fuels about which little is known and much is to be feared. It is important that society grasp the significance of the choices facing it.

and that it not be bullied into the belief that there exists but one solution.

In the broadest sense there are two directions open. One involves payment of the dues demanded by uncontrolled growth, irrespective of consequences; in this scenario society would accommodate whatever scale of risks and changes transition to a new energy economy would require. The second would decide that the asking price is too high, therefore that future growth should be governed by the larger needs of society.

A central role in posing and resolving this question will fall to science and its practitioners, for the public mind understands 'science', 'solution' and 'security' as indissolubly linked. Caught unaware by present events, many look automatically to science to produce the next miracle. Because of the high regard in which it is held, the science establishment disposes over inordinate power to shape and define what is possible, thus to affect — to the point even of determining — the manner in which society understands its options.

Not surprisingly, the Canadian scientific community is eager to lead us in the quest for technological solutions to energy scarcity. In 1975 the Science Council of Canada published a general position on energy matters, and has then since busied itself preparing the detailed strategy presented in June of this year. Taken together these documents provide us with a chilling look at just how science would remodel our future, and they force the disturbing conclusion that the science establishment stands as a serious obstacle to the sane regulation of our affairs.

Assisting the Public Choice

The Science Council entered the energy debate with *Canada's Energy Opportunities*, in which it proposed a key role for science in solving our common problem. Its argument is that only the ample application of science will guarantee the public access to a wide range of energy choices.

The report claims that Canada will have no choice but to make the transition from petroleum-based energy to substitute forms; that we risk chaos if the transition is not carefully planned and managed; and that this is best guaranteed by turning the reins over to science through financing of expert appraisal of the energy options.

In arguing for this mandate, the Council advances itself as a neutral tool which the democratic community must use if it is to make a "judicious" choice. Science is there to illuminate the choices, to suggest how best to evaluate them and to plan for the technologies that will realize them. No freedom is removed from the community in this manner, rather it is rendered capable of choosing "the most promising means of energy production, whether it be from solar radiation or from any other source." The precise means for deciding what looks "most promising" are left hanging or only dimly implied, thus giving an impression of commitment to a balanced evaluation of all sources. If Canadians could but muster "the wisdom to take the

necessary initiatives now," the country could "envisage this period of transition with serenity."

Canada's Energy Opportunities is careful to present science as a force having no preference in the matters it considers, capable of reasoning in the best interests of society and wishing only to act as its aide-de-camp. At no point are its close links with private or public enterprise admitted or examined.

As proof of its responsible nature the Science Council makes a great show of concern for energy conservation and environmental protection. Having stacked motherhood statements up like pancakes, the Council neatly sidesteps an evaluation of science's role in producing the present energy system, which it piously claims needs correcting in the direction of efficiency and environmental compatibility.

In future, not only will scientists help plan for our energy needs, but they will do it within the confines of efficiency and ecological balance. To this end consent to the use of more science will bring greater rationality in the use of resources, leading us to the sunny shores of "a prosperous society, living in harmony with nature."

Hands over their hearts, the scientific community give us a pledge: "we know enough to be preoccupied by the risks of massive and irreversible damage that the continuation of present tendencies would bring." This new preoccupation with the ecology will apparently protect society's inherent links with nature and thus dominate the choice of energy supply and the risks in exploiting it. Or so they would have us believe.

In fact, *Canada's Energy Opportunities* employs much cant to create the illusion of a link between science's concerns and those who would opt for an economizing society in "harmony" with mother nature. The text is dotted with calls to recycle wastes, to be more efficient in using scarce resources, and to eliminate the problems provoked "by a dizzying and constant growth of consumption."

It is all for measures leading to reductions in the rate of growth of energy consumption, which could constitute "the first stage towards the institution of a resource-managing society." One is left with the impression that the Council wants to eradicate waste and pines for an economy which would reproduce itself in a balanced fashion.

But all is not what it is made to seem. We learn that the goals of conservation and reduced consumption must be achieved "without reducing our economic potential." Conservation, rather than a primary goal, will play second fiddle to "economic potential;" the Council doesn't stop to explain fully what that means but, as we will see further on, it's just another way of saying that the economy must be allowed to grow at the rate it wants to.

This waffling on key issues is the first indication that science, far from being without preference, operates from a framework of assumptions which condition its statement of options.

For example, in line with the image of responsibility, the claim is made that "we must gradually loosen our dependence upon exhaustible energy resources in

order to rely upon those that are *practically inexhaustible*." Which, at first blush, appears to call for a society based on renewable energy sources. Moreover this must occur "even if we have to halt the traditionally rapid growth of consumption and abandon uses and methods that are damaging to the surrounding milieu..."

A very radical position. And very responsible too, until, that is, one notices that to the Council the "practically inexhaustible" includes not only renewable resources like solar and hydro power, for which the name has "literal value," but also those sources inexhaustible except over "the extremely long-term, such as uranium and thorium."

This facility for speaking out of both sides of the mouth governs much of the argument. When it wants us to perceive it as responsible towards the needs of nature, the Council dramatically shakes its finger at the growth ethic. Thus it warns us that the projected growth in energy consumption (in order of 300 per cent by the year 2000) will "inevitably have repercussions on the surrounding milieu." Further, that environmental safeguards will not prevent the damage because nature cannot indefinitely withstand "an energy consumption growing in exponential fashion." And since a tripling of demand in 25 years is decidedly exponen-

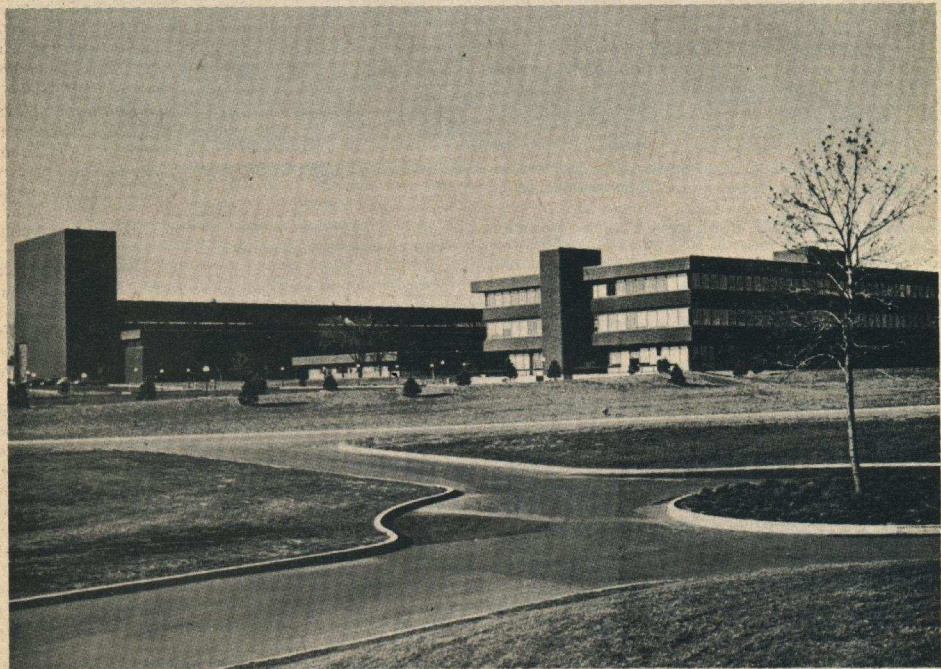
tial, the Council will obviously call for a halt to growth, right? Wrong!

Conservation Ditched

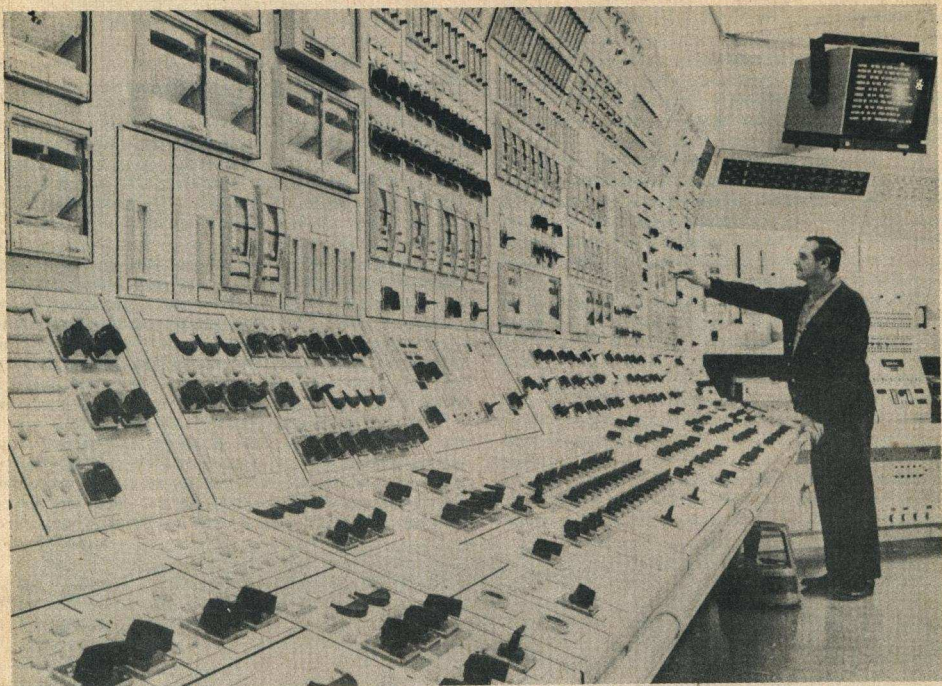
The booklet *Roads To Energy Self-Reliance* is the Council's big play for federal research dollars, involving a menu of energy projects requiring \$3.8 billion over the next 30 years. In it we are given a much more precise set of goals, offered as a stepping-stone to full energy autonomy. It is interesting to note the 'evolution' in thinking.

Given the fuss made over conservation in *Canada's Energy Opportunities*, it is fascinating to remark that it receives no more than \$270 million of the global budget, or about 7 per cent. Fascinating as well is the fact that conservation has been pared down to the job of rendering existing energy conversion systems (thermal and nuclear generators, for example) more efficient.

This humble role derives from the fact that, given the growth imperative, conservation measures could reduce demand growth by no more than 15-20 per cent at the maximum. A result that would hardly make a dent in a projected growth of 300 per cent. And the Council reasons that our energy needs are "tied" to



Atomic Energy Canada research laboratory: the Science Council shakes its finger at the growth ethic... then comes down on the side of uranium and thorium.



Pickering nuclear station control room: already locked in an embrace with the Candu system, the Science Council wants to go further in the direction of thorium.

our "economic and political aspirations," which in turn are welded to growth; thus rather than kid ourselves about the potential of conservation measures, we must plan to maintain a high, and growing, level of energy consumption "in order to conserve *the quality of life* at a level acceptable to the collectivity."

A Good Idea, But

As with conservation measures, so with the whole range of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and biomass gases. The discussion of these sources — and the pitiful funding of \$136 million over 30 years — leave no doubt that they were included for their cosmetic value, to deflect criticism and to further the illusion that all options are being considered.

In spite of its rejection in the short term, the Council claims to hold high hopes for soft energy sources over the centuries to come. But it is concerned that we avoid "premature" reliance on their contribution. Society will do best to "progress gradually" in their use. However, we should not "conclude that the apparently weak financing" is "incompatible" with the commanding role renewable sources should one day play; or that, "worse yet," this be taken as "con-

sent to a permanent dependence upon the dominant technologies for utilisation of exhaustible resources."

But what else can be concluded? Spending breakdowns show a total dependence upon exhaustible fuel resources. Moreover, they contemplate compounding that dependency by a factor of three, along the way leading us through a transitory reliance upon coal and then into the untroubled era of nuclear fuels.

This disinterest in soft energy is justified by reference to the market place, i.e. they are uncompetitive in price terms. The Council concludes that consumers would never accept energy from renewable resources because it would be more expensive. Thus it should be kept as a bright thought whose time will someday come, which moment will be signaled by the impartial arbiter 'market price'.

Energy from renewable sources obviously cannot achieve dominance in a society where production is constantly being centralized in response to the growth imperative. Its 'need' is for energy that is centrally generated on a scale determined by the size of its industrial units. Such energy generation is itself an industrial undertaking and is highly subsidized through the use of environmentally destructive fuels. As it is this context which determines price variables,

confining social choices within the price matrix simply ensures that existing fuel systems will be replaced by avant-garde fuels and technologies of the same type.

Conversion to soft energy would demand a decisive transformation of the production cycle and the acceptance of radically different social goals. Such fuels could be viable beginning tomorrow, were labour-time withdrawn from centralized production and put into the decentralized forms demanded by their nature. Soft energy's ecological neutrality tends towards a much smaller scale of operation and would dictate much greater (in market terms 'less efficient') use of social labour.

Such a direction would mean changes in the social order and a conflict with existing property interests. Unwilling to buck the hegemony of growth, the Council wants to see renewable energy fall by the wayside. That it points to market price as the reason merely indicates its complete fealty to the property system.

Having placed growth beyond discussion in the search for options, it follows that research is to be limited to fuels readily commercialized within the price model. Each of the proposed energy systems would have far-reaching social consequences, but these the Council sees fit to accept on our behalf.

Firstly, they want to help clear the natural obstacles hindering rapid exploitation of frontier hydrocarbon sources. This tack, creating 'exotic' technologies and posing certain risks to delicate marine environments, would firm up remaining petroleum supplies and perhaps lessen our dependence upon imported oil.

Secondly, research would attempt to eliminate blocks to immediate use of our coal reserves, identified as the fuel capable of tiding us over the "uncertain" transition to a new energy era. Meeting energy needs through coal use will mean a terrific increase in the circulation of sulphur and carbon dioxide, thus jeopardizing the atmosphere and intensifying problems like acid rain. It will also mean stripmining of large areas of the agricultural west.

Finally, the lion's share of funding will permit "the conceptual refinement of nuclear fission reactors and methods of utilizing them" and will ensure "the more effective use of nuclear fuels." The Science Council takes as given that Canada is already committed to nuclear generation of electricity; its research falls within the cadre of perfecting certain avant-garde applications of the existing system.

The Environmental Shuffle

But what of the demand, so prominent in *Canada's Energy Opportunities*, that the ecology take greater precedence in energy decision-making. In *Roads to Energy Self-Reliance* this commitment is honed to the point of extinction. Instead of choice based on the long-term needs of our environment, we get only research designed to mitigate the damage caused by ecologically harmful options: "the experience... acquired will allow the gradual elimination of the hazards caused by the new energy sources."

This tells us two things: first, that the sources pro-

posed will further risk our already-taxed ecosystem; second, that science sees environmental damage as a necessary trade-off, sort of 'risk factor' that can be moderated downward through refinement of technology.

The Council evidently cannot imagine an environmental threat so great as to occasion a total ban on the activities that would provoke it. Risk, you see, can always be compressed into acceptable parameters by applying more science. Thus, in the example of deep-water or ice-bound exploration for oil and gas, science will study the structural properties of ice and 'perfect' technology for containment and cleanup of the spills they know will necessarily occur.

Faith of this order is difficult to summon, just as the oil slicks from IXTOC-1 (shallow water, ice-free) are gently lapping at beaches along the Gulf. More bizarre even is the calm admission that even given "a complete potential for technical intervention in deep water" we must "expect serious difficulties all the same."

The use of coal as a petroleum substitute will, it is admitted, produce global ecological problems, but that shouldn't stop us in the short term. The increase in "carbon gas... risks in the long-term the production of *disastrous effects* by causing the heating of the atmosphere... There exists no practical solution to this environmental risk..."

And the long-term turns out to be about fifty years: "it would thus not be surprising if, towards 2030, urban and regional pollution forced the collectivity to resolve the socio-economic dilemma by favouring a form of energy production that *respects the world ecosystem*." Why, one wonders, should we wait until 2030? And why should we be tempted into taking up with demon coal?

Clean Fuels for Clean Living

The answer is that by the time coal is rendering our world unlivable, we will be capable of making the full transition to what the Council considers an ecologically sound fuel system: namely one based on radioactive materials. The report is unambiguous in adopting nuclear power as the lynchpin of Canada's long-term energy supply. It identifies electricity as the single most important energy form for satisfying industrial growth needs; and it sees nuclear generators as capable of providing "the greater part, if not all, of the predicted growth of our electrical energy needs."

Refinement of nuclear technologies would command 58 per cent of requested funding, or \$2.2 billion. Twenty per cent of that would allow the development of a pilot underground dump site for the "definitive confinement" of radioactive wastes. Science sees a strategic need for this project, not because of an inherent danger posed by surface storage of radioactive bonbons, but rather as a demonstration before an anxious public that burial is a workable solution.

Thus the dump is an obstacle-clearer, an essential element in securing "collective approval" of the full-scale nuclearisation of Canada. In this manner sci-

ence, which as we must remind ourselves is neutral in these matters, will show us that the long-term radioactive threat posed by accumulating wastes should not retard our transition to the "all-electric society."

And Then Even Bigger Nukes

The remaining funding, about half of the total, would go towards perfecting a thorium cycle for the existing Candu reactor system. Already locked into a torrid embrace with Candu, the Council wants us to overcome our pubescent hesitations and learn to 'go all the way.' 'Going all the way' means capitalizing on our advantage as possessors of a nuclear technology, accepting that it is here to stay and finding the means to give it longevity.

In Candu's case — a voracious natural uranium-user — it means finding a way of multiplying the available fuel base. A viable thorium-uranium fuel would give Canada the equivalent of the breeder reactor's plutonium cycle, in principle making it capable of producing more usable (and more deadly) fissile material than it consumes.

Realization of this dream would secure our fuel supply base indefinitely, open up export markets and guarantee our status as a nuclear power — and we could all sleep tight without nagging doubts about running short of radioactivity.

Among the side-benefits a thorium cycle would bring is the opportunity it would give us to get into reprocessing of nuclear wastes. However, since this exciting possibility is exceptionally dangerous, "a large part of the experimentation will have to show that the recycling of fuel... will not create unacceptable possibilities of accidental emissions, and risks for the health of workers and the public."

We would do well to note that they say "unacceptable possibilities," implying the existence of levels of risk that are acceptable. But then, they are certain that "if the thorium system contributes... to the energy supply in a very critical period, the majority of Canadians will grasp and accept the trade-offs between the advantages and the risks."

The report goes so far as to state that the thorium project will likely produce "fiercer opposition" than the other research proposals, due to the associated risks of thermal pollution, reactor meltdown, irradiation of the population, etc.

Their belief that all of these potential dangers can be engineered out of existence is unnerving, especially given recent events at Three Mile Island. But one is pushed over the brink by direct lies, such as that concerning the twenty reactor-years of experience at Pickering which have "proved the validity of the Candu natural uranium system at the technical, economic and environmental levels." Apparently, inadequate safety systems and procedures are not the stuff of which concern should be built.

Science and Democracy

The importance of these issues derives from the effects they will have on the level of democracy

achieved in energy decision-making. Our entire society shares faith in the miracle-working powers of science: raised on gadgetry and computers, we intuitively feel that a space-conquering science can be counted on to overcome a problem as banal as a shortage of energy.

As we are conditioned to view scientific knowledge as universal, we look to those whose profession it is to perform large parts of our reasoning for us. We already trust them. There is thus no doubt that the temptation to trust them further, perhaps fully, will play a prominent role in our future political life.

Unconscious trust of science is a frightening thing. It becomes sinister when one grasps the eagerness of scientists to render that trust total, to allow themselves to act with ever-less reference to the unskilled and the uncomprehending. 'Oh no,' avers dame science, shocked at the accusation; we do not seek "to determine, once and for all, the diverse paths of progress, but rather... to multiply and enlarge the energy options in order to facilitate the future choice."

Our examination allows us to conclude that this is the purest double-talk: the proposals in effect make all of the essential choices for us and serve to eclipse all possibility of real discussion. But, they reassure us, the selection of "promising" options was based on "the technical experience of a group of experts", who acted "on the basis of technical, economic and socio-political criteria."

All of which, it needs to be added, remain undiscussed and which fact appears natural and right to the Council.

What it all means is that the technicians believe it is they who are really competent to make the key social decisions because the implications for our lives are ultimately far less important than the effects they would have on the system. Science should take custody of much of the process of deciding and government should give it the necessary funding: only in that way can we avoid the pitfalls of wrong decisions, based on reactions to "the desires of a badly informed public."

Any doubt that one might feel about this trust of science is doubt that one should overcome, because the experts know the needs of the system and, as we should know by now, its needs are identical with our own.

So deep is this conviction within the science establishment that they find it unnecessary to even discuss the criteria which govern their judgements. In its place we are given homily: "the choice of the scale of energy priorities and associated technologies unfolded naturally within the framework of known needs and was founded on the knowledge and judgement of experts."

What this brand of science is in fact organizing is the very antithesis of real democracy: the fully administered reality, in which all of the complications of free choice are dissolved in the calm and objective world of formulae. 'We' have but to down a good dose of soma, thence to lose ourselves in the tranquility of knowing that The Controllers 'understand' our needs and are selecting the very best ways of meeting them.

The Big Red Scare of '79

by DOUG SMITH

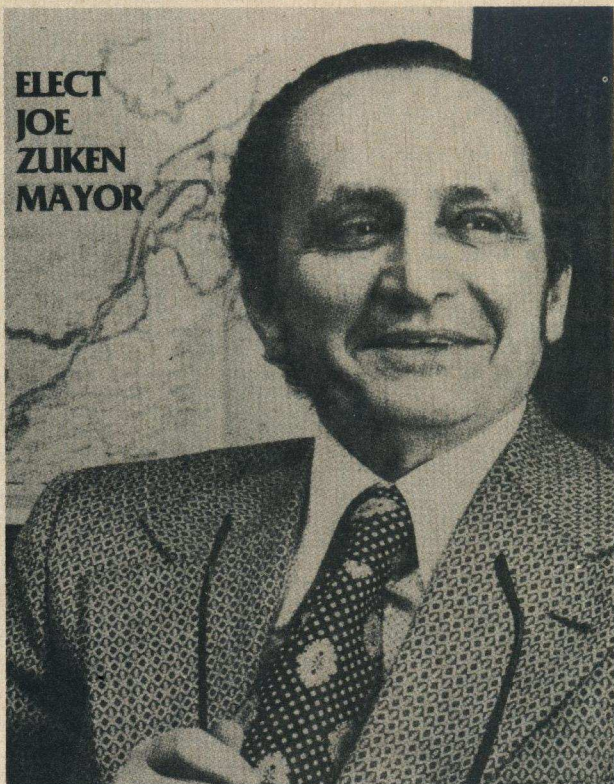
On June 20, one day short of the 60th anniversary of the Bloody Sunday police riot that ended the Winnipeg General Strike, Winnipeggers gave Bill Norrie an overwhelming 80 percent of the vote in a mayoral by-election.

The result should not have been surprising — Norrie is a member of the Independent Citizens Election Committee — the Conservative-Liberal coalition which has run City Council almost continuously since 1919. Since Norrie is a lawyer, a former Liberal who supported Sydney Spivak in the federal election and the chairman of the city's executive committee, the election should have passed with a yawn.

But there were two quirks in the election which lent it the flavour of a three ring circus and naked class struggle — the fact that there were 11 other candidates and the fact that the one who had the best chance of beating Norrie was Joe Zuken, a member of the Communist Party of Canada.

The election, which was necessitated by the death last spring of Mayor Bob Steen, attracted every sort of candidate including three members of the New Democratic Party, a Socred who wanted to give the city's Ukrainian community a better break, a music teacher who wanted to get involved and an unemployed accountant who was told to run by the sun during last February's eclipse.

The North End of Winnipeg has always had a special relationship with the Communist Party and the tradition of Communist city councillors goes back to the thirties, when Jake Penner and Joe Forkin were elected and represented the Workers' Unity League. In all the years Penner was on Council he had the



Winnipeg Mayoral candidate Joe Zuken: red-baited by sections of the NDP

reputation of being the hardest working and most knowledgeable member of the Council.

And that was the mantle that Joe Zuken fell heir to when he took over Penner's seat in 1962. Zuken had a long history in radical politics in Winnipeg. He was the director of the Winnipeg production of *Eight*

Men Speak, the agit-prop play concerning the persecution of Communist leaders in the 1930s, which the city decided to ban. As a lawyer he defended many people being charged under the Defence of Canada Act, including Annie Buller.

During his 20 years on Winnipeg's school board he proposed

such radical reforms as free textbooks and free kindergarten. At that time the papers accused Zuken of wanting to nationalize the children. But Zuken persevered and eventually received establishment recognition. The University of Winnipeg gave him an honorary degree, and the provincial historical society also honoured Zuken with an award for his service to the city.

Diligent constituency work

That service took the form of diligent constituency work — not just for members of his own ward but for any citizen who had run head on with city hall — and Zuken's ability to provide articulate opposition to the policies of the ICEC. With Zuken's scathing wit and near-perfect attendance record he often appeared to be the only one who knew what was going on at city hall.

The fact Zuken stood out intellectually was given ironic counterpoint by the way the ICEC continually barred him from any city hall committees. In the mid 70s the NDP rewrote the city's constitution, adding a requirement that all councillors be appointed to committees, leading to Zuken's first appointment:

The fact that Zuken was nearly a venerable civic institution — and virtually the only one that was not likely to be ripped down and replaced by a high-rise — he presented something of a problem to those who would have liked to have red-baited him out of the mayoral race. How could you say the only councillor who understood Roberts' Rules of Order was a threat to "our democratic process?" Most of Zuken's critics knew they could not get away with painting the 66 year old man as a bomb-hurling Bolshevik.

But if fear of Communism would not work — not that Zuken's platform had very much to do with Communism, Zuken referring to it as urban reform and comparing it to Toronto Mayor John Sewell — fear-of-fear-of-Communism seemed to be just what the doctor ordered for the first half of the campaign. A col-

umnist in the *Winnipeg Free Press* said the provincial Minister of Economic Development, J. Frank Johnston, was doing all he could to make sure Zuken was defeated. The reason? Johnston was certain there would be no more investment capital flowing into the province if Winnipeg tried to build socialism in one city.

Norrie was able to remain fairly aloof from the red-baiting, as in fact were all of the establishment candidates as the right of the NDP moved in to do a more than adequate job.

Elmwood NDP City Councillor Alf Skowron said he decided to run for mayor to give people a choice between Norrie's Conservatism and Zuken's "extreme Communism."

As well, J. Frank Syms, a defeated NDP candidate from the federal election declared his candidacy to offer Winnipeggers a choice of a "pragmatic social democrat." Syms was at the time under attack for pamphlets he put out during the federal election calling for a return to capital punishment and an end to bilingualism — stated in language that placed him slightly to the right of Dan McKenzie.

Skowron endorsement refused

Skowron decided to seek an official NDP endorsement. The party had not seriously run candidates for Mayor since the days of the CCF. When Steve Juba, a provincial Liberal, became Mayor in the 50s the party seemed to come to the conclusion it was better to suffer with Juba than split the vote and let the ICEC capture the Mayor's chair.

The NDP provincial council refused to endorse Skowron, pointing out that doing so would make Syms and Harry Lazaranko, yet another New Democrat who was running for Mayor, subject to expulsion. The unstated reason was that Skowron could have been one of the most embarrassing NDP candidates in a long series of gaffes. Right-wing on many issues — he recently opposed bilingual signs at city hall even though it is in the city's charter

— Skowron's verbal ramblings are painfully disjointed, and, as one critic said, they indicate a complete lack of linear thought.

To Skowron the question was much more sinister. The party council refused to endorse him because they would be embarrassed by the large number of New Democrats who were working for Zuken. He then gave forth a figure which was eventually to be treated as fact — there were 300 left extremists working for Zuken, he said.

Communist threat raised

Peter Warren, Winnipeg's most listened-to hot-line radio commentator had a special show five days before the election dealing with the threat of electing a Communist Mayor and the infiltration of the NDP by Marxists. Skowron said he was preparing a list of the big cheeses in the party who were supporting Zuken. At the top of this list appeared Jay Cowan, the NDP labour critic in the legislature. It seemed there was a Zuken sign in a window of the house Cowan lived in.

Syms also involved himself in this orgy of self-destruction. He issued a press release saying "One is therefore moved to wonder why a group of Marxist-Status of Women-Social Activist militants within the NDP have volunteered to support an independent mayoralty candidate who is a member of the Communist Party."

Syms' attack was more hysterical as he claimed that "What may not be well known is that this group has a majority grip on the provincial executive of the party in Manitoba." There also existed a "small, but highly organized cadre of radicals." These rantings would not have been so serious if not for the fact Syms came within a few thousand votes of getting elected to the House of Commons last May and was a contender for the party presidency in 1978.

The press reaction was almost touching as these things were faithfully reported. In truth, the Mani-



NDP candidate J. Frank Syms claimed radicals had taken over the executive of the Manitoba NDP.

toba left could barely organize a dinner party, let alone take over the executive of the NDP. The figure of 300 was used as an established fact, even though there were little more than 300 people in all working for Zuken and they came from a variety of political stripes including Liberals and Conservatives. As well Frank Syms' word was never questioned when he accused someone of supporting Zuken. In one case, someone had said that it would not be such a terrible tragedy for Zuken to get elected, and Syms had him

made a member of the committee of 300.

The tragedy of the campaign was the fact that the internal troubles of the NDP managed to obscure the issues that Zuken was trying to raise through his candidacy. He was constantly pressed on his membership in the CP. Would he resign so as not to be an embarrassment? How could he go to the U.S. to attend civic conventions? Would the international banks lend the city money if it had a Communist Mayor?

For his part, Zuken said he had always been an independent at city hall and had never let any organization tell him what to do — something of a break from democratic centralism and a sidestep that upset some supporters. At other times Zuken said he hoped he would be something of a tourist attraction for the city.

The issues Zuken was trying to raise were important too. The ICEC had been running city hall as a prep school for the Lyon government — two councillors are running for the Tories this fall in by-elections. They have given the Trizec Corporation one of the biggest sweetheart deals conceivable at their development at Portage and Main. The Winnipeg Jets have been given generous handouts to expand the city's arena so they could get into the NHL.

And at the same time many services are being reduced. Public transit rates are climbing, ambulance fees are moving up to \$60, garbage collection is being cut back and the machinery is in disrepair. City Council tried to provoke strikes with many of its employees this summer and forced generally poor settlements.

But although Zuken did manage to raise these issues on occasion, the final question for the media was whether or not Winnipeg was ready for a Communist Mayor. Many people who might have supported Zuken seemed to have been blown all the way over into Norrie's camp. Zuken beat all the other candidates in their own bases of support but still lost his own ward to Norrie.

Whether or not the Zuken campaign will lead to a blood bath in the NDP, and that seems a possibility, it has certainly provided Sterling Lyon with ammunition for the next provincial election.

But it could also lead to a closer examination of city hall now that the ICEC controls all the power and must be responsible for everything that it does.

And Joe Zuken? A month after the election he was happily harassing the city for overruling a building inspector who said that the fire exits on the arena expansion were not sufficient.

There are 20 million books and pamphlets in the famous U.S. Library of Congress. Someday you'll be able to consult them by pushing a button while sitting in your living room. It's easy to pooh-pooh the coming of the 'Wired City' and the 'Information Age' — but it's happening. Here's how — and here's how Canada is avoiding some tough decisions.

The Wired City

by Glenn Schneider

The gaunt spectre of extinction haunts the marbled corridors of some of Canada's largest corporate entities these days, invisible to most of the building's occupants but startlingly apparent to others.

In closed meeting rooms in the offices of Bell Canada and the other major telephone companies across Canada, employees who have had a glimpse of the future gather to speak in hushed tones about the impending demise of that ubiquitous and faithful device — the telephone.

Not that they view the phone companies' downfall as imminent. But the day may be close enough to cause great discomfort and gnashing of teeth in their corporate boardrooms.

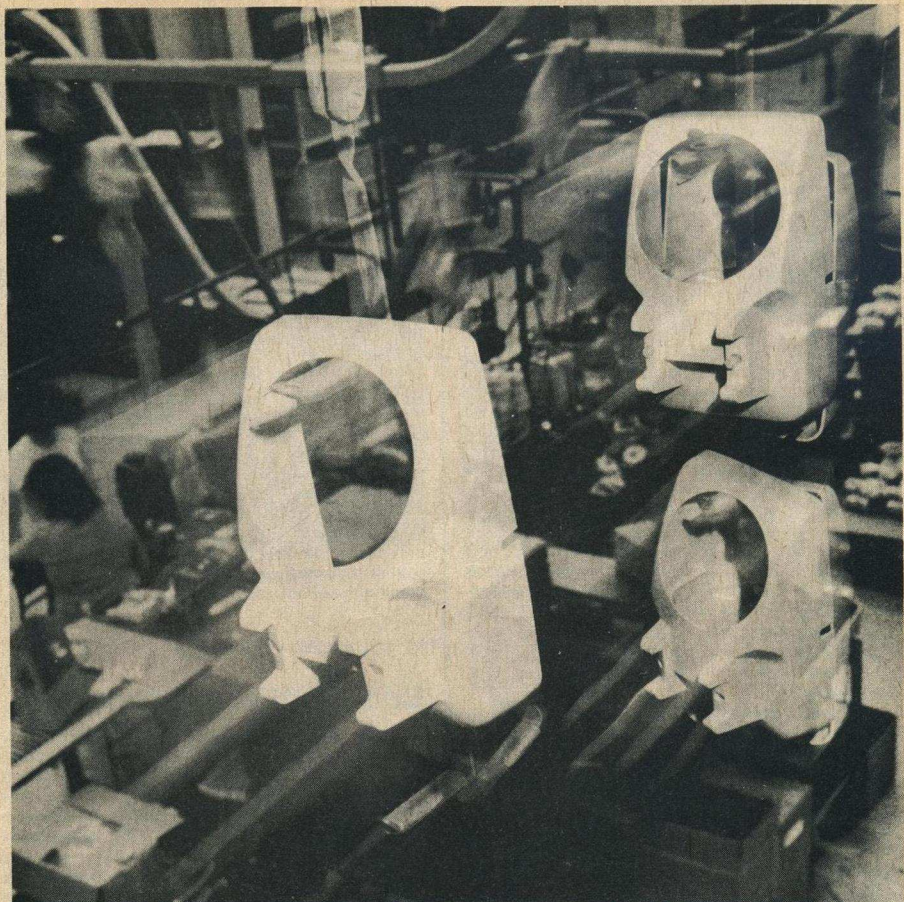
The cause of their concern is a wire currently attached to television sets in over 3.5 million Canadian homes, bringing the much-loved American television networks to Canada. The wire belongs, in most cases, to the nation's 500 cable television operators, who are beginning to discover that they hold the key to the early introduction of the much

vaunted "Wired City".

Predictions of the Wired City have been with us for some time without ever living up to expectations. The public has become so jaded by failures such as the U.S. Bell System's Videophone in the '60s that they've tended to view with healthy scepticism recent rumblings about electronic mail delivery to the home, access via the television set to thousands of pages of information stored in computers and automatic reading of utility meters by remote computers.

Yet experiments being conducted overseas and in North America, as well as actual services now being offered to the public in some areas, indicate that the Wired City may no longer be seen as futuristic mumbo jumbo but as a reality whose impact we can only guess at.

A report by the Consultative Committee on the Implications of Telecommunications for Canadian Sovereignty, also known as the Clyne committee after its chairman, J.V. Clyne, said of the new age to be ushered in by telecommunications that "it is



Canada's phone companies worry that the cable companies may be the ones who will control the 'Wired City' that's on the horizon.

not too much to say its birth is an event equal in importance to the industrial revolution of the 19th century.'

Why does this have some people at the telephone company upset? Telecommunications being their virtual monopoly, one would think that they would be celebrating the arrival of a new era. Yet the actions of Canada's regulatory bodies and advances in technology have combined to play a nasty trick on Ma Bell and her associates and provide them with a healthy competitor — the cable companies — who are now in a position to squeeze the phone companies out of their legacy of the Wired City.

The cable television companies, because of the much higher capacity of their coaxial cable and

their penetration in major Canadian cities will be in an advantageous position to become the carriers of *all* communications services. With changes to the electronic components of a coaxial cable system, its capacity blossoms to provide room for almost all foreseeable uses, including television, telephone, alarm services, pay television and information services. The much narrower capacity of the telephone companies' "paired" copper wire does not allow them the same luxury.

On June 6, 1978 the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), in a public announcement, invited applications by Ontario's cable television companies to provide new *non-programming* services over their cable

systems. A hearing was set for November and three applications were received from cable operators to provide automatic fire and intrusion alarms and information retrieval services. Despite a flurry of interventions from telecommunications carriers and provincial governments, the applications were eventually approved and experiments are about to begin with these services — provided by the local cable operators — in Kitchener, London and Ottawa.

The effect of this action by the CRTC was to change the role of the cable companies from that of carriers of television programming to that of telecommunications carriers — in direct competition with the telephone companies.

Let's play a somewhat dangerous game for a moment and cast ourselves in the role of futurists, pondering a particular scenario for the evolution of the Wired City. The game is dangerous because the rules seem to shift frequently as vested interest groups assert their pressures and as technology offers new alternatives. However, let's take a most likely path, a path which has the telephone people a little edgy, to say the least.

With CRTC and federal government encouragement, the cable operators begin providing the new telecommunications services, particularly the new information retrieval, or videotex, services, such as the Federal Department of Communications Telidon. Along with these services, of course, they would carry their present volume of U.S. and Canadian television signals, plus some form of pay television (now in full tumble in the government regulatory grist mill).

The federal government, through the post office, announces that it is ready to begin some experiments with electronic mail. It will do so gradually, likely on a local level in major cities. Electronic Funds Transfer (essentially electronic banking) is being tested in the U.S. and Canadian banks are eager to pursue this latest development. Since both electronic mail and EFT will use some form of display screen (the television set) and because the cable operators will likely be able to offer the cheapest rate of delivery (since they can simply open another channel on their present cable) it is natural that these new services would use the facilities of the cable operators. Thus we would see the cable companies evolving into the new focus for telecommunications in most areas, leaving the telephone companies to provide simple voice services and eventually to disappear.

The cable companies would have to develop some form of two-way capability over the cable to begin to offer information services of the Telidon type, but this has been done in the U.S. and is being put in place in some Canadian cable systems. It is just one step further for the cable companies to dedicate a circuit for voice communication and begin to undercut the telephone companies in the provision of telephone service. More likely, the use of the telephone will gradually decline as people

become used to communicating via the television screen.

Since the ability to provide all communication services over one facility will soon be available, it makes little sense to have two wires entering everyone's home.

This development was foreseen by most of the telecommunications industry — there eventually must be some form of integrated communications network on a local level. Bell Chairman Jean de Grandpre, at the opening of Bell's fibre optics experiment in Toronto, announced that his company intended to be the provider of such a network. Yet Bell was pinning its hopes on the rapid development and integration of fibre optics in telecommunications plant in the country. Estimates of widespread fibre optic cable installation range from five to 20 years. Meanwhile the cable television companies have in their hands — now — a network, which with some reconfiguration, can provide all the capabilities of fibre optics without the wait.

Bell and the other telephone companies will hardly disappear. With over \$13 billion invested in equipment across Canada, they are simply too large to fade away. At worst, they would likely continue to operate the country's long distance facilities. But they are being threatened in what is the heart and soul of their business, their monopoly of local telecommunications distribution.

Bell's delaying action

While the cable operators have only recently awakened to the possibilities before them, Bell has been moving to delay any progress by the cable companies until the arrival of fibre optics.

In February, 1979 it announced its own information retrieval system, Vista, which will operate over regular paired telephone lines. Similarly, telephone companies in other parts of Canada are beginning to protect themselves with experiments of their own — including Alberta Government Telephones paired line experiment which will provide telephone, alarm services and information services to 120 homes in Calgary.

By far the most interesting trial is to be undertaken early in 1980 by the Manitoba Telephone System using coaxial cable in an area of Winnipeg not yet served by the local cable operators. It is the first attempt by a telephone company to integrate a broad range of services over one coaxial cable, including alarm services, telephone, television and Telidon.

For the most part these can be viewed as delaying actions. The phone companies want to get on the bandwagon first, to be seen as the rightful heirs of this new technology. The truth of the matter, however, is that in most cases it is the cable television companies who own most of the facilities which



Will Joe Clark's government take the tough communications decisions?

could see the most immediate introduction of the Wired City.

And this poses some interesting and vital questions for the people of Canada and all levels of government.

The federal government and its agencies have been watching this battle shaping up with little or no action on their part, except to encourage the cable companies. While the former Liberal government amply demonstrated its appreciation of the dynamic nature of telecommunications, computers and the television industry and their potential impact on Canadian society through a series of study papers, its actions to guide the future direction of policy to the greater benefit of Canadians have been minimal.

At several points the government and its regulator in communications, the CRTC, appeared at loggerheads with one another on policy, as the CRTC followed its mandate as it saw fit without regard to current government policy or to the realities of a growing provincial interest in communications.

Former Communications Minister Jeanne Sauve sought to relieve herself of some hard decisions by calling several federal-provincial ministerial conferences on communications and by promising, in her final days in office, a sharing of regulatory jurisdiction over both telephone and cable companies with the provinces.

What this neglect has led to is essentially a thinly-disguised war behind the scenes, with the Canadian



Former Communications Minister Jeanne Sauve avoided hard decisions by concentrating on power-sharing with the provinces

public being kept unaware of the implications of the current maneuverings for control of telecommunications in Canada.

While many people would probably welcome Ma Bell's decline with only muffled hurrahs after years of rate increases and all the other annoyances which go hand in hand in dealing with a large utility, little thought has been given to the results of turning over our telecommunications future to privately-owned cable television operators.

The cable companies generally operate only in the profitable urban areas of the country, with no mandate or interest in serving rural areas. As well, their regulator, the CRTC, has demonstrated a rather benevolent attitude towards the operators at renewal of license hearings, even when the cable operators have failed to meet very simple programming standards established by the Commission.

The tough questions remain to be asked. Although recommendations of the Clyne Committee included those that the cable companies should be regulated by rate of return on invested capital (instead of the current, whatever-the-market-will-bear philosophy) and that arms length subsidiaries be set up to introduce new services, it also tacitly accepts that the cable operators *will* become carriers, without regard to the consequences of such a proposition.

The difficulties of trying to bring some reason and

(Continued on page 29)

Here's a rundown on the Information Age

What is the Information Age? One of the most disturbing things about it is that nobody appears to know exactly what it will entail. The federal Clyne Committee set up to study the implications of telecommunications for Canada stated that "No single person can totally understand this new society. . . ."

Yet from what the soothsayers and futurists are telling us and from the nature of experiments planned or now being conducted by the cable and telephone companies, such a new society promises to bring significant changes in the way we live and work.

The marriage of the computer, the television and telecommunications is allowing the introduction of information retrieval, or videotex, services like Telidon, developed by the Department of Communications and Vista, introduced by Bell Canada.

Both types of systems owe their birth to pioneering work done by the British Post Office, which currently has a system called Prestel operating in England allowing customers to dial up onto their television screen over 200,000 pages of information.

In Canada, videotex and other communications service experiments are being planned or are currently under way in: Kitchener, Stratford, London, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver (all offered by the cable television companies) and in Calgary, Toronto and Winnipeg (by the telephone companies).

A further fibre optics trial of integrated services is also planned for the rural community of Elie, Manitoba with participation by the Department of Communications, the Canadian Telecommunications Carriers Association and the Manitoba Telephone System.

When one begins to think that any kind of information capable of being stored in a computer could be brought to your home — almost instantly — then the potential of such a system begins to show itself. While current predicted uses include such mundane items as computer games, transportation schedules, advertising, telephone and television directories, there are other possibilities which would allow people to work at home instead of the office, allow children to obtain a great part of their education from the home and see the introduction of electronic mail delivery and electronic banking.

Let's look at the concept of a video library for a moment. The U.S. Library of Congress has roughly 20 million books and pamphlets. With IBM's 3850

Mass Storage System, it would take only twenty 3850's to store all the material in the Library of Congress. All the resources of this massive library could be available to you in your living room at the touch of a button.

While such a comprehensive computerization of information is still some time away, Canada's newspapers aren't waiting til everything is in place to begin their own computer based information system. Early in 1979 Southam Press, Infoglobe (a division of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*) and the Torstar Corporation (publisher of the *Toronto Star*) announced the formation of a consortium which will compile all the news stories gathered by the organizations and file them in a computer memory, ready to be accessed by participants in various telecommunications experiments. If newspapers someday become obsolete because you can see the news instantly on your television set, these companies don't want to be left out in the press room with no product to sell.

Although being held up by the struggle between the cable operators and the telephone companies over who will be the carrier of the Information Age, there remains little doubt that it is coming. While Canadians have this breather, it would seem a good time to assess the impact of "new services", including the saving of resources and the likely displacement of people.

If electronic mail becomes a reality, it may be a vast improvement over our present system but what happens to our postal workers suddenly without anything to sort or deliver?

Further, what happens to our forest products industry if we become a nation not dependent upon paper (for bills, newspapers, advertising)?

What is the fate of the transportation industry when information no longer moves on paper over the roads, but in electronic pulses over communication facilities?

The implications are tremendous. Most people in the communications industry believe that our society and laws will evolve as the technology evolves and that seems a reasonable approach as far as it goes.

Yet the impact of this Information Age threatens to be so dominating that it seems most appropriate not to continue to stumble onwards but to take some time to peer through the smokescreen of technology and measure where we will be and where we want to be in the not-too-distant future.

(Continued from page 27)

planning to a disjointed and complex industry such as communications appear to have been too hot an item for the federal government. Operating under the theory that the cable and telephone companies will fight it out and whoever emerges victorious will be the new carrier of tomorrow's services, Ottawa has, like Pontius Pilot, chosen to wash its hands of the whole affair and let fate take its course.

Yet forcing the telephone companies to proceed to build another broadband network either of fibre optics or coaxial cable (except in Manitoba and Saskatchewan where coaxial hardware is mostly in the hands of the telephone companies already) in competition with the cable companies will be terribly expensive — and it is the Canadian consumer who will pay the cost.

Given that the federally-regulated telephone companies are forbidden to carry cable television, it is a rather dubious competition anyway, and a waste of resources on a scale as to be totally irresponsible.

What is the answer? Former Canadian Broadcasting Corporation president Alphonse Ouimet, in a paper to a study group at McGill University has come closest to even proposing a solution. He suggests the formation of province-sized public utilities to act as the common carrier of integrated telecommunications services. Ouimet's paper has been largely ignored by government and the tele-

phone companies and loudly decried by the cable operators.

The jockeying currently taking place among the telephone companies, the cable operators and the government and the CRTC is doing nothing to vault Canada into the Information Age. This country is one of the most cabled on earth and we are in a position to leap ahead of other countries in the widespread introduction of new services. In an increasingly energy conscious world the value of the new telecommunications services is inestimable and the expertise and hardware to be developed are eminently exportable.

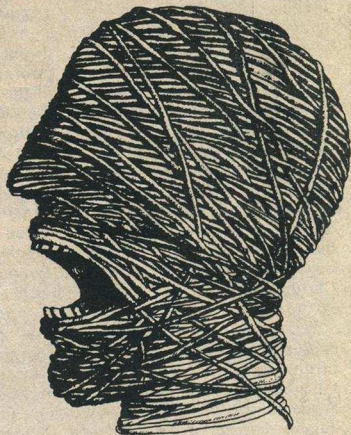
Despite its advantages, Canada remains mired in the backwater of regulatory confusion and government inaction. While the potential of the coming information revolution could be very positive, it is also frightening enough not to leave its implementation to the whims of the victor of an underground battle between Ma Bell and the people who bring you Mork and Mindy. Whoever wins will be charged with bringing you the future.

Prime Minister Joe Clark and the new Minister of Communications David MacDonald now have an opportunity to evaluate the direction of our future communications. Will they have the fortitude to withstand the assault of the vested interest groups and make the tough decisions which will ensure Canada's future in this most vital area?

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Grenada: a 'domino' falls

by RALPH COOK

Last March 13, the first revolution in the English speaking islands of the Caribbean occurred in Grenada.

It is hard to imagine a less likely place for this to happen than this small (12 by 21 miles, population 110,000) quiet, polite and industrious island.

For the past seven years, Grenada had been ruled by Sir Eric Gairy. As did most of the Caribbean post-independence Prime Ministers, he started out as a trade union leader. He gained a tremendous following by winning wage increases not only for workers in general, but for the previously ignored plantation workers as well.

So great was his popularity that he was able to ride out the condemnation of his corruption and unconstitutional use of the police force by the Duffus Commission — an independent, fact-finding body under Sir Hubert Duffus, a Jamaican jurist.

With a promise of land for the landless he won 13 of the 15 seats in the legislature in 1972. His transition to dictator was rapid, starting with the formation of his private army — the Mongoose Squad. This small but heavily armed group was beyond the law; in fact, when one of them was arrested the chief of police disappeared and has not been heard from since.

In 1973 the New Jewel Movement held a rally which was attacked by the Squad. Ten people, including the father of the new Prime Minister, Maurice Bishop, were shot and Bishop and several others were beaten unmercifully and then deprived of medical attention for five days.

Gairy became a laughing stock abroad when he pressed the United Nations to set up a commission on

UFOs after claiming to have seen a flying saucer. (After the revolution a room in his mansion was found to contain all the paraphernalia of black magic.)

Gairy treated Grenada as his personal fiefdom. I have been told of the personal experiences of people whose innocent actions were considered by Gairy to be a slight. The next day their land was expropriated or their shops were visited by the Mongoose Squad which helped itself to whatever it fancied.

The civil service was filled with his friends and relatives regardless of their qualifications. Women had to undergo the "couch test" by Gairy and often by his cabinet ministers before they were employed.

As Gairy became richer the country, never very prosperous, became poorer. There had not been an audit of the accounts of any government department for seven years.

He managed to survive the 1977 election by fraud and the continued support of those who still saw him as the trade union leader. (He in fact remained head of the union and collected 50 cents per day from every member, but there is not a penny in the treasury.)

Despite the repression, opposition continued to grow and it was obvious that Gairy could only survive by destroying it.

On March 10 Gairy left for a visit to the U.S., leaving orders that the entire leadership of the opposition, especially the socialist New Jewel Movement, was to be eliminated. The plot was leaked and the New Jewel leadership went underground, held an emergency conference and contacted other opposition groups over the weekend. They decided it was 'now or never'.

On Monday, March 13, they took over the radio station and broadcast

an appeal to the country to join with them in overthrowing the government. They had obviously gauged the mood of the population correctly. Within hours the army and police had surrendered, the Mongoose Squad and a number of Gairy henchmen were behind bars, all with the loss of only two lives. Crates on the dock marked medical supplies were found to contain arms and ammunition from Chile.

U.S. reaction was predictable. The next day State Department officials were on hand to warn Bishop of the consequences of any association with Cuba. (This was rather ironic since the U.S. press was already reporting that Cubans had led the revolution and two months later the U.S. ambassador was saying the same thing.)

A not very subtle parallel was drawn between Grenada's dependence on tourism and the fate of that industry in Jamaica in 1975-77. (Jamaica had incurred U.S. displeasure by demanding a reasonable price for bauxite and developing closer ties with Cuba. The result was violence blamed on the CIA, magnified by the U.S. press, and a drastic fall in tourism.)

When told that the country was bankrupt the U.S. official said "I am not at all surprised." When Bishop asked what aid might be expected the answer was "We prefer to work through multinational bodies rather than give direct loans or grants. We could probably let you have \$5,000 each for a few projects now. The multinational aid would take a year or two to clear channels."

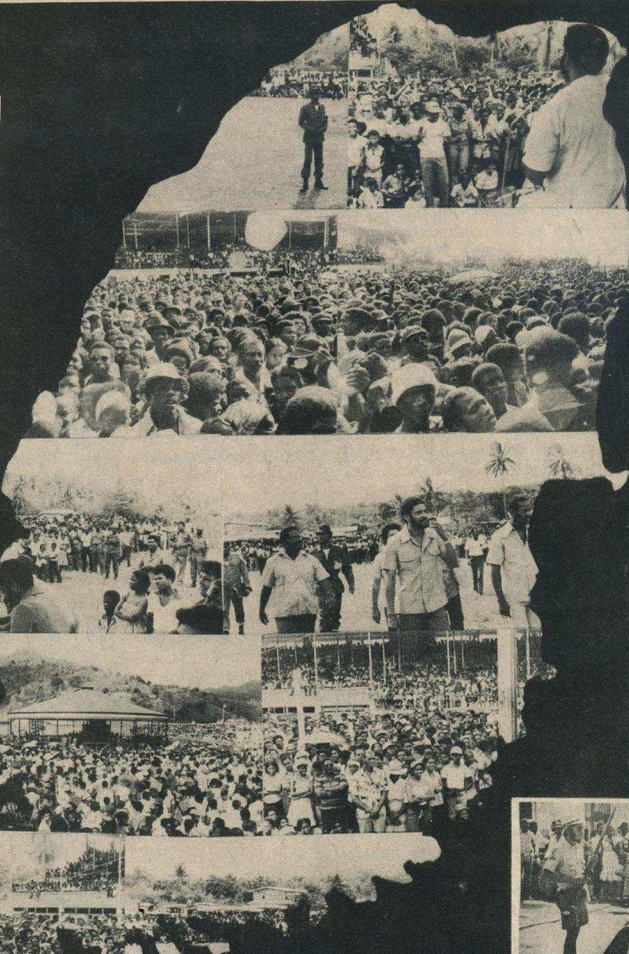
Within ten days, teams of Cuban experts were on the island, evaluating the situation, and are already delivering aid in health care, housing and fisheries.

Evidence soon started to come in



" The army had not been involved, there was no soldier in the new administration, no assistance had been received in the fighting.... This revolution is for food, for housing, for education and human rights for all we expect all countries to strictly respect our independence just as we will respect theirs. No country has the right to tell us what to do or how to run our country, or who to be friendly with."

Maurice Bishop



GRENADA, A popular revolution

that Gairy was busy in the U.S. recruiting an army of exiled Cuban mercenaries to invade the island. Grenada appealed to the U.K., Canada and the U.S. for military assistance. All refused and the U.S. said it was investigating Gairy's

activities to see if he was breaking the law and warned that Grenada would only be justified in asking Cuba for aid if it were actually attacked — Cuba is nearly 1,000 miles away.

The next hurdle was the sur-

rounding small islands with which Grenada shares a number of services. Using the excuse that the airport was closed on the day of the revolution they tried to persuade Liat Airlines to stop flying to Grenada. This was unsuccessful. They

also share a common currency and refused to send \$30,000 which they had no legal right to refuse. Grenada said it would withdraw and print its own currency — the money was on a plane the next day. Similarly, the court of the area is in Grenada and the other islands said they wouldn't use it; they didn't — for one week.

All of these moves were designed to bring about the downfall of the new government and to reinstate Gairy, the legally elected Prime Minister. But what really bothered them was the precedent that had been established.

The most vociferous opponent was the representative of the Dominican government of Patrick John, who walked out of a conference when it voted to seat the Grenadian representative. Within two months that country had a general strike against the government over corruption, repression and establishing relations with South Africa. Troops shot into a demonstration killing two and wounding others.

The struggle intensified and after several cabinet ministers' homes and cars were stoned they all resigned. It was only then that John gave up. Rosie Douglas, a name familiar to many Canadians, was one of the members of the opposition coalition.

There have been other changes in the area. In a recent election in Antigua, which earlier this year was devastated by a volcano, the governing party was almost wiped out by a left-wing coalition. Left-wing groupings are growing rapidly in several other islands. Small wonder, then, that the Grenada revolution sent shock waves through the area.

Grenada was a British colony until 1972, but today Britain's attitude is that the less responsibility it has in the area, the better. It was quite happy to leave the decision up to the Ambassador who simply accepted Bishop's credentials as the next Prime Minister.

Canada, apart from refusing to supply arms for defence against a Gairy invasion, did not react at all. We do, however, have a considerable presence there with three of the four banks being Canadian. As usual in the Caribbean, they have

made money on plantation and consumer loans while refusing loans to farmers and small business.

On March 13, the new government took power in a country which was bankrupt; where practically nothing had been spent on public services for years; which had an overstuffed, very inefficient civil service; and which had a 58 per cent unemployment rate.

By the time I arrived there three months later considerable progress had been made. Roads were being rebuilt, the water system repaired, electrification in the countryside extended, food importing and distribution rationalized and the civil service reorganized. Of much more significance is the way in which the government is giving leadership to self-help projects which have released the energies of people who obviously now feel that they have a real stake in the future of the country. Special attention is being paid to youth by the establishment of Youth for Reconstruction in which young people spend 60 per cent of their time in on the job training and 40 per cent on education.

I attended the opening session of a three day conference of Caribbean women. I was struck by the balance between the discussion of specific women's issues and the recognition that many of their goals can only be achieved as they participate in the building of the economy.

Conferences and meetings have become the order of the day. The government is obviously very aware of the danger of instituting measures which are not understood. For example, the school curriculum is almost unchanged since colonial days. High School graduation exams are set and marked by Cambridge or London University external departments. Most of the older generation is concerned that internal exams would not be recognized abroad. There will be meetings throughout the island to explain and discuss the advantages of changing to the Caribbean Examination Commission system before the changeover is made.

The Church (60 percent of Grenadians are Catholic) has adopted a 'wait and see' attitude and a Bishop in another island was criticized by

the Church in Grenada for interfering in their internal affairs when he made some adverse comments. In fact, nearly all the opposition so far has come from outside and follows the usual CIA orchestrated first stage in such situations — propaganda destabilization. This has not worked since the measures taken by the government have been popular.

Even business people are not displeased. In fact, the finance minister has said foreign investment will be welcomed. However, the conditions laid down for its performance, combined with a new labour law that includes penalties of \$5,000 and/or two years in jail for failure to bargain in good faith, makes it unlikely there will be many takers.

The second stage of the CIA plan (leaked to Bishop through a contact in the State Department) has so far resulted in several fires of unexplained origin in public buildings. Efforts to discourage tourism through the U.S. media with reports of non-existent violence, occupation by 5,000 Cuban troops, etc., have also been noticeable.

At one point a sudden shortage of oil developed. It turned out that this had been deliberately engineered by the Englishman who was in charge of the system.

Bishop, while encouraging the country to be vigilant, does not spend much time worrying about exactly what the U.S. will do. "The Carter administration is in such a state of confusion, policies can change from day to day," he says.

The real test for the government internally is likely to come in the next few months. "So far, we have been too busy reorganizing things and trying to get the country back on its feet for any ideological differences we may have to surface," said a cabinet minister.

Ideological differences there certainly are, since the government is made up of all shades of the spectrum from populists to Marxists.

So far, most internal reforms have been popular, while externally the government has defied the U.S. in opening up relations with Cuba and taking such initiatives as recognizing the Sandanistas before the overthrow of Somoza.

Bear View



Premier Peter Lougheed



The Shah and Empress of Iran

- Johnson on Lougheed — p. 34
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The 'Alberta Question' — according to Ontario Premier Bill Davis it's a bigger problem for Confederation than the 'Quebec Question.' In these review articles, Norman Penner and Myron Johnson examine the Lougheed government and the historical roots of today's so-called 'Fortress Alberta' mentality.

I. The man from Edmonton

by MYRON JOHNSON

Peter Lougheed, a biography by Allan Hustak. McClelland & Stewart/Toronto. 249 pp. \$14.95 cloth.

In his biography of Peter Lougheed, Allan Hustak sets the stage with a revealing chapter on the Premier's grandfather, Senator James Lougheed. As Conservative leader in the Senate, Hustak says, James Lougheed was guided by two principles: "his allegiance to the Canadian Pacific Railway and his loyalty to the party which had created that railroad and named him to the upper house. His blatant disregard for what some saw as a conflict of interest earned him a rebuke from Bob Edwards, who came to call the Senator 'an offensive promoter of corpo-

ration interests to the detriment of the people.'"

Reviewing the career of Peter Lougheed as Premier of Alberta, one is tempted to observe "like grandfather, like grandson." For the Premier is as wedded to the corporate structure as ever his grandfather was, and is no more able or willing than his grandfather was to recognize conflict of interest. In Alberta today, cabinet ministers are permitted, even encouraged, to buy shares in the 50 per cent publicly-owned Alberta Energy Company, then make policy decisions which directly affect the value of the shares. This disregard of conflict of interest is not a peculiar trait of Peter Lougheed, but lies rather in the corporate outlook and nature of the Alberta Conservative Party.

From the days of Senator Lougheed to the present, perhaps now more than ever, the Conservative Party in Alberta has been the political arm of

the corporate sector. It is not so much that Lougheed's ministers are tools of the corporate sector as that they are part of it — the political part. They come into government from the corporate sector, and when their political careers end they return there.

Lougheed himself cut his teeth as a corporation lawyer with Mannix Corporation and moved up the hierarchy. In some cases, most notably former Energy Minister Don Getty, retiring ministers retain contracts as major advisers to the government while simultaneously holding active directorships with numerous large companies doing business with the government.

Without blinking, they will admit their role is to steer the companies through the shoals of government bureaucracy. They see no conflict of interest in this and are hurt when it is suggested. That is the Tory view of Alberta. What's good for Imperial Oil truly is good for Alberta.

Although he probably does not intend it as his focus, one of the strengths of Hustak's biography is the picture he paints of the web of corporate and political interconnections which make up the Lougheed government. We see how the key civil servants were recruited from corporate jobs, how key advisers bounce in and out of government and business, and how even Lougheed's style of government is corporate-managerial.

The biography has one particularly striking segment — in many respects the most interesting part of the book. That is the examination of Lougheed's image building, and his systematic and largely successful attempt to use, cajole, intimidate and manipulate the media to his political ends.

Some degree of manipulation can be found in the press and media throughout the province, but it is most blatant in the private television stations in Edmonton and Calgary. It is almost frightening to discover how spineless they are in the face of Tory pressure, how open and available they are to promote the Tory viewpoint, indeed how eager they are to be used. It would not be much of an exaggeration to describe two of the television stations in particular as the media arm of the Conservative Party.

Lougheed's image building

Hustak's *Peter Lougheed* has other strengths. It is written in a readable and often entertaining style, and gives a good chronological account of his life. Hustak has obviously spent considerable time with Lougheed and researching his subject, and delves into the friendships, the family background and particularly the psychological makeup of the man.

But in a sense that is also the weakness of the biography. Hustak is clearly intrigued with psychological explanations of history and political events. The book opens with an account of Peter Lougheed at age 10 breaking into the family mansion in Calgary, shortly before the mansion is sold. The family fortune built up by his grandfather has largely disap-

peared through the depression, some bad luck and some bad management by Peter's father, who was evidently much less aggressive than either his Senator father or Premier son. The psychological impact on young Peter of the decline in the family fortune, symbolized by the sale of the mansion, is a recurring theme in the book. It accounts, it seems, for his drive, his political ambition, and even his western alienation.

Though it makes entertaining reading, it is questionable whether this psychological approach really tells us a great deal about the rise to power of Peter Lougheed. (It may say more about the motivating drive of politicians generally than about Lougheed's particular influence on Alberta.)

The biography also suffers from a too-personal approach. Hustak acknowledges that Lougheed read the manuscript before it was published. Whether he modified any interpretations as a result is difficult to say, but the question is bound to arise. In any event, one of the annoying features of the book is Hustak's reference to his subject alternately as "Peter" and as "Lougheed". The first name basis may be fine in discussing Lougheed's childhood, but Hustak jumps capriciously from "Peter" to "Lougheed" sometimes on the same page, and one is left to wonder whether it is the result of sloppy editing or whether Hustak was simply too close to his subject.

A more serious shortcoming of the book lies in Hustak's interpretation of the Edmonton versus Ottawa disputes which have been the hallmark of the Lougheed years in office. To be fair, he does a reasonable job of laying out the facts. But in assessing and interpreting events he tosses objectivity out the window. It's the White Knights in Edmonton against the Black Knights in Ottawa. He does not seem to consider that the federal government may have as legitimate a national interest to protect as Lougheed has a provincial interest in dealing with oil pricing, supply and exports.

Lougheed's Ottawa policy

Indeed, to take Lougheed — and Hustak — at face value, one might conclude that federal control of natural gas exports represents an intrusion into provincial affairs, rather than the constitutional responsibility of the federal government. Nor does Hustak find it curious that federal-provincial conflicts seem to have a way of surfacing whenever Lougheed is looking for an election issue, that Lougheed could suddenly forget his grievances with Ottawa when he wanted governmental co-operation in a sweetheart deal with the Syncrude consortium, or that in directing so much of his energy toward real and imagined grievances against Ottawa Lougheed has done nothing to reduce the massive foreign corporate control of the petroleum industry in Alberta.

It is difficult to know why Hustak has so uncritically accepted the Alberta line on the petroleum question; the charitable conclusion is that econom-



Former Energy Minister Don Getty (right) with Alberta Energy Company president David Mitchell: cabinet ministers are encouraged to buy shares in the company, then find themselves making decisions that will affect the shares' value.

ics is not his strong suit.

Another aspect of the book which is not entirely satisfying is the explanation (or lack of explanation) of Lougheed's success at various stages of his political career. Too often we are left with the feeling that Lougheed's quick rise to the top "just happened", or resulted from his personal drive. Given a party with no provincial representation and a leader with no political experience, the rise of the Lougheed Tories during a period of relative calm and prosperity is surely unusual. Hustak is undoubtedly on the right track in pointing out the urbanization of Alberta, the rise of the upper middle class, the coming to power of the managerial-executive sector, but there is another crucial factor — perhaps *the* crucial factor — which is often overlooked.

In a major way, Lougheed's path to power provincially was paved by the federal success of John Diefenbaker. In other words, Alberta became a Tory province in 1958, and with the resignation of Ernest Manning in 1968 the shift to the Tories provincially was almost predictable. To this day the federal Tories win a larger percentage of the popular vote than their provincial counterparts in Alberta.

Even so, the Lougheed Tories won 74 of 79 seats in the 1979 provincial election, a fact even more difficult to explain when viewed in the context of the government's record from 1975 to 1979.

Shortly after the 1975 election the government was shaken by a series of scandals involving gross mismanagement by the Culture Minister and the Deputy Premier (Dr. Hugh Horner). No heads rolled, but Horner's ambition to succeed Lougheed went down the drain.

Then in the fall of 1978, shortly before the election, another series of scandals hit the headlines, less serious than those of 1975 but nonetheless embarrassing to the government. The most celebrated example was the Premier's acceptance of free airline passes.

But what might have been expected to undermine the government's strength even more between 1975 and 1979 was a whole series of policy moves which alienated important interest groups in the province.

In the fall of 1975, only months after tossing money around the province in a free-spending election, the government suddenly discovered restraint. It imposed a spending guideline policy for the next three years which resulted in cutbacks in rural education, hospital construction, health and social services, and university budgets.

Meanwhile, the introduction of repressive labour legislation brought severe criticism from the labour movement and much more labour activity in support of the New Democratic Party. In violation of a 1971 election promise, Lougheed withdrew the right to strike from all provincial civil servants, passed legislation giving the cabinet unprecedented power

to end strikes without reference to the legislature, imposed wage controls and publicly blamed labour for inflation.

Nor were these the only unpopular issues for the government. Environmentalists were outraged when the government disbanded the Environment Conservation Authority for recommending against a dam site favored by the government; home buyers were concerned when house prices shot up to the highest in North America; women's groups were alienated by government inaction on women's issues; natives by a variety of legislative and bureaucratic manoeuvres against them; municipal authorities by the government's refusal to implement revenue-sharing; small farmers by declining prices and rising costs.

Overall there was a general consensus that the government had grown "too powerful and arrogant." It seemed evident that there was some dissatisfaction even within the government when an unprecedented two dozen MLAs, including nine cabinet ministers, declined to seek re-election.

In the face of all this, though nobody expected a major shift away from the Tories, there was an expectation that the government would suffer some setbacks in the election. Yet the government was returned with as big a majority as ever. Why?

There is no question that the very buoyant state of Alberta's economy was a prime factor. In the face of the province's vast oil wealth, the grievances of various interest groups were not sufficient in the final analysis, to shift a great number of voters.

Moreover, Lougheed is a skillful practitioner of the age-old shell game of western alienation, and in the end regional interest won out over class interest, even with the majority of working people. The Conservatives did suffer a relative setback, with a six per cent reduction in the popular vote from 1975, and they faced some close contests in a number of ridings. But in the end no seats changed hands.

Long-range goals unclear

Despite Alberta's current prosperity, however, some very serious questions must be posed about Lougheed's long range goals for the province. He talks frequently about the need to diversify the province's economy to ensure prosperity once the oil and gas are gone. Yet curiously it is in this very area that the strongest criticism may be levelled at him.

As a Conservative his natural inclination is to leave the economy in the hands of the corporate sector and to the regulation of the market. That laissez-faire attitude is reinforced by his strongest supporters, the active membership of the party (on the whole more right wing even than the government), and the corporate elite of the province.

Especially with private capital available, there seems to be little active role the Tory government can find to play in developing the economy. Thus we see the odd contradiction of a multi-billion dollar

Heritage Trust Fund established to diversify the economy, and no apparent government plan to invest it. Certainly there seem to be no plans for genuine diversification; the best the money seems destined for is oil sands development. For a man who has repeatedly stated Alberta must plan to end its dependence on oil and gas, Lougheed and his ministers are obsessed with the petroleum industry.

The government's dilemma can be illustrated by the case of Pacific Western Airlines. From almost any point of view the purchase of PWA in 1974 was a sensible move, particularly for a province with a history of transportation problems and grievances.

Yet there is probably no single action by the Lougheed government for which it has been so widely and consistently condemned. The criticism was loudest from their own supporters on the right — the corporate community and rank-and-file Tories — and from the Social Credit opposition. Even the NDP, in a stand which can charitably be described as strangely inconsistent, opposed the PWA purchase. Having burned its fingers on PWA, the Lougheed government has been loath to invest directly in the economy, and the Heritage Fund remains largely untouched.

Like the Confederate States

But when all the wash is hung out to dry, what is most disturbing about Peter Lougheed is his concept of Canada. It has long been evident that he favors a decentralized form of Confederation, but just how decentralized becomes clear when his constitutional proposals, outlined last year in a document entitled *Harmony in Diversity*, are studied in detail.

What he is proposing is a constitution uncomfortably similar to that of the Confederate States of America. The federal government would be robbed of much of its power, the provinces would gain it all and give up nothing. The proposals are so extreme that the basic nature of the Canadian federal system would be altered. It would not be far wrong to call Alberta's constitutional position quasi-separatist.

The fundamental problem with Peter Lougheed is that he has very little feel for Canada as a nation. There can be little doubt that he believes passionately in the destiny of Alberta and the West, in the inviolability of the free-enterprise system, and in the God-given right of the Conservatives to rule.

But that he cares much about Canada is not at all clear. In the fall of 1978 he was willing to scuttle the Constitutional conference in a cynical attempt to provide himself an election issue. Trudeau skillfully pulled the rug from under him, and Lougheed was forced to postpone the election until the spring. But it is a measure of the man that he was so willing to trifle with Canada's future at this crucial point in the country's history.

It has often been remarked that Peter Lougheed is a man to be watched in Canadian politics. Those of us concerned about the future of the country may wish to add: Very, very carefully.

II. Rebellion then, now

by NORMAN PENNER

William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical, by Anthony Mardiros. James Lorimer & Company/Toronto. 298 pp. \$9.95 paper.

Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West, by John Richards and Larry Pratt. McClelland & Stewart/Toronto. 340 pp. \$16.95 cloth.

The Canadian West has been wild and turbulent from the beginning. It has never been tamed even though the main rulers of Canada, the Montreal and Toronto business and political elites have tried mightily to do just that.

They took over control of the West immediately after Confederation without so much as informing the people who were already there — the Métis, the English and Scottish settlers, the Indians and the Inuit. When these people objected, John A. Macdonald sent in the army to quell the resistance, and created the Mounted Police to keep this resistance quelled. Macdonald gave the railroad barons 25 million of the choicest acres across the West, and then they began building the CPR, dispossessing all along the way the native people from the land which they had occupied for generations.

The Central Canadian ruling class then sent in Ontario farmers to colonize and anglicize the newly-opened territory, but it didn't take very long before these farmers too caught the rebellious spirit of the West and this vast region became a hot bed of radical thought and action. The federal government brought in hundreds of thousands of "men in sheepskin coats" from Central and Eastern Europe and put them to work on the most difficult and isolated prairie lands and it was these "foreigners" who brought much of the West under cultivation overcoming tremendous difficulties on the way. But they too became radical and constituted an important section of the left in the West.

As a concession to the farmers' movements which were springing up like a prairie fire the Central Government created the three prairie provinces, but then by denying these provinces control of their own land and resources which all the other provinces enjoyed under the BNA Act, they added fuel to the fires of rebellion. They looked to the Church to help pacify the growing movements of protest and dissension, but several outstanding ministers of the gospel also became radicals and emerged as leaders of these movements.

William Irvine was one of these ministers and Pro-

fessor Anthony Mardiros is to be commended for writing the first complete biography of this outstanding radical figure in Canadian history.

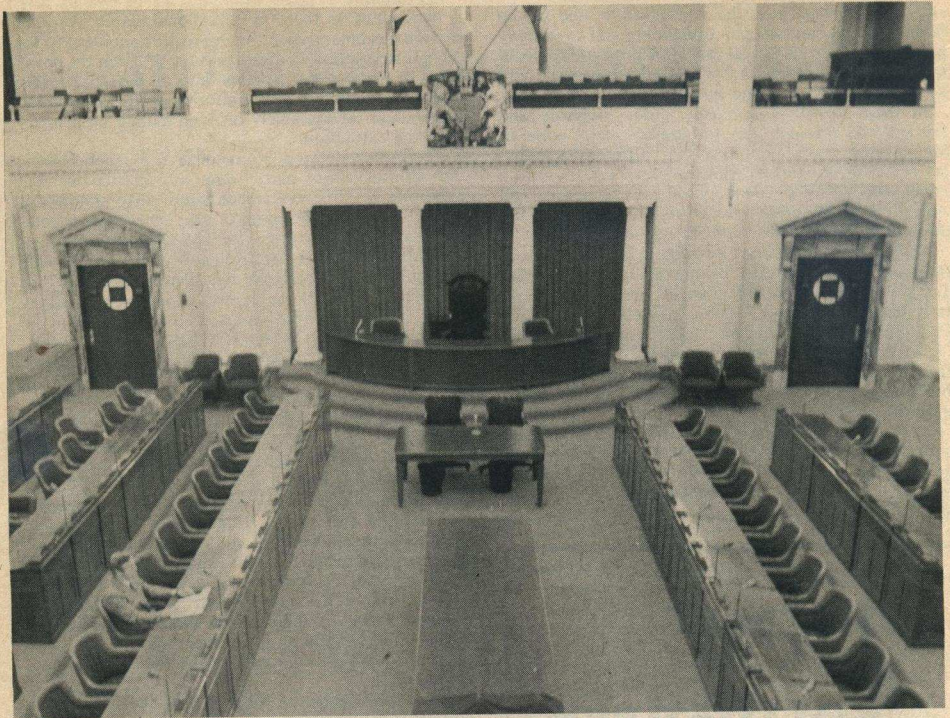
William Irvine began his political work from Calgary where he was a minister of the Unitarian Church, towards the end of the First World War, when the radicalism in the West was gathering momentum among the farmers as well as the workers. Irvine was one of the first to see that the farmers had to undertake their own political action, break with the old-line parties, and join with the workers in a genuine anti-capitalist movement.

When the United Farmers of Ontario won the provincial election of 1919, followed in 1921 by the United Farmers of Alberta, which Irvine influenced the most directly, followed by the federal election of that same year in which the newly-formed farmers' party, the Progressives, won 65 seats and Labour appeared for the first time in the House of Commons with two members, Irvine and J.S. Woodsworth, the message seemed to be taking hold. As it turned out, many of the so-called Progressives were really Liberals at heart and soon returned to Mackenzie King's bosom, but about a dozen farmer MPs joined with Irvine and Woodsworth to form a solid democratic bloc called the "Ginger Group" from which the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, predecessor to the NDP, was founded in 1933.

There is no doubt that William Irvine deserves a lot of credit for perceiving with Woodsworth that a genuine social-democratic party could only take root in Canadian soil if it represented a coalition between the labour and farmers' movements. This ran into enormous difficulty among sections of the socialist movement who looked upon farmers as small capitalists and therefore foes of labour, and among farmers who had tended to be hostile to the trade unions. What overcame these antagonisms and made it possible for such a party to be created, was the advent of the Great Depression which affected the workers and farmers equally, and brought about the conviction that they had in fact a common foe.

Irvine combined several talents — an able speaker, an energetic organizer, a very capable journalist, and a sometime theoretician. His main theoretical work was the book *The Farmers in Politics*, published in 1920. This was a clear exposition of the theory of group government which had been growing in popularity about the western farmers and this book brought new adherents to that concept.

It was an attack on the orthodox party system but also an attack on the Marxian theory of class conflict. Irvine held that instead of parties running the parlia-



Premier Peter Lougheed sits alone in the Alberta legislature: a sharpened federal-provincial struggle will be with us for a long time.

mentary bodies, they should be run by representatives of the main occupational groups in the country: farmers, workers, business and professional people. Although this idea did not take hold in the labour movement which stuck to the ideas of class conflict, it played an important role in convincing the farmers that they should enter politics as an organized bloc or group, which they did.

Irvine was one of the first influential Canadians to be attracted to the ideas of Social Credit which had been expounded in a book written in England by a civil engineer, Major C.H. Douglas, in 1921. Irvine popularized Douglas's ideas in the House of Commons in the twenties, and because the idea of social credit was directed at the banking system and implied a socialization of credit, it appealed to the farmers who were so exploited by the banks.

But when the idea became embodied in the thirties in a conservative political movement in Alberta, Irvine fought it, because he then felt that there was already a party, the CCF, which answered the needs of the farmers far better than did the Social Credit League under William Aberhart.

Irvine was an MP from 1921 until 1935 from Alberta with the exception of one year. He was defeated several times after that and finally in 1945 he was sent back to the House, this time from a B.C. riding. He remained a loyal member of the CCF and NDP until his death in 1961, although in his later years he objected very strenuously to some of the cold war politics which it seemed to him were being supported by the main leaders of his party.

Mardiros writes in a clear and straightforward style, which makes the book easy to read and follow. The weakness of the book lies in its uncritical approach to Irvine and its tendency to engage in hero worship. So much so that Mardiros finds it necessary to strongly criticize C.B. Macpherson's brilliant analysis of the social theory of the United Farmers of Alberta, written in 1953. He takes this analysis as a personal attack on Irvine and makes the rather strange suggestion that if Macpherson could not come up with a better political strategy for Alberta than Irvine's, then he should not criticize!

Macpherson wrote about the evolution of the radicalism of the UFA which marked its first period,

and then showed how the conservative side of the farmers' movements began to develop and eventually produce the Social Credit phase of prairie populism, which became steadily more conservative until there was not a trace in it of the earlier radicalism.

In their *Prairie Capitalism*, John Richards and Larry Pratt, although they too are critical of some of Macpherson's arguments (but for different reasons) are primarily concerned with the past 25 years during which the political economy of Saskatchewan and Alberta has undergone a major shift as a result of the discovery of rich deposits of oil, gas, and potash.

The sections in the book on Alberta represent a continuation and deepening of the brilliant work that Larry Pratt has produced in earlier writings, particularly his essay in *The Canadian State* (edited by Leo Panitch) and the sections on Saskatchewan follow earlier writings by John Richards, as well as emanating from his role in the Saskatchewan legislature as an NDP member and leader of the Waffle in that province.

The oil and gas boom which hit Alberta from 1947 with the discoveries at Leduc has created a new indigenous bourgeoisie based on these provincial resources. On the one hand, most of the oil is controlled by U.S. oil trusts and a section of this bourgeoisie

is dependent on these multi-national giants. Another section has emerged out of enterprises ancillary to the oil industry, and sees in the present situation the possibility of turning the province into an industrial province with secondary manufacturing as the main thrust, rather than relying solely or even mainly on primary resource extraction.

The Alberta based bourgeoisie has reconstructed the Conservative party into an instrument that expresses its interests much more than the Social Credit ever did. The party is provincialist in orientation, nailing its banners to the anti-Ottawa tradition of the West, but with an entirely new content. This elite has much more clout than the farmers had, and they are using it to fight the central government at every turn. The centrifugal tension always present in federal-provincial relations has been greatly strengthened at the periphery, as a result of this clash.

Saskatchewan case less clear

The case of Saskatchewan is not as clear, nor is it as clearly set out in the book. First, the potash and oil resources of Saskatchewan are not as wealth-producing as the natural resources of Alberta. Second, there has not been the development of a strong provincial bourgeoisie, partly because the Saskatchewan NDP government wants to use its provincial powers to develop these resources with strong state intervention.

Yet because it is constrained by the limits of provincial powers, it has had to retreat, or moderate its policies. However, it finds itself siding with Alberta in challenging the federal government around the issues relating to provincial rights in the matter of natural resources.

Since 1930, when the western provinces were given control over the public lands and resources, one would think that there is no further disputation possible over this question. But because the federal government has been increasingly anxious to control or share in the provinces' control over these vital resources, they have found ways of limiting the provincial powers, mainly by asserting that some of the measures taken by Alberta and Saskatchewan infringe on the federal government's exclusive right to indirect taxes, or on the powers of the federal authorities over inter-provincial and international trade.

This book shows why other provinces besides Quebec are asserting their provincialism very strongly, and also explains why this sharpened federal-provincial struggle will dominate the Canadian political scene for a long time. It also demonstrates that no simple solutions or cries for "national unity" will change this. If anything the attempt to strengthen the central government at the expense of the provinces will only exacerbate this conflict.

Some of the writing is turgid and some of it is highly technical but it is truly a seminal work that brings into focus the new stage in the economic and political developments of the West. It does for this era what C.B. Macpherson (*Democracy in Alberta*) and Seymour Lipset (*Agrarian Socialism*) did for the previous period.

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Lasch lashes our narcissism

by ROBERT CHODOS

The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations, by Christopher Lasch. George J. McLeod/Toronto. 268 pp. \$15.95 cloth.

Christopher Lasch is an unusually perceptive American social critic and historian who teaches at the University of Rochester. He is enough of a Freudian to use a psychoanalytic concept as the basis of his critique of contemporary American culture, and enough of a Marxist to attribute the growing applicability of that concept to changes in the forces of production. He presents a convincing case for his contention that American culture today is, in its essence, a culture of narcissism.

While the youth of the seventies has been popularly identified as the "me generation," Lasch's analysis takes in more than this transitory phenomenon. He sees as much evidence of narcissism in the more socially conscious generation of the 1960s as in its successor, and few of the idols of the sixties, from John F. Kennedy to Jerry Rubin, escape Lasch's lash.

Post-war narcissism

Narcissism, he contends, is inherent in the whole development of American society since World War II. And while most of his discussion centres on the United States, he believes that the malaise he is describing extends to the rest of the advanced capitalist world as well, including — as he notes somewhat ruefully — "even Canada, long a bastion of stolid bourgeois respectability" which "now faces in the separatist movement in Quebec a threat to its very existence as a nation."

A believer in such old-fashioned virtues as "theoretical rigor,"

Lasch insists on sticking to the clinical meaning of narcissism; I will leave it to readers better versed in Freud to judge how faithfully he has done this. For the narcissist, as portrayed by Lasch, the external world holds little interest except as a reflection of the self. Deeply anxious about the legitimacy of his own needs and instincts, the narcissist compensates for these anxieties with overblown fantasies of wealth, beauty, power and fame. He seeks constant emotional gratification but is afraid of real and lasting emotional involvement. The poverty of the narcissist's inner resources makes aging and death especially terrifying for him.

Traits encouraged

The increase in the number of pathological narcissists turning up in psychiatrists' offices is only one manifestation of the prevalence of narcissism in American culture. The imperatives of advancement and even of survival in present-day American society encourage the narcissistic personality traits present in everyone. The decline of moral and philosophical perspectives in the face of the "therapeutic sensibility," the emphasis on youth and the cult of celebrity, the degeneration of art and sport into spectacle, the substitution of the "executive success game" for corporate loyalty — all these make for a society by whose criteria the narcissist is likely to succeed.

Lasch sees the origin of all these changes in the growth of bureaucracy (in industry as well as government), in the separation of planning from production and the resulting trivialization of work, and in the penetration by "experts" and professionals of areas of life where everyday competence and self-reliance formerly reigned. In particular, parents no longer consider themselves competent to raise their own children without reference to experts of various kinds so that

bureaucratization now extends to early childhood development — the stage at which personalities are formed. The insecurity inherent in this form of childrearing produces narcissists.

Such, drastically oversimplified, is Lasch's thesis. In the course of developing it he touches upon a number of aspects of American life, notably education, sports, the family and relations between the sexes. The book does not lack scope. But in covering so much in so small a space Lasch, perhaps inevitably, leaves the reader with a few unresolved contradictions and underdeveloped ideas.

In the latter category, one that stands out is his concept of the waning of the sense of historical time. He maintains that the sense of belonging to a historical continuity has been lost in our age, that we are no longer much interested in what happened before we were born or in what will happen after we die.

'One life to live'

People once saw themselves as continuing the lives of their ancestors and their own lives as being continued by their offspring, but now we have, in the prevailing phrase, "only one life to live." This is a bold and suggestive assertion and one that underlies many of Lasch's other arguments. In his discussion of aging, for example, Lasch points out that without a feeling that one is part of something that will be continued by future generations, "the thought of our eventual supersession and death becomes utterly insupportable."

Unfortunately, this idea of the waning of the sense of historical time is never fully developed in itself. Instead, it weaves in and out of other discussions, and the reasons for this fundamental change and its historical origins are not explored.

There is also a contradiction in Lasch's attitude toward the past. In

many ways, he sees the past as having been better than the present. He makes no apology for this, and in fact says that "the belief that in some ways the past was a happier time by no means rests on a sentimental illusion; nor does it lead to a backward-looking, reactionary paralysis of the political will."

This attitude toward the past is a recurring note, and it leads to Lasch's conclusion that there is hope for the future (just about the only note of hope in a generally gloomy book) in the survival of "traditions of localism, self-help and community action" inherited from the past. At other times, however, he writes approvingly of the homogenizing tendencies in American society which have played such a large part in wiping out those same traditions.

Lasch's attempt to resolve this contradiction consists of saying that the past was, admittedly, awful, but the present is worse: "it is a tribute to the peculiar horror of contempo-

rary life that it makes the worst features of earlier times... seem attractive by comparison." But that is too unidimensional to be a satisfactory resolution. It is not that we have regressed, it is that our "progress" has had a price. The question of whether or not it was worth that price involves some intellectually intricate and emotionally charged value judgments. Lasch's conclusion seems to be that it was not, but he never really lays the basis for this conclusion on the table.

A third point on which a fuller discussion would have been welcome is the decline of religion as a force in advanced capitalist societies. The absence of such a discussion is perhaps the single most puzzling aspect of the book, especially since many of the qualities and social forms whose loss Lasch mourns were at one time closely associated with religion. The historical continuity to which people once saw themselves as belonging was, to a large extent, a religious continuity.

The "moral and philosophical perspective" from which Lasch urges us to approach the subject of aging and death is a perspective that religion once encouraged. And in his discussion of sports, Lasch deplores modern society's destruction of ceremony and ritual — which, again, once had their fullest expressions in religion. The current failure of religion to provide any of these things, its capitulation to the "therapeutic sensibility" and its degeneration into suburban social service and media hucksterism (among other debased forms) are an important aspect of the changes Lasch is analysing, but unfortunately they are an aspect on which he has little to say.

But it is hardly a criticism of the book to say that it does not give answers to all the questions it raises. It is to be hoped that Lasch will choose to pursue these questions further, and that the result will be as stimulating and provocative as *The Culture of Narcissism*.

Why the Shah had to fall

by PAUL PETERS

The Crowned Cannibals: Writings on Repression in Iran, by Reza Baraheni. Vintage Books. 279 pp. \$4.95.

"They don't shoot poets", said Garcia Lorca to anxious friends who warned him of the impending arrival of Franco's army during the Spanish Civil War. But they do: and the great Spanish poet was promptly shot following the Falangist occupation of Granada in 1936.

For there are regimes in human history whose aversion to culture stems, not simply from reasons of state, but from something more intrinsic; as if they sensed that they and an authentic human culture could not possibly co-exist. Franco's was one such regime; and, as this book by an outstanding Iranian poet makes clear, the regime of the late, departed Shah was another.

Reza Baraheni never shared the naivety of a Lorca. Childhood memories of his neighbours being gunned down by the troops of the late Shah's father must have seen to that. Later in life, as the poet and critic Baraheni set out to begin writing, he found that the themes which interested him were dangerous and taboo.

Even language itself had become a politically explosive subject. His own language, Turkish, was forbidden; its words were not permitted even to adorn his father's grave. The Persian which he learned and mastered was itself being decimated, purged of its 'non-Aryan' Arabic vocabulary.

Thus it was an easy step for an Iranian writer to become political, especially since, in the existing climate of repression, writers were often the only ones who could publicly express any degree of opposition. As it turns out, the antipathy of the regimes we mentioned toward poets proves quite justified. For as this book shows, the sensitivity of the poet can make a superb political weapon.

There are images drawn from a nation's myths or literature which can sometimes sum up the reality of that country better than any amount of sociological or historical data. Reza Baraheni could be expected to uncover such an image, if one existed, for Iran. He has. In the myths and epics of Persia he has found the recurring theme of the ancient and all-powerful fathering, who uses his *farreh*, or divine gift, to murder and consume his own sons. In an essay, *Masculine History*, Baraheni traces out the implications of this image. The result is a discussion which ranges freely from Oriental despotism and Greek tragedy to the sexual attitudes of Iranian males. The essay forcibly



The Shah and Empress of Iran: a grotesque spectacle

reminds us that the mechanisms of male domination and the subordination of women, still also prevalent in the West, are things as barbarous and anachronistic as the divine right of kings.

But above all, it offers a dazzling apotheosis of Iranian history. Shah Reza Pahlavi claimed direct continuity with the reign of Cyrus, and altered the Iranian calendar to support that claim. Baraheni agrees that this legacy of despotism was indeed the one Iranian tradition which the Shah upheld. He too was a "crowned cannibal", armed with the *farreh* of Pentagon and CIA support, to strike down anything fresh and vital which might become a challenge to his power.

What is remarkable about this power is not only its oppressiveness, but also its absurdity. Baraheni has an eye for the absurdity of despotism which would have pleased the master satirists of the Enlightenment. He reveals that the Shah, guardian of Persian culture and Islamic custom in Iran, can himself hardly speak Per-

sian, and has no inkling of how to act in an Islamic place of worship. Boarding school in Switzerland and winters spent gambling in St. Moritz were a poor preparation for either role.

Thronged of people and a delegation of religious leaders greet the Shah, when he returns from one of these St. Moritz vacations. The crowd has been bussed there by army transports, and is made up largely of secret police; the "religious leaders" are soldiers whose assignment for the past two months has been to grow beards of a suitable patriarchal length.

One scene sums up the grotesque spectacle of the Shah's rule. A masked ball at the palace shows the assembled Iranian elite at play, carousing in the garb of creatures and beasts. In their midst appears the Shah, as an enormous, howling dog.

But if Baraheni caught a glimpse of the heights of Iranian society, he also experienced its depths. If it is true that the reality of a society is illuminated by its extremes, Baraheni was placed in an ideal position to

depict the reality of Iran. The second half of this book is a distinguished contribution to a genre which has been particularly enriched by the 20th century; the memoirs of political prisoners.

There has been much talk in recent days about bloated government bureaucracies. There can be no doubt that there was one government bureaucracy in Iran whose growth and expansion had indeed gone mad: the bureaucracy of horror. In a country where wealth and power have been concentrated into the hands of one family and its minions, and all criticism is outlawed, it is not surprising that the largest social service agency should be the secret police.

In 1973 Reza Baraheni spent 102 days in prison, not knowing whether he would live or die. His crime was to have written an article in defence of Iran's national minorities.

"Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." However much Lord Acton's famous dictum applies to the Shah's regime in general, nowhere does it apply with greater force than in the case of the SAVAK, the Shah's secret police. For there is no power more absolute, and more absolutely corrupting, than that of the torturer over his victim.

Baraheni documents, from his own experience, how the bodies and psyches of thousands of political prisoners in Iran became objects of all the ruthless probing brute force, technology, and an unbounded sadistic

'The author . . . meant his work as an act of protest against the Shah's regime, and now finds it has become a standard reference as to why this regime so spectacularly crumbled'

fantasy could muster. Prisoners were regularly beaten until they urinated blood. Sometimes more refined methods were used, such as burning them with cigarettes or pulling out their fingernails. Technology played its role; weights would be strung from a prisoner's shoulders or sexual organs, electric shocks would be administered to their genitals; some prisoners had their entire bodies burned on an electric grill.

Perhaps in recognition of Baraheni's sensibilities as a poet, psychological methods were employed in his case as well as beatings. A fake execution was staged; he and his entire family were threatened with rape.

All this was done by men who regarded themselves as civil servants, wished to be addressed as 'Doctor', and interrupted their torture sessions for lunch breaks or important calls from their superiors. Sometimes they would even engage their prisoners in conversations about culture. Here it was impossible to determine if they were seeking a pretext for renewed torture or simply trying to relieve their boredom.

The macabre quality of these exchanges is reminiscent of conversations held between Nazi jailers and their Jewish victims about the merits of Goethe. Indeed, if a comparison with the Nazi regime is often invoked in a metaphorical sense to denounce violations of human rights, in the case of SAVAK the analogy seems rather more direct. As we realize the extent of the terror in Iran, and trace the dogged resistance of the political prisoners, we understand the unquenchable determination the people of Iran showed in ousting the Shah.

Habent sua fata libelli, the Romans said: books have their own fates. The fate of this book is pregnant with ironies. When it was first published two years ago it seemed destined to remain obscure, a little-known indictment by an exile of a regime which appeared invincible, and which was still being lionized in the Western media. Now the book is likely to find a much wider audience.

Everyone stands to benefit from this irony: the readers who, expecting to find background material on Iran, will also receive into their hands a work of literature; and the author himself, who meant his work as an act of protest against the Shah's regime, and now finds it has become a standard reference as to why this regime so spectacularly crumbled.

It often happens that the fate of a book fails to correspond with the author's expectations. Rarely, that it so wildly exceeds them. As a writer and courageous dissident, few have deserved this fate so richly as Reza Baraheni.

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The message is the problem

by RAE MURPHY

A Bend in the River, by V.S. Naipaul. Alfred Knopf/New York. 278 pp. U.S. \$8.95.

"So from an early age I developed the habit of looking, detaching myself from a familiar scene and trying to consider it as from a distance. It was from this habit of looking that the idea came to me that as a community we had fallen behind. And that was the beginning of my insecurity."

The speaker is Salim, the scion of a family of Indian merchants who, for generations, have been part of the primitive commercial classes which dominated the petty trade on the African continent. It falls to Salim to take over a small business in the interior — at a bend in a great river which flows somewhere through "darkest" Africa to the coast. It is post-colonial Africa, the old order is dead and in its place there is mere anarchy. Life, in the absence of order, promises to be every bit as Thomas Hobbes imagined — "...solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

Every omen bodes ill at the bend in the river. A mysterious rebellion sputters and is finally extinguished shortly after Salim arrives. Business naturally is in the doldrums. White mercenaries appear, order of sorts is established while the country is governed by a despotic and crazed president — an Idi Amin type. Business revives and begins to thrive as The Big Man is in control. Then The Big Man appears to lose control, another inexplicable rebellion grows and, as the book ends, Salim makes his way down the river.

Throughout this period, Salim makes a great deal of money and loses most of it. He observes and, as an outsider, his inability to act in any manner leads him to worry a great deal; to listen and to worry a great deal more; to observe and worry even more.

Nothing much happens in *A Bend in the River*. As in most of Naipaul's work, the plot is subordinate to the discussions between protagonists and the musings of a central character. In *A Bend in the River*, Salim proclaims his ability to detach and observe and this, with the exception of a frantic, exhausting and, for the reader, a rather tiresome sexual encounter with a married woman, is all that Salim does.

But he does this extremely well, or at least he explains things with wonderful erudition.

"The novel," Naipaul once wrote, "is a form of social inquiry." He also describes the finest novels as "being indistinguishable from the truth."

Naipaul's brilliance as a journalist lies in his unerring eye, a nerveless, rigorous intellect and an awesome command of the language. His genius as a

novelist is his ability to create the landscape and situation; to develop his characters and motivate them, thus concentrating and enriching the truth.

In his best fiction, *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Mimic Men*, he succeeds admirably. In his recent fiction, *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River*, although both are technically precise, there is an element of force in which too much seems to be packed into a meagre situation and in which characters arise with very little apparent motivation or development, but well-equipped with arguments and monologues. For example, in *A Bend in the River*, Salim is sat down after a party by a friend who proceeds to deliver an uninterrupted monologue which covers the futility of Indian independence, to the dreadful prospects awaiting the intellectual of the "third world", trying to straddle the twain which cannot meet.

At another point in the book, Salim, whose limited travels have taken him from his native coastal town to this isolated point on a river, whose readings have consisted mainly of an old encyclopedia and whose social contacts are virtually non-existent — is able to cut through the social and commercial fog of London literally before he has left the airport.

These are irritants in *A Bend in the River*. The real problem is the message; less the chosen form of delivery. If it is Naipaul's decision to use the novel as a method of animating an essay, then it is the quality of the essay that requires attention.

In his early fiction, Naipaul wrote about the Caribbean as the islands assumed self-rule. More specifically, his attention was directed to the East Indian community and the tragicomedy of their existence as an isolated and sterile community within a larger absurdity of the fragmented society of the islands themselves — societies which he once wrote of as being dangerous ultimately only to themselves.

As he was accepted, by British critics rather patronizingly, as a talented colonial, Naipaul worried that his reputation as a writer was predestined to be confined by the narrowness of his background. He also earned the enmity of other Caribbean writers. He was also accused of being both unsympathetic to the plight and the struggles of the peoples of the islands as well as being racist in his attitudes toward the blacks.

Naipaul has never seen himself as an exponent of the "third world" but, rather, as an exile — above the fray, observing and telling things as they are. In this sense, there is a close, almost organic, relationship between his journalism and his fiction.

With minor exceptions, Naipaul's interest has remained with the relationship between the societies of the former colonies and the colonialist metropole; however, his field of inquiry has expanded to include

South America, India and, to a lesser extent, Africa. Naipaul's distance from his subject area has also increased along with his identification with his audience.

He is best appreciated in England and now in North America. He reflects, in his writings, our interests and, more lately, our paranoia.

Where once the islands could be discarded as absurd, where once the exile could salvage his position by recognizing his position, where once the threat of the fire next time could be assuaged by threat of force, where once there could be the comforting notion that the wogs didn't begin until Calais, Naipaul is here to tell us that the wogs have now reached Chelsea.

This ultimately undermines the credibility of *A Bend in the River*. When Naipaul was writing about the Caribbean, his vision was somewhat incomplete because of the effective absence of any viewpoint from the black community — with the exception of Meredith in *Guerrillas*, they exist only as caricatures. Indeed, *Guerrillas* is given perspective only by the key intellectual transaction between Meredith and Roche, during which not only the essential vacuity of the

white, liberal dilettante is illustrated but expression given to that element in the society who chose to build within the realistic parameters given.

There is no Meredith in *A Bend in the River*. The Africans are the mere background — a part of the jungle. Unable to create a society either recognizable or acceptable to Europeans, and having none of their own, the present becomes merely a caricature of the past and the future voided by the jungle.

Perhaps Naipaul's problem in *A Bend in the River* can best be described by referring to Meredith's criticism of a book written by Roche in *Guerrillas*.

"... although it is very political — and I know that you consider yourself a political animal — there seems to be no framework of political relief."

A Bend in the River is thus a grim book, but it is also essentially a one-sided one, and given the shallowness and bleakness of the characters who listlessly play out their lives, *A Bend in the River* reflects a very minor side at that. Africa, which assumes both the absence of the colonized and the colonizers, assumes too much.

A book which deals with the manipulated without reference to the manipulators, deals with too little.

A gospel tract for the twice-born

by RUSSELL A. HUNT

Matacil Spray Report, by William Thurlow. Gander Environmental Group, Gander, Newfoundland.

Without people like William Thurlow, of the Gander Environment Group (and Elizabeth Ray of the Cape Breton Landowners Against the Spray, and the leaders of the Concerned Parents in New Brunswick) the Atlantic Provinces would be a much more tranquil place.

These people, and many others like them, have kept vital the long, variously successful struggle to stop or modify the aerial spraying of insecticides to combat the ravages of the spruce budworm. Without them, the Avengers and DC-6's would lumber into the sky every spring with their loads of DDT or Fenitrothion or Matacil in an echoing public silence.

Because of them, however, the

public wrangle over the wisdom of this technological assault on the environment has become a perennial, agonizing tag-team wrestling match, pitting these activists against the pulp mills and lumber interests, with the various provincial governments pitching in on one side or the other at intervals.

Dr. Thurlow is one of the more recent entries on this public exhibition. A few months ago he made a speaking tour of the Maritimes, preaching the gospel of resistance to the annual airborne deluge of untested chemicals. Now he has published a small book entitled *Matacil Spray Report* which is intended to document and substantiate the lectures he delivered last winter.

The book, like so many other public documents arising out of this controversy, is going to be praised by those who are already convinced that Matacil is only the latest in a long series of catastrophic ecological mistakes. And it is going to be

ignored or contemptuously dismissed by those who regard those planeloads of chemical as so many million gallons of salvation for the Atlantic forest industry (if not for the Atlantic forest).

It is unfortunate that this is going to be so. What we need are books and articles that make sense of this complex issue, so that the public can understand what it is that's going on when Nova Scotia Forest Industries starts predicting a timber shortage in 20 years, or when Dr. Crocker from Halifax talks about viral potentiation and the etiology of Reye's Syndrome. It is an odd combination of factors which renders the book a gospel tract for the twice-born of the antispray movement, but, sadly enough, that's what it is.

One of these factors is the book's own obvious commitment to a certain position. I don't mean to suggest that Dr. Thurlow should (or could) have concealed his attitudes — after all, if he had not embraced

them there could hardly have been a book at all. And I'm not calling for some fraudulent pseudo-objectivity. We all know, or should by this point, that there is no such thing as a "fact" out of a context, out of a structure of argument and values.

But the book's set of assumptions leads Dr. Thurlow to a willingness to accept information which is not very well substantiated, or even worse, which is immediately doubtful.

For instance, the later sections of the book are full of things like the second- and third-hand reports from moose hunters that moose in Newfoundland spray areas acted funny during hunting season. Now that may be true, and it may even have been due to nerve damage caused by carbamate insecticides... but it's precisely the kind of pseudo-fact that will be believed or disbelieved according to the team you've signed up on.

Another factor is the book's frequent descent into polemics. Thurlow can't seem to resist the pull of sarcasm: "Wasn't it interesting," he asks, "that the mammal control area for Test Block was located near Gander Bay, bordering on spray block 216...." Or "no wonder such low concentrations of aminocarb were found...." Such a tone amuses and enrages the committed, but is no help to people who want to come to some understanding of the difficulties involved in measuring the impact of something as difficult to control and to quantify as an aerial spray.

But probably the book's most important handicap is its use of scientific language. Not the fact that it uses it — no understanding of this matter can be attained without some specialized language — but the way Dr. Thurlow uses it. The first chapter of the book is entitled "Chemistry" and it involves a chemical analysis of certain aspects of Matacil. The problem isn't the existence of the chapter but the function Dr. Thurlow seems to want it to play: it seems to be an attempt to impress the reader with the scientific sophistication of the book.

To be useful, such language must either be addressed to chemists or be presented in such a way that a

reasonably bright and concerned reader can figure out what is being said. Neither is the case here, and in fact the rhetoric lurches unpleasantly back and forth between two attitudes toward the reader.

At one point, for instance, we are jollied along in the tones doctors use in dealing with recalcitrant children (two medical derivatives of carbamic acid are defined as "drugs which are good for what the doctor intends but harmful otherwise"), and a sentence later we are expected to swallow, without any sugar coating of explanation or bedside jollity, this definition of insecticides derived from carbamic acid: "usually monomethyl carbamic acid esterified to an aryl alcohol."

It's too bad, but Dr. Thurlow's book has fallen between two high stools. It's particularly unfortunate because we could have used someone occupying either stool.

One of the stools might have been filled by a book which really did gather the kind of technical information we need about Matacil into one easily available source, no matter how technically abstruse its language. This is not that book, however: there is still just too much we don't know about what is known. Someone, for instance, knows about the secret manufacturer's tests on Matacil which allowed it to be licensed for use in Canada; but this book, of course, does not. That's understandable, and so is the fact that the book does not consider the history of Matacil or the spray programs of the various provinces of the physics of aerial spray or the economics of spray programs as opposed to forest management. Those things are not what Dr. Thurlow had addressed himself to, but their absence means the book is not the reference book we need.

The other stool would have been occupied by a really persuasive polemic, the kind that leads a reader carefully to an understanding of why the author's position is as it is. This isn't that book either, though its tone (once one is past the early, technical chapters) suggests that that's more what Dr. Thurlow had in mind. Here is a representative passage from that more polemic portion of the book:

"A number of residents of Carmanville, 40 miles north of Gander and close down wind from a spray block, report strange behaviour in crows this fall. While most drivers accidentally hit a bird flying along a highway at some time in their experience, crows usually escape this fate. While lots of crows have been there for a long time, none could ever remember having hit one before. However, this fall, many crows have been hit on that highway. The crows have been flying exceptionally low, slow and without evasive tactics to avoid danger — quite unlike their usual behaviour. Is this from Matacil-induced delayed neurotoxicity? Is this because of one eye being blind and thus not seeing the cars, similar to the 'one eyed Woodcock' problem in New Brunswick?"

In spite of all this, the book still offers the committed reader the most thorough available bibliography on Matacil and related issues, in its footnotes; and its text is a goldmine of information (though, as in a goldmine, you have to do some digging).

The problem Dr. Thurlow has faced and failed to solve is not an easy one, and it is no disgrace to have failed to solve it. In some ways, it's our most important social problem. It is, put roughly, this: how can we assemble and present the "facts" of a matter as complex as this so as to produce real understanding? Most of us, presented with as densely complicated an issue as this one, make our decisions on the basis of the way we perceive the person who's presenting the facts, not whether they make sense.

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The Doctors of the System

by WENDY BOYD

Getting Doctored: Critical Reflections on Becoming a Physician, by Martin Shapiro. Between the Lines/Toronto & Kitchener. 221 pp. \$14.95 cloth. \$6.95 paper.

In *Getting Doctored*, Martin Shapiro reflects on the process of becoming a physician and, in particular, on how this process is crucial for the maintenance of the present health care system. From the cut-throat competition in the scramble for admission to medical school, through the basic science and clinical years, and on to internship and residency programs, Shapiro tellingly describes the molding of the "professional" mentality.

He speaks from experience of the excessive fear of failure which plagues most medical students, and of their response to feelings of powerlessness, insecurity and inadequacy by becoming submerged in the professional role and internalizing the compulsion to work.

This "ritual of overwork," Shapiro believes, is a mechanism allowing students and young doctors to submerge almost totally in the medical environment to the exclusion of most other concerns. In assuming the professional identity and the title "Doctor", partly as a protection against self-doubt, medical students surrender the potential for seriously and critically examining the medical environment and their role within it.

Shapiro leaves no doubt of the need for just such critical examination. From his own experience as student, intern and resident, he cites numerous illustrations which reveal the hierarchical, authoritarian nature of hospital practice and its underlying class, racist and sexist biases. One has only to walk into a hospital cafeteria where hospital workers, each wearing a uniform that is a direct reflection of rank, sit in carefully circumscribed areas, to witness one manifestation

of the stratification of the work force. Despite much talk of the "team approach" to health care, some clearly are "more equal" than others.

Two examples, from my own experience, further illustrate this point. How proud we were, as second year students, to be seen with our bright new Hewlett-Packard stethoscopes conspicuously slung in the pockets of our clinical jackets. The stethoscope was a badge of office, particularly for women medical students (who otherwise, heaven forbid, are frequently confused with lab technicians, physiotherapists or nurses).

Great was our indignation at one Winnipeg teaching hospital where changing areas for the Labour Floor in obstetrics were labelled 'Doctors' and 'Nurses'. The source of our indignation was not the rigid separation of doctors and nurses in the hospital hierarchy, but rather because, as women, we had to change with the nurses rather than having our 'real' rank recognized.

Shapiro maintains that stratification among hospital workers and within the ranks of doctors themselves reflects order, an order characterized by domination, exploitation and lack of fulfillment. Aside from the damaging effects of such stratification on hospital workers, it cannot even be argued that the patient benefits, in some way, from superior care. In fact, just the opposite is true. For rigid stratification is maintained through destructive competitiveness, through 'gamesmanship' (or on-upmanship), by recourse to technical jargon that excludes both patients and those workers further down the medical pyramid from participating in any real way in decisions regarding patient care.

In fact, patients are frequently the least likely to be involved in such decisions and are often denied even common courtesy. This is particularly true of lower income patients who populate the public wards and outpatient clinics of every Canadian hospital.

I well remember one occasion on rounds with a surgeon known for his insensitivity to patients' feelings. Stopping at the bedside of one particular man who had just woken up and so was unshaven (surgical rounds are always held first thing in the morning, usually before 8 a.m.), this surgeon remarked loudly to the cluster of medical students trailing in his wake that he wouldn't even allow such an unkempt person to rake his leaves.

I once witnessed another doctor, this time an obstetrician, squirt a syringe-full of local anaesthetic in the face of a woman whom he considered to be making an undue fuss during the delivery of her baby.

To be fair, I have known warm humane physicians, both as teachers and classmates, though these qualities are present in spite of, rather than because of the nature of medical training.

Shapiro's book surpasses much of the popular criticism of the medical profession in its exploration of the root causes of the serious problems in medicine. Shunning the tendency to search for "One Underlying Problem", he firmly situates medicine within the context of the larger society.

Two themes occur throughout the book and are developed more fully in the concluding chapter — alienation and authoritarianism. Drawing heavily on the work of Marx and Fromm, Shapiro shows how these two concepts provide a useful framework to explain the maintenance of a system that does not serve the best interests of patients, health care workers, nor even, ultimately, the physicians who have reached the pinnacle of the medical pyramid.

The problems of alienation and authoritarianism occur throughout our society. The essence of Shapiro's book, therefore, can be found in its final sentence, "... significant change in medicine can only come as part of a more general transformation of society itself."

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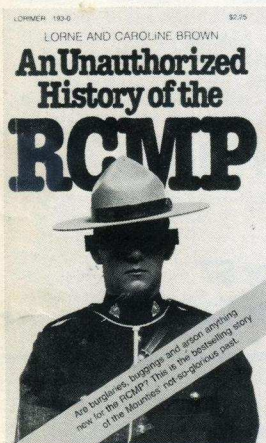
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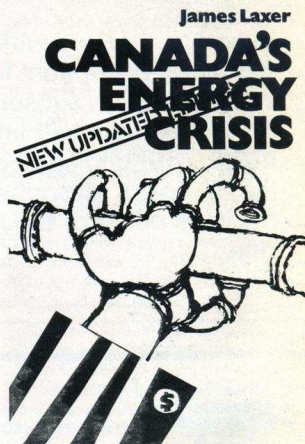
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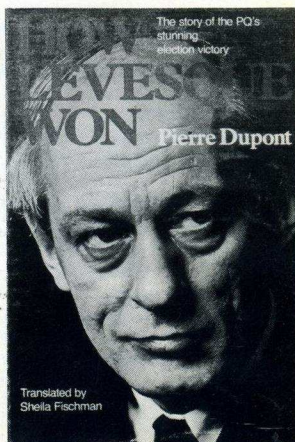
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