

This is a thematic guide to historical documents, both textual and graphical (photography, art, images of artifacts), available on the Internet. These excerpts are intended to acquaint history and library staff with the types and location of documentary material for curricular use. Suggestions for related activities are also included.

The theme for this issue is ...

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

WORKING IN BUSINESS

[The Trade Union Movement in Today's Changing Society \(1984\)](#)

Bob White, then Canadian Director and International Vice President, United Auto Workers

[Labour-Management Relations: Reflections on the Past, Challenges of the Future \(1994\)](#)

Activity: Your boss at the Ministry of Labour has announced that staff will organize workshops to encourage cooperation between workers and managers in businesses across the province. You are one of the staff members assigned to come up with the discussion agenda — a list of topics that people at the workshops need to talk about. Sit down with the two or three other staff who have this assignment and brainstorm some topics to go on the list.

PEOPLES' BUSINESS

[Why Do the Metis Press for a Land Base? \(1986\)](#)

Metis National Council Submission to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations

[Free Trade and the Indian Nations](#)

Saskatchewan Indian, Winter 1987

[Making History: Casino Development Agreement Signed](#)

Saskatchewan Indian, June 1994

Activity: Create a story map or panorama of a small community, native or non-native, that includes the businesses of the residents. Depict all the business going on there in a way that shows how it fits into the community as a whole. Write text entries that reveal the links among the businesses and the people operating them.

ART IN BUSINESS

[Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee - Summary of Recommendations \(1982\)](#)

[Report of the Task Force on the Status of the Artist - Summary of Recommendations \(1986\)](#)

Activity: Many of these recommended reforms were intended to make cultural businesses more businesslike and treat artists more like other workers, yet still maintain their distinctiveness from most other kinds of business and worker. Critics would say these recommendations go too far, that they put the government in the culture business too much, and that they don't allow artists to succeed on their own. What does the evidence tell you? Go through the recommendations and classify all the suggestions according to their level of government involvement.

INTRODUCTION

Business got Canadians' attention in a big way in the 1980s and '90s. A clearly business-oriented outlook increasingly took the place of government's mandate of massive support for social development, as the "welfare state" succumbed

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

to ballooning public debt following the post-war boom. Greater pressure from global trade competition made business needs even more critical in national policy-making. Entrepreneurship became a major focus of immigration and other foreign policy.

Leaders of big (and small) business influenced issues ranging from the National Energy Program and free trade with the U.S. to Sunday shopping and a rollback of metrication. Yet in examining the role of business people in national affairs, it's easy to overlook the parts played by participants not normally identified with business. Three are highlighted here: workers, native peoples and artists.

[Union leader Bob White](#), probably the best-known representative of industrial working people in the period, lists the positive by-products of collective bargaining between employers and employees, but also emphasizes problems that government and management decisions create (intentionally, it would seem) for workers. [Another analyst](#) of labor-management relations puts less emphasis on their us-versus-them nature, and more on the trend toward increased worker participation in business decisions.

From the perspective of native peoples, business issues and business itself are very much tied up with other aspects of life. Metis people making a living in their [traditional resource-based economy](#) — carrying on business as trappers, hunters etc. — must be able to maintain communities on land of their own. Both Metis and aboriginal people see the [Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement](#) affecting not only their livelihoods in business, but their lives in general through issues such as land claims, social services and self-government. In their [casino agreement](#) with the provincial government, Saskatchewan aboriginal people obtain for themselves not only a major business opportunity, but the training and income that will lift them collectively to a better standard of living.

Since the creation of the CBC and the Canada Council for the Arts, the government of Canada has been, directly and through financial support, in the business of cultural and artistic production. Recommendations of the [Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee](#) seek to put artistic production on a more businesslike basis, whether at the level of government ministries and arts agencies, corporations and organizations in the cultural “industry,” or individual artists. Recommendations of the [Task Force on the Status of the Artist](#) call for granting artists the rights and benefits available to the average worker and businessperson, plus practical recognition of the unique characteristics of the artist's career, profession and role in society.

WORKING IN BUSINESS

The Trade Union Movement in Today's Changing Society (1984)

Robert White, then Canadian Director and International Vice President, United Auto Workers

“[...]

I think that if you check the record you will find that a lot of the basic benefits that Canadians now take for granted in our society, which are in effect by legislation today, the idea[...]came from the collective bargaining process. [Things] like minimum wages, maximum allowable hours of work, adequate health care, vacations with pay, paid maternity leave, equal pay for equal work, pensions, some remuneration when you're ill, anti-discrimination clauses on the basis of sex, race or national origin, you can trace their roots back to some collective bargaining table. Then we move on to things like paid education leave, health and safety provisions, of course, and the list goes on and on. [...]

Then we didn't stop at the bargaining table. We joined with others in society and campaigned vigorously to get similar legislation to move those kinds of benefits to the rest of society. [...] In most cases these breakthroughs were done when the labour movement was facing strong opposition from employers. It is still happening in several sections of society. If you don't believe me, just go down to the Labour Relations Board and watch [union] certification petitions, certification applications and the opposition by employers. In many cases there is strong opposition by a powerful political structure as well.

[...]

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

In the past three years in this country the governments have been practicing the economic and fiscal policies of monetarism, the use of high interest rates, tight monetary policies and, yes, its deliberate creation of unemployment to create what's known as draining the inflation out of the economy, to participate and enforce a so-called restructuring of our society, to wipe out the 'inefficiencies' people talk about. The inefficiencies were the plants and offices employing a lot of working people in this country. The monetarists believe you've got to concentrate the power in fewer corporate hands, and it's happening. Their policy is to believe in absolutely free trade and that multinational corporations have a right to determine in what country they are going to put the jobs around the world. And then we're sold this on the basis that we have to all pull together and it's the equality of sacrifice.

[...] The facts are that the workers in this country who are unemployed are losing their homes because of high interest rates because they couldn't keep up their payments, or farmers who are losing their farms — there are many speculators moving in behind them, speculating on future markets and the money speculators are making millions of dollars out of the deep recession we were in.

Hand-in-hand with that policy of monetarism goes the policy that we have to turn the labour movement back. It is sold on the basis that labour has become too powerful, that workers are taking an unfair share of the economic pie. Of course nothing could be further from the truth, but it retards labour's progress. [...] We should [feel] lucky to have a job; we should not be talking about improving our standard of living. So [the policy] is designed to turn the clock back on labour. You have to ask yourself, well, if you look around the world, was it successful? If your sole goal is to do something about inflation I guess you can argue that it was successful. We wrestled inflation to the ground and got the unemployed lined up so far they are walking all over us and we couldn't get back up again. [I] think it is fair to say that that turned out to be a very, very costly move for our society in terms of lost production, in terms of social services, etc.

[...]

Then you have the private sector employers who have lectured us for years on the sanctity of collective agreements. We were told that once we signed an agreement for a three-year period, if we had problems through the life of that agreement we had to take those problems to arbitration. [...] Then all of a sudden we had employers who were saying to us, 'we had a great recession and we're losing money. The situation's changed since we signed the collective agreement. You must now open up your collective agreement and let us take back some of what we agreed to give to you.' And we said, 'we don't understand it that way. That's not the way we've worked over all these years and if you've got an argument with us you have to take it to arbitration.' Then they said, 'If you don't open up your agreement we are going to take your work and we're going to put it in some other location.' [...]

So what happened was that we got into a contest where worker was being pitted against worker. Workers in plant A were being told if you don't open up your agreement and take a wage reduction, or take a pension reduction, or give us back some cost-of-living money, we will take your work and we will move it over to plant B in the same corporation. And the workers in plant B were being told the same thing.

I remember it very simply. It came to my attention by mail. A small group of workers in Cornwall, Ontario went into the employer who asked them to talk about the problems [he] had, asked them to open up their agreement and give back some money that was negotiated. They agreed to do that because they were scared, worried about their jobs. The employer said if you make concessions then we will move 150 jobs or whatever into this plant. And they did. The workers didn't realize that those 150 jobs were coming not only from a plant in Quebec but from the same union, a local union of ours in Quebec. It wasn't a question of making jobs or saving jobs in that situation, it was a question of moving jobs from plant A to plant B.

[...]

The issues we face in the future are going to be enormous. I think that the greatest issue facing us today is the issue of unemployment. [...] There are people coming back to work but the 'recovery' today still has high unemployment. I think it's four times higher than it was in the last recession we had. There's talk about recovery with unemployment at 11.2% —[...]so surely the issue facing us is unemployment.

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

If we don't solve the problem of unemployment the labour movement will retard its progress in collective bargaining because there will always be a pool of workers the employer will want to draw on who are desperately looking for work. It will retard the progress on social issues because of arguments that we can't get the money. People who argue we can't put money into unemployment because of the deficit never seem to take into account the large amount of money coming out in unemployment insurance and welfare payments when people could be paying taxes.

[...]

[...] Take a look at labour-management relations in this country. In many cases they have improved. I think if there is anything management has learned as we went through these difficult times it is that we have to share information. We used to go through collective bargaining, we used to demand to see the company's profits, to see their books, but they never agreed. Then when they stopped making money and were losing millions of dollars they wanted to show us their books. We told them we didn't want to see their books. We didn't trust their books.

I think going through that, labour-management has learned a little bit about dialoguing with each other. I tell you that in a lot of plants that I represent today, workers know much more about the company, much more about their competitors, much more about the quality and much more about the ongoing running of the business.

That's important to us.

[...]"

http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/cir/library/electronicarchive/SeftonLectures/http://SeftonLecture02nd_1983-84_White.pdf

Labour-Management Relations: Reflections on the Past, Challenges of the Future (1994)

L. Victor Pathe, Former Ontario Deputy Minister of Labour-Management Services [sic]

"[...]

[...] After what might be termed a golden era for collective bargaining in the 1950s and '60s, the early 1970s became a more difficult period. By 1974, inflation was running at double-digit levels, as were collective bargaining settlements and interest rates. There was real anxiety about the future and a lot of turbulence in the system. In October of 1975 the federal government introduced wage and price controls. This certainly dampened the fire and the program ran until 1978. The late '70s were a period of stagflation, which ran into the early '80s. In the early '80s the economy went into recession, plants closed and jobs were lost in large numbers. This led us to become much more acutely conscious of the changing international forces on our economy.

I would argue that the years 1975-80 represented a turning-point in labour-management relations and that much has evolved in the years since to change significantly the level of cooperation in the collective bargaining system. Prior to 1975, labour-management cooperation was hardly ever discussed. Neither side found it appropriate for the adversarial system. Organized labour was happy to be judged based on its economic achievements at the collective bargaining table. [...] Canadian management had also found contentment in [the] system[...] Typically management's approach was something like this: negotiate a new agreement every two or three years, give them the minimum required to avoid a strike, pass on the costs to the customers, and whatever you do, 'keep the management's rights clause intact.'

In my opinion, that began to change in the period following the Anti-Inflation Program. Labour leaders came to realize that workplace problems caused by repetitive work and the boredom resulting from it, unresolved complaints and the unfulfilled expectations of a more educated workforce were to a significant extent causing the rejection of recommended settlements. More had to be done in the workplace and at the bargaining table to deal with these workplace problems.

Management negotiators found that items on union agendas which had for years fallen off the table in exchange

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

for monetary gains, no longer fell. [...] I believe there was a perceptible shift in management's willingness[...]to improve communications, share information, solve workplace problems, whether or not they were violations of the collective agreement, and in some cases involve employees in shop floor decisions. But most of [this was] aimed at reducing worker alienation and improving cooperation without dramatically altering the power arrangements in the workplace.

During the 1980s the focus of collective bargaining changed. International competition was becoming impossible to ignore. The initial response of many employers was often the lean-and-mean approach, and lowering labour costs became the primary focus in the effort to become more competitive. Whether conscious of it or not, employers were, and still are, faced with a fork in the road: they could work with their employees and unions toward more flexible workplaces and a fully involved workforce, or they could bargain hard to gain savings by wage and benefit concessions.

[...]

[...] Looking back to 1975 or 1976 we can see a slow but nonetheless definite improvement in labour-management relations and take some satisfaction from this. On the other hand, we must deal with the impact of our new world of competition and the reality of our restructured economy. Many manufacturers have disappeared and those that have survived can no longer sell everything they produce. We have moved from a producer-driven economy to one that is consumer-driven. If we cannot supply customers with what they want, there are many companies in many countries which will supply them with exactly what they want — in the size, type, volume and colour which they desire, and at a competitive price.

[...]

Success in this more competitive global economy will require organizations that can deliver greater improvements in quality, productivity and flexibility than are attainable in [conventional] workplaces. To achieve these goals our organizations must provide for full worker participation in order to get the best out of the latest technologies. Compared to the [conventional] workplace, workers in these organizations will have to apply thinking skills as part of their jobs. In order to achieve the improvements in quality, productivity and flexibility, production decisions will have to be made by people as close as possible to the point of production. [...]

[...]

What are the barriers to our achieving more involved and high performance workplaces? There are many, but here are a few of the more obvious ones:

- (1) Lack of recognition of the need for fundamental change on the part of major organizations.
- (2) Low Levels of Trust: the division of the workplace into doers and thinkers over the years has left a residue of mistrust.
- (3) Lack of Commitment (Employer and Union):

First with regard to employers: an employer's lack of commitment manifests itself in the reluctance to empower and involve employees. Without these, there will be no meaningful change in our workplaces.

With regard to unions: some unions are more comfortable with the adversarial system. It is much easier to oppose and assign blame than it is to make constructive proposals and be part of the solution.

From the employee perspective, the biggest barrier to higher levels of commitment is the absence of employment security. [...]

[...]

Let me conclude by saying that these are not solely labour-management issues or workplace issues. [S]ociety as a whole has a major interest in the way they are resolved. Our future standard of living will be affected by the outcome. As a society we will benefit from a more competitive workplace resulting in a more prosperous economy. And we will benefit from more satisfying and democratic workplaces which reflect the values we hold for individuals.

[...]”

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

ALSO SEE:

Surviving the 1980s

Canadian Labour History - New Directions

Canadian Museum of Civilization

“As wage controls were relaxed in the late 1970s, more daunting problems appeared on the horizon. A shift toward more conservative economic attitudes begun around the time of the implementation of wage controls was now in full swing. Conservative commentators attacked the size of government and expenditures. Every aspect of government regulation and spending came under attack. [...] This critique was quickly extended to the labour movement. [...]”

<http://www.civilization.ca/hist/labour/labh42e.html><http://www.civilization.ca/hist/labour/labv42e.html>

Labour's Future

Canadian Labour History

<http://www.civilization.ca/hist/labour/labh43e.html><http://www.civilization.ca/hist/labour/labv43e.html>

ACTIVITY

Your boss at the Ministry of Labour has announced that staff will organize workshops to encourage cooperation between workers and managers in businesses across the province. You are one of the staff members assigned to come up with the discussion agenda — a list of topics that people at the workshops need to talk about in order to work together better in their factories, shops, restaurants, or wherever they are employed. Sit down with the two or three other staff who have this assignment and brainstorm some topics to go on the list.

First, think of the problems that happen between workers and bosses — the “doers and thinkers” that Pathe mentions. Draw on your experience in places where there is a leader or leaders telling everyone else what to do — tell about what goes on not only at your job, but in the classroom, sports team, family household etc. (Don't give names or opinions of people, just describe where things don't go smoothly.) Group similar experiences under their own topic heading, such as Not Listening, or Rushing Through Things Too Quickly. Try to include times when you have been leader (for instance, as a camp counsellor or older sibling). As you listen to each other's experiences, try to see how the leader role is different from the follower role.

Next, go over Pathe's and White's lectures and find their examples of problems, but also their examples of cooperation. Put these under topics (like Sharing Information, or Getting Everyone in on Decisions) and add your own, from experience and from your ideas of the way things should be. Then from your list of topics, choose the top ten that should be on the workshop agenda. Aim to have people at the workshop discuss how leader and follower roles can come together to do better business.

PEOPLES' BUSINESS

Why Do the Metis Press for a Land Base? (1986)

Metis National Council Submission to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations

“The primary purpose of a land base is to enable the Metis people/communities to continue existing as an aboriginal people on lands which are legitimately theirs and utilizing the resources which are necessary to sustain a continuing livelihood and traditional way of life. Essentially it is a place for our people to live and prosper according to our own ways. To best describe this need for a land base, an excerpt from a presentation made to the Metis National Council General Assembly in September, 1986 by representatives from Metis communities in Northern Saskatchewan will be used.

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

‘For over two hundred years now, the Metis of Northern Saskatchewan have lived in harmony with our land and its resources. We have made use of the land, the trees, the wild plants, the waters, the fish and the game — taking what we needed for our livelihood. During this time we built strong values, strong families and strong communities.

These communities, communities such as Ile a la Crosse, were not just a small patch of land defined by some bureaucrat who defined a set of village boundaries. [...] Ile a la Crosse was and still is all those things which go to make up a Northern Metis community — it includes the trap lines of our families — it includes the lakes and the fish which support our people — it includes the wild game which feeds our people — it includes the wild fruits which we harvest — it includes the wild rice which we harvest both commercially and for our own use — it includes the trees which we use to build our homes and which we also harvest commercially — and most important, it includes the people and that spirit of the Metis community that can’t really be described in words we learn in school.

[...]

We are fortunate, you see, because we have not been removed from our traditions for several generations — as has happened to many of our people who have lived in the cities of the south for several generations. Many of us who live in Northern Metis communities still make our living in the traditional ways — and almost all of us remember the days when we had control of our own lives, the days when we used our resources for our needs and processed these resources in our own communities. Today most of us remember, today we understand.

But in two or three generations who will understand if we don’t regain control over our own lives? What will become of our people and our way of life if governments are allowed to continue to take control of our traditional sources of livelihood, then give control of these resources to the big companies — the government power companies, the timber companies and the mining companies?

What am I trying to tell you about Ile a la Crosse and other Metis communities of Northern Saskatchewan? I guess the most important thing I am trying to help you understand is that we are still Metis communities — Metis communities with strong and deep roots in the Metis traditions and our way of life. We have not lost our roots and our goals must be seen as a continuation of our long-standing, traditional way of life.

In short, when the people of Northern Metis communities talk about our goals for the constitutional negotiations we are not talking about fine-tuning a few government programs. What we are talking about is obtaining an agreement that fully respects our right to self-determination — our right to maintain a way of life which has served our people and communities well for many generations, though we expect that we may make adjustments to the economic base of our community — our right to make our own decisions, within our own community, about those matters which affect our daily lives — in a few words, the right to control our own futures, our own destiny.’

This expression for the need of a land base holds equally true for Metis peoples and communities in all parts of the Metis Homeland and received wholehearted agreement and support by all representatives at the Assembly who represented such Metis communities and interests.”

<http://www.halcyon.com/pub/FWDP/Americas/metis87.txt>

Free Trade and the Indian Nations
Saskatchewan Indian, Winter 1987

“This year Canada and the United States negotiated a free trade agreement. [...] This agreement has been denounced and applauded by the parties on all sides. [...] Instead of entering the debate, we must examine the impact this agreement will have on the Indian nations and straddle both sides of the American-Canadian border. When the map was drawn between Canada and the United States, the Indian Nations existed on both sides of

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

the border and in many cases, families, tribes and bands were all split up and one group became Canadian and another group became American. But the fact remains we are all Indian nations with a common heritage. Delia Opikekew, a former Saskatchewan resident and now a lawyer in Toronto, feels that the free trade agreement will have a positive effect on the Indian nations. Ms. Opikekew states [that] the American's law has been much more respectful of Indian sovereignty. [...] She feels that as the two countries become close together through the free trade agreement, there will be a need for the two nations to have similar laws in order to accommodate business purposes. This will have a natural spill over onto other areas and the Indian law in Canada should become much more similar to that of the American law in the United States. [...] Projects in the United States such as Indian regulated bingo halls, tribal law courts and much more Indian control over business and the economy will spill over into Canadian law to the benefit of Canadian Indians.

The Assembly of First Nations on the other hand disagrees, and in a presentation [to] the Standing Committee on International Trade and Commerce on November 18, 1987, the AFN denounced the free trade agreement and presented three areas of concern:

Firstly, benefits from land claims or other sources of government used to support Indian business interests[...] will be construed as subsidies by the Americans, seen as unfair competition and subject to dispute and eventual replacement. In brief, the AFN went on to describe Indian business as being ill-equipped to deal with the transition to free trade. [It quoted] statistics such as only 6% of Indian businesses have more than 10 employees in a national economy, and the survival rate of Indian businesses is very low — 56% of Indian businesses are under five years old [while] nationally only 17% of firms are less than five years old. Also, Indians serve a small population and small markets and have a very limited growth. If restrictions are placed on Indian assistance through government programs, the Indian business community will surely suffer and remain stunted and underdeveloped.

The second area of concern involves the agreement on Continental Energy Sharing which would involve First Nations' jurisdiction over water, gas, oil and wood. The AFN takes the position that much of the resources of Canada still remain in Indian hands either under treaty or unsettled land claims, and the agreement on an energy sharing policy between Canada and the United States involves products that are not necessarily theirs.

[...]

However, in an NEDP-funded joint Native Council of Canada - AFN study into the effects of free trade, a number of recommendations were made in support of the free trade agreement and the process of implementation. [...] The report recommends that native people become involved and push for such things as rescinding portions of the 1972 Marine and Mammals Protection Act, which calls for a ban on importation of Canadian whale products in the United States, even though these products are art objects created by Inuit people. Also, the Jay Treaty should be modernized and implemented on a commercial scale. The report also recommends there should be unimpeded access to the markets of the First Nations in North America. [...]

[...]

Throughout the free trade debate, there becomes a pattern that the issue broadens out beyond straight economics. The question of industrial subsidies to Indian industries and businesses must be protected. The social issues must be protected and strengthened in Canada. If free trade means equality, then Canadian social services will slip to the level of those in the United States.

[...]”

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/indian/a87win02.htm>

Making History: Casino Development Agreement Signed
Saskatchewan Indian, June 1994

“[...]

[June 17 at Wanuskewin Heritage Park] was indeed a joyous occasion for [Saskatchewan provincial] Chief

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

Roland Crowe, who had worked long and hard to make this day happen. Before the gathered audience, Chief Crowe and the Hon. Eldon Lautermilch[, minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority,] signed a historic agreement on casino development in the province.

‘This signing signifies a willingness to work together,’ said Chief Crowe. ‘We talk about the progress made in the last few months, and this does not resolve all the issues, but when we look at the situation our people are in, we see that opportunities are few and far between. With this agreement, we have stopped and thought about those who are not so fortunate. With this agreement we can offer a dream and light at the end of the tunnel.’ The dream, for so long denied First Nations people, the opportunity to enter a training program and at the end of it be assured of a job, says Chief Crowe, is the dream that has maintained him during the long struggle to see this development take place.

Some may feel, he says, that he has a fixation with casinos. But there are few other project possibilities for Saskatchewan that provide such a catalyst for industry and job creation. From top executives to parking valets, there will be many jobs to fill, for all levels of ability, training and education.

‘This agreement is the first of its kind in Canada, where First Nations and government have come to a conclusion on sharing of revenue from full-fledged casinos. This is not the kind of agreement we’re used to seeing in Canada.’ And with the structure that has been agreed upon, First Nations will have the opportunity to take leadership roles and to flourish financially alongside the non-Indian participants.

Chief Crowe has a vision of First Nations people living in a province where they have jobs, decent living accommodation, pride in what they do and a feeling of ownership in the whole process. And that can begin to happen now, he says.

[...]

‘As First Nations, we want to be part of a strong and vibrant economy, and to have an equal opportunity at a better life. We look forward to a continued sharing and working together,’ said Chief Crowe[...] The Hon. [Mr.] Lautermilch voiced parallel sentiments. ‘For me this is a special day,’ he said. ‘I take a great deal of satisfaction from the fact that we were able to work together and put together one of the most significant signing agreements in the history of Canada.’

This is the first time, he said, that government and First Nations have been able to formalize a real and true partnership, and that is a very concrete recognition of First Nations’ right to self-determination and self-government.

[...]”

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/indian/a94junin.htm>

ACTIVITY

Create a story map or panorama of a small community, native or non-native, that includes the traditional and/or modern businesses of the residents. Depict all the business going on there in a way that shows how it fits into the community as a whole. Write text entries that reveal the links among the businesses and the people operating them.

Make it a small, tightknit community rather than a suburb or neighborhood in an urban area. The difference is that people in the small community know and are related to each other more than in a city, and know everyone’s business. (Where you live, you may recognize the local pizza delivery guy, but that’s not the same as having grown up with or even being cousins with him.)

Emphasize how the local economy ties many of the businesses together. A single economic sector, such as grain farming or a casino, may provide most residents’ livelihoods. It will probably influence what education, job training and lifestyle they have (those who don’t have a job in the city). Make those links as you illustrate and describe schools, secondary businesses and recreation in the community. For an extra dimension, write short scenarios or resident profiles that demonstrate the traditions and connectedness that lead to “strong values, strong families and strong communities.”

ART IN BUSINESS

Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee - Summary of Recommendations (1982)

“The following is a complete summary of the recommendations made by the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, on the topics listed below:

- Chapter 2 Government and Culture
- Chapter 3 Marshaling Resources
- Chapter 4 Heritage
- Chapter 5 Contemporary Visual and Applied Arts
- Chapter 6 The Performing Arts
- Chapter 7 Writing, Publishing and Reading
- Chapter 8 Sound Recording
- Chapter 9 Film
- Chapter 10 Broadcasting
- Chapter 11 International Cultural Relations

Chapter 2 Government and Culture

[...]

4. In recognition of the accountability of cultural agencies to Parliament and the Canadian public for the interpretation and execution of their respective mandates, each agency must develop appropriate measures for the disclosure of its plans and performance, including the preparation and publication each year of a corporate plan and an annual report which, in their form and content, will stimulate public interest and permit informed judgments.

[...]

Chapter 3 Marshaling Resources

10. The Department of Communications, in consultation with the Federal Business Development Bank, should promote the use by cultural enterprises of the financial and managerial services of the Bank[...]

[...]

12. Tax provisions respecting the employment status of artists[...] must afford equitable treatment in comparison with those applicable to other classes of taxpayers.

[...]

14. The federal government should assume a leading role in fostering the creation of a non-governmental organization designed primarily to devise initiatives and provide impetus in the marketing and promotion of Canadian arts.

[...]

Chapter 6 The Performing Arts

[...]

41. The federal government should assist dancers and other artists who have short professional careers to resettle into allied professions where their artistic skills can best be put to use. All the relevant agencies and departments — such as the Department of Employment and Immigration — should be involved[...]

[...]

Chapter 7 Writing, Publishing and Reading

[...]

45. The federal government should establish immediately, outside the copyright regime, a program to provide payment for both library and reprographic uses of the books of living Canadian authors. The basis for calculation of such payment should be the annual royalty payments to living Canadian authors.

[...]

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

49. For the long-term future, the federal government should adopt a cultural policy for support to book publishing which would contain two major components: a comprehensive subsidy program geared to the twin elements of content and demand; and in a supporting role, an economic development program underpinning the industrial structure of book publishing.

[...]

52. [...] The [Canada] Council should establish a two-pronged system of grants [to magazine publishers] based on the twin elements of content and demand, similar to the redesigned subsidy program already outlined for book publishing. The department should initiate an economic development program for the magazine industry similar to the one recommended by this Committee for book publishing.

53. The federal government should pursue a broad policy of stimulating public demand for Canadian publications through awareness and incentive measures, with the objective of increasing that demand so that book and periodical wholesalers, retailers and librarians are encouraged to make Canadian products more widely available.

Chapter 8 Sound Recording

54. The [Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)] should continue to apply Canadian content regulations to AM radio programming, but the stipulations dealing with the Canadian creative components of broadcast recordings should be strengthened. In addition, the CRTC should re-examine the present regulations for FM radio and devise ways to increase the performance of Canadian specialized recordings on both AM and FM radio.

55. The federal government should assist Canadian-owned companies to distribute and market recordings of 'pop' music and of specialized materials recorded by Canadian artists through a loan program or other appropriate forms of subsidy.

56. The federal government should ensure that, for specialized recordings only, subsidy programs are established to assist Canadian-owned companies to produce recordings by Canadian performers, with special consideration given to recordings of which the material is written by Canadians.

57. The CBC should increase its production of quality recordings by Canadian artists and improve its promotion and distribution of such recordings, extending these services to suitable recordings made by independent Canadian producers.

58. The federal government should assist Canadian record producers to improve the international marketing of their recordings through various means including attendance at marketing fairs.

59. Canadian-owned sound recording studios should be assisted to acquire and upgrade recording equipment through an expansion of existing loan programs, possibly established in association with the Federal Business Development Bank.

60. The federal government should empower a non-governmental, Canadian cultural products marketing organization to administer a discount voucher scheme, based on a levy on sales of blank audiotapes and videocassettes, to stimulate the sale and production of Canadian sound recordings and film and video productions.

Chapter 9 Film

61. The Canadian Film Development Corporation should have its role and budget substantially enlarged so that it may take bolder initiatives in financing Canadian film and video productions on the basis of their cultural value and professional quality.

62. The Capital Cost Allowance tax incentive for investment in Canadian film production, or at the very least

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

some equivalent incentive, should continue to be used in order to channel private capital into Canadian film making.

63. The federal government should provide the Canadian-controlled film distribution industry with the economic strength to market Canadian films successfully to Canadian and foreign audiences through all channels of exhibition and sales.

[...]

Chapter 10 Broadcasting

65. CBC television should discontinue selling air time for commercial advertising.

[...]

67. With the exception of its news operations, the CBC should relinquish all television production activities and facilities in favour of acquiring its television program materials from independent producers.

68. A proportion of the CBC's programming budget should be allocated specifically to the commissioning of programs produced in the various regions of the country.

69. CBC programming, though developed primarily from Canadian sources, should nevertheless include imported programs or co-productions of some programs of interest and excellence which would not otherwise be available to Canadians.

[...]

72. The CBC should enhance its marketing operations in order to exploit the maximum domestic and international marketing potential of its materials and those of other producers.

[...]

75. The CRTC should require private broadcasters to allocate substantial percentages of their programming time, programming budgets and gross revenues to new Canadian program production.

[...]

Chapter 11 International Cultural Relations

[...]

90. Among the Canadian companies, groups or artists eligible to receive federal support for international tours and projects, the following should be given priority: Canadians who have received recognition in Canada and who will benefit materially and professionally by foreign experience; professionals, in the broadest sense, meaning not only those whose principal employment is the pursuit of their art but also those who have demonstrated excellence in performance; Canadian artists and performers representing the cultural traditions of Canada's Native peoples and ethnic communities who can introduce foreign audiences to their specialized art forms.

[...]

98. The Bureau of International Cultural Relations of the Department of External Affairs should involve itself more actively in the promotion of Canadian artists in other countries. [...] It should seek the active cooperation of interested private sector corporations in the promotion of cultural activities in those countries where such collaboration is likely to advance both trade and cultural objectives.

99. Although federal funding for the presentation of Canadian cultural activities in other countries has some relevance for the achievement of diplomatic and trade objectives, substantially increased expenditures would be justified for reasons relating to the professional development of artists, to the opportunity to increase their financial rewards and to the pride of all Canadians in their achievements.

[...]"

Report of the Task Force on the Status of the Artist - Summary of Recommendations (1986)

“The following is a complete summary of the recommendations made by the Task Force on the Status of the Artist, on the topics listed below:

- Plan for Action
- Taxation
- Collective Bargaining Rights
- Copyright
- Employment Status
- Social Benefits
- Health and Safety
- Education and Training
- Artists Rights

A plan for action

1. The Government of Canada, through the Minister of Communications, should immediately establish a National Advisory Committee on the Status of the Artist, and provide sufficient human and financial resources to effectively represent the Canadian artistic community to all levels of government in the development, implementation and monitoring of legislative or policy changes that affect the artistic profession.

Taxation

2. We recommend that the unique nature of the artistic profession henceforth be recognized in the Income Tax Act, and that artists be granted a specific status similar to that of farmers and fishermen.

3. We recommend that the artist's dual status (employee and/or self-employed) be recognized and applied within the Income Tax Act, based on artists' needs.

4. We recommend that a level of non-taxable income be established below which the artist would not be taxed under the Income Tax Act. We suggest that this level of income be comparable to that granted to Canadian Members of Parliament (\$18,700 in 1986).

[...]

7. We recommend that the Income Tax Act be amended so that the artist would no longer be subject to the criterion of reasonable expectation of profit. [...]

8. We recommend that project grants, awards and travel allowances be considered as business income and that the related expenses be deductible.

[...]

Collective bargaining rights and the artist

16. We recommend that within the next session of Parliament, legislation should be enacted to recognize organizations representing self-employed professional artists as collective bargaining agents. [...]

Copyright: New rights for creators

17. We recommend that within the next parliamentary session, the Parliament of Canada should undertake passage of legislation to revise the Copyright Act[...]in order to affirm the moral rights of artists to the full enjoyment of economic benefits generated by their work. [...]

Employment status and the artistic profession

18. As a primary condition of funding, all levels of government and their funding agencies should require producers, businesses, institutions and the cultural industries to recompense artists involved in the funded

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS IN THE 1980s AND '90s

undertaking at no less than the minimum scale of artists' fees established by their disciplinary or representative bodies.

19. All levels of government and agencies should adopt a policy devoted to the commissioning of Canadian visual art at a level of no less than 1% of capital development costs for public facilities, or buildings intended for occupancy by government or public agencies. [...]

[...]

Social benefits and the artist

22. The provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Program should be amended within the next parliamentary session to allow the extension of benefits to professional artists[....] We further recommend that Unemployment Insurance Program coverage also be used to provide maternity benefits to women artists.

[...]

24. The current laws restricting the access of self-employed artists to private pensions should be amended to extend their access to such plans.

25. We recommend that the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act should be amended to extend coverage to the professional artist, regardless of employment status. [...]

Health and safety

26. We recommend the establishment, in each province, of an occupational health and safety board with representation from the artistic community, producers and government agencies, for the purpose of informing, advising, educating and protecting artists in all disciplines on matters of health, safety standards, equipment and procedures. [...] Dancers, visual artists and craftspersons are particularly prone to temporary or permanent injuries.

[...]

30. Municipalities should ensure that compulsory safety and health standards are updated and implemented in all educational institutions, private schools and studios, commercial establishments and galleries.

Education, training and public perception of the artist

[...]

32. All levels of government and their agencies which subsidize the professional development of the artist, in cooperation with the private sector and the artistic community, should design a national strategy for the development of the artistic profession in Canada, supported by adequate levels of financial resources.

33. We recommend that

- a) The Government of Canada should initiate discussions with provincial education authorities to design a Canadian arts education program as a core subject for all Canadian students at the primary and secondary levels.
- b) Education authorities should consider employing professional artists as arts educators within the school system, regardless of their academic qualifications.

[...]

Artists' rights

[...]

37. All levels of government, and their departments and agencies which provide services or programs to the artistic community, or which affect the artist directly, should develop and consult an artistic advisory board to provide advice on artistic life and practice. Artists who sit on such boards should receive reasonable payment for their services.”

ACTIVITY

These two sets of recommendations reveal the mixed approach Canadians interested in the arts took toward culture in the 1980s (and still do today). Cultural support was a hybrid of the conventional assistance generally given to private business (like tax breaks, federal loans and government promotion) and direct intervention in the arts and culture (e.g., subsidies, financing and other forms of sponsorship, and directives such as requiring radio stations to play Canadian music and telling the CBC and private broadcasters where to get their productions). Many of these recommended reforms were intended to make cultural businesses more businesslike and treat artists more like other workers, yet still maintain their distinctiveness from most other kinds of business and worker.

While there is no (legal) business in Canada, no matter how “private,” that doesn’t get some sort of government help, critics would say these recommendations go too far, that they position the government in the culture business too much, and that they don’t allow artists, broadcasters, theatres, record companies etc. to succeed on their own. What does the evidence tell you? Go through the recommendations (and others at the same Web site) and classify all the suggestions according to their level of government involvement. See if they can be sorted into two or three broad, general categories (such as Government Control of Culture, Government Encouragement of Culture, and Standard Business Regulation — under which you might place, respectively, Cultural Policy Review recommendation number 49, number 41, and number 12, for example). If those categories are oversimplified, choose more appropriate ones (for example, break down Government Encouragement into more expensive and cheaper encouragement).

Notice when categorizing each recommendation if you are judging whether that suggestion is a good one or a bad one. You will probably, like most people, have opinions (call them biases) about the proper role and value of artists, arts and cultural organizations, and government cultural policy. Examine your biases and write them down; ask yourself, for instance, if an artist should be treated any differently from the average worker or businessperson. Now see if you need to replace your previous categories with ones that fit your biases, and/or if you should set aside some or all of your biases while you analyze the recommendations.

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