

T.H.B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies*. Vols. I and II. Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975. 115 pp.

This review of To Know Ourselves is the second to appear in the Journal. Given the significance of the Report, the Editors decided that the perspective of a reviewer from a Canadian Studies program outside Canada would be interesting and informative.

Something over 25 years have gone by since the Massey Commission outlined and created a new vocation for “the projection of Canada abroad”. This present methodical, painstaking, sobering and yet hopeful *Report* is a later-century extension and elaboration of the theme; for although the burden of the evidence and the thrust of the recommendations are “put down on the ground” in Canada, the sections of the text dealing with Canadian studies abroad and a Canadian presence overseas are full of interest and, in my view, deserving of close attention and discriminating support.

Under its general objective of reflecting “a sensitivity to the Canadian context” the Commission acknowledges that “as a result of public demand” they made extensive enquiries into the state of Canadian studies abroad. The result of these enquiries, now carefully set out, country by country, indicate that despite a good deal of individual effort and devotion there has been, until very recently, little institutional support; and that although there are now well-based (if imperfectly funded) focal points (of which the Centre of Canadian Studies in the University of Edinburgh is the best example) the overall effect appears to be fragmentary and insufficiently co-ordinated. As within Canada itself, the Commissioner indicates that too modest a sum has been assured from public funds to make these efforts take hold, and that too little effort seems to have been made to involve private sources (industry, foundations and voluntary bodies) in continuing contributions to the financial needs of Canadian studies abroad.

Elsewhere the Commission in a sort of lineal succession from the Massey Commission documents has emphasized an underlying theme of the entire *Report*:

Failure to give adequate encouragement and support to academic activity relating to Canada in the Social Sciences and Humanities will widen the gap between the Universities and their society, discourage promising teachers and researchers from developing their scholarly interest in Canada, and deny to Canadian students the opportunity to study their own country in a thorough and substantial way.

If this should be true within Canada, how much more applicable it is likely to be outside Canada? In the Commission’s view a great deal has been done, in a modest way, to encourage the intelligent consideration in institutions outside of Canada of the history and organization of government, the springs of cultural outpouring, the variety of activity represented within the Canadian economy, and the outline shape of some sense of Canadian identity. But, reading the measured prose of Professor Symons and his associates, it is difficult to escape the view that opportunities have not been capitalized upon, and that a very little extra effort at co-ordination and direction would have provided rich rewards in appreciation and the augmenting of a Canadian “presence”.

The *Report* goes further, and it makes some sensible suggestions. At the moment when there were stirrings of strong cultural interest 30 years ago – whether under UNESCO or other external auspices – there was certainly no messianic zeal at the East Block in some

of the directions the *Report* suggests are important. Other activities within the Department of External Affairs seemed more pressing; the junior officers briefly occupied with cultural matters were shifted elsewhere with some frequency; no great share of available resources were at that stage allocated for cultural or academic exchanges; and the notion got about that the path to steady advancement within the foreign service was unlikely to lead on naturally from service in Information Division.

Though this background has altered considerably, and activities beamed abroad have been much intensified, there are very few officers within the Department having special skills or professional experience in cultural affairs. The *Report* considers that there should be such officers, and that they should have the means and the official encouragement to “reach out” to make Canada more usefully known abroad. In a service with missions nowadays in something over 80 other nations, and with growing contacts with a multiplicity of international organizations, and when a perceptive and vigorous program of development aid is being steadily pursued, it would surely not be out of keeping to have more consecutive and discriminating effort put into the still-basic requirements of “the projection of Canada abroad”; and the recruitment and training of specialists in the field (the *Report* says) ought to be given a high priority.

One outside commentary on the *Report* and the ground it covers suggests that many forward gestures are *tentative* but (it adds) we are a tentative *people*. As Canadians we *may* be; if we are, it is probably our own fault; and some other people might argue that, anyway, nobody else would be likely to take any notice. My own view is, that tentative or no, there comes a point at which identity as a nation requires to be built on self-respect within and for a community of people. It might be possible to go slogging along without giving heed to any of the large number of Recommendations in the Report (some have already been implemented). But to pay no heed would be out of keeping with some of the human and humane instincts of the Canadian people; instincts never entirely obliterated in Canada the Middle-Aged Power by combinations of opportunism and obscurantism. The Report seems to be saying that it would count for a great deal if resolute action were taken now, not simply for the benefit of all the people of Canada within Canada — where intellect and application and appreciation have a place — but for people in many lands whose lives are touched in some way by the fact and the example of Canada.

To state an extreme case, no one would readily contemplate, I suppose, replacing the spacious lines over the main entrance to the Parliamentary Buildings in Ottawa

The wholesome sea is at her gates
Her gates both East and West

by, for example, this sentence from the Report (my italics):

As things now stand *there are few other countries in the world with a developed post-secondary system that pay as little attention to the study of their own culture, problems and circumstances in the university curriculum.*

So much of the *Report*, and so much of the attention devoted publicly to it in Canada since its publication, is concerned with conditions within Canada that it may seem curious to have given so much attention to a survey of links with and available resources in other countries. But a lengthy series of detailed and specific recommendations, covering eleven

countries by name, and a wider range by implication, underlines the urgency of developing all these contacts and resources as a means of helping Canadians to understand themselves and of enabling citizens of other countries having close ties with Canada, economic, diplomatic, quasi-cultural, to arrive at a better understanding of Canada the nation and of some of its contributions to the world community.

To implement and sustain the thrust of the recommendations under the chapter headed Canadian Studies abroad would very evidently require intention, determination, people (and the recruitment and training of people specially for the work to be done) and money. The *Report* says bluntly enough that

to support a strong programme of external cultural activities commensurate with the needs of this country, the Commission recommends a substantial increase in the annual budget for the cultural affairs programme of the Department of External Affairs. The annual budget for these purposes should be at least \$15 million, five times the current (1975) level of support.

In addition, the *Report* outlines an additional role for support from non-governmental sources. The Government of Canada, it says, has an important role to play as sponsor and catalyst, and in allocating money directly at effective levels in the fostering of Canadian studies abroad; this very fact should, in turn, “stimulate greater interest and support . . . from private donors, including corporations and foundations.”*

The *Report* further notes that the present terms of the Income Tax Act effectively discourage many potential private donors from making grants or gifts outside Canada in support of Canadian studies programmes in other countries that meet approved academic criteria, and recommends that this Act should be amended to allow tax-deductible contributions to be made by Companies, foundations and individuals.

There are some intriguing arrows directed at academic bullseyes. The Commission reports on delegations representing Canadian universities at international gatherings which in a number of instances had been made up “largely, or even entirely, of non-Canadians”. In the Commission’s view “delegations composed in this way do not adequately represent Canada, nor is it appropriate to request them to do so”. In consequence, delegations of this order “should normally be composed of Canadians”.

One over-riding recommendation (it is alluded to in some 20 other recommendations) is for the formation of an independent Advisory Council for External Academic and Cultural Affairs, whose members would be private citizens, apt to assist the Department of External Affairs in planning academic and cultural programmes external to Canada. Provision would be made for associate members representing the various departments and agencies of the government of Canada involved in cultural and educational affairs abroad, and for appropriate liaison with provincial departments and agencies concerned with the same objectives, as well as with non-governmental associations and institutions. As a part of its reviewing, assessing and recommending functions, covering proposals for new programmes and the more effective execution of existing ones, the Advisory Council should report publicly each year upon its activities, findings and recommendations.

This is an alluring and captivating prospect, not least when viewed by a Canadian from

*Some identifiable support has already been forthcoming, in the case of Canadian studies in the United Kingdom, from both British and Canadian corporations.

a temporary point of academic vantage abroad. Granted only that people of sensitivity and conviction can be persuaded to take on the task, and that sufficient means are made available to enable the advisory function properly to be discharged, the prospect might become a vigorous and ever-enlarging reality, to the benefit of us all.

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André Desgagné et Roger Miller, *L'Université et la syndicalisation des professeurs*. Etude spécialisée No. 3, réalisée au Conseil des Universités. Québec: Editeur officiel du Québec, 1975. 192pp.

Puisque les universités sont des institutions, à bien des égards, différentes de celles des secteurs public, para-public et privé, on devrait s'attendre, dès les premières tentatives de syndicalisation, à voir surgir un mode d'action syndicale et un type de syndicalisme passablement différents de ceux qu'on connaît actuellement dans le contexte nord-américain. Etant donné le caractère fortement personnalisé des rapports sociaux dans le passé et une certaine tradition de participation informelle aux divers organes de l'institution universitaire, on doit également s'attendre à des difficultés majeures lorsqu'il s'agit de concilier la participation syndicale au gouvernement de l'Université et la revendication d'ordre économique et professionnelle. Sans apporter une réponse précise à ces attentes, les auteurs de cette étude, après un effort de réflexion poussée appuyée sur des théories des organisations et une psycho-sociologie de l'organisation syndicale, fournissent tout de même, les modèles cognitifs de base qui permettent de déceler des tendances nouvelles au sein de la vie universitaire, marquée par la présence récente du syndicalisme chez les professeurs. Comme on le sait, ces deux auteurs connaissent bien le milieu universitaire pour y avoir oeuvré comme professeurs et administrateurs. Ils ont essayé de "prendre un recul" vis-à-vis un milieu qui leur est familier et faire preuve d'un minimum d'objectivité dans la présentation des modèles de congruence entre divers types d'institutions universitaires et diverses formes d'action syndicale. Pour ce faire, ils ont emprunté le cheminement suivant. D'abord, ils ont cherché dans un premier chapitre à saisir l'envergure du phénomène syndical chez les professeurs au niveau universitaire, de même que les causes possibles ou conditions économiques politiques et institutionnelles qui ont présidé à l'éclosion d'un syndicalisme universitaire. Encore là, l'information dont ils disposent est avant tout le produit de leur observation personnelle de la scène universitaire et du contexte socio-politique immédiat. A cela s'ajoute la lecture assidue d'ouvrages américains sur le sujet. Les auteurs n'avaient probablement pas le temps ni les moyens de procéder à une enquête auprès des acteurs eux-mêmes, une enquête dont les résultats leur aurait permis d'asseoir leur analyse sur des assises plus empiriques. La réflexion se poursuit, dans un deuxième chapitre, sur les problèmes techniques que posent la syndicalisation des professeurs. Un premier problème réside dans l'établissement d'une ligne de démarcation entre le camp des administrateurs et celui des professeurs. La nature collégiale du gouvernement des plus petites unités administratives et pédagogiques, en occurrence, les départements, amène le professeur à cumuler partiellement le rôle d'employeur