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Have the student radicals gone?

Maybe. What's happening?
A personal view
by a distinguished academic

by Major Moore

In September, 1936, I became an undergraduate at the University of Toronto: 17, naive, curious, impertinent, enthusiastic, maddened, romantic, poor enough to require (and lucky enough to get) a bursary. I left the university in 1942 to go overseas with the army, my projected MA in philosophy incomplete. I did not return to the academic fold until 1970, when I accepted a professorship in the new faculty of fine arts at York University. Quite a lot, one might say, had happened in the meantime.

It was not as if I had lost touch with youth in those intervening years. I watched my own children grow, worked with young people professionally, and did a certain amount of teaching and guest lecturing at various colleges and universities. Moreover, my activities in broadcasting and the theatre were often directly linked to educational systems. But there were surprises in store.

In my first playwriting workshop at York, I encountered a novice author unwilling to write a simple exercise in dialogue. "Like," he said to me, "the dialogue, man, it, you know, nowhere." I suggested he contribute a scenario instead, an offer he declined on the ground that it, too, involved words; what he was interested in, he told me, were "ideas." The pungent aroma of pot in the corridor later reminded me that he was not alone in his retreat from setting things down or getting things done.

But, in my next course, I found a group of students with an opposite view: they were less interested in whatever ideas I might have on the subject in hand, than in my activities on behalf of the politically deprived or defrauded, both at home and abroad. Other students, I later discovered, were concerned less with acquiring new knowledge of any kind than with acquiring committee seats where they could impose what they already knew. Still others were mainly devoted to gumming up the works in general. For them, likewise, dialogue was nowhere.

In this polarized atmosphere, I could detect consensus on only a single issue: as one young woman put it to me with an emphatic fit on the desk, "I want to do what I want to do!" But when I gently enquired what it was she wanted to do, Lady Godiva climbed down and said she didn't know, and would I help her find out. Not all my students showed the same engaging uncertainty beneath the bluster. The point is, that almost all of them, however sharply focused, felt compelled to insist on their rights as a preliminary to dialogue. In some cases, it was a high price to pay; in others it was the merest of formalities.

In my own youth, students had few rights—but the difference was more apparent than real. We were, I think, as much concerned, as idealistic, as skeptical, as iconoclastic, as boisterous, as political, as any students I've ever known, if less violent in our methods.

Contrary to later legend, we had wide freedom of choice in
courses; we took collective action (often successfully) against what and whom we didn’t like, and vigorously backed causes we did like, whether local or distant. I say this not to argue the defeatist case that, “The more things change the more they are the same”, but rather to separate the real from the apparent changes.

I may, of course, be misremembering the past; but I have seen little evidence that students since 1970 are more or less intelligent, upright, industrious, concerned, hypocritical, or independent than their predecessors. If the underprivileged of the thirties dressed and spoke as much as possible like the well-to-do, well-to-do students of the seventies dress and speak like the underprivileged; what has changed is the convention, not a student’s readiness to follow or flout it.

Many of the manifestations of change, therefore, while they may seem new, belong in the same category as each generation’s belief that it alone has come upon naked Truth for the first time, along with Beauty, Love, Honesty and Integrity.

But there have been changes both real and novel in the period under discussion. In the late forties, many of my friends and contemporaries from the armed services continued in college or continued interrupted studies; they were older, more sophisticated, soberer and more job-oriented than their immediate precursors, and the fact that many were already married reduced the university’s traditional parental role.

In the fifties, together with many others in broadcasting, I became deeply concerned with the educational uses of television, and had associations in that regard with both faculty and students. One educator called the decade one of “apathetic innocence”, but I found it one of incubation: in information and communications, in the arts, in packaged politics, in social relationships (immigration, minorities, the sexes, the family), in the search for a personal meaning made urgent by an increasingly crowded, but shrinking world.

On the surface, the academic grove may have seemed a quiet place, but during the fifties, the face was laid and lit for the mind-blowing of the sixties. Then it happened: a horde of young men and women, hyper-sophisticated out from war and victimeat, but from their ubiquitous usage on the screen, sought salvation by education. The influx was followed (not anticipated) by a host of new universities requiring instant faculties and a dangerous expansion of resources.

Institutions of higher learning have always involved a complex six-way interrelationship, entwining government, administration, faculty, students, the school system, and the community as a whole. The resulting mixture, slightly different in each individual case, is necessarily dynamic and volatile — far from the quiet stronghold implied in the two most common images of university life: the academic’s self-serving “idealist of reason” and the mob’s “ivory tower”. Ever since their origin in the late middle ages, universities have been both products of the events and mores of the surrounding world, and a reflection of a unique configuration of local factors — size, place, composition of faculty and student body, sources of funding, the status of the particular culture, and the like.

There has always been a tension between the institution and the society outside, and a tension inside the institution between its two primary functions: the preservation and imparting of existing knowledge, and the discovery and encouragement of new knowledge. It is the latter that most often brings the university into conflict with itself and with conservative elements in the community supporting it. This, in turn, has required the university to fight unceasingly for the right to explore and to dissent from orthodoxy, whatever its source.

Traditionally, the student body, abetted by young faculty radicals and a few old heretics, has been the vanguard of new ideas and their implementation, known as reform. Government and the public normally accept this yeasty student activism as good for both youth and society, possibly on the premise that once wild oats are sown, the kids will settle down, and they may come up with a few good notions in the meantime.

What, then, was so different about the sixties? Why didn’t the traditional formula work? Why the apparently sudden (and widespread) resort to confrontation politics, brute power, sit-ins, take-overs, vandalism, and arrests, culminating in the destruction of the computer centre at Sir George Williams in Montreal?

There are the obvious answers: the sheer number of students; the uncertain quality of many new teachers and the consequent decline in college spirit; the gradual replacement of private funding by government grants, and the resulting pressure for “more scholarship per dollar.” There was also confusion between two meanings of “eliteness”: social privilege (justifiably obvious to all) and the provision of opportunity to our own brains and talents (which we all discovered). And there were the internal transgressions: old curricula and teachers weeded them to them, administrators divorced from teaching, and the impersonality of massive market logic.

But to my mind, the principal causes must be sought outside the university. As the correspondent for The Times in London put it: “Everything was connected with everything else — the war in Vietnam, colonialism in the third world, the viciousness of the capitalist system, and all the neurotic varieties of contemporary madness.” He wrote this following a 1967 conference in London, addressed by Stokely Carmichael, Paul Goodman, Herbert Marcuse, and the psychiatrist R. D. Laing — all gods in the sixties’ student pantheon. But we fell into a common dialectical trap if we paid attention to threat of issues (one could add a dozen more or make up one’s own list), instead of that significant opening clause: Everything was connected with everything else.

That was the real change, the profound revolution of the sixties. Granted that the issues themselves were important, the basic cause of this generation’s alienation and alienation was not so much the convergence of events (colonialism and
I think back to the forties and fifties in seeking an explanation for the student revolt of the sixties, it is partly inspired by a meeting in 1945 that I attended, and I know of the sentiments of CBC television, and a University of Toronto committee established by President Sidney Smith to study the new technology's implications for higher education. (This was a year before CBC-TV went on the air, but long after Toronto, like many other Canadian cities, was blacked out by stations.) Not one of the educators owned a TV set; most speakers advised building the line - a Maginot line - against the uttermost; much time was spent comparing the worst of television (by hearsay) with the best of literature - a ploy of which the logicians present should have been thoroughly ashamed.

There were certainly men of foresight and goodwill there, including Sidney Smith and his vice-president, Claude Bissell, but few others appeared to grasp even the general proposition that we had entered an age of instant information, of memory banks and quick retrieval, of visual and audial records beyond the dreams of print-bound historians, of synchronized experiences. We saw that it would force us into new and complex frontiers of the knowledge of the world and of the inner states of mankind. We saw the possibility that this knowledge would be available to many more people than had previously been able to read even the works of Shakespeare.

Our universities failed to meet this challenge largely because their faculties continued to believe that culture was part of education, one of its subject matter. Throughout the fifties, for example, and despite notable exceptions, there was a feeling that the core curriculum was teaching history, literature, and art - a pleasant way of delivering the knowledge of the world to students.

In brief, they drew the line at participation entertainments during school hours - a line their future students had already wiped out. These young people were not going to be content to study the glories of the past, unless it helped them create something in the present. They had seen the world and they wanted a slice of it.

Many other student syndromes of the sixties are directly traceable to the information and communication explosions and their most obvious agents, the mass media. For the first time in history, minorities of various sorts, including students, had round-the-clock contacts with their fellows throughout the period and indeed the world; moreover, everyone - both students and public - knew more of what was going on in the universities generally.

Consequently, political movements could spread like bush fires; political techniques were available on call from the network, instant supplementation from the fountainheads of the Historians of the Inquisition, the New Republic. The techniques, naturally, could be used on behalf of any cause; and many Canadian students insulated causes when they couldn't find enough around here, or made mountains-out-of-molehills causes so that the techniques wouldn't go to waste. There were real grievances enough, to be sure, but the inflation debased the coinage.

As for turmoil of the sixties, the principal causes must be sought outside the university.

Even the much-noticed bickering of local authority (from protests on the one hand, and pressure from the mass media for why should one insist on titbits with the mighty bow down before a mere college teacher? Then, even the bowing was a matter of compromise in close-up, and why should anyone pay heed to them?

It followed, of course, that one way of elevating oneself was to put down the mighty - the most effective weapon being literature. With this end in view, there was always the hot-seat method learned from television: Are you wise or are we going like this - no middle ground allowed, no reserve judgment, no plea of insufficient evidence or deeper concern with some other cause. If you're an authority, you must suffer exposure - on our terms.

Exposure, in turn, meant access to the media; and student radicals were, in general, much more familiar than their teachers with the methods and images of the new style of news. Indeed professors, like other traditional professionals, refused to stoop to newswriting as adamantly as they had scoured advertising. Moreover, having no wish to find the students. Had these same students been more than apprentices in the new sociology, they would have realized the camera is at best, a sometime friend, and that self-serving exposure would eventually breed reprobation in them it was meant to impress. One sound reason for the reluctance of many authorities to engage in publicity was that, therefore, they had achieved much, both beneficial and harmful, in relative secrecy. This privacy, too, was shattered by the age of electronic information, but the students realized it first. The tendency of the establishment to form a defensive square around this privilege only confirmed student suspicion of a rip-off by teachers and administrators in league with a power elite, and fed their television-stimulated appetite for "letting it all hang out".

Finally, the new surge of Canadian nationalism, which became a particular focus of campus activism, was another effect of the modern communications revolution. It was much more vivid and immediate than anything in the television revolution. It was vivid and immediate in the diffusion of the Canadian experience. The new technologies, of course, were the means of distribution, but the students realized it first. The tendency of the establishment to form a defensive square around this privilege only confirmed student suspicion of a rip-off by teachers and administrators in league with a power elite, and fed their television-stimulated appetite for "letting it all hang out".

The very massiveness of the media, the pervasive homogenization to which we are subjected by the neighboring United States (their entertainment and education factory the world has ever known) provokes a self-defensive need to build a barrier against the environment - and to contribute something of our own. Once again, judging by the current student demand for courses in Canadian studies and by faculty backwardness in meeting it, the pupils seem more aware of the environment than many of their teachers. We bring them to the present, to the revolution. It is common cause that university students today have "settled down" - miraculously according to some, naturally according to others. This seems to me true in only a limited sense, that they do not have to worry about finding some young people out of higher education, delaying it for others, and making those who do attend dedicated more to learning a discipline than to playing power politics. The proportion of older and part-time students has risen, and the composition of the student body has as a whole, and lending it the weight of experience and responsibility - much as the arrival of the veterans after the 2nd World War.

The most basic change, however, has taken place not in the profile of the student body, but in the university's relationship with government. The financing of higher education is now almost totally by government, by which I mean the provinces and the federal government, with a consequent increase in both direct and indirect state control. Through management of the allowances paid both to the students and to the institutions, and through regulation of matters such as student fees and the curriculum, the state has moved into the classrooms of the nation.

In this, it would seem, the governments have the support of the voters - a turn of events for which the campus radicals of the sixties must be held partly responsible. Students who once fought so hard for the democratic right to sit on internal committees, and who would have no interest in leaving the snatched out of their reach by democratically elected politicians. Committees and boards of governors were tamer ages now.

Students had imagined the trendy premise of "accountability" meant that the university was accountable to them as consumers of education; they learned that instead the university was held to be accountable to the government, and government, in turn, accountable to the voters. The fact is, that in the early seventies, the campus radicals were neither co-opted or silenced: they were outlawed - by world events beyond their control, and by governments relentless enough to propose "universal access" to education while they raised student fees to unprecedented heights.

In short, the universities became, in terms of real political power, a sideshow. And those brought up on television knew the difference between prime time and a filler. I know only to say we still have plenty of radicals on our campuses, but the focus of their attention has changed. There are naturally a few prematurely aged war-heroes still around, trying to generate political scenarios of the old kind for themselves to star in, but their audiences are chaste. The new activists, observing the universities at the mercy of budget-paring government and tax-conscious public, are turning their eyes toward the rat race to the learning experience. This involves, first, reform within the university itself and, second, persuading the voters (and through them the politicians) to grant education a higher priority and respect it than it now has. Both of these are causes that can unite students, faculty, and administration.

The universities, only yesterday seen by radicals as sumpers of a reactionary social system, today appear as allies, since the system has turned on the universities. No longer merely symbols of ruling privilege, they are marked not for destruction, but for revitalization.

The facts is, that in the early seventies, the campus radicals were outflanked by events and government.

It was an almost childlike faith in the power of education, on the part of the public in the 1950s, that came close to destroying the universities in the 1960s. When it was discovered that education was neither a social cure-all nor the key to political ascendency (a confusion between Mount Carmel and Mount Olympus), that public receded like a dumped child lover. In light of the present more realistic assessment of the role that the university, perhaps, student of the seventies are the ones to bring about a reconciliation.

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Misread and sometimes ridiculed. Often falsely accused.

THE PLACE OF PROFIT

by Raoul Engel

"Far better to make money be my slave," the penniless young John D. Rockefeller is reported to have mused, as he leaned on his hoe, having cultivated potatoes from morning to night for 37 cents a day, "than ever to be slave to my money!"

Such anecdotes have become part of the folklore of rags to riches. The 1860s: heyday of capitalism! Every man for himself, let the devil take the hindmost! Historians like to dwell on the dubious morality of the period, when the so-called robber barons founded dynastic fortunes by dint of shameless exploitation of others. Or else they depict those years in a kind of romantic aura, where personal luck and energy—along with unwavering sobriety—produced the stereotypes of success. Horatio Alger was paraded before every 19th-century schoolboy as the example of what every boy could become. The truth lies somewhere in between. The economy of the period was unregulated, whether in the United States, Canada, or Great Britain. There was little if any taxation; company laws had not yet been written; stock markets were gambling casinos. Above all, the sudden flowering of inventions and scientific ideas had given new impetus to industries of all kinds. Productivity at any cost (human or social) was triumphantly signaled by the belching chimneys of Hamilton, Ont., and Pittsburgh, Pa., the roar of textile looms attended by the children of Lancashire, the heroic shanty towns of the Klondike, California, and South Africa (where a pinch of gold was worth more than any man's life), and the wildcat drilling rigs dotting the empty landscape of Texas and Pennsylvania. When a gusher came in, it transformed a dirt farmer into an instant millionaire. Already oil was being recognized as the force that would drive, heat, and lubricate the new industrial society.

If oil were to drive the machines, what drove the men? It was simple. Profit drove them. But not profit as we've come to use the word—the reasonable rate of return on capital and effort, after taxes are paid. Nor was profit always related to satisfying a legitimate commercial need. Profit meant: give the least, grab the most!
The ostentatious life-style of such early individualists—with too much instant money chasing elusive, instant culture—was a form of inflation too. It took a couple of generations before the heirs of those fortunes learned how to temper wealth with taste and social conscience. Foundations were established bearing the names of the very men whose earlier attitudes to wealth seemed entirely selfish. Today, the profits of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and scores of less-famous funds, are channeled into scientific and medical research; into endowed awards for universities, and hospitals; into scholarships for artists, writers, and musicians; into grants for the most astonishing variety of visionaries, dreamers, and eccentrics to enable them to do their own thing.

By an unhappy irony, many such benefactors have been among the worst hit by the recent sharp decline of corporate profits. As the foundations' assets, invested in the bonds and shares of a variety of companies, have shrunk, so their philanthropies have also had to be trimmed back. This may well read like special pleading on behalf of the great corporations. It isn't meant to be. For regardless of any impression that handsome profits serve the rich and power- ful, the diminution of profits tends to hurt everyone, especially the ordinary person in the street.

The specialized research unit in a hospital has to delay a project under way for lack of funds. The breadwinner in a modest home is suddenly out of work, because his employers have to curtail their payroll. Price inflation, while raising the employers' costs, has not raised their profits. Their margins are still as they were for growth and the expansion has evaporated. In terms of real dollars (that is, dollars adjusted for inflation), these people are standing still at best; at worst, actually sliding backwards. Like a man on an icy slope, they are scrambling desperately uphill while, in reality, losing ground all the time.

Many people scoff at this argument as self-serving propaganda. Not only does a younger generation prefer the easy ideological cliché to hard facts and figures; older people do, too. Glancing at headlines that proclaim higher corporate earnings, they recoil with instant hostility. Another rip-off! Exploitation of the workers! Since 1950, profits have been altered partly due to the increased costs of employee compensation—paychecks, fringe benefits, vacations, pensions, and insurance policies—plus increasing government funding of social programs through taxation. In addition, there's the obvious factor of inflation.

Opting for the facile game of good guys versus bad guys, it isn't difficult to ignore the fact that socialist enterprises need profits as much as cures. A tractor-assembly plant in Omsk, Russia, has to set aside a portion of its earnings for future growth in the same way that a tractor-assembly plant in Winnipeg, Man. Machinery wears out and has to be replaced out of earnings or new financing, as surely in Omsk as in Winnipeg.

There's one difference. Where the state is the only employer, a certain amount of accounting sleight-of-hand is quietly absorbed in the national books. Profit appears to be secondary to a larger scale of priorities. In Winnipeg, it's a lot tougher. The tractor plant prospers or folds in direct proportion to its efficiency, in other words, its profitability. There are no comfortable state cushions. Moreover, if it is a public company, its earnings are published and determined in large measure its ability to raise capital for future growth. Investors, disenchanted with the descending spiral of lower profits, falling share prices, and curtailed dividends, can't be blamed for shifting away from common stocks and toward fixed-interest savings bonds and certificates.

Investors—individuals as well as institutions such as mutual funds—recycle savings in order to earn a reasonable return by way of dividends or interest. With European and North American stock markets in a steady decline over the last couple of years, money has tended to flow away from market participation toward debt financing. In other words, investors nowadays prefer to lend their capital, at high interest rates and in greater safety, by way of bonds and debentures. (The gamblers may speculate in commodity futures, gold, raw whiskey in bulk, or swiftly galloping horseflesh.) But to invest in the ingenuity, vision, and promise of some venturesome company offering shares in its future potential—forget it! As a result, major corporations and promising newcomers are forced to borrow development capital at often-exorbitant interest rates. While a triple-A rated, blue-chip company may be able to get away with paying the prime rate (recently as high as 11 percent in the United States and Canada) on a multimillion-dollar issue it floats on the bond market, a small company may have to pay two, three, and even four percent above the prime rate for its development funds.
Such heavy charges consume corporate earnings and forfeit future health and vigor — much as a long-distance swimmer would be burdened by lead weights tied to his waist.

Nowhere is this burden of indebtedness more serious than in capital-intensive industries. Electrical and telephone utilities, railways, and airlines all have this in common: they need very large amounts of capital to stay in business. In today’s profit squeeze, these sectors of the economy are in trouble. Too much of their revenues go towards paying interest on their loans; not enough is left for new equipment and shareholers’ returns. This is due to these companies’ high debt-equity ratios.

The debt-equity ratio is the financial structure of a company. It defines the balance between its debt (the capital it borrowed at benchmark interest rates) and its equity, that is, the capital contributed by its shareholders. Capital-intensive industries have heavy debts in relation to shareholders’ equity and are said to have high debt-equity ratios. In boom times like the late 1980s, industries requiring large amounts of capital find it easier to finance investments internally. Revenues are high, and they easily service their debt (in other words, pay interest on and repay their loans). The surplus flows through the balance sheets, and shows up in rich black on the bottom line. Shareholders are jubilant. Their share in the company partake of the bonanza. Year-to-year growth, measured by earnings (profits) per share, is impressive indeed. Raising fresh capital is easy. Based on a high-growth track record, investors fall over each other to subscribe to new stock issues.

In recession times, these same industries may wonder if they’ll survive at all. The airlines, for example. In the decade of the sixties, airlines were big spenders and big earners. It was a glamour group. New jets, proliferating routes, gourmet food, and in-flight movies — an apparently bottomless purse kept the airlines flying high.

No longer so. Runaway inflation is wreaking havoc on the highly leveraged airlines. Quadrupled fuel costs, sharply higher wages, and expensive new aircraft have cut deeply into earnings. And there are other factors such as the competition resulting from under-utilization of these aircraft. After servicing their huge load of debt, there’s little, if anything, left for shareholders. Airline shares have plummeted.

Fresh capital can’t be found — except by way of a further load of even more expensive debt. Investors ask themselves: why risk their savings in airline shares when they can lend their money at virtually no risk and a yield of 10 percent or more? When profits decline, everybody suffers.

When profits vanish, once-great enterprises are reduced to begging. Pan American World Airlines is in such straits that it went to Washington for a $10 million-a-month subsidy, just to keep flying. It was politely, but firmly, refused. Private enterprise, Pan Am was reminded, ought to be able to live by the rules of free enterprise.

But how were they supposed to raise cash? Said Willis Player, a Pan Am senior vice-president: “We should be ordering new planes now, for delivery in two or three years when our Boeing 707s are obsolete. We should be doing what we’ve always done, which is to be assuring our future needs. Today, we just don’t have the credit to do it.”

Although the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board refuses to allow foreign ownership of more than 10 percent of airlines, the U.S. government made a special arrangement with the Shah of Iran. In mid-February, he was allowed to pump $250 million into Pan Am, in return for 13 to 15 percent ownership, thus bailing out theailing airline.

Highly capital-intensive industries such as airlines, utilities, and oil companies are caught up in an inflationary squeeze that classical economics hardly could have anticipated. First, in response to a slowdown in the economy, government will apply a little excess fiscal and monetary stimulus — that is, put too much money in people’s pockets through tax cuts. This soon generates some demand-pull inflation (more consumer demand than existing facilities can satisfy).

But then, as prices rise, demand pull is translated into cost push, as labor unions strive to catch up with the rising cost of living. Where wage settlements are excessive — where they far exceed increases in productivity — the effect will be to trigger a new round of price increases.

It’s the old riddle of the chicken and egg. But whichever comes first, its offspring is inflation. Inflation is the invisible thief robbing everybody’s savings.

But inflation, when coupled with depreciation allowances established before inflation reached double-digit level, jeopardizes the future survival of the biggest industries. That’s why Pan Am might’ve been flying obsolete 707s by the end of the decade if the Shah of Iran hadn’t intervened.

One answer: new depreciation accounting. In a recent interview, London merchant banker Sir Siegmund Warburg was asked how the perilous state of business could be strengthened.

“If I were president of the United States,” he said, “one thing I’d do is introduce depreciation on the basis of the replacement cost of machinery and equipment. It seems to me utterly sound . . . to calculate depreciation on the basis of original cost.”

The plight of Pan Am is a case in point. It depreciates a $165 million Boeing 707, but inflation pushes its replacement cost up to $28 million.

But where many industries can at least fight their battles privately, others are exposed to the glare of public scrutiny. And often, political expediency.

Since the winter of 1973, when imported oil prices began their incredible escalation, the oil industry has been busy explaining its sharp rise in profits. In light of striking increases in oil-company profits, explanations of Arab oil embargo weren’t always satisfactory to those outside Canada lining up for hours to buy a few gallons of gasoline.

One consulting firm, Data Resources Inc., reports that as a group, U.S. petroleum companies increased their earnings by 46 percent between 1972 and 1973, and again by a further 63 percent between 1973 and part of 1974. True, the industry will probably face a decline of about 20 percent next year, but that’s still nearly double 1972 profits.

The Canadian picture shows a similar trend. Profits of six major oil refiners (taken as a group) improved by a solid 43.2 percent in the first nine months of 1974 over the same period a year earlier (from $352 million to $504 million). A group of 27 western oil companies — producers and explorers — shows an even more impressive jump. Their average profits increased 108.6 percent in the first nine months of 1974 over the equivalent 1973 period (from $138.3 million to $289.9 million).

On the face of it, such profits may strike some people as almost indefensible.

Some moralists called them immoral. Politicians found them to be splendid headline grabbers. But financial analysts considered them only adequate to meet the vast expenditures faced by the industry in the years ahead. Moreover, forgetting for the moment future capital needs, analysts point out the generally unexciting profits of oil companies prior to 1972.

In a survey of oil-company profits, the April 1974 issue of Fortune magazine sets into perspective the level of oil-company profits that had stunned Congress, the press, and public opinion.

“Stockholders’ equity (the most meaningful profit indicator) was for a long time a just-below-average performer,” wrote Carol J. Loomis in Fortune. “In seven out of 10 years ending in 1972, the median return for the 20 to 29 petroleum-refining companies listed in the Fortune 500 largest corporations was below the median for the entire 500. In the other three years, the petroleum group was above the average. In 1972, the median for the whole 500 was 10.3 percent, the median for oil fairly close behind at 9.4 percent.”

If those figures don’t suggest a disaster, they do at least show that the oil industry achieved its great leap forward from a fairly low base — so that, for instance, its median

“Opting for the article, it isn’t difficult to ignore the fact that socialist enterprises need profits.”
Across North America, the apparent profits of oil companies have provoked reactions varying from fury to disbelief. Perhaps misunderstanding is at the centre of the controversy. Are such profits indelicate? "Or," asked Fortune magazine referring to U.S. firms, "should we view the profits as a rather extraordinary piece of good news — as a sign that the industry will, after all, have the means to help the country move toward self-sufficiency in energy?"

As for Imperial Oil Limited, the earnings for 1974 were $290 million. The company spent $404 million on capital and exploration programs, and $113 million was needed for the higher cost of inventories. During 1974, Imperial borrowed $100 million. In February of this year, another $100 million was borrowed. Out of every dollar of Imperial's 1974 revenue, eight cents was profit. Of that amount, five cents was reinvested in the business. The remaining three cents was paid out in dividends to shareholders.

"Inflation is the invisible thief eroding everybody's savings."

If governments stop using the resources industries as a political football.

If corporate profits are allowed to rise to a level consistent with industry needs. Those needs are only incidental to fancy dividends to attract market players. They have to do with the resumption of a high level of high-risk efforts and high-cost development activities that were cut back by many companies following the federal budget of Nov. 18, 1974.

The governments of producing provinces have announced some measures recognizing the gigantic task that lies ahead. Saskatchewan revealed its intentions to permit deductibility of royalties in computing provincial income tax for 1974. British Columbia announced that it plans to implement procedures under which the double-taxation impact on natural-gas producers will be eliminated. But neither of these provinces has altered its very burdensome royalty rates. Alberta proposed new tax and royalty provisions in December that would reinject more than $300 million annually into the oil industry. But, according to Toronto's Globe and Mail, the federal government will acquire approximately $1 billion annually through extra taxation under the provisions of the federal budget of Nov. 18, 1974. So there will still be less money for the oil industry.

Beneath such contrast is the fact that through government, we are all involved. For government — provincial or federal — is the instrument of the public will. And its various levels must cooperate to achieve the outcome that is constructive to us all.

And to reach this objective, the private sector must fulfill its role. The goose must be allowed to nibble a little, drink a little, and scratch for profit here and there, if it is to go on laying golden eggs for the rest of us.

Raoul Engel is business editor for Global Television, Toronto.
The quiet birth of the new Indian art

by James Hickman/photos by Rudi Haas and Paul Balche

What's Indian art? Why, of course, it's totem poles, bark baskets, a few beads, some colored feathers, and maybe a little paint on the face. Clichés. Hackneyed misinterpretations. But they've been woven into the fabric of the Canadian personality for many years. To suggest all Indian art is primitive or even traditional is the equivalent of accepting the movieland image of Indians as wild-eyed, scalphunting savages. Just as Indians themselves aren't stereotypes, neither is their art, a fact somewhat obscure to much of white society. Contemporary Indian art is a blend of the western way of life with the visions of modern native people; it is a hybrid born from twin environments, creating a new art form. But acceptance of it hasn't come easily, and even now it is only gaining a foothold. Indian art had been allowed to die, but as attitudes changed in the 1970s, it was reborn.

Until recent years, Indian art in Canada was received with apathy. In part, the lack of response arose from sparse knowledge among many Canadians of a culture distinct from their own. Art by native people was looked upon in an anthropological sense, an exhibition left over from a primitive race.

The insensibility shown this art by the majority of Canada's population, and the resulting feeling on the part of native artists is revealed in the words of George Clutesi, a native author/painter/
carver, who wrote a few years ago: "We must try a lot harder. Indian art is a form not found anywhere else in the world. We must say to the white man, 'I don't care what you think. This is what I can produce, write, or paint.'"

The first exhibition of Canadian native art — for art's sake, not that of history or anthropology — took place in 1969, not in Canada, but at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. At that prestigious museum in France, the show was aptly titled: Masterpieces of Indian and Eskimo Art From Canada.

Almost six years after the show in Paris, contemporary Indian art managed to dent the apparent insularity of Canadian society with a six-week exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto. Canadian Indian Art '74, held from June 4, was organized by Tom Hill, a Seneca Indian from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. A former painter, Hill works out of Ottawa as head of the cultural secretariat for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The ROM exhibition was just one of a variety of projects in which he is involved: he helped make a movie on four contemporary native artists for the National Film Board; he promoted a book, Indian Arts in Canada by Olive Patricia Dickason; and now he's gathering photographs for another book, this one about the ROM exhibition. He thinks of himself as an advocate of Indian art, seeking to win public appreciation for it. If you're curious about the death and rebirth of native art in Canada, Tom Hill can tell you of its history and evolution.

The room in which he works is located in a tall government building on Laurier Avenue in the capital city. It is brightened by paintings from modern Indian artists, serving indirectly to soften the endless greens and grays of office cubicles. A big man with a round face and jet-black shocks of hair, Hill wears a sweater, moccasins, and jeans, contrasting the collar, tie, and jacket apparel prevalent in this government community.

"After studying at the Ontario College of Art, I went out into the world as a..."
Eight-inch-high Totem by Pat Dixon was carved in argillite in 1973

Painter," he says, "I couldn't make it happen, and that's more. I saw other Indian artists in the same predicament. They couldn't explore their creativity because people expected traditional crafts from them."

Finding many avenues closed to him as a painter, Hill decided to get involved in a different way - as an administrator, helping Indians to find their proper place in modern art. And that's what he's still doing, by working for the federal government.

"There are a number of reasons why Indian art died," explains Hill. "The sciences - such as anthropology or ethnology - tend to examine it simply as a relic from primitive craftsmen, rather than artwork from a sophisticated culture." Yet the native culture was highly advanced. For example, while the Cretans painted a mural about wild-boar hunting at the Palace of Tiryns in southern Greece about 1200 B.C., Indians of the Salish tribe in the Fraser River Valley of British Columbia sculpted small, high-quality figures in stone.

The Victorian era, with its somewhat fustian logic and rigidity, was another historic contribution to the setback endured by Indian art. "The Victorians and their missionaries were shocked by the paganism of native tribes," Hill says. "They tried to erase rituals they considered heathen, and force Indians to accept Victorian culture and mores."

Unfortunately, compelling the native culture to change radically by adopting new values hindered artistic expression, since every ritual was laced with a variety of art forms.

As author and historian Olive Patricia Dickason wrote in Indian Arts in Canada: "The idea of art for an artist's sake did not concern Indians; the necessity of making objects beautiful was directly related to their purpose, even though it did not increase their practical efficiency. This was true of rituals and ceremonies where the artist's work - masks, sculptures, clothing - was an important part of the rites, but enriched with beauty as well.

If the charm of Indian art objects was linked to their purpose, then Canadian laws banning and punishing pagan rites squashed much of the purpose in native culture and, in turn, much of the art. Almost, it seems, in the custom of Victorianism, laws forbidding rituals were part of the government's policy of "assimilation" in the 1880s. Perhaps the most well-known of these were the Potlatch Laws on the west coast, making it illegal for Indians to indulge in their ceremonial feast when gifts were exchanged as a show of wealth. Potlatch Laws remained in effect until 1951.

"As Indians passively accepted these laws," Hill points out, "different art forms ceased to exist. Major collections were sold or confiscated by police. There was a severe drop in the number of craftsmen. Not only that, but often the artists who produced objects for the rites were also philosophers, responsible for keeping the ceremonial traditions evolving, so the spiritual life of Indians, as well as their art, sank to a new low. A fragment remained, though, withstand the turbulence of the law by going underground; rituals were performed in secret places away from the watchful eye of the police.

During the last 25 years, native art has been dealt another blow, not by scientists, Victorians, or the law, but by Indians themselves. Catering to the public appetite for traditional crafts, native artists commercialized their work. Instead of experimenting with their creativity, artists bowed to the demands of the buyers, who expected something that looked very "Indian" - such as miniature totem poles, blankets, beadwork, or colorful clothing.

But some artists dared not to conform, transcending the commercialization and clichés in favor of authentic visions. The most famous of this new group is Norval Morrisseau, a self-taught Ojibway painter, who achieved almost instant success. In September, 1962, Morrisseau's one-man show at the Pollock Gallery in Toronto sold out within 24 hours.

Using acrylic paints, Morrisseau often does his work on rough, brown building paper - the kind that comes in large rolls. This medium, combined with Morrisseau's unique style embodying Indian mysticism, gives his paintings an unexcelled quality. After ignoring Indians or forcing them to change their culture for so long, white society accepted Morrisseau's work and, what's more, it became very chic.

"Morrisseau broke ground," says Hill. "He managed to get Indian art separated from history or anthropology.

Made from the wood of tamarack pines by John Blueboy, Three Twig Decoys embody grace, skill, and imagination.

Sea Lion, by Lorraine Bronson, is a carving of bone with an inlay of shell, made in 1974.
He was the trend setter of the sixties, who paved the way for the seventies. But he also spawned a lot of copycats who thought they could make it by imitating him.

Some artists, like Daphne Odjig, who were influenced by Morriseau in the late 1960s, developed their own techniques. Like Morriseau, Odjig utilized the doctrines of Indian mystics, but she combined them with the style of modern European painting to create something unique.

Art was raised from the ashes, because apathy was still pervasive. It was in the dawn of the seventies, after public attitudes changed, when Indian art was re-born. Pottery, painting, weaving, and carving showed new, modern growth, as small galleries across Canada opened their doors wider than ever. People started accepting Indian art that was of today, not yesterday.

Then, in 1974, thanks to last summer’s exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum, the art forms of native people advanced further still. The success of the native art show at the Musée de l’homme in Paris helped spark interest in a Canadian exhibition. The Canadian Guild of Crafts, the department of Indian affairs and northern development, and the RGM sponsored the event, with Tom Hill as coordinator. Good critical reviews appeared. Thousands of people streamed in to see Canadian Indian Art ’74. It was the country’s first major showing of contemporary works by Indians.

“I can see a lot of results from the exhibition already,” explains Hill. “Visitors saw the art in a new light. Interested commercial galleries contacted me. And surprisingly, the greatest demand for another exhibition came from New York, Michigan, and Oklahoma. In fact, some galleries in New York City are now selling art by Canadian Indians.”

The future looks bright, especially for the young, emerging artists who wish to express themselves through their Indian heritage and their place in western society. Robert Houle is a classic example. He borrows designs from beadwork or tepees, and enlarges them until they’re abstract. Then he creates hard-edge acrylic paintings on huge canvases. At first glance, it’s impossible to interpret Houle’s Indian legacy in the abstract geometrics of his work. But the legacy is there.

And other artists, like Leo Yera, Wilma Simon, Clifford Maracle, Arthur Shilling, Lorraine Bronson, and many more, can explore their creativity to the fullest, secure in the knowledge that Indian art will not be allowed to die again.

There is still a long way to go. But the rebirth of Indian art has given native artists their strongest motivation. It allows them to express themselves in the way they choose.
Leo Yerxa doesn't care for fame

In a townhouse located in a treeless new suburb of Kitchener, Ont., lives Leo Yerxa, an Indian artist who, at 27, has already achieved professional acclaim. His small house, shrouded in warmth, seems the right setting for a man of his sensitivities. The walls are hidden by artwork, some by Yerxa, some by others.

Yerxa is an Ojibway from the Couchiching Reserve in northern Ontario. A tall, lean man with a taut face, he speaks with reticence, seeming to form each thought clearly before uttering a word. When he speaks, his words are few and precise. "I did that painting in acrylics," he says, pointing to a picture called Priest, a chilling study of a cleric. "It took me a whole summer to complete it. Usually I work in watercolors because I paint much more freely and quickly with them." There is silence. He picks up a coffee mug and sips.

Until 1967, Yerxa lived on the reservation, going to school, trapping, and guiding. Then he moved to Ottawa, and took a graphic arts course at Algonquin College, which led to a job as a designer two years later. But it didn't satisfy him. "I wanted to paint full time," he explains. "Ever since I was a young child, I had been painting, and that's what I liked doing best.

By the time Yerxa moved to Kitchener with his wife and two children last fall, he had realized that ambition. Now, he takes courses in sociology, art history, and other subjects at University of Waterloo, a few miles from his townhouse. When he's not in class, he's painting new work to be sold at the Evans Gallery in Toronto.

Yerxa won a competition to design the set of four Olympic coins which will be available in May, thus adding to his present achievement. He is hesitant to go into details concerning the competition because of the confidentiality which surrounded it.

He also illustrated What They Used To Tell About, a book of Indian legends from Labrador, edited by Peter Desbarats, a former newspaper columnist, now a television commentator in Toronto. The book is a slim, hard-cover edition with simple, effective illustrations in orange to brighten its pages.

He wrote and illustrated a children's book about trapping, but hasn't really tried publishing it. "I just wanted to do it," he says, "that's all." He takes photographs too; in fact, it's one of his hobbies, along with writing. And when he returns to the Couchiching Reserve as a trapper next fall, he'll continue his painting, photography, and writing.

To many people, returning to a trapper's life when fame appears imminent may seem peculiar. "I want a healthier life," he explains. Then a pause. "Fame as white people see it means a big house, two color TVs, cars, swimming pools, and that kind of thing. My Indian friends are split in their opinions: some want these types of things; others would just like to live the way Indians used to. To me, the white way seems full of troubles. There are drugs, crime, and general depersonalization in cities.

"I guess I've sold a few hundred paintings," he continues matter-of-factly. He says he used to avoid the galleries because of the high percentage he felt they charged for selling his work. But, over a period of time, he established a good working relationship with the Evans Gallery in Toronto, and it now sells his work. Next October, it will hold a one-man show of Leo Yerxa's paintings.

He works at home in an area behind a large brass bed in his bedroom. "Often, I'll be up about five o'clock and go until three or four in the morning," he says. "Still, I don't have a routine because sometimes I'm lazy and other times I work very hard."

Under his bed, Yerxa has a large folder with his recent works in it. Most of his paintings are done in soft-brown watercolor washes, with wispy strokes that add to the gentle, understated nature of his work. He flicks through the pile choosing certain paintings, many about people alienated from one another in dark cities, confused or hurt.

For the most part, his figures have closed eyes, and look almost pious. "Most of my work has an element of protest in it," says Yerxa. "But not political protest. I'm interested in examining city-versus-country attitudes, or changes in ways of life from years ago to now. I want to understand things, instead of trying to point out what is good or bad." Despite this, he appreciates politically motivated art, and defends it, depending on its merit.

"I've noticed with my art," he continues, "a certain amount of surprise from people who expect traditional Indian crafts. Also, I think some Canadians don't even know there are Indians in this country, let alone Indian art.

"My goal is simply to keep up my art throughout my life. I don't care about becoming famous and wealthy like Picasso. I'd rather be outside in the bush trapping. And I want to build a house on the reserve when I get back. Up there, I can think, because it's quiet and peaceful. This helps my art. Many of my paintings are done from memories of the place where I grew up. I want to go back and do what my father and grandfather did during their lives."

Artist Leo Yerxa wants to be a trapper again

People bound by urban alienation is the subject of this work called City
Coal, the famous Cinderella fuel, doesn’t sit alone much anymore. Coal was the energy source that drove technology into the 20th century, only to be nudged to a distant back burner by oil and natural gas. The new fuels have also been cleaner, cost less to produce, and were easier to move around. Small wonder coal took its lumps.

Now, things have changed: World prices for petroleum have risen sharply. The production capability of existing Canadian fields will start to decline in a few years. New resources in the Arctic, along our ocean coastlines, or in the Athabasca tar sands, will be more difficult – and considerably more expensive – to retrieve.

There are, of course, energy sources which are not fossil fuels. Uranium or one is now being used for nuclear energy. Solar energy is a possibility. But in the case of solar energy, there are technological problems still to be resolved. And that may take years. Meanwhile, the demand for energy continues to grow.

We have great needs, and the energy resources currently available aren’t equal to these needs. And that’s why coal is worth a second look. It’s still being used in its more traditional forms, but its future use, as an energy resource, is yet to be fully explored.

Though it comes from a mine, coal is not like other minerals. It started as plant life hundreds of millions of years ago. When the plants died, they decayed into bogs of peat – brown, springy stuff much like the kind nursery workers sell to back-yard gardeners. Over the years, sediment built up and squeezed the peat down. Under pressure, oxygen and hydrogen escaped, leaving a high concentration of carbon. Thus, coal is mostly carbonized plant remains. The longer it has been under pressure, the more carbon it contains and the better the grade of coal.

Coal that contains sufficient carbon may be processed into coke which, in turn, is used to make steel. The carbon molecules in the coke help in the chemistry that changes iron ore to steel.

Anthracite is the oldest and highest-ranked coal. It’s so hard you can rub it without getting your fingers dirty. You can also polish it and carve it into costume jewelry; no one will ever guess you have coal in your cuff links. There aren’t any true anthracites in Canada, though some of the harder coals of British Columbia come close.

Ranked below anthracite is bituminous coal. It has slightly more moisture
and less carbon than anthracite. Canada has lots of bituminous coal in British Columbia and Alberta, lesser amounts in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Some, but not all of it, is good coking coal.

Subbituminous, a lower grade of coal containing smaller percentages of carbon, is found mainly on the prairies. It’s burned primarily in thermoelectric generating stations.

Lignite, the lowest grade of all coals, accounts for Canada’s major coal deposit between the prairies and the Maritimes. It’s near Oskawana, Ont., not far from James Bay. Fortunately, the coal is close to the tracks of the Ontario Northland Railway, so future development is a possibility. Lignite is very volatile and subject to spontaneous combustion; it demands considerable care in storage and transportation.

In all, Canada has just under two percent of the earth’s coal reserves. Coal has been mined in Canada since the 1720’s when workers building the famous fortress at Louisbourg, N.S., found exposed seams in the cliffs of Morien Bay, now Port Morien, a village near Glace Bay. The industrial revolution, combined with the good luck of the area’s proximity to shipping lanes, got Maritime mining off to a promising start. Since some Nova Scotia coal was a good source of coke, iron ore was brought from Newfoundland, and Sydney, N.S., became a steel centre too.

But by the 1920’s, all had replaced coal as a fuel for ships. Then, in 1946, the Carroll Royal Commission proved energy needs are not easy to predict. After a careful study of Canada’s energy situation, the commission decided that, “Despite the importance of alternative sources of energy, coal is and will probably continue to be the most important source of energy for railway locomotives, for industrial and domestic heating.” Soon, railways completed the switch to diesel locomotives, and homeowners turned in their coal stoves for oil-burner and gas-burner thermostats.

But the demand for coal in Canada didn’t disappear. The steel mills of Ontario and Quebec needed coal. So did the thermal-electric generating stations. Unfortunately, for those whose livelihoods depended upon the coal industry, Canada’s mines were located at opposite ends of the country. The mines of Pennsylvania and West Virginia were much better able to the industries of central Canada. To make sure they’d have ample coal, Canadian steelmakers bought into U.S. coal mines, and sometimes bought them outright. Meanwhile, coal production in Canada dropped by almost half from 19.1 million tons in 1950 to 10.2 million tons in 1962.

Now things have turned around. One of the best breaks for western-Canadian coal mines was Japan’s boom in steel. In the early 1960’s, the Canadian government had helped develop a market for Canadian coking coal in Japan by subsidizing freight costs on trial shipments. Now, without government involvement, the western mines ship over 12 million tons a year to Japan. That’s more than Canada mined in 1960.

In November, 1974, at the opposite end of the country, 22,000 tons of Cape Breton coal were shipped to keep the lights of Oxford, England, burning. It was a trial cargo to a generating station near that famous university town. If the results prove successful, eastern Canada could soon enjoy an overseas export trade of its own.

Helping to meet the demand are speedier working methods in the mines. The slow pick-and-shovel days have long since disappeared. Even in Princess colliery (in the town of Sydney Mines in Cape Breton), probably North America’s oldest producing coal mines, automation abounds. Parallel tunnels are connected by a third tunnel, called the working face. Along this face, the Anderson Shearer, a 24-foot mechanical mule, jerks along, churning 30-inch bits from the wall with each thrust. Up to 100 gallons of water a minute have to be pumped in to keep the dust down. The roof is supported by “walking jacks”. As the tunnel advances, the jacks follow along behind. Where an area has been completely worked over, the roof is allowed to collapse.

Some Cape Breton mines reach out three to four miles into the Atlantic, about 3,000 feet below the ocean floor. In the Princess mines, it takes over 45 minutes for workers to get from pithead to coal. To reduce such non-productive travel time, the work week has been divided into four 10-hour shifts.

Most of Canada’s future coal, however, will come out from the Maritimes, but from the west, which has about 95 percent of Canada’s reserves.

If the coal is near the surface, as is the case in most mining in western Canada, it is removed by open-pit or surface mining. To assess the practicality of a mine, engineers consider the ratio between overburden and coal. The maximum practical ratio is about 10 to 1, which means that to dig through 100 feet of overburden, the vein of coal below must be at least 10 feet thick. When the mine has been exhausted, the pit may be filled in and resurfaced, and put back to use as grazing land, or for other purposes such as water reservoirs. Imperial Oil, as an energy company, first took an interest in Alberta coal in 1963, studying the potential of coal re-
serves for generating stations. Imperial later began acquiring leases, and has been exploring for coal since January, 1972.

One problem with western subbituminous coal is that it doesn’t give as much heat as coal from Virginia and Pennsylvania. The former produces less heat, and this has been a factor in its lower price. In 1974, Ontario Hydro bought eight million tons of U.S. coal. They will buy more in 1975, according to a spokesman.

There is an ironic environmental problem with western-Canadian coal. Compared to U.S. coal, it has far less sulfur to pollute the air – 0.5 percent versus 2.25 percent. The difficulty is that air-pollution devices in some smokestacks are triggered by the presence of sulfur. Special precipitators detect the sulfur, then put an electric charge into the smoke particles, which are then drawn into a metal screen at the base of the stack. Without enough sulfur to set off the action, the ash would go straight up the chimney. Ash particles are a major pollutant. Ontario Hydro sees a possible solution: a blend of U.S. and western-Canadian coal.

Environmentally, coal has come a long way since it was criticized in England during the 13th century because of its noxious fumes. As new processes develop to convert coal into liquid fuel and gas, the ash and sulfur content will be eliminated, thus creating a cleaner-burning fuel. Also, liquefying coal will facilitate its transportation, and perhaps keep the costs down. But, meanwhile, coal does not burn as cleanly as oil or natural gas. And there is another environmental controversy involving the wisdom of surface mining, in that it defaces the landscape. The land can be reclaimed, but sometimes the cost of doing so may make a potential development uneconomic.

Other immediate concerns in western Canada include a minor shortage of skilled labor and a major shortage of heavy equipment. Any mine needing a dragline, the large mechanical digger used in surface mining, will have to wait until the 1980s before North America’s only two manufacturers can supply them. Even with delivery, the machine can’t go to work immediately. Because of its size, a dragline is shipped in pieces. It takes 12 to 14 months to put one together.

In addition to the problems of getting the coal from the ground, comes the challenge of getting the coal to market. Those shipments to Japan, for example, involve a costly train ride of about 700 miles through the mountains of British Columbia. The trip has become more efficient by special unit trains which keep about a hundred coal cars in almost constant motion. Since the trains always travel between the same two points, the cars are never uncoupled. Positioned throughout the train are remote-controlled diesel locomotives. They can be started and controlled from the lead engine to help the train up long grades.

But even with the high efficiency of unit trains, coal remains more expensive to transport than gas and petroleum. According to a spokesman from Interprovincial Pipe Line Limited, transporting something by pipeline is about one-quarter the cost of shipping it by rail. One future possibility is to crush the coal and mix it into a slurry with water, then send it through a pipeline. It’s a workable idea. In Arizona, the 18-inch Black Mesa pipeline moves five million tons a year over a distance of 273 miles.

Interprovincial Pipe Line Limited has studied the possibility of piping coal from Alberta to the Lakehead in a slurry of oil. At the end of the trip, the oil would be filtered from the coal. But Interprovincial says there’s a problem: about 20 percent of the oil can’t be removed from the coal. As petroleum prices go up, the savings from oil slurry pipelines go down.

Difficulties aside, as long as the present energy picture continues in uncertainty, Canadians can draw a measure of comfort in knowing there’s a good supply of coal. A new $38-million coal terminal is planned for Thunder Bay, Ont. And whether it’s fed by unit trains or pipelines, if coal can reach a busy place. There is a potential resource of about 120 billion tons of coal in western Canada. That’s the energy equivalent of a half million barrels of oil. And that means even when you count the latent hydrocarbon resources of the Arctic, Canada still has potentially twice as much energy in coal as in conventional oil and gas reserves combined.
Education, teachers have taught us, is everybody's business. They meant that the quality of our schools and what goes on inside them is too important to be left exclusively to the professionals. Teachers took the lead in involving the public more deeply in education, whether through visits to classrooms, participation on school boards, or the formation of community associations for parents and teachers.

Today, education is not just the object of public involvement, but the subject of public debate and often stern criticism. To some persons, it seems to be adrift in disorder, lacking both guidelines and goals. We are wrong, however, if we believe that this criticism is only recent. Socrates was discontented with education in his time. In our own century, one of the most important public thinkers, the late Walter Lipmann, the American philosopher/journalist, was severe in his judgment on education in North America back in 1940. "We have abolished the old curriculum," he said, "because we are afraid of it, afraid to face any longer in a modern democratic society the severe discipline and the deep, disconcerting issues . . ."

The argument will not end tomorrow. Has current education, with its emphasis on innovation and individuality, lost its course? Perhaps it will be in retrospect that we will be able to determine if education in the past two decades, found fresh wisdom, or got lost in confusion.

But out of the melée has come one emphasis everyone has welcomed, that is, the great increase in the numbers of those attending what we used to call "night school". Now we refer to what they are engaged in as "continuing education". Millions of people are back in the classroom, many of them working toward academic degrees, but most taking courses simply for enjoyment and stimulation. So, in cities and towns where school and college parking lots were once almost empty after dark, they are now often crowded. The courses people take are as varied as human interest itself: photography, accounting, boating, mechanics, language, gardening, psychology, politics, advertising.

For some of the students, the purpose of their effort is, in part, professional. They are preparing themselves for advancement in their careers, or enrichment in their retirements. Wise people. Indeed, they know that whether someone is looking at changing work or changing life, an exposure to new ideas is not just helpful, but necessary. This is so for all kinds of reasons, partly because of the massive growth of new information, partly because of the deep changes in our society, and certainly because we know that to live a full life we cannot shut the mind at age 65 or 75 or 85.

The man or woman who, in mature years, takes a course in politics or economics, may find one of the most rewarding experiences of all learning. For in such subjects, it is almost inevitable there will be a great contrast of outlook between minds. It may be between instructor and students, or among students themselves, whose philosophies on politics and economics will vary according to their conviction and experience. Listening to views differing from their own, advanced by able advocates, should be one of the exciting experiences of people's lives.

This isn't to suggest the student is merely a repository for whatever ideas are advanced by those who teach. Instead, he or she should learn in such situations to think critically, to sharpen perceptions, to reevaluate personal views. In this exercise, any student should develop a more-discriminating and organized mind, one better able to give reasons for the convictions that are within it.

Learning need not be confined to the lofter academic subjects. In fact, those who have spent their lives dealing with things theoretical might benefit most by joining some of the popular classes on house repairs or physical fitness. They provide not just the refreshment of change, but the joy and confidence that come from acquiring a skill useful in day-to-day life.

Some people may argue that all of this is fine for the big city with its resources of teaching talent and classroom space, its large community colleges, and its vast number of professional people able to teach the most specialized subjects. Yet, every area has a pool of such teachers: a carpenter who might teach basic woodworking, a banker who can instruct on household budgets, a lawyer who may offer a course in public speaking.

In fact, a community need not have a large number of experts at all before it begins certain forms of education. In one village, a woman who had been a lifelong reader organized a literary club which grew so popular it was divided into two groups, and then became three. At certain times, members read the same book, then met weekly to discuss its themes and characters. At other times, they read individually and brought their separate reports and suggestions for future reading by other members.

This latter style of adult education may seem to lack the authority and sophistication of the university night course, but it has advantages all its own. For it brings people together, not to listen to an instructor, but to each other. Thus, they advance one of the most important aspects of life, the sharing of ideas, the exchanging of viewpoints. Sometimes this will broaden their knowledge. And it will always increase their ability to appreciate another perspective, and their confidence to express their own.

Education should never end, no matter what our age or circumstances. By making an effort to improve our own minds, we contribute to ourselves and to our communities. In the end, we'll have a mind and body that is better for the experience and, if enough of us take it seriously, a society with a little more reverence for the importance of ideas.