

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Tom TRAVES : *Essays in Canadian Business History*. Toronto, McClelland and Steward, 1984, 212 pp., ISBN 0-7710-8570-2

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automatique en 1990; qui plus est, plusieurs grandes sociétés, dont IBM, General Electric, et General Motors sont maintenant engagées dans la robotique. La section traitant de l'industrie de la robotique au Japon nous paraît très complète... est-ce dû à la prédominance de ce pays dans ce domaine? L'auteur liste les fournisseurs de matériel robotique et décrit des caractéristiques particulièrement intéressantes reliées à certaines de ces sociétés; par exemple, on peut voir que les sociétés Yamaha et Honda ont, au départ, développé des robots «à l'interne» dans le but de répondre à leurs propres besoins. Cependant, le lecteur ne peut éviter d'être impressionné par le lien **management — force ouvrière** qui a occasionné au Japon un «accueil» au concept et au matériel de fabrication automatique. Aussi, le lecteur demeurera probablement songeur: même si les premiers robots ont été réalisés aux États-Unis, à l'heure actuelle, 70% des robots produits et en opération dans le monde sont de fabrication japonaise! Un autre fait remarquable se traduit autant aux États-Unis que chez plusieurs pays européens, dont la France, la République Fédérale Allemande, la Suisse, l'Angleterre et la Suède, par des «liens commerciaux», des «ententes», des «échanges», des «équipées conjointes», etc. avec... le Japon!

C'est la troisième partie de ce livre qui nous a le plus intéressé... et impressionné! En effet, l'auteur a recensé et décrit le profil de trente-trois manufacturiers de robots au Japon, en Europe de l'Ouest et aux États-Unis. On obtient un aperçu des produits offerts, des stratégies de production et de mise en marché, des équipées conjointes, etc. Se dégage alors une appréciation de la compétition qui attend le manufacturier et le fournisseur de robots à l'échelle mondiale.

Nul doute que ce livre est destiné au lecteur américain (des USA!). Cette affirmation n'est pas un reproche, car l'analyse inhérente de ce livre est très riche. En peu de temps, le lecteur est en mesure de se familiariser avec un sujet fort complexe et compliqué! Le fait que Jack Baranson ait choisi de présenter ce sujet en termes de facteurs **d'offres et de demandes** des fournisseurs,

d'une part, et des utilisateurs, d'autre part, ainsi que des éléments de l'environnement économique affectant les fournisseurs et les utilisateurs font en sorte qu'il y a de nombreuses leçons à tirer et à retenir de ce livre, autant sur le plan de la mise en marché que sur celui du management.

Même s'il faut regretter le manque d'une partie synthèse au livre qui aurait rassemblé le tout et exposé le ou les «messages» (peu importe qu'ils soient tous destinés aux lecteurs des USA!), les matières à réflexion sont suffisantes pour en féliciter l'auteur et recommander la lecture de son oeuvre.

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**Essays in Canadian Business History**, by Tom Traves (Ed.), Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1984, 212 pp., ISBN 0-7710-8570-2

This edited collection includes seven essays on various aspects of business history throughout Canada, primarily based on the late nineteenth and the twentieth century. A bibliographical essay, eight pages long, completes the book.

In the eyes of the editor, it is **first** an attempt to assert the presence of business history in a virtual vacuum: «Business history has not yet become an academic specialty in Canada. There are no journals, no academic associations, and almost no conferences dedicated to its systematic study. A decade ago, the first and last of the two Canadian collections of essays explicitly identified with the field were published, but their impact was marginal»<sup>5</sup>. But more than that, Traves proposes to produce the **right kind** of business history: not ideologically partisan or mercenary in its use of historical information for present purposes. The author concludes: «It would be naïve to assume that any important field of social enquiry, let alone one so potentially contentious as business history, could escape this impulse, but it would be

regrettable indeed if the goal of writing about businessmen came to the inextricably linked to either of the hagiographical or muckraking traditions that have prevailed in the past. Neither simple-minded social theories nor uncritical analytical practices will serve to advance our understanding or the field very far»<sup>6</sup>.

In «Industrial Relations» and even in «Administrative Sciences» programmes, this is a very neglected field. Beyond the usual Management I-type survey course on schools of management thought, future managers know very little about their predecessors. In Industrial Relations, the situation is even more desperate.

Hopefully, this little book will help furnish the sort of material necessary to a better understanding of the other side of the bargaining table — in its various ramifications, past and present. The next problem, once enough of it is available, will be getting it into courses and programmes.

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**'Remember Kirkland Lake': The History and Effects of the Kirkland Lake Gold Miners' Strike 1941-42**, by Laurel Sefton Macdowell, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983, 292 pp., ISBN 0-8020-5585-0 et ISBN 0-8020-6457-4 (pbk.)

World War Two marked a major turning point in the history of labour relations in Canada. From the beginning of the century, federal and provincial government labour policies had provided for the investigation and conciliation of labour disputes but had given little protection to unions or union members. Achieving mature expression early in the century in the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (IDIA) of 1907, these essentially voluntaristic procedures survived the labour upheavals of World War One and the depression of the thirties more or less intact. Indeed, IDIAism was briefly strengthened by

the return to power of the act's author, Mackenzie King, in the federal election of 1935. King's oft-professed love for the working man had always been tempered by a dislike a strong and aggressive labour unions. By 1935, however, the IDIA was becoming rather dated. In that same year, the New Deal government of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States passed the National Labor Relations Act, the 'Wagner' Act, which established a National Labor Relations Board, guaranteed the rights of collective bargaining, and specifically protected unions and union members against a range of 'unfair' labour practises. Canadian labour immediately began to agitate for similar legislation in Canada, but the *de facto* alliance between government and business proved stronger than in the United States: the Canadian parliamentary system can be a powerfully conservative force, containing and isolating the moderate left during serious economic crises, in the thirties as today, rather than giving it a creative role to play as it did in Roosevelt's New Deal alliance. Thus there was no 'Canadian Wagner Act' until the pressure of World War Two forced the federal government to put into effect its equivalent, P.C. 1003, the **Wartime Labour Relations Regulations**, in February 1944. This Order-In-Council was to provide the basis for most subsequent federal and provincial labour legislation in the post-war period.

The subject of this book, the Kirkland Lake strike of 1941-42, was both a symptom of the breakdown of the old order and an instrument of change. Fought for union recognition by the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, which was trying to make a breakthrough in the mines of Northern Ontario, the strike was part of a more general effort by the CIO and the Canadian Congress of Labour to establish industrial unionism on the same strong footing that it was beginning to enjoy in the U.S. The walkout, however, was doomed from the beginning, with no protective legislation, an intransigent management strongly imbued with the individualistic ethos of the self-made man, a hostile press led by the Toronto **Globe**