

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Laurel SEFTON MACDOWELL : "*Remember Kirkland Lake*" :  
*The History and Effects of the Kirkland Lake Gold Miners' Strike 1941-42*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983, 292  
pp., ISBN 0-8020-5585-0

Hugh Tuck

---

Volume 39, numéro 4, 1984

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/050092ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/050092ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

---

### Éditeur(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

### ISSN

0034-379X (imprimé)

1703-8138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

---

### Citer ce compte rendu

Tuck, H. (1984). Compte rendu de [Laurel SEFTON MACDOWELL : "*Remember Kirkland Lake*" : *The History and Effects of the Kirkland Lake Gold Miners' Strike 1941-42*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983, 292 pp., ISBN 0-8020-5585-0]. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 39(4), 803–804.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/050092ar>

---

Tous droits réservés © Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval, 1984

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

---

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

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.

**James THWAITES**

Université Laval

**'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**

**and Mail**, a wartime federal government bureaucracy largely manned by prominent businessmen who had been recruited by C.D. Howe, 'minister of everything' in the King cabinet, and an Ontario government dominated by northern mining interests. The timing of the strike was unfortunate as well. Not only was a mid-winter strike difficult for the strikers, but gold mining was becoming less profitable as the deepening U.S. involvement in the war made gold less essential for financing the Canadian war effort. There was simply no urgency in getting the men back to work, and the walkout could also provide management with an excuse for reducing staff and closing down less profitable workings while blaming the strike and the union for the subsequent adverse effects upon the economy of the region. The loss of the strike was disastrous for Mine-Mill's operations in the Kirkland Lake district. The turn-around for the union in the district only came (and then slowly) after the enactment of P.C. 1003 in 1944.

This was one of the most serious defeats ever inflicted upon a labour organization in Canada, and its impact was felt throughout the labour movement. Professor Macdowell argues, however, that it was only a defeat in the short run — that it merely marked the low-water mark of labour's fortunes during the war years. The walkout, Macdowell suggests, was the last and most serious of a series of defeats which prompted the labour movement to throw its support behind the C.C.F. in an effort to bring about effective change. The rise in the C.C.F.'s fortunes by 1943, both nationally and in Ontario, made P.C. 1003 and its provincial equivalent, the **Ontario Collective Bargaining Act**, political necessities which overrode the influence of conservative business and mining interests.

Macdowell's book is a model of what a book of this sort should be. The historical background and the wider social context are well done and provide a concise and up-to-date guide to the state of labour relations in Canada before and during World War Two. The story of the strike itself is told with insight and understanding, partly perhaps

because the author's father was a participant. This is a first-rate exercise in the 'old' labour history which owes little to the trendy and often marxist-oriented studies in working class culture which are now beginning to appear.

About the only problem is a tendency to inflate the strike's importance: while «remember Kirkland Lake» was undoubtedly a potent slogan during labour's push for P.C. 1003, the author present little evidence that the strike was absolutely crucial to this endeavor. But in terms of the study as a whole this is a minor problem. This book deserves a wide readership among all those interested in the history of modern Canadian labour relations.

**Hugh TUCK**

Memorial University of Newfoundland.

**Personnel, Managing Human Resources**, by Arthur A. Sloane, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1983, 619 pp., ISBN 0-13-658278-8

Peu de champs d'activités ont subi autant de changements au cours de la dernière décade que celui de la gestion du personnel. Et peu d'auteurs ont fait la synthèse de ces changements avec autant d'à propos qu'Arthur Sloane dans son dernier ouvrage: **Personnel, Managing Human Resources**.

Reprenant chacun des thèmes inhérents à la gestion des ressources humaines, Sloane, dans un style vivant et direct, fait état des derniers développements. Ainsi traitant de la planification, du recrutement et de la sélection, aborde-t-il aussi le thème de «l'Égalité en emploi», rappelant les lois, règlements, cas juridiques et les efforts qui sont faits aux États-Unis afin de pallier aux injustices auxquelles font face les minorités nationales.

Dans l'introduction, qui forme la première partie de l'ouvrage, Sloane rappelle les étapes qui ont marqué l'évolution de l'administration du personnel aux États-Unis. Puis il traite de l'importance de la gestion du