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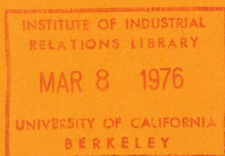


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The Changing Stance of the Professional Employee

by

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The Changing Stance of the Professional Employee

L.W.C.S. Barnes*

The power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas. Keynes, The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money

There used to be a rule of thumb approach to the academic disciplines which went something to the effect that if you could make meaningful measurements you were probably dealing with a physical science, if you could only give meaningful definitions you were probably involved with a social science and if you could not do either you were in the field of the arts. Be this as it may, I have always had a propensity to try and define things before subjecting them to too many words or to too much ink. While I realize that to some observers of the current scene this habit can do little but date me, it is one with which I have come to live and which I am unlikely to cast off at this stage. It is this habit which brought me face to face with a conundrum in the form of the topic of this paper, which was suggested to me by my good friends in the Industrial Relations Centre at Queen's.

Just what does the stance of the employed professional really mean? My first resort was to the dictionary. "Stance" is defined quite simply as "position taken for a stroke". Hardly of any immediate help. Then I noticed the derivation which is apparently from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to strike". The light began to shine. Perhaps the cypher could be cracked after all. We just had to find who were getting themselves positioned for strikes. Why — the employed professionals, of course. But

Note: The topic of this paper was the subject of lectures given by the author to several White Collar Seminars conducted by the Industrial Relations Centre of Queen's University at Kingston. In its subsequent development he was assisted by data kindly provided by a number of colleagues. In this connection the author is particularly grateful to Miss F. E. Goodspeed of the Pay Research Bureau and Mr. A. J. Agius of Canada Department of Labour. The analysis and conclusions are those of the author alone.

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who are they? Back to the dictionary again and we find the word "professional" illustrated in the phrase "professional man, especially cricketer or golfer". That, needless to say, was the Oxford dictionary. The College Edition of Webster tells us that professionals are persons who make some activity, not usually followed for gain, into their source of livelihood. Somehow or other this seemed to have potential connotations somewhat removed from any reasonable topic for this paper. The legal definitions of the word "professional" did not seem to offer much more help than the dictionaries, although they used many times more words to do it.

Reluctantly, I came to the conclusion that I should have to trust that my readers could join me in the artistic situation of knowing roughly what we mean even if we can't define it.

Nevertheless, I believe that we can all accept the pragmatic view that, whatever the public belief may be, in reality the typical professional in this year of grace, 1975, is unlikely to be a doctor in his office, a lawyer in his chambers or a parson in his pulpit. He is much more likely to be either one of twenty chemists in a quality control laboratory or one of five hundred meteorologists in a federal government department or, perhaps, one of a thousand engineers in an aero-space plant. He is no longer, in fact, a self-employed practitioner of a calling for which he has received appropriate training and license, but is an employee utilizing his education and skills and carrying his responsibilities but, nevertheless, an employee, with a salary scale, a leave schedule, an attendance register and, often a very uncomfortable feeling about his role and his future in the overall pattern of things.

The change from what might be termed the classical concept of the members of the learned professions to the modern reality of the employed professional has been in progress for more than 150 years. Ever since the early days of the Industrial Revolution, entrepreneurs have required the immediate availability of expertise in fields such as science, engineering and law and have taken practitioners of these and other professions on to their payrolls.

There were some observers even then who were explaining these developments in their own particular terms. By 1848 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, for example, had little doubt about what was happening. As they wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to in reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science into its paid wage-labourers."

At first these professional employees were, by the nature both of their responsibilities and the size of the establishments in which they worked, closely integrated with the policy-making role of the entrepreneur. Even in the formative years of what are essentially twentieth century indus-

tries, the employed professionals often started off with this special relationship. I found this to be well illustrated recently while pursuing a point in my hobby of military history. The role of some of the then very rare breed of what would now be called aeronautical engineers, employed in the factories which produced the fighter aircraft of the First World War, must have been very similar to that of some of their employed professional forbears of almost a century earlier. As time passed, and as the scale and complexity of industry grew, so did the number of employed professionals. At the same time the concept of professionalism spread into constantly widening areas of applicability. Philosophers and mathematicians described themselves as economists. The men who succeeded those largely self-taught genii such as Watt, McAdam, Stevenson and Telford, eventually came armed with diplomas certifying them to be structural engineers, mechanical engineers, chemical engineers, electrical engineers, and so on. This proliferation of professions by a process not unlike natural selection in the biological kingdom is still at work. The natural and social sciences continue to yield the new specialities which are needed both by the ever-growing size and complexity of industry on the one hand, and by the demands of the fundamental knowledge explosion itself on the other.

While a type of natural selection was producing the new professions and the new specialities at a remarkable pace, it seemed unable, until very recent years, to adjust the thinking of the employed professional to accept the fact that his role, his influence and his status had changed quite radically from those of his professional predecessors who, for centuries past, had seemed such a permanent and readily identifiable part of society.

Whether the processes of natural selection had speeded up or whether the overpowering effects of his environment had at last shaken the employed professional out of the conceptual picture of the nineteenth century into the economic and social realities of the last half of the twentieth century, would be an interesting subject to discuss. Suffice it to say that I believe that the evidence, not only in Canada but throughout the bulk of the industrialized western world, points to the development during the sixties of some quite major changes in the views and actions of many of the employed professionals. I further believe that the trend which was established is continuing to accelerate and that the attitudes, demands and viewpoints of the employed professional at the end of this present decade will bear virtually no resemblance to those of their predecessors of a generation ago. Furthermore, they will differ significantly from their own position even at the beginning of this decade.

The employed professionals and, in particular, those who graduated during the tumultuous years of the sixties, were faced with a complex set

of strains and stresses. Having spent their formative years in an atmosphere where the right to question and to challenge the accepted norms of society was regarded as being of fundamental importance, they were then faced with the reality of their true significance and influence as individual professional employees in the ever expanding national and supranational industrial complexes. It is small wonder that the effect of this traumatic shock is liable to be such that the young graduate's job satisfaction often falls to the lowest level of his working life at the end of his first year in his first job.¹

As the result of this conflict a steadily increasing demand arose for participation in the decision-making processes and, more particularly, in areas having direct social consequences. The engineer became less willing to be involved, quietly and without question, in the design of an automobile which sacrificed safety and pollution control for the attraction of increased profits. School teachers began to demand an input into traditional management preserves such as curriculum content and class size. Social workers in New York acquired a voice in the determination of their case loads. To achieve these objectives required organization and again the message was the same. Even the attitude of society itself began to force the employed professionals to demand involvement in policy making as a counter to the responsibility which society laid upon them. The parent who was dissatisfied with his child's progress blamed the teachers, not the members of the school board and the administrators. If this was to be the case, then the teachers believed that they must have an input into the system of education.

Numerous theories have been advanced to explain the changes in the attitude and approach of employed professionals which began to become unmistakably clear during the course of the last decade. I would suggest that two of the most significant causative factors which have been identified to date are those which have to do with the social and economic advances of the blue collar work force on the one hand and with the growth in the size, complexity and inhumanity of industrial units on the other.

It is a simple statistical fact that in the United States "union membership has been declining as a percentage of the labour force and of non-agricultural employment during the past decade".² Although Canadian trade union membership at the beginning of 1973 was equi-

1 Studies carried out by J. Gibson of Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, should be consulted in this connection.

2 *The Current Industrial Relations Scene in Canada, 1975* (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, April 1975).

valent to 36.3 percent of the non-agricultural paid workers of the country (compared to 26.7 percent in the United States) which was about 6 percent greater than it had been a decade earlier, this increase was due in significant part to the growth of trade unionism in the largely white-collar public service sector of the economy as opposed to the mainly blue-collar industrial sector.³ Nevertheless, in spite of this, the economic gains achieved in the traditional areas of blue-collar unionism have continued to grow.

"While no direct measures of earnings differentials for different education groups are available for Canada over the period 1931-61, the absolute average earnings differentials measured in constant dollars between professional occupations and all occupations appear to have remained constant or even narrowed slightly while the real cost of qualifying for these occupations has risen."⁴ As the sixties dawned and developed the situation became increasingly clear. The experience of the present decade has removed any lingering doubts.

Between 1962 and 1972, when the general index of wage rates in industry, as reported by the Canada Department of Labour, rose by 91.5 percent, the average increase in salary of a sample of professional employees composed of engineers, research scientists and university teachers examined by the Pay Research Bureau increased by only 79.3 percent.⁵ In the same period the average increases in samples from three other general categories were

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Technical | 84.2 percent |
| Trades and Service | 90.0 percent |
| Police and Firemen | 112.9 percent |

In respect of more specific occupations the same study indicated a 78.2 percent increase in the rate of pay of professional engineers at the working level over the ten-year period. The third of five levels of engineering technicians⁶ achieved an increase of 92.7 percent in the same

3 For further data in this regard see *The Current Industrial Relations Scene*.

4 D.A. Dodge and D.A.A. Stager, *Economic Returns to Graduate Study in Science, Engineering and Business*, Reprint Series No. 18 (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, 1972).

5 Canada, Public Service Staff Relations Board, Pay Research Bureau, *Salary Trends and Characteristics in Industrial and Other Organizations in Canada, 1967-1972* (Ottawa, 1972).

6 "Positions at this level are involved in the carrying out of standardized or prescribed operations in Testing, Data Analysis and Presentation, and Hydraulic Field Measurements requiring a limited background of knowledge of engineering methods and practices in the specialization." Pay Research Bureau, *Salary Trends*.

period. The figure for electricians was 91.9 percent, that for cleaners was 100.9 percent while firemen gained 113.1 percent. Looking at the figures from a different viewpoint the report showed that in 1967 the average annual rate of pay of the engineering technicians was 59.8 percent of that of working level graduate engineers. By 1972 the corresponding figure had become 66.1 percent.

While the absence of data on such items as overtime and bonuses in the P.R.B. study makes it impossible to draw a precise comparison of the earnings of the various occupations during the periods in question, the general pattern which it presents at the very least does nothing to deny the validity of the picture which had been developing in the minds of many employed professionals during the last fifteen years. They could not see any obvious reason to question the findings of the Economic Council of Canada that the rate of return on the costs of a high school education had risen from 16 percent in 1939 to 28 percent in 1959 while the return on a university education had remained constant at 14.5 percent.

Not only was the employed professional aware of the closing of the differentials between his own salary and those of occupations traditionally junior to his in the organizational structure, but he was also becoming aware of a compression in the rewards for post-graduate education and specialization.

The P.R.B. study⁷ provides data on the mean salary levels of engineers and scientists with various academic qualifications and years of experience during the period between 1967 and 1972, from which the following examples were extracted:

| Years from Bachelor Graduation | Bachelors and Masters | | Ph.D.'s | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | 1967 | 1972 | 1967 | 1972 |
| | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| 5 | 9235 | 12412 | 10726 | 12906 |
| 10 | 10967 | 15029 | 11896 | 14703 |
| 15 | 12321 | 16631 | 13325 | 17533 |
| 20 | 13744 | 18116 | 16853 | 20212 |

While the 1972 salary of a holder of a bachelor or master's degree, five years after bachelor graduation, was 134.4 percent of that earned by his comparable predecessor five years earlier, the figure for a Ph.D. was only

⁷ Pay Research Bureau, *Salary Trends*.

120.3 percent of that of his predecessor. Not only did the salaries of the holders of doctorates appear to be rising more slowly than those of graduates with lower degrees but, in absolute dollar terms, the Ph.D., by 1972, was unlikely to yield its holder any very meaningful advantage, at least in the first half of his, or her, career.

The economic trends which were afflicting both university graduates relative to high school graduates and the holders of higher degrees relative to their less qualified colleagues in the early years of the present decade show no signs of abating. As John Crispo put it recently, "Our whole hierarchy system is breaking down. The assumption that a rough relationship existed between education and salaries is no longer accepted and we have nothing to put in its place."⁸

No longer can the flow of young graduates be absorbed, in significant part at least, by "the rapid expansion of demand for such graduates in the public sector and especially for secondary school and university teachers. Demand from this source will not expand nearly as rapidly in the 1970's."⁹ Hence, as Dodge and Stager conclude, "we expect some fall in the absolute earnings differential between university and high school graduates".¹⁰ The same investigators similarly conclude that "since the rate of increase in the supply of graduates with higher degrees in the 1970's will be even more rapid than that of graduates with first degrees only, and since a much larger fraction of those with higher degrees are employed in the education sector, it seems certain that there will be some downward pressure on the earnings differential between those holding bachelors and higher degrees during the 1970's". To those who would suggest that, clearly established as these trends now appear to be, they may eventually prove to have been relatively short-term phenomena, the employed professional is likely to reply in terms which bring to mind the rejoinder, which had its origin with Lord Keynes, that in the long run we tend to be dead.

The unorganized professional worker, like his other white-collar associates, found that not only was his relative economic status being undermined by the militant upthrust of organized labour, but that his views on the development of society in general, and of the economy in particular, were receiving remarkably little attention in the halls of government compared to the consideration which was given to the opinions of both 'big labour' and 'big business'. Much as he may have felt himself to be an individualist the employed professional began, slowly and often

⁸ Quoted in the *Ottawa Journal*, March 15, 1975.

⁹ Dodge and Stager, *Economic Returns*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

reluctantly, to realize that he too must organize, if only in self preservation. This is a subject to which we must return a little later.

The change in the role and relative status of the employed professionals has given rise not only to concern about their economic position in society at large but also, in many cases, to a growing sense of frustration and dissatisfaction with their actual jobs. Many theories have been developed in an endeavour to determine the basic causes of this general decline in job satisfaction. One of the best known is that due to Professor Frederick Herzberg and his followers. In essence, and with the inevitable risks associated with condensation, Herzberg's analysis hinges on the hypothesis that the factors involved in providing job satisfaction are separate and distinct from the factors which lead to job dissatisfaction. The opposite of job satisfaction is *not* job dissatisfaction but, rather, *no* job satisfaction and, similarly, the opposite of job dissatisfaction is *no* job dissatisfaction. From this basis Herzberg classified the various factors, the presence of which led to job satisfaction, as "Motivator factors" while those which, if lacking, could lead to job dissatisfaction he termed "Hygiene factors". This approach was applied to the analysis of replies from some 200 professional engineers and accountants in the United States, each of whom had been asked to describe the situations which led to the peak of their job satisfaction and to their period of greatest dissatisfaction respectively. The results were then plotted and produced what has since become a very well-known graph (Figure 1).

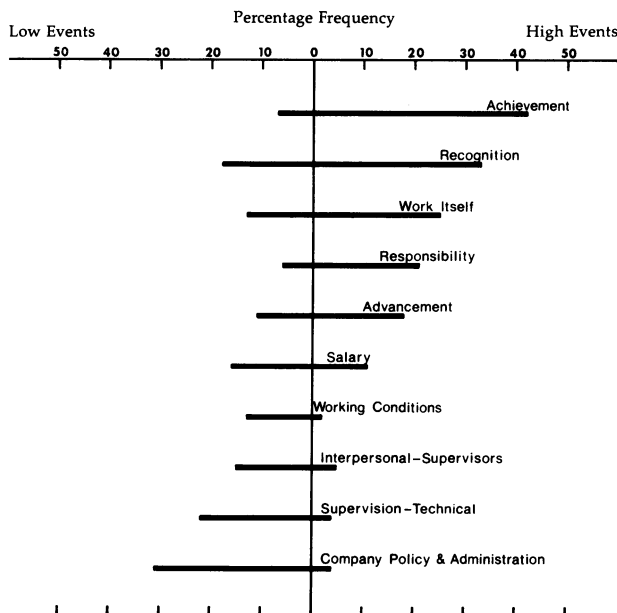
Herzberg's original work was published in 1958 and some ten years later some similar experiments were carried out in Canada. It is of interest to compare the Canadian findings with the original American results. In terms of the number of observations by far the most important was that carried out by Cliff Reid between 1968 and 1970 with the aid of 1,256 participants, the majority of whom were junior, middle and senior management and professional employees of Canadian National Railways (Figure 2).

The two other tests, while based on much smaller samples, are of interest in that the subjects in both cases provided reasonably representative cross sections of the professional classes of the Federal Public Service, ranging from actuaries to engineers and from economists to nurses (Figures 3 and 4).

It would be a rather rash observer who would draw any very precise conclusions from this limited amount of data but there are at least some apparent similarities. The critical importance of the Motivators, and particularly of Achievement, Recognition and the Work Itself is obvious as is the broad correlation between the results which Herzberg reported in the late fifties and the Canadian findings of a decade later. Amongst the Hygiene factors it is perhaps worth noting the significance of Com-

Figure 1

**Comparison of Low and High Events
Engineers and Accountants, United States***

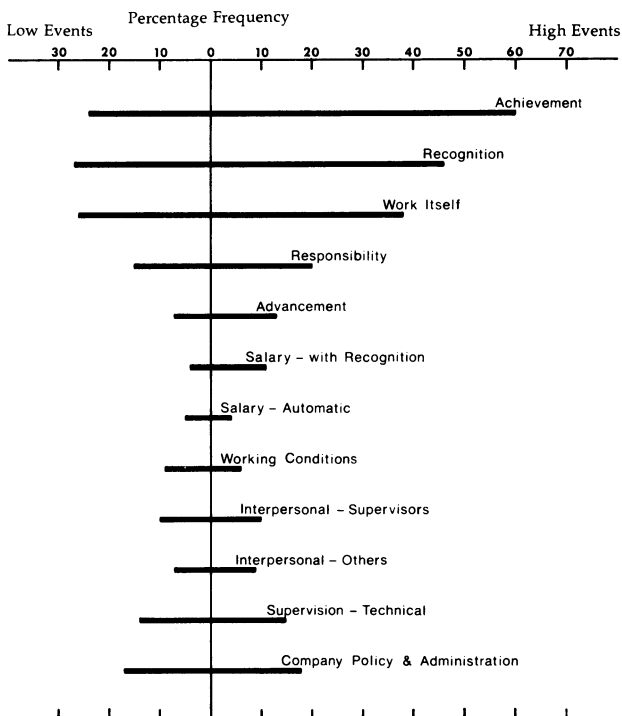


Source: Frederick Herzberg, *The Motivation to Work* (New York: Wiley, 1958).

* Sample = 200 engineers and accountants.

Figure 2

**Comparison of Low and High Events
CNR Seminar Participants, 1968-1970***

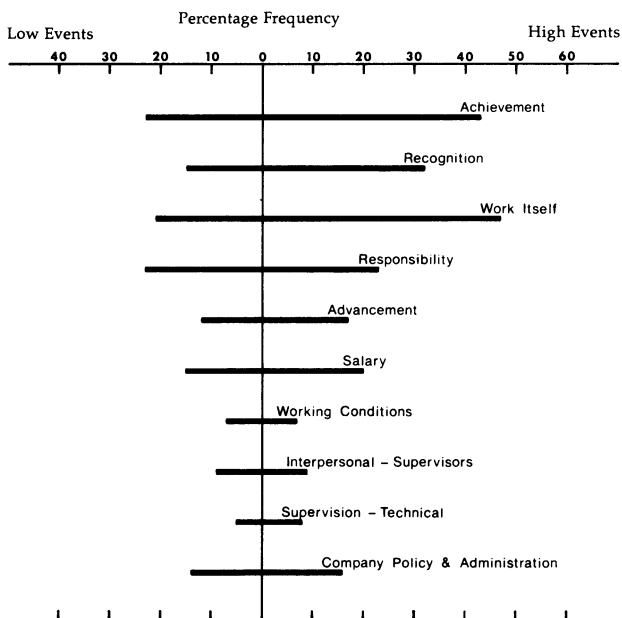


Note: Testing by Cliff Reid.

* Sample = 1256 senior, middle and junior management, blue and white collar workers, professional and technical workers mainly from CNR participating in 41 seminars held between November 1968 and November 1970.

Figure 3

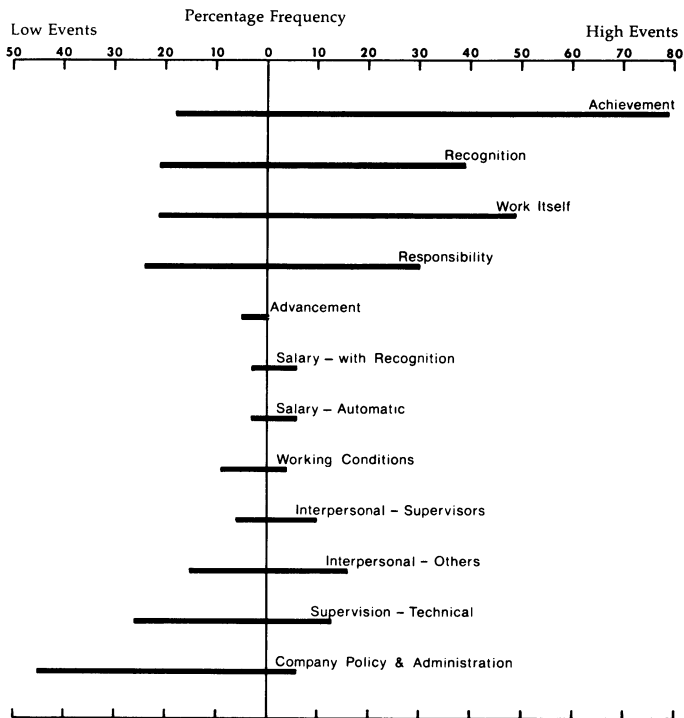
**Comparison of Low and High Events
Professional Employees of the Public Service of Canada, 1969***



Note: Testing by George Lach, February 1969.

* Sample = 48 professional employees of the Public Service of Canada.

Figure 4
Comparison of Low and High Events
Professional Employees of the Public Service of Canada, 1971*



Note: Testing by Cliff Reid, May 1971.

* Sample = 34 professional employees of the Public Service of Canada.

pany Policy and Administration. In this connection the results of the two samples drawn from the professional ranks of the Federal Public Service are interesting. There are far too few observations to affirm with any degree of certainty that the apparently increasing disenchantment with the employer's policies and administrative practices in the period between February 1969 and March 1971 is significant. It can be said that the results in no way contradict the empirical assessment of the trend of employee morale which this observer, at least, made at the time.

It has been suggested that there is a time lag in the development of the reactions and responses of Canadian professionals to their employment situations when compared to that of their counterparts in the United States and Britain. Herzberg's 1958 findings, while providing a reasonable match for the Canadian situation of a decade later, may not provide such an accurate picture of the American situation in more recent years. For example, a study carried out towards the end of the sixties found that status and promotion to a better job were more effective incentives for Canadian managers than they were for Americans in similar positions for whom salary then seemed to be the best motivator.¹¹ In 1971 a very detailed study was carried out of the attitudes and motivations of the 280 white-collar (including professional) staff of Duckham's a small British oil company. Of the 48 employees who had already joined a union "specific gain by way of pay and conditions was an important conscious reason" although more than half of them had indicated a desire for more responsible jobs and almost as many would have liked more demanding work. Of those who said that they might eventually join a union "pay appeared to dominate all other images."¹² Could it be that the American and British base lines are changing? Perhaps the pressures of inflation, of the over-supply and under-employment of graduates and of the closing income differentials are producing a realignment of the professional's expectations and objectives? If so, can Canada be far behind?

Perhaps we should return at this point to give some consideration to the practical manifestations of the steadily growing realization by the employed professionals that if they are to have any chance of preserving their economic and social standards they must organize. The evidence in this regard is presently scattered and, in parts at least, contradictory. In the first place, what are the catalysts which set off the actual organization process? In recent years observers have identified a number of situations each of which can be illustrated by specific examples. In one case it might

11 A.E. Carlisle, *Cultures in Collision* (University of Michigan, 1967).

12 This study was carried out by Barry Irving and Linden Hilgendorf of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and was discussed at length in the London *Times* in January 1972 under headlines such as "Towards Executive Unions".

be the onset of unemployment in an area of previously high employment and prosperity, as illustrated by the organization of engineers and scientists in the aerospace industry in California. In the Duckham Oil study, to which reference has already been made, the process of unionization was found to have been triggered by the take-over of the small company, two years earlier, by the multi-national giant, British Petroleum, which precipitated a 'morale' crisis amongst the staff. As one reviewer saw it, the whole theme of the report was "disturbance as an impetus to union recruitment".¹³

Another form of catalyst may be the coincidence in time of the approach of a union organization drive with the existence of a rumbling but not catastrophic discontent with employer practices. This would seem to be a pattern which is often applicable to the unionization of scientific and professional employees in Britain. Yet again the catalyst may be of relatively minor importance and organization may come because the time is ripe, the facilities are available and the physical grouping of like-minded employees makes organization relatively easy. This explanation would fit the case of some professions in the Federal Public Service and is also clearly illustrated by the organization of school teachers during recent years. A school, staffed largely by members of the same profession working in close proximity to one another is, of course, an ideal unit for organization as are, for example, hospitals and certain government research agencies.

Similarly the leadership in initial organization differs with the prevailing situation. As an example, the evidence reported in the case of the California aerospace industry seems to indicate that the initiative received a good deal of support from relatively senior professionals who were suddenly faced with the breakdown of what they considered to be a well established relationship with their employer. In other situations the leadership is coming from relatively recent graduates and, yet again, some of the most militant support for out and out unionism in some of the major British industries is coming from well-established, working level professionals. Once a viable organizational presence has become apparent in a workplace or unit, group conformity usually becomes the principal recruiting force. At Duckham's "six out of ten union members said that they had got the idea of joining from other people at work".¹⁴ All in all, the data are such that only the broadest and hence the most valueless generalizations seem to be possible. The pot is coming to the boil and at this stage it is almost a matter of random chance as to where each individual bubble will rise to the surface and burst.

13 Innis Macbeath in the *London Times*, January 1972.

14 *Ibid.*

To add yet further confusion to the picture it is far from clear what the eventual form of the typical organization which will encompass the employed professionals will look like, if, in fact, there will ever be a typical organization. The bulk of the evidence to date seems to indicate that professionals are organizing themselves outside the existing framework of the blue-collar unions, but not necessarily in bodies limited entirely or even mainly to professional personnel. On the other hand, many of the wealthy and influential labour unions are devoting a great deal of time and effort to the white-collar area in general. In the United States, for instance, the Teamsters are mounting large scale endeavours aimed at the organization of some of the larger and presumably unorganized white-collar groups in some of the biggest firms in the country. Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicate that "the number of white-collar union members in the United States increased by some 50 percent over the 1962-72 period, raising their share of total union membership from 13.0 percent to 16.5 percent. Of the 2.9 million white-collar union members for whom an occupational class could be determined, 1.1 million were employed in professional and technical jobs."¹⁵ Firm data on the Canadian white-collar situation are rare and even rarer in the professional segment. In some cases factors such as the professional's familiarity with a well-established union in the plant or in other organized sections of the workplace seems to have been significant. Chemists in the steel industry have joined the Steelworkers and Social Workers in hospitals, in which the Canadian Union of Public Employees has been certified on behalf of other employees, have joined CUPE. "A hundred supervisory workers at the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority have been organized by the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers."¹⁶ In contrast, the 160 Social Workers and related professional staff of the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, after a careful review of alternatives ranging from CUPE to an organization limited entirely to Social Workers in similar employment, recently gave overwhelming support to the certification of the Civil Service Association of Ontario as their bargaining agent. Yet again, "the first major certification of university faculty in English speaking Canada"¹⁷ was won by the University of Manitoba Faculty Association. In the Federal Public Service certification of professional groups followed largely along the lines of traditional staff association memberships. The Professional Institute of the Public Service was certified for the vast majority of the groups but there were exceptions. The auditors, in a close contest, chose

15 *The Current Industrial Relations Scene*.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*

the Public Service Alliance. A factor in this particular decision might well have been a group insurance plan offered by the Alliance which was considered to be attractive to the older members of the group. Yet again, one or two groups, such as the Foreign Service Officers, decided to establish their own limited membership bargaining organizations.

In Britain, the investigators from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations who studied employee attitudes at Duckhams in 1971 had, the year previously, examined the situation in a very much larger organization, Imperial Chemical Industries, which has a white-collar and professional work force approaching fifty thousand strong. Their report sought to analyze the reaction of the white-collar employees of ICI both to organization in general and to specific types of organization. Amongst the possibilities which were considered were the continuation of an existing staff committee system, the development of a more formal staff association and the introduction of established white-collar unions. The analysis gave no clear indication beyond the fact that the existing staff committee system was universally regarded as quite inadequate. Thirty-five percent of the respondents thought that the answer might be found in a revamped and improved staff committee system. Twenty-nine percent were for a staff association and twenty-four percent were for full union negotiating rights. There were significant variations in response by grades within the hierarchy and it is interesting to note that employees at the salary levels encompassing works supervisors, scientists and engineering and technical grades all put a union as first preference and a staff association as second, whereas male clerical workers gave first choice to a staff association and second choice to a union. Women in all categories put staff committees first and unions third. To quote the review of the report in the *London Times*, "the researchers could find no independent criteria except grade and sex to mark homogeneous subgroups of opinion. There was absolutely no correlation with age and certainly no indication of radical youth — in fact the trade union alternative was most popular amongst those aged 40 to 49."

If trend there is anywhere in this broad mass of often conflicting data, it would seem that the movement has been towards organization through associations or unions whose membership is restricted to employees of broadly comparable white-collar interests which are not always associated in a formal way with the bulk of the organized labour movement. Experience in Canadian industry, limited as it is outside the Province of Quebec, would seem to be in conformity with this trend. This, it should be emphasized, is a very broad generalization and while I believe that, for the next few years at least, the employed professionals will continue to favour the relatively limited membership type of organization, I should be very surprised if we do not see a steadily closer

association developing between these professional or white-collar unions and their blue-collar counterparts, at least in the field of economic and perhaps of political action.

The very use of the words "professional unions" would probably cause a tremor of concern in some of the members of these organizations even today. It is obvious that, to use the modern jargon, some professionals still have a "hang up" about the word "union". This is, in part at least, a reaction from the traumatic experience through which the thinking of the professional has developed during the last decade or so and through which it is still developing. I suggest that ten years hence there will be far less reluctance to recognize things for what they are without the need for an implied apology.

While the professional's present tendency to shun the word "union" and to organize him or her self within a grouping aside from the main stream of organized labour may be based, in part, on some Pavlovian reaction arising from the folk-lore of an earlier era, part of the explanation lies in the recognition of some fairly fundamental differences in at least their earlier objectives. It might perhaps be opportune to look briefly at these differences and at the effects which they have had on the bargaining demands of employed professionals. Given the hypothesis that the classical blue-collar trade unionist looks upon the job as inviolable in itself and insists that his pay be maximized as the price of working under conditions which are entirely under the control of agents of the employer, both as to nature and to duration, it is hardly surprising that the collective agreements which are negotiated on his behalf tend to give great weight to provisions designed to guard him against arbitrary actions on the part of management and to some of the more obvious of Herzberg's hygiene factors and predominantly, of course, to that of pay. References to motivator factors are the exception rather than the rule.

Michael Barkway saw the same thing in another light in an article in the *Financial Times*, when he wrote: "If the chance for satisfaction, responsibility and self-fulfillment on the job is to be confined to a few managers while everybody else has to do something he hates then, in my view, there is a lot to be said for paying top salaries to the drones as necessary compensation and very little to the managers who already have their reward."

Perhaps the original difference in viewpoint of the professional sprang from his demand for the recognition of what have been referred to as soul issues, such as job satisfaction and social responsibility. In other words, factors not unrelated to Herzberg's motivators. Of course the hygiene factors always figured in every professional's objectives. Of course he required a salary which would reflect his contribution towards the economic progress of the country, but he fought with equal tenacity for

objectives which were not always readily understood by his fellow-workers in the blue-collar areas. In the late sixties in the city of Newark, N.J. where twenty-five percent of the population were living on welfare and where it was obvious that salary increases were likely to be of negligible proportions, there was a teachers' strike which lasted for nearly four months and which cost the average teacher \$2,000, where major items in dispute were matters such as the teachers' demands for an input into curriculum development and class structuring. Five years ago an officer of one of the largest teachers' organizations in the United Kingdom told me that one of the most ardently supported cases in which his members had recently been involved, hinged on opposition to the decision of a school board to split a particular school into two sections which would have been divided by a busy highway. The teachers successfully fought this management decision on the grounds of the risks to which the children would be exposed in repeated crossings of the highway and of the obvious implications in terms of their professional responsibility for the children in their care.

In other words the employed professional was becoming increasingly less willing to accept the traditional concept of management rights. Unless there is some rapid and radical rethinking on the part of employers in this area, I foresee not the possibility but the strong probability of growing conflict on this matter in the course of the next few years. But, on the other hand, I also foresee a growing concern by professionals about the achievement of the objectives for which the blue-collar unions have always striven. As I suggested earlier in this paper, the base line appears to be moving. It might be expected to move significantly further during the remainder of this decade.

One of the benefits traditionally associated with a classical professional occupation was that of reasonable security. This security may well have been little more than the polite penury of a country parsonage but there was an almost unquestioned concept of certainty and reliability about it. To a large extent this advantage continued to be enjoyed by the earlier generations of employed professionals. While not entirely immune to the ravages of the business cycle they could confidently assume that the risk of unemployment to which they would be exposed during their various careers would be at least minimal, and certainly incomparably less than that which constantly threatened the vast majority of the working population of their time.

The employed professionals of today, by and large, still enjoy significantly more security than do members of virtually any other sector of the work force but, in many cases, they are becoming increasingly aware that this inner pillar of their life style is no longer as reliable as they once believed it to be.

Conclusive data which would justify these deep seated fears are difficult to obtain, particularly in the Canadian context, but such information as we have pertaining to the situation in the United States would seem to show some grounds for this concern. Compared to the recession of the fifties the current unemployment rate amongst blue-collar workers in the United States is rather less than might have been anticipated on the basis of the economic indicators. On the other hand, unemployment amongst professionals is significantly greater than it was in the fifties. The ratios are, of course, still very favourable to the professionals but the fact seems to be that twenty years ago the rate of unemployment amongst blue-collar workers was some five times greater than that amongst professionals, while today, the ratio is probably in the order of three to one.

While the fears of the professionals may still be greater than the immediate situation justifies they see the writing on the wall and the trend of the graphs. No longer is the individual professional a small, scarce and essential component of economic life, almost as indispensable in recession as in boom. His personal security of employment might well be expected to wane as, gradually, he ceases to be something akin to an indivisible capital asset without which his employer would find it difficult to operate on any significant scale and becomes, instead, an indistinguishable part of an increasingly large fraction of the work force, the total of which must be expected to bear a meaningful relationship to the prevailing well-being of the economy.

In 1901 the entire white-collar group accounted for 15.2 percent of the Canadian labour force, with the professional segment accounting for a mere 4.6 percent. By 1960 the corresponding figures were 39.5 and 9.7 percent respectively.¹⁸ Between 1961 and 1972, while the annual rate of growth for white-collar occupations was 4.4 percent, that of the professional and technical segment was 6.4 percent. This may be compared to the annual growth rate of 1.9 percent for all other occupations.¹⁹

In the manufacturing sector of the economy the trends were even more dramatically illustrated. White-collar occupations, which had accounted for 20 percent of the labour force in 1951, had increased to 28 percent by 1971. But the rate of growth of the professional and related groups was even greater. Whereas in 1951 they accounted for 31 percent of the

18 Data from W. Donald Wood, *Occupational Trends and Their Implications*, Reprint Series No. 1 (reprint of a presentation to the Special Committee of the Senate on Manpower and Employment, March 1961) (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, 1961).

19 See *The Current Industrial Relations Scene in Canada, 1974* (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, April 1974).

white-collar employment in manufacturing industries, by 1961 they accounted for 53 percent of the significantly larger total.²⁰

On the supply side, not only has the number of graduates continued to grow, but the participation of university trained personnel in the work force has also increased significantly in recent years (see Table 1). No longer is the professional automatically a rare resource for which there is a continuing demand, with all the economic strengths and advantages which that situation can normally be expected to provide. Not only are many professionals forced to take jobs which yield them far less personal satisfaction than they had anticipated, but they are jobs which, from the employer's viewpoint, are becoming less significant in the overall operation. When the economic crunch comes they are jobs which are increasingly expendable. The Technical Service Council reported that job opportunities for professionals and executives declined by 11 percent in the fourth quarter of 1974 and that job openings were down slightly from their 1973 level, a situation which was explained, in part, by "the high incidence of lay-off's, particularly in the manufacturing sector".²¹ As for new graduates, the Council indicated that "opportunities exist for degree holders in engineering, commerce and business administration. Openings remain limited for graduates in general arts and natural sciences and for Ph.D. graduates in engineering and science." The Council found that employers "are turning away from the underemployment phenomenon which was prevalent several years ago".²² The outlook over the next ten years or so was found to be even more depressing. "Engineering graduates will continue to enjoy a seller's market in Canada until 1978. But after that the demand is expected to fall off sharply. By 1984 there will likely be about 3,300 engineering graduates fighting for only 1,500 job openings." Chemists will be even worse off with "the supply of new bachelors in chemistry expected to be more than double the demand for the next 10 years". Even future business and commerce graduates are foreseen as facing "a sharp decrease in demand . . . after 1978 as the population growth declines".²³

The outcome is hardly surprising. We are now seeing professionals becoming militantly concerned with job security in its various manifestations. In so doing they are forging yet another common link with the remainder of the labour force. Under a headline which read "Campus

20 *Ibid.*

21 Quoted in *The Current industrial Relations Scene in Canada, 1975.*

22 *Ibid.*

23 These findings of a Technical Services Council study were reported in the *Financial Post*, September 6, 1975.

Table 1

**Labour Force Characteristics by Level of Education
Percent distribution**

| Year | Population (14 years and over) | | Labour Force (14 years and over) | | Participation Rates | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| | Primary | Secondary | Primary | Secondary | Primary | Secondary | | | |
| 1960 | 47.7 | 45.4 | 6.9 | 45.3 | 46.2 | 8.5 | 50.4 | 54.1 | 66.0 |
| 1973 | 27.0 | 52.0 | 21.0 | 20.3 | 52.6 | 27.1 | 45.1 | 60.3 | 77.0 |

Source: *The Current Industrial Relations Scene in Canada, 1975* (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, 1975).

militants: this time faculty" the *Financial Post* recently reported that "there is a new militancy stirring in Canadian university faculties, a mood that threatens to further disrupt academic life as those in less lofty positions push for more money and, above all, job security As the rate of student enrollment declines and governments tighten the purse strings on university spending, the professors are fighting to gain job security and to keep pace with inflation."²⁴ This is certainly a significant change in mood from that which prevailed only a few years ago when, as Desmond Morton recalled, "even faculty radicals regarded unions as part of a quaint working class sub-culture".²⁵ Now, with tenure "coming under attack by witch-hunting student militants and economy-minded administrators . . . the union style job security and the protection of a seniority clause may be the only alternative".²⁶

The salary demands which various groups of organized professionals have been putting forward during the last twelve months, and in support of which they are prepared to strike, have shown that, in the matter of economic objectives, there is now but little difference between the professionals and the blue-collar sector. The posters carried by the Ottawa high school teachers as they walked the picket lines during their prolonged strike earlier this year demanded "Professional pay for professional teachers". While the passer-by may perhaps have pondered the intended significance of the double use of the adjective in this particular context he was probably aware that, in essence, the teachers had pay objectives that had no difficulty in holding their own in the same league as the less convoluted and more forthright demands of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

If the present day professional's expectations from the bargaining process are becoming increasingly indistinguishable from those of the rest of the work force so, too, are their techniques of bargaining. The series of rotating strikes by federally employed nurses earlier this year differed but little from that which had been carried out a few months previously by the Trades and Labour Group of the Public Service. The threatened refusal of faculty members of the University of Prince Edward Island to submit their students' final marks just shortly before Convocation Day was doubtless designed to have exactly the same effect on the progress of bargaining as was the refusal of the snow-plough operators at Toronto and Montreal airports to report for work following the first big

24 *Financial Post*, May 24, 1975.

25 Desmond Morton (Erindale College, University of Toronto), "Faculty Unionism: Next Trauma for the Universities?", *Civil Service Review* 48 (June 1975).

26 *Ibid.*

storm of the season. Desmond Morton thinks that "the day of tea-and-sympathy faculty associations — invariably ignored when salaries and workloads are determined — may be over".²⁷ One might perhaps wonder whether there is much room for doubt in this regard.

There has been a slow but steady trend on the part of professional bargaining units in the Federal Public Service to change from binding arbitration to conciliation and strike as their route for the ultimate settlement of disputes with their employer. Groups, many of whose members as recently as 1967, had grave reservations about what they saw as the dubiously professional implications of their staff association even applying for certification as a bargaining agent under the recently proclaimed Public Service Staff Relations Act, have now demanded the possible confrontation of the strike in lieu of the reasoned arguments of the arbitration alternative. The fact that 330 engineers and scientists employed by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited were manning picket lines (and responding with all the indignation and high dudgeon of seasoned trade unionists to a threatened lock-out by the Crown Corporation) is now a sufficiently common type of story for the news media to downgrade its presentation to the level of minor interest. Well might one speculate on the coverage which such an event would have received even five years ago. Today, the differences in both the priority of objectives and the techniques of industrial relations between organized professionals and their fellow workers in the blue-collar sector are so much smaller than they were ten years ago that a simple exercise in extrapolation alone might lead one to doubt whether they will be of any significance at all ten years hence.

The growing involvement of government at all levels in everyday life, coupled with an increasing concern about the effectiveness with which their interests are being represented, is making today's employed professionals more politically conscious than were their predecessors of a generation ago.

There are some who see the outcome of this frustration with the lack of opportunity for involvement and for personal satisfaction and development as politically pre-ordained. They have no doubt about the inevitability of all "paid wage-labourers", irrespective of their traditional origins, joining the ranks of the far political left. There is no lack of evidence to support this thesis. On the other hand there are observers of the current scene who see the risk of a totally different outcome. Professor Albert Blum,²⁸ for example, has redrawn our attention to the con-

²⁷ Morton, "Faculty Unionism".

²⁸ School of Industrial Relations, Michigan State University.

tribution which the crash of the dreams of the middle classes in Italy and Germany during the inter-war years made to the rise of fascism in those countries. It is perhaps timely that we should again be reminded of the fact that it was "the lower middle class which had received a secondary and even a university education without being given any corresponding outlet for its trained abilities" which did so much to carry Hitler and Mussolini to power. At very least we should remember the warning which Arnold Toynbee gave us in the thirties of "the demonic driving force" which "was generated out of this intellectual proletariat's exasperation at finding that its painful efforts at self-improvement were not sufficient in themselves to save it from being crushed between the upper and nether millstones of Organized Capital and Organized Labour".²⁹

To those who would say that the prospect of significant numbers of Canadian professionals ever donning the coloured shirts of the political extremes is inconceivable, it might be well to recall that it would have been almost equally inconceivable twenty years ago to imagine professionals engaging in industrial action of a type which would result in medical personnel walking out of hospitals, scientists barring access to government research establishments and university professors withholding their students' final marks. Suffice to suggest that it behoves all those of us who value our traditional democratic system, whether we be involved in management, in the unions, in government or in the academic world, to pay due heed to these lessons of history lest we eventually find ourselves in the sad position of having to relearn them in our own country.

There can be but little doubt about the fact that the considerable wind of change which began to blow through the ranks of the employed professionals during the sixties is still blowing. The object of this paper has been to draw attention to some at least of the straws which lead me to believe that that wind might well be both increasing in force and changing direction. The evidence is still insufficient to provide the basis for any scientific forecast of its eventual strength and bearing, but this does not mean that we should neglect such indications as there are. I recall an old fisherman's adage about always trying to read what you can of tomorrow's weather in this morning's ripples. So it should be with industrial relations.

29 The two quotations are from Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, abridgement of Volumes I-VI by D.C. Somervell (Oxford University Press, 1946). The relevant volume of Toynbee's original work was published in 1939.