

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Alton W.J. CRAIG : *The System of Industrial Relations in Canada (2nd ed.)*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1986, 510 pp., ISBN 0-13-881194-6

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RECENSIONS BOOK REVIEWS

The System of Industrial Relations in Canada, Second Edition, by Alton W.J. Craig, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1986, 510 pp., ISBN 0-13-881194-6

Alton Craig has done it again! In the second edition of **The System of Industrial Relations in Canada** he has produced an excellent primer for the beginning Industrial Relations student. The book may be used at both the graduate and at the undergraduate levels.

The text is a comprehensive introduction to concepts and facts crucial to understanding the Canadian scene. The book is very instructor friendly. The eleven chapters deal with all the topics on which most introductory courses focus: the framework and environment of the Canadian system; the theory and history of the labour movement; labour legislation; the negotiating process; third-party intervention; the grievance procedure; public sector bargaining; and the outputs of the Industrial Relations system.

Each chapter contains useful discussion questions as well as detailed references. The Instructor's Manual provides short and long sample exam questions. The Manual also gives helpful hints for classroom use of the bargaining simulation and case studies provided in the books' Appendices. The cases themselves are complex enough to challenge students yet brief enough to be effective in class discussion.

From a substantive viewpoint there are several sections of the book that are excellent. The «Postscript» provides a good overview of Canadian Industrial Relations; perhaps students should be encouraged to read this chapter first. The section on mediation is also outstanding for its conceptual clarity and readability.

Despite these positive aspects there is still much room for improvement — improvement that would make a third edition perhaps **THE** definitive introductory work on Canadian labour-management relations. The shortcomings of the book are highlighted in several stylistic and substantive areas.

Stylistically the text could be made more student friendly. For example, although Chapter 5, «The Structure and Functions of the Canadian Labour Movement» is generally a scholarly and well documented section I fear that, based on students' comments concerning the first edition, it will be regarded as a bit too dry. It is difficult to keep beginning Industrial Relations students interested in trade union structure. For many students the subject seems to be far removed from the drama of collective bargaining. In order to raise the level of interest in the topic many instructors refer to lots of current events during classroom discussions. It is also imperative that contemporary events play a more important role in the text.

Perhaps the third edition might incorporate current events «windows» — brief blurbs or boxes on how certain happenings relate to key concepts. For example, inclusion of a brief newspaper article on inter-union strife in the construction industry might help students to better understand the concept of exclusive jurisdiction.

Another way the text could be made more student friendly is by revision of Chapter 6, «Legislation Governing Industrial Relations in the Private Sector». This is a comprehensive

and well documented section. Much of the chapter, however makes for dry reading — largely because of the historical approach. The material would benefit by a continuous tie-in with generic concepts such as freedom of association. Also, although Craig goes to great lengths to incorporate descriptions of legislation from across Canada I think that this kind of detailed material might be more appropriate as an appendix. Instructors might feel more comfortable focusing on the legislation of a specific jurisdiction. Providing the details of each piece of provincial or federal legislation in an appendix as opposed to in the text would avoid bogging down the students.

Substantively there are several things that might be done to improve the work. Chapter 3, «Theories of the Labour Movement» provides excellent summaries of the ideas of major thinkers in Industrial Relations. The theorists' ideas, however, could be made more relevant to contemporary problems. For example, it would be useful to relate Commons' market thesis to the challenge posed to trade unions by the multinational corporations. Also, Hoxie's typology can be applied to the different kinds of unions found in today's labour movement.

Another substantive improvement would involve Chapter 4, «The History and Philosophy of the Canadian Labour Movement». My experience and that of my colleagues has been that students tend to shy away from a straight historical approach to this topic. The use of a conceptual framework, such as that developed by Commons and other institutional economists might help make the chapter more cohesive and interesting to students.

There are also several substantive omissions which are unusual in a work as scholarly as this. Thus despite a description of the One Big Union no reference is made to the Winnipeg General Strike. Also, the attention given to the Landrum-Griffin Act should be matched by a fuller discussion of CALURA — especially given recent changes made to that legislation. Chapter 11, «The Outputs of the Canadian Industrial Relations System» suffers from the absence of a comprehensive conceptual framework. It would have been useful, when describing various kinds of contract clauses, to relate the possibility of achieving each clause to the relative bargaining power of labour and management. For example, why are certain unions able to negotiate a «closed shop» while others are not?

It is certainly easier to criticize a major work than to write one. The comments I have made are designed to help the reader of what is, on the whole, a solid and excellent book. The improvements suggested are almost cosmetic when viewed in light of what the book accomplishes. This reviewer hopes to see many more editions of **The System of Industrial Relations in Canada**.

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Canada Labour Relations Board — Policies and Procedures, par C.H. Foisy, D.E. Lavery et L. Martineau, Toronto, Butterworths, 1986, 553 pp., ISBN 0-409-81975-1

Il s'agit d'un exposé détaillé de l'intervention du Conseil canadien des relations du travail relativement aux Parties IV et V du **Code canadien du travail**, lesquelles portent respectivement sur l'hygiène et la sécurité professionnelles et, surtout, sur les rapports collectifs du travail. On y fait état et analyse les plus pertinentes des quelque cinq cent décisions rendues par l'important organisme fédéral en date du 6 mars 1985. En cela, l'ouvrage s'apparente à celui de James E.