

The Canadian Journey

Rivers of Memory,
River of Dreams





The Seagram Company Ltd.

1430 PEEL STREET, MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA H3A 1S9

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Shortly after the outbreak of World War II, a time of cataclysmic tension in our nation and the world, the late Samuel Bronfman on behalf of Seagram commissioned Stephen Leacock to write the reflective history, *Canada, The Foundations of its Future*.

In the introduction to that book, my father wrote: "Of all the natural resources of Canada, the greatest is its people." That premise is as valid now as it was then. Nonetheless, when we examine Canada today, we find a perplexing contrast. We are as blessed with freedom and material well-being as any nation on earth. But realistically, new — and often difficult — relationships have emerged in our social and political order. Their intensity has caused us all to reflect on two vital subjects: who are we and where are we going?

As a concerned corporate citizen, Seagram asked an outstanding group of journalists and photographers to address these questions in terms of our strengths, our weaknesses and our opportunities. Leading this team were, as editorial director, John M. Scott, former editor of *Time* Canada and now that magazine's Canadian correspondent, on leave of absence for this project; and Alan Grossman, a writer of wide journalistic experience here and abroad.

The quality of this work has prompted us to give it wide distribution in English and in French through a variety of Canadian magazines and by mail in both Canada and the United States. We hope that it will bring new insights to those who read and discuss it.

Our country is, after all, one of great accomplishment. For years Canada has been regarded throughout the world as a bright star in the galaxy of nations. Ours is a unique opportunity to reach together for greatness — and to achieve it. With compassionate hearts and open minds, let us dare to explore unrealized horizons as we pursue The Canadian Journey.

Charles R. Bronfman

March 1980.

The Canadian Journey

Rivers of Memory,
River of Dreams

Bangkok. A Rockefeller Foundation conference on economic and cultural affairs in the Pacific. A Canadian Senator has just spoken and asks for questions. "The essence of the questioning," British Columbia's Jack Austin reports later to the Senate, "was 'what's happening to Canada? We do not understand how such a country can be doing itself so much damage. Why are so many Canadians so unhappy about their country?'"

New York. A banquet of the International Chamber of Commerce. The after-dinner speaker is former U.S. Commerce Secretary Peter Peterson, and the after-dinner joke is about Canada. Canadians, he says, thought their country would have the best of everything: American efficiency, French culture, and British government. What they ended up with instead is American culture, a French style of government, and British efficiency.

It is a cause of genuine wonder abroad that Canadians should appear to have lost their bearings. Canadians, of all people — so blessed with space and natural treasure, with political freedom and social stability. To others perhaps even more than to themselves, Canada's possibilities have always seemed to be as limitless as the far horizon.

The horizon appears suddenly to have narrowed, even with the brief afterglow of the Tehran "embassy caper." Certainly it has in much else of what Canadians have been reading about themselves. "Hapless Canada" declares a title in *Harper's*. "A House Divided" proclaimed another in *Newsweek*. At home, a worried study from academia asks the ultimate question: *Must Canada Fail?* The answer from the country's political establishment is not always reassuring. Last year, the federal government's Task Force on Canadian Unity issued a report that uncovered not only "a protracted state of crisis" in Canada, but "a crisis of existence itself" and "a crisis graver than any it has known before." For good measure, the report managed to repeat the word "crisis" three times more in three successive paragraphs.

To a good many Canadians, all of this may well seem too much crisis-mongering by thrice, portraying a country in which they hardly recognize themselves. For measured by the remarkable distance they have come in just two decades — or the problems that burden nine-tenths of the world — Canadians are coming into their own as never before. It is not only Quebecers who feel more in control of their own lives. The rich resources of western Canada are at long last giving that region a foundation for economic security, and its growing population a new claim to political power. With Canada's expanded 200-mile offshore limit, the wealth of the seas is helping to create a fresh dawn of opportunity for many Atlantic Canadians. While Ontario is no longer cushioned by cheap energy, it has provided jobs for the Western industrialized world's fastest-growing labour force, including the many thousands of immigrants who have helped transform once parochial Toronto into one of North America's more livable cities. And just last year, marinated buffalo meat and *pirogis* were served at Ottawa's Rideau Hall after Parliament was opened by a new Governor General — the first of neither French nor British origin.



Square-dancing in North Battleford, Sask.
(top); village *fête* at Cap Santé, Que.



There is an enormously healthy common denominator in all of this. It is quite simply that more Canadians than ever are feeling, as the *Québécois* say, comfortable in their own skin. That more Canadians than ever are enjoying, and asserting, opportunities for fulfillment in the diverse parts of the country is a source of strength to be celebrated rather than a development to be decried.

Yet Canada sometimes gives the impression of being a collection of isolated medieval city states that have abruptly decided to pull up the draw-bridges. In the Northwest Territories, the Indians of the Mackenzie Valley call themselves the Dene Nation, and demand recognition of their "sovereignty." When Canadian Pacific Investments tried to buy MacMillan Bloedel, the huge British Columbia forest products company, B.C.'s premier banned the takeover lest the company "lose its B.C. identity." During his brief prime ministry, when Joe Clark declared that he had no plans to participate personally in the Quebec referendum campaign because he is "not a resident of Quebec," he was probably tactically wise. But he nonetheless left the impression that for Canada's Prime Minister to do so would amount to an intrusion — even on a question vital to the future of all of the country.

Quite obviously, a rush of change has placed Canada and its federal system under serious strain. The danger is that, as Canadians pursue their local interests and identities, they find themselves on a collision course with other regions and communities whose aspirations differ from their own. In years past, Canadians could pursue their own goals relatively insulated from conflict in a vast country stretching across five time zones. Now such isolation is not possible.

Canada's federal and provincial governments are no longer small enough that the average citizen can ignore their presence — or remain unaffected by their rivalries. What is more, a revolutionary new era of communications means that Canada's different regions and cultural communities are now far more conscious of who they are — and of what others have that they do not.

Amid the welter of claims, what is all too easily lost sight of is the idea of Canada itself. John Hirsch, who came to Canada from Hungary in 1947, co-founded Winnipeg's Manitoba Theatre Centre and later was head of television drama at the CBC in Toronto. "In Quebec now," Hirsch has said, "I am regarded as an Anglo-Saxon, which I find hard to believe. In Toronto, I'm looked upon as a westerner in spite of my Hungarian accent — I am expected to ride on the back of a buffalo. When I go to Edmonton, I am called an easterner. I find it terribly difficult, and I don't know where the hell I fit in as a *Canadian*." Hirsch concluded that there are "two ways to cope with it as a human being — to run away, or to try to stretch one's self."

To stretch one's self . . . This is the challenge for Canadians now: to hear and to understand one another. That new voices are speaking up, in new accents, is not to be feared but welcomed. For it means, quite simply, that Canada is growing up. It is only by understanding the many rivers of Canadian experience, and the memories they carry of past hurts and future hopes, that Canadians will be able to discover the confluence of their dreams.

Some Folks Aren't Leaving Anymore

Some East Coast fishermen say that if you fish long enough, you'll "get your day." Atlantic Canadians have been fishing for a mighty long time in economically troubled waters. Today, however, more and more of them no longer feel boxed in by a regional past which too often since Confederation has seemed like one long decline.

The Maritimes were a pre-Confederation hub of British North America; Halifax was not only an important British military garrison, but a flourishing port

A westerner from Hungary rides on the back of the buffalo.

Clockwise from left: Drilling for oil near Sable Island, N.S.; busy Halifax container port; bountiful mackerel catch off Nova Scotia.



Everybody is a somebody
but who in the hell do you
think you are?

just off the Great Circle Route of North Atlantic shipping. Maritimers in those days were shipbuilders to the world.

Even after its economic fortunes declined, the region continued to turn out a disproportionate share of Canada's most influential politicians, business leaders and scholars. The difficulty, of course, was that Atlantic Canadians usually had to leave to make it. But that has begun to change for many of them. During the past decade, for the first time since World War II, more people moved into the Atlantic provinces than moved out.

These days, the noon gun of the Citadel booms out over a Halifax much changed from the mid-1960s. Today, there are new container port facilities, a revived waterfront bustling with life, and a world-class ocean research centre in the Bedford Institute. The city's unemployment rate has been below Toronto's in recent years, and suburbs like Bedford and Sackville are among the fastest growing communities in the country. Whether it is drinks and conversation at the Jury Room, dinner at Fat Frank's or a performance at Dalhousie's Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, an evening out is far livelier than it was in the rather dead and dowdy Halifax of the "out-migration" era.

The best-publicized part of the in-migration is the "Small Is Beautiful" crowd. Some of them are Maritimes-born "come-back-homes" disenchanted with the central Canadian urban rat race. It is all reassuringly 1960-ish, from the artists' and writers' colonies at carefully preserved Nova Scotia fishing villages like Duncan's Cove, to bearded entrepreneurs like Halifax's "Banana Man," whose red wagon selling homemade "Natural Banana Ice Creamy" is a familiar summer sight outside the public library. *Atlantic Insight*, one of Canada's new crop of glossy regional magazines, calls its newsmagazine-style People section "Folks." Its editor, the former Toronto journalist Harry Bruce, celebrates what he calls "a beautifully intimate society where everybody is a somebody."

"Inside those nicely weathered shingles in Duncan's Cove," objects an old-line Haligonian, "you'll find just another Toronto town house. They are a bunch of Upper Canadian elitists, here because of the scenery, not the people." A more serious reservation is that Halifax's economic revival is "a total illusion," as Lyndon Watkins, a regional economic writer, argues. "It's the result of grants and transfer payments from a federal government that gets out its cheque-book and pushes dollars down our throats, because it is too busy to understand what real economic development is."

Halifax is in economic bloom partly because it has emerged as a regional centre. The city's role is resented in other Atlantic provinces; even in places like Yarmouth and Sydney, Haligonians are apt to be greeted with the familiar Nova Scotia phrase "who in the hell do you think you are, anyway?"

In contrast to Halifax, Atlantic unemployment rates in many areas remain among the country's highest. The region also has its share of monuments to the shortcomings of some of the hundreds of separate Atlantic development projects. The white elephants include New Brunswick's Bricklin automobile; Newfoundland's Come-By-Chance refinery, one of the largest bankruptcies in Canada's history; and Nova Scotia's accident-prone Glace Bay heavy water plant. Glace Bay officially opened in 1967, but sea water rusted its pipes when it was shut down by technical problems. After a long hiatus, it was finally relaunched and now provides 427 jobs. Given the monumental subsidies that went into the plant, the cost works out to nearly \$750,000 a job.

There are few areas of Canada without monuments to the futility of trying to bring industrial development to places too distant from markets or resources. An excellent reason for the upbeat mood among many Atlantic Canadians these days is the increasing importance of the resources the region does have — and of some it didn't even know it had — in and beneath the waters of Canada's newly expanded offshore limits.

Toronto's glimmering skyline at dusk.



Two years ago, for the first time, Canada surpassed Norway to become the world's leading fish exporter — and the income of many Atlantic fishermen has doubled in just the last five years. Off the coast of Nova Scotia, companies are drilling for oil and natural gas deposits, and Newfoundland has been abuzz with the possibility of what financial page writers call "North Sea-sized" offshore oil deposits.

Oil is a chancy game but that hardly seemed to matter in St. John's. They were snapping up oil stocks, and speculating in real estate, at such a pace that one government official warned islanders not to drown themselves "in a tide of hysteria." But just in case, Premier Brian Peckford took the precaution of assuring Newfoundlanders, and warning everyone else, that when the wells come in, they will be controlled "from St. John's, not from New York or Calgary or Halifax." The extraordinary sign of the times in the premier's comment is surely that he didn't even mention Toronto.

The Fat Cat Has His Doubts

The traditional Canadian power centre that former Premier Leslie Frost used to call "good old Ontario" is no longer so certain of its star in the heavens. Frost, to be sure, sometimes seemed the only Canadian with a kind word to say about the place. For more than a century, Ontario has been vocally resented or secretly envied, a sort of national comic-strip character called King Konfederation. "We can't have breakfast in the morning without paying profits to some firm in Ontario," Newfoundland's former Premier Joey Smallwood used to complain. "When we get out of bed, the very bed we get out of came from Ontario. And when we step down on the floor, the carpet, if we are rich enough, or the linoleum, or the old-fashioned canvas — that came from Ontario too!"

In addition to the complaint of economic domination, there was the cultural domination of English-speaking Canada by a southern Ontario so parochial that University of Toronto professor Northrop Frye once described it as "one of the most brutally inarticulate communities in human history." Less than two decades ago, Toronto The Good still seemed doomed by a prophecy made earlier in this century by visiting British poet Rupert Brooke. Toronto, he declared, "will always be what it is, only larger."

That had all started to change by the 1970s, when Toronto suddenly was delighted to find itself displayed on the covers of foreign magazines as "the most successful big city in North America." Many good burghers of the city were outraged in 1966 when an abstract sculpture by Henry Moore, *The Archer*, was unveiled in the downtown civic square. As a measure of change, the world's major Henry Moore collection is now among the Art Gallery of Ontario's most popular exhibitions.

In addition to culturally joining the world, Torontonians are even culturally joining Canada. In the 1960s, Toronto looked down its nose at nearly everywhere else in Canada. In its theatre lately, some of the most popular productions reflect themes from all over the country. Among them are rural Ontario's *The Donnellys*, Western Canada's *Paper Wheat* and *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, the Newfoundland satirical review *Codco*, and the plays of Michel Tremblay and David Fennario from Montreal.

But just when Toronto is becoming more of what a cultural metropolis ought to be, better reflecting the diversity of the country, it has begun to get the gnawing feeling that the country may no longer care. Its longtime closest provincial associate, Quebec, and the federal government, appeared to spend most of the past three years preoccupied with the Quebec referendum. Economically, the power and glory, along with the money, seem to be drifting west. And it is not only the national landscape that is changing, for Toronto is worried that its own urban success story is getting decidedly frayed around the edges. These days it just never seems to stop raining on Toronto's parade.

Pumping heat into heavy-oil deposits
at Cold Lake, Alta.
View of Calgary's downtown.



Who cares about the poor
little girls of Ontario?

In fact, Toronto and southern Ontario should cheer up, for most of their problems are those of success; they come with the territory. Some arise from the more cosmopolitan nature of today's Toronto. There are deplorable conflicts between the metropolitan police force and racial minorities, but this may not be altogether uncommon in a city which has attracted so many new immigrants. Today, no less than half the school-age population speaks English only as a second language.

While life is a little more complicated, it continues to have its rewards. When they aren't busy worrying about *The Way They Were*, Torontonians have been enjoying their new major league baseball team, their restaurants (which are still improving), and looking forward to concert-going at a brand-new Massey Hall. The city's schools and social services are still among the finest of any large North American city.

As for the economic storms of recent years, few major industrialized regions have flown through them with less turbulence. Ontario still produces nearly all of Canada's automotive products, well over half of its iron and steel, electrical and machinery industries products. Nearly half of Canada's finance, insurance and real estate transactions — and 81% of its stock exchange trading — take place in southern Ontario. The province last year employed just under 40% of Canada's work force, and paid 53% of its corporate income taxes. In other words, the "Fat Cat of Confederation" is still plump.

"Why all this sourness and discontent?" asks Ottawa's Simon Reisman, a former federal deputy finance minister. "Why all the screaming and hollering that Ontario is going to the dogs? Yes, there's a shift to the West, and some of it is at the expense of Ontario. But many of the needs for an economically developing West will be bought in Ontario anyway."

Maybe so, but good old Ontario still worries. The fretfulness these days resembles that of rural Ontario about a century ago when another westward exodus, of Ontario farmers settling new land on the Prairies, brought intimations of wrack and ruin. The mood, then and now, is captured in a song that Ontario's farm girls used to sing in the 1880s, as their young men left for a booming West:

*One by one they all clear out,
Thinking to better themselves, no doubt,
Caring little how far they go
From the poor little girls of Ontario.*

A Star on the Dressing Room Door

Calgary is surely the only major North American city where, as a reflection of its cow-town past, auto expressways are still called Trails. The most travelled trails lead downtown to the west end, now the world's third largest oil industry headquarters, after Houston and London, England. Against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains, the city's skyline is dominated not so much by its oil company skyscrapers, as by construction cranes building new ones.

As might be expected, Calgary is the kind of city where you can buy a \$10,000 desk ornament such as a four-inch working model of an oil well rocker pump in 18 carat gold. Auto dealers sell impressive numbers of the big gas guzzlers that people elsewhere no longer seem to want. Toronto's two leading art dealers, Mira Godard and Walter Moos, have both opened Calgary branches, which one Toronto critic archly refers to as "petro-galleries."

Much of Calgary's loose change and street kinetics is provided by an oil industry which, despite overwhelming U.S. ownership, has more national staffing and management than does any oil industry outside the United States. It is a world of billion-dollar capital investment commitments, and nerve-tingling



challenges like drilling through thick ice packs in Arctic seas. "We make as many decisions in a week as most businessmen make in a lifetime," says one oil executive.

They also live pretty well. A top oil man typically arrives at his tower office at 7:30 a.m., perhaps in a Mercedes 450 SEL. Lunch, at the Ranchmen's Club or a "Derrick Sandwich" at the Petroleum, begins precisely at noon and ends precisely an hour later — both to get back to the telephone before offices close in the East, and because Calgary business lunches really are business lunches. The chief executive may have a twin-engined King Air or Apache available for field trips. It can also whisk him away Friday afternoon to a fourwheel drive waiting at "the ranch," say 1,000 acres of freehold land in the elegantly rolling Rocky foothills of the Priddis-Turner Valley-Black Diamond area.

For ordinary Albertans, oil prosperity is reflected in the fact that Edmonton levies the lowest provincial taxes in Canada. In fact, taxes seem more a moral than a financial necessity. "We could virtually wipe out taxes in Alberta," the province's treasurer, Louis Hyndman, once explained. "But we are keeping them at present levels so people will realize that government services *do* take money." Besides paying for the upkeep of the largest public service, per capita, of any province in Canada, and for a few purchases like its own airline (Pacific Western), the provincial government last year retired the capital debt of every municipality in Alberta.

To Canadians outside Alberta, the best-known destination for provincial surpluses is the \$6.2 billion Alberta Heritage Trust Fund, currently expected to be worth well over \$30 billion by the end of this decade. The fund has lent hundreds of millions to other provinces, and Premier Peter Lougheed has even offered loans to the federal government. More remarkably, with about \$5 billion in regular circulation (including \$3 billion from the Heritage Fund), the Alberta Treasury has become the largest single lender on the country's short-term money market — larger, by far, than any of those big "eastern" banks.

In Calgary alone last year, people were arriving at the rate of 2,100 per month. As Canadians have done ever since Confederation, they are sharing one of the great opportunities their country offers: mobility within a vast trans-continental federation.

Another thing many eastern Canadians share these days is the myth, inspired by all the tales of wealth, that there is a single entity that might be called Oil West. But even in Calgary itself, a block or two from the oil company towers, shabby lobbies of hotels like the Calgarian ("No Visitors After 9," "Pay In Advance") are crowded with idle Indians, whose Alberta unemployment rates are as high as 80%. And despite the importance of the oil boom, Calgary remains a Prairie grain and cattle centre as well. Within the city, railway tracks pass pens crammed with lowing cattle. Motorists leaving downtown along a neon-lit expressway still drive by wheat pool grain elevators before reaching city limits.

Away from Calgary, most parts of western Canada resemble the Oil West myth even less. Nor do they resemble one another.

Literally speaking, Saskatchewan is neither an island society like Newfoundland, nor one which speaks its own language like Quebec. Even so, figuratively it seems to be both — a society with bedrock social arrangements very much its own. It was nearly 40 years ago that Saskatchewan elected the first socialist government in North America. Well before that, the province helped create the wheat pools, and a credit union and cooperative movement which is still pervasive. On just one street corner in Maple Creek, like so many banks, there are a co-op gas station, co-op shopping centre and co-op lumber and feed centre.

"This highly developed sense of community," as Regina lawyer Morris Shumiatcher calls it, remains entrenched partly because Saskatchewan is still so predominantly agricultural. Many public servants, professionals and skilled workers remain so attached to the family farm that government departments and even the multi-billion-dollar potash industry plan work schedules around the seeding and harvesting seasons. These are not the only roots that endure. Larry Brown, executive director of the 14,000-member Saskatchewan Government Employees Association, says of the provincial capital of Regina: "This is still one of the few places I know where people vehemently argue politics at a purely social gathering, and then burst into the chant 'God Damn the CPR.'"

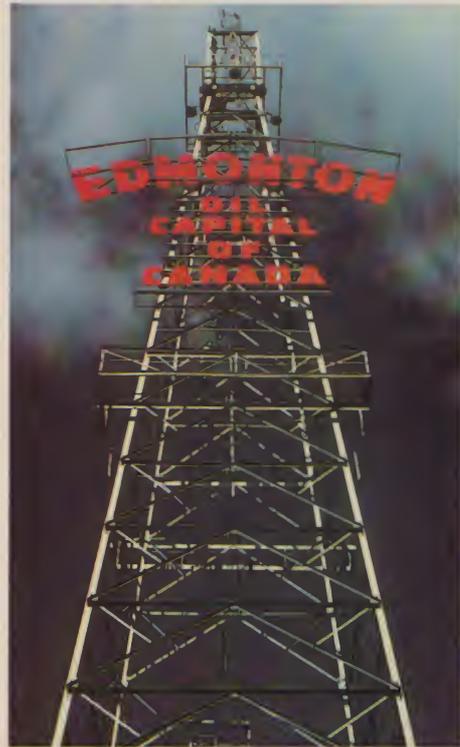
In Vancouver, cocktail conversation can be equally distinctive. Last fall West Vancouver property owners on Sentinel Hill were greatly concerned by 20% to 30% depreciations in property values — because the stately Douglas fir and cedar trees, which helped attract them there in the first place, had grown so tall they were blocking their views of Vancouver harbour. Yet in contrast with some parts of California, wealth is not required to enjoy "Beautiful British Columbia." Middle-income Vancouverites pilot their small boats through the Gulf of Georgia, watching bald eagles soar overhead, and stop to catch salmon, dig for clams and oysters, or lower crab traps at the Gulf Islands. Vancouver has also begun to create a vibrant city life that may one day match its stunning geographic setting.

Without doubt, Vancouver's Good Life and Alberta's oil boom make millions of eastern Canadians highly suspicious of "western grievances" and

-We could virtually wipe out taxes but that would be immoral.

Clockwise from top left: Smokestacks on Edmonton's Refinery Row; Inuit worker at Tuktoyaktuk, N.W.T.; bulldozing sulphur extracted from natural gas north of Calgary; mining the tar sands at Fort McMurray, Alta.





"western demands." What the West is grieving about becomes much easier to understand elsewhere in the region, in the mining and resource-based towns strung across western Canada, especially in the north. Isolated, often wholly dependent on a single natural resource, they are typical of the economic realities of much of western Canada's history. There has never been a good life to depend on.

At first it never seems that way, since every bust begins with a boom. Right now, for example, Alberta's Fort McMurray is heading for the high point of the cycle. Its population has increased more than six-fold to 28,000 in just the past decade. There, the development of northern Alberta's vast tar sands has attracted workers from as far afield as Newfoundland, along with Ukrainian farmers' sons from Saskatchewan and bearded Mennonites from Manitoba. Often they live in trailers, and find so little to do that when a worker says he's "going out," it may mean he is flying to Edmonton for the weekend.

But more and more Fort McMurray residents are buying \$75,000 homes, building churches and putting down the roots of community organizations. "I've been working up here for two years now," says Alec Zinfandel, a father of two from Saint John, N.B., employed as a heavy equipment operator. "This is my home, and I think I'll stay here." But what will happen to workers like Zinfandel or to their children, pessimists wonder, if tar sands oil ever again becomes uneconomic? The same thing, no doubt, that happened in British Columbia's Cariboo country when the gold petered out and places such as Barkerville became Hollywood Western ghost towns. Or in more recent years to scores of Saskatchewan communities where people simply abandoned their homes and moved away when a grain elevator and railway branch line shut down.

The sad cycle is familiar in areas of eastern Canada as well, where the closing of a plant, or a sudden shift in far-off world commodity markets, can wipe out the economy of a community or of a whole area. But what has always given the problem particular poignancy in western Canada — and helps to explain the hard edge of today's western demands — is the Dirty Thirties.

In the 1920s, much as today, eastern Canadians envied the Prairies, which had become the booming, prosperous "Granary of the Empire." Then came the 1929 world economic crash, plus the unprecedented devastation of a decade-long drought. About half of the people in cities like Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary went on relief. Outside the cities, children were unable to go to school because they had no winter clothing. Farm mothers cut up their husbands' worn-out denim overalls to make brassieres for themselves and moccasins for their children. Much of rural western Canada became a cashless economy.

Charles Clark, father of the former Prime Minister and retired publisher of the weekly *High River Times*, remembers bartering subscriptions for chickens. "The necessity of survival broke down barriers between people," he recalls. "In the West, we had to come together. Anywhere you stopped was home — you slept on the floor; you were friends and understood each other."

It is tempting to see many of today's political and business leaders in the West as a generation haunted by ghosts of the 1930s and determined that it shall never happen again. To many eastern ears, economic complaints from an apparently thriving West have an exaggerated, show business ring. But economic prosperity based on exhaustible resources is very much *like* show business. As the old Irving Berlin song goes, one day "on your dressing room they've hung a star." But the next night the whole show folds.

Unless, that is, western Canada develops a broader, more secure economic base, not tied solely to oil or other non-renewable resources. Westerners believe that all of Canada would benefit if the West had a more permanent base for economic development. Just as firm is their contention

Architect Arthur Erickson's new Vancouver courthouse.



that achieving it will require from the rest of Canada changes in national policies — and perhaps a whole new way of looking at the country.

As many westerners see it, central Canada still views the West as an empty hinterland supplying raw resources to a populous and industrialized Ontario-Quebec heartland. It is a complaint almost as old as Confederation when, as every schoolchild knows, the Fathers were indeed preoccupied with industrializing central Canada.

Today's western Canada is no one's hinterland any longer. It is the home of nearly one Canadian out of three, and flourishing with creativity in business, government and the arts. In Alberta's capital, the Edmonton Opera Association sells out all 2,700 seats for every performance, and has a waiting list for season tickets. Many buffs consider Edmonton's Citadel to be a theatre without peer in the country. At one point, the *Edmonton Journal's* busy arts critic, Keith Ashwell, paused to count, and calculated that he had attended no fewer than 136 theatre, music and gallery openings in the course of a year. Soon all of Canada will become a beneficiary of the West's new cultural heft. The Alberta government has promised to distribute free to 23,000 schools and 3,600 libraries across the country the new three-million-word Canadian encyclopedia that Edmonton publisher Mel Hurtig has begun preparing for 1984 or 1985.

Despite the international celebrity of such westerners as the late painter William Kurelek and architect Arthur Erickson, western Canadians believe easterners are unaware that anything much besides oil and wheat fields lies beyond Thunder Bay. Otherwise, ask westerners (in a complaint familiar to many other Canadians as well), why would a CBC television network news program that calls itself "The National," broadcast stories about a garbage strike in a Toronto suburb?

The more serious complaint is that national policies of a century ago are no longer appropriate to a very different Canada and a more mature western region. What the West's litany of policy grievances — whether on tariffs, transportation or resource taxation — most importantly boils down to is one deeply-held conviction. It is that longstanding federal policies are holding back western economic development, particularly of a more diversified industrial base.

For example, Ottawa has always seemed to westerners far less successful at negotiating favourable trade terms for export industries *they* want to develop (such as petrochemicals and food processing) than at perpetuating the 19th century protective tariffs that safeguard central Canada's manufacturing industries. As Alberta's former Premier Harry Strom used to complain, "We see the logic of protecting infant industries. But some of the 'infants' are now 80 years of age — and we are tired of paying their pensions."

True, many of western Canada's traditional problems had as much to do with economic realities — such as a relatively small population and great distance from markets — as with a dead hand in Ottawa. But even economic realities change. Along with the West's population growth, its energy and its minerals, the growth of markets in the Pacific and U.S. West has given the region new muscle.

The output of western Canada's economy has climbed to almost 80% of Ontario's, versus less than 65% a decade ago. Much of the increase is linked to energy resources, but by no means all. Western Canada is also manufacturing products like farming and logging machinery, and trailers and prefab homes that are exported worldwide. Helping to finance business expansion are new institutions like the Bank of British Columbia and the Winnipeg-based Northland Bank. It thus should hardly have come as a surprise when, as a bench mark of western Canada's new economic clout, the Calgary-based Foothills Pipelines group won out over Bay Street's Canadian Arctic Gas Pipeline consortium in the contest to build the Alaska gas pipeline — the most costly private construction project ever planned in Canada.

On the shores of Lake Ontario are infants 80 years old.

A Process as Natural as Breathing

What Does Quebec Want?

The question resounded through Canadian life for two exasperating decades, until the English became as sick of asking it as the French were of answering it. On November 15, 1976, Quebec elected a premier who for the first time seemed willing, and certainly claimed to be able, to answer that question with total clarity and absolute finality. To answer it, for that matter, in a one-syllable word.

What does Quebec want? Quebec, declared Premier René Lévesque, wants "out."

There is no gainsaying that Premier Lévesque's dedication to the goal of an independent Quebec is shared by many of the province's articulate and influential intellectuals, artists, teachers, journalists and technocrats, and by many of the young. But the question did not begin with Lévesque, and his is far from the only answer. Quebec, like Canada, is much too diverse a place for its feelings to be summarized in words of one syllable.

Its metropolis of Montreal is the largest French-speaking city in the world, after Paris. On a weekend evening in Montreal, the student Latin Quarter around Rue St-Denis, with its cafés, jazz *boîtes* and sidewalks crowded with summer strollers, feels not unlike Paris' Boulevard St-Michel, albeit freeze-dried. There has been a migration of many young anglophones from the province; one Montreal area English-speaking high school even held last year's 1959 class reunion in Toronto, since so many alumni have moved there. But over one million non-francophones remain in Quebec, a number that is larger than the population in five of Canada's ten provinces. Most of them live in Montreal, where their voices can be heard in the cavernous *bouzouki* palaces of Park Avenue or in crowded English-style pubs like *Le Cock n' Bull* (a new form of *franglais* inspired by some of the more dubious provisions of Quebec's language law).

Outside Montreal is a province that no less defies simplifications. At James Bay, Quebec engineers — working entirely in French — have just finished building the first stage of one of the largest hydroelectric projects in the world. But in the gentle countryside some farmers live in the same high-roofed grey stone houses, and speak the same 17th-century-accented tongue, that they have for ten or more generations. To the west, among the bare rock and spruce of Abitibi — about as close to Toronto as to Montreal — Quebecers who earn their living from the forests do much of their business, and share a modern frontier-style life, with northern Ontario.

What many urban and rural Quebecers share, and have shared for several centuries, is not a desire to get "out" of Canada but an enduring ambivalence about it. They have considered themselves good Quebecers and good Canadians, and have traditionally rejected the advice of anyone who tells them they cannot be both. That may be one reason why Premier Lévesque's Parti Québécois has increasingly played down a direct choice between federalism and independence by proposing an "association" — which has been described as sounding like a "fairy-tale Confederation where there'll be lots of candy and no medicine." Comedian Yvon Deschamps captured the ambivalence in his observation that what *Québécois* want is "an independent Quebec — in a strong Canada."

Throughout Canada's history, it has more often seemed to Quebecers that it is not the *indépendantistes* within, but English-speaking Canadians who have told them they could not be good *Québécois* and good Canadians at the same time. *Québécois* began calling themselves *Canadiens* long before Confederation. English-speaking Canadians did not stop calling themselves





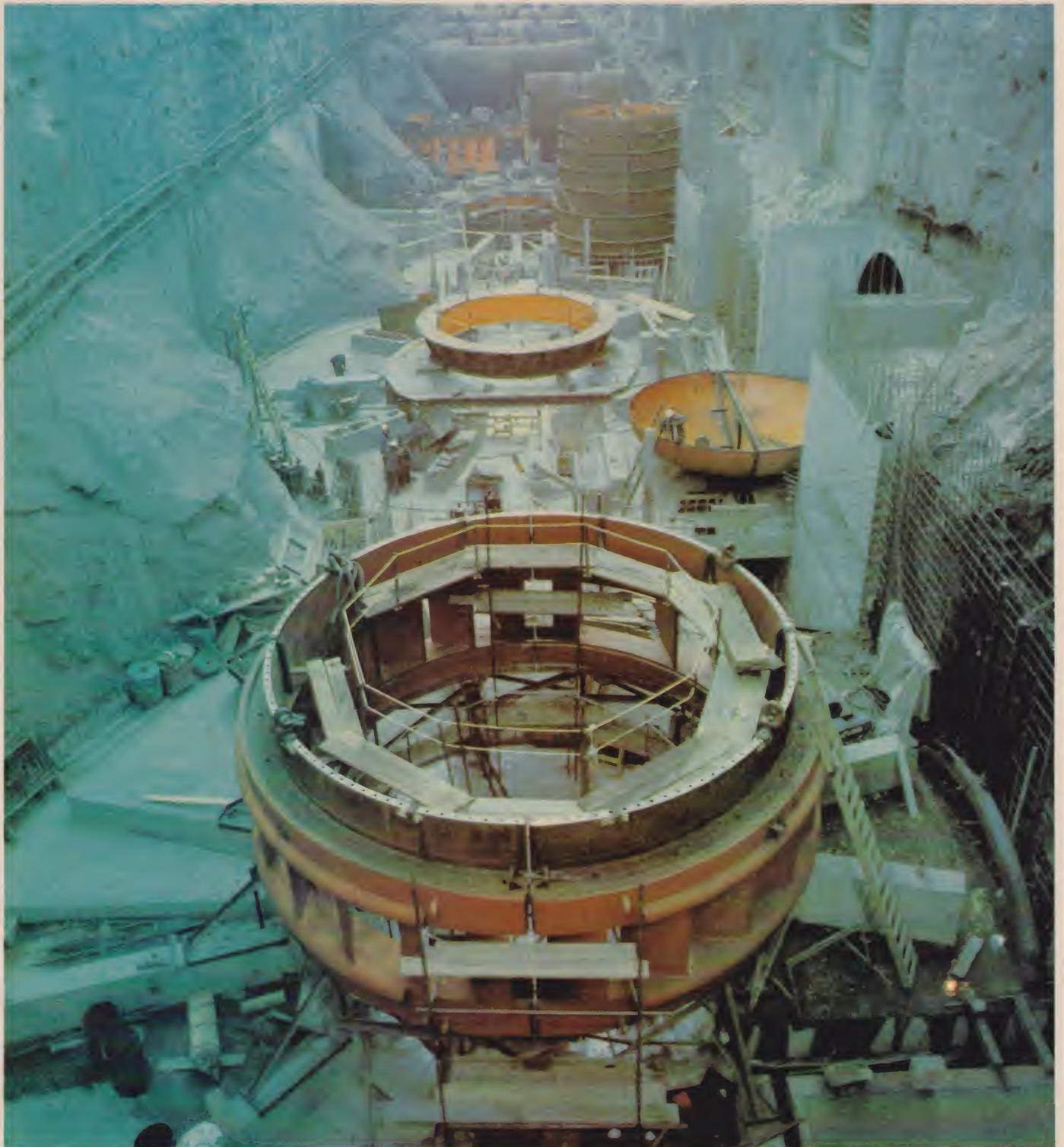
"British subjects" until well into the 20th century — nor did they harbour much doubt that the *Québécois* would eventually assimilate. English-speaking Canadians might instead have taken note of historian Arnold Toynbee's observation, in his book *Civilization on Trial*, that "whatever the future of mankind in North America, French-Canadians will be there at the end of the story."

No aspect of the survival of more than five million francophone *Québécois* as a distinct society in North America has been more clouded by misunderstanding than the question of language. Outside Quebec, many English-speaking Canadians seldom hear a language spoken other than their own. Some ask, even at this late date, why anyone living in North America would insist on speaking anything but English.

The short answer, as Prime Minister Trudeau once explained to an English-speaking audience in Manitoba, is that "just as when you speak English, when a Quebecer speaks French it is something he does naturally and automatically — almost like breathing. And when you limit a person's use of his language, it is almost like interfering with his breathing. When we cannot speak our own language — to borrow a famous phrase some of you use about French — we feel like someone is 'ramming something down our throat!'"

Within Quebec itself, the security of the French language is more and more taken for granted by today's generation of young *Québécois*. In fact, what often are called "language issues" are at bottom concerned with other

Quebec's LG-2 hydroelectric power development at James Bay.



realities — personal fulfillment, psychological security and a fair share of economic and political power.

There is a very clear reason for this. In a country where more than one language is widely spoken, *which* language is used in government, business life, the professions and schools becomes a vital index of, and doorway to, status and success. Even where just one language is used, the accent with which it is spoken can enormously help or hinder economic opportunity and social acceptance. It certainly was true, and too often still is, that immigrants arriving in English-speaking Canada could find their situation mirrored in novelist James Baldwin's remark about class-conscious Britain: "To open your mouth in England is to have confessed your parents, your youth, your school, your salary, your self-esteem and — alas — your future."

Baldwin's remark applies — alas — to what it has meant to speak French in Canada through much of Canadian history. In plain language, these were not the terms of the original bargain. The French explorers, after all, planted the blue *fleur-de-lis* from Hudson Bay in the north, to New Orleans in the south. At Confederation in 1867, Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, promised that there would be no "attempt made to oppress the one language or render it inferior to the other." Not only were language rights constitutionally entrenched in Quebec and the federal Parliament. Laws and statutes for both Manitoba, and the territories which were later to become Saskatchewan and Alberta, provided for French educational rights, and for official status for French as well as English.

French rights in the West were swept away by the end of the 19th century. In Ontario, the infamous Regulation 17 restricting French schooling was passed shortly before World War I, leaving Quebec's Henri Bourassa to wonder why French-speaking Canadians should be sent to fight the Prussians in Europe, when they were the victims in their own country of "the Prussians of Ontario."

Even inside Quebec, the outlook for the language of the majority was for generations not reassuring. As the saying goes, money talks. In Quebec, until recently, it usually spoke English. When the 1960s began, an English-speaking Quebec male wage earner brought home an average 51% fatter wage envelope than did a French-speaking Quebecer. In part, this was because Montreal's dominant English-speaking business establishment made little room at the top for francophones. Even as recently as 1976, a study of Quebec's 100 largest business firms showed that 43 had not a single French Canadian senior executive, and all but four of them had five or fewer.

The second-class status of French went far beyond the executive suites. Montreal is a city where more people speak French than the number who speak English in Vancouver. Surely, no job applicant at a large Vancouver company would dream of being accepted if he or she understood no English, or be routinely turned away for speaking no French. Yet in Montreal, that frequently used to happen in reverse.

In Vancouver, an English-speaking housewife would not expect to be told by clerks at Woodward's department store that they couldn't understand what she was saying. Yet this is what French-speaking Quebecers were frequently told at stores, restaurants, and banks in downtown Montreal. In Vancouver, English-speaking parents frantically bringing a child to a major hospital's emergency room would not have to try to explain what was wrong in a language other than their own, because the medical staff was unable to understand the predominant language of the city. Yet that, too, was often the case for French-speaking parents at major hospitals in Montreal.

Earlier generations of *Québécois* retreated to an inward-looking stronghold, where they could be sheltered beneath the high silver steeples of



At school in Montreal: "French, I speak it from the heart."



Quebec's Catholic churches, and on the neatly divided oblong farms of the countryside. But then came the revolution: the not-so-Quiet Revolution that shook Quebec to its foundations in the 1960s, and is still shaking up old power relationships, old clichés, and old ways of doing things in Quebec and in Canada as a whole. For by the end of the 1950s, a new generation of *Québécois* saw that their destiny could not be fulfilled by resisting the modern North American world, but only by conquering it, and conquering it in French.

The pride and self-assertion of the new Quebec is reflected in every sphere from business and education to popular entertainment and the arts. Quebec, in fact, is now more secure culturally, and culturally more vital, than any other part of Canada. In literature, the claustrophobic world of priests and old seigneurial families has given way to the more universal psychodramas of novelists like Marie-Claire Blais and the late Hubert Aquin, and to the poetry of a Paul Chamberland. Such established theatre companies as the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde and Rideau Vert have been joined by excellent newer companies inside and outside Montreal. Some of the musical high notes in Quebec these days are being provided by composer-performer François Dompierre and pianist André Laplante, winner of Moscow's prestigious Tschaikowsky International Competition.

Many *Québécois* fretted that the age of television would obliterate their culture. Like English-speaking Canada, Quebec has its share of Hollywood reruns. But Montreal has now become the centre of a French-language TV production industry stronger than that of France itself. Television also helped to popularize performing artists like Gilles Vigneault and Diane Dufresne, who not only are stars in Quebec but pack theatres like the Olympia and Bobino in Paris.

The most radical change of all, perhaps, was the reform of Quebec's educational system, which helped lead to a spectacular catching up in many sectors of modern business and technology. Today, Pierre Laurin, director of the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* of the *Université de Montréal*, says that business students account for 15% of Quebec's university enrollment — a higher proportion than in the rest of the country. Robert Laflamme, a vice-president of Greenshields, reflects the new world of young *Québécois* businessmen: "Status used to mean English. You bought clothes at Holt-Renfrew, you stayed at the Ritz. Today status can also mean a night at the Meridien or clothes from Brisson & Brisson. Today there is a choice."

Quebec consulting engineers have been providing the technical know-how for major transportation systems in Africa and hydroelectric projects in South America. Hydro-Québec, now one of the largest Canadian companies of any kind by assets (\$12.8 billion), has a first-rate reputation on world investment markets for the quality of its financial management and technical expertise. Like Montreal's giant Power Corporation, more and more Quebec firms no longer confine themselves to the province's borders. Quebecair has been dickering to buy Nordair from Air Canada, and Provigo (annual sales: over \$2 billion) has major food and other merchandising interests as far afield as western Canada and the U.S.

It is now exactly ten years since the giant General Motors assembly plant at Ste-Thérèse, Que. became a flaming symbol of language inequality during a highly publicized strike at a plant where half of the foremen couldn't speak French. Today, General Motors supervisors and foremen at Ste-Thérèse almost all speak French, and more than half the senior management are francophones. Yet there remains in English-speaking Canada a firmly held belief that "English is the language of business" — always has been, always will be.

It is worth recalling that a related article of faith — "English is the international language of aviation" — was the battle cry in English-speaking Canada during the 1976 strike over bilingual air traffic control at Quebec airports. That ugly crisis managed to erupt, complete with T-shirts showing beavers choking frogs and proclaiming "Where are you, General Wolfe, now that we need you?" despite the fact that, as a blue-ribbon commission subsequently found, English is not "the" language of aviation. The International Civil Aviation Organization specifies air traffic control in "the language normally used by the station on the ground" — such as French in Quebec — with English "available on request."

Language conflicts seem to be fuelled in English-speaking Canada because of two other persistent myths: that francophones are "all bilingual," and that they are demanding "special privileges, when they are just like any other minority."

In fact, unlike the vast majority of francophones that English-speaking Canadians meet outside Quebec, most *Québécois* are *not* bilingual. More than three-quarters of Quebec's five million francophones speak *only* French — equivalent to the entire population of the three Prairie provinces. Surely this fact alone means that English-French bilingualism is not some artificially imposed "special privilege," but a paramount human reality about Canada.

In recent years, many English-speaking Canadians have been saying: "I agree they ought to be able to speak French in Quebec — but why should

there be French, with French schools and all that, *outside* Quebec?" One compelling answer is still that provided by *Le Devoir's* late editor, André Laurendeau, in the 1960s: "The only place that a French Canadian can really feel at home is in Quebec. And if Quebec is the only possible place to live, why should a French Canadian be interested in the rest of Canada?"

As Laurendeau warned, much of the new generation of modern *Québécois* has grown to adulthood defining its spiritual and economic space as Quebec, and less than convinced about the importance of any Canadian dimension to their lives. The danger of this, says no less staunch a federalist than Quebec's Marc Lalonde, is that "like intelligent and energetic young people anywhere in the world, many of them will rise to the top in their society. If they are blocked from rising to the top in *Canadian* society, then they will find the temptation to do so in a separate Quebec quite irresistible. And they will lead others with them."

The alternative is for Quebecers to feel — and to be — part of the life of the whole country, sharing power and its rewards, not only in the federal government but in business corporations and national organizations. Ottawa, at least, is a very different place from what it used to be. For the first time since Confederation, the Canadian government is generally able to provide public services to taxpayers in French as well as English. For the first time, *Québécois* have held key federal Cabinet economic portfolios, and the Ottawa bureaucracy (though not yet in all its senior ranks) more or less reflects the French-speaking proportion of Canada's population. French-language television programming is now available nearly everywhere across the country. "Hardly a 'French takeover,'" says Keith Spicer, the former official languages commissioner, "but not the perpetuation of an 'English colonial regime' either."

Is Quebec the only place that feels like home?

Outside the federal establishment, progress still comes an inch at a time. Perhaps a third of the million or so francophones who live outside Quebec no longer use French — even at home. But in recent years, Ontario and New Brunswick, where more than three-quarters of non-Quebec francophones live, have begun to provide increased French-language education, and some additional government and legal services in French.

Long-held attitudes do not, of course, change smoothly or overnight. Public protests against park rangers wearing uniforms that say PARC JASPER PARK, or the booing of *O Canada* when a verse is sung in French in Vancouver and Toronto, sound like thunderclaps in Quebec. But backlash voices are now, in fact, far less representative of attitudes among younger English-speaking Canadians than groups like Canadian Parents for French. This organization has 5,000 member-families seeking, among other things, public school French immersion courses, which have a remarkable record of success, as well as long waiting lists in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

In the long run, this emerging attitude is one of the most salutary changes in a country where francophones have borne almost the entire burden of bilingualism. Today, in Montreal and Ottawa, young people far more frequently talk in French when they are in linguistically mixed groups than used to be the case. In Vancouver, it is even possible to hear young B.C. anglophones chatting with *Québécois* visitors or students in French, while watching the Pacific sunset over daiquiris in the English Bay Café.

Young anglophones across Canada are not, of course, going bilingual *en masse*. But many of the best and brightest of the new generation of English-speaking Canadians have acquired a warm admiration of what Quebec has done, and of what it has become. The Quiet Revolution was always destined to change Canada — one way or another. Which way, may

now be significantly influenced by how many English-speaking Canadians share with the *Québécois* the transformation they have undergone in their own self-image — from a somewhat folkloric *belle province*, to a people exuberantly capable of full participation in modern North American life.

No Longer So Vertical — or Inhibited

"The English," he whispered. "Pa, the only people who count are the English. Their fathers got all the best jobs. They're the only ones nobody ever calls foreigners. Nobody ever makes fun of their names or laughs at the way they talk. Nobody," he concluded bitterly. "'Cause when you're English it's the same as bein' Canadian."

This rather touching *cri du coeur* might well have been voiced by generations of French-speaking youngsters told to "speak English" by their schoolmates, neighbours, and eventually their employers. In fact, it is an episode from John Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death*, a novel about growing up ethnic in Winnipeg's crowded North End.

World history does not always record that people who are put-upon rationally make common cause with their equally put-upon potential allies. So, in Canada's debate on national unity, it is more ironic than surprising that francophones and so-called ethnic Canadians often sound as if they are each other's principal opponents. It is ironic because both groups have shared a long history of profound discomfort at the hands of what each saw as a dominant, and sometimes domineering, Anglo-Celtic establishment that defined "bein' Canadian" as being "English." It might be thought that each group would embrace the other for having played a vital role in the evolution of a mutually more congenial definition of Canada: the francophones by having made impossible the imposition of a unitary state and "melting pot" culture; the so-called "third force" by softening the numerical and social dominance of an Anglo-Celtic majority.

Yet they have seldom recognized a common cause. Instead, spokesmen for many ethnic groups have protested fiercely against "special privileges" for francophones. For their part, many French-speaking Canadians have responded with outright hostility to the idea of official multiculturalism. Each group has never really understood the reasons for the other's fears and suspicions.

The classic dream of immigrants who came to the New World was to build greater economic opportunity for themselves, and above all for their children. As they saw it, wherever in Canada they first settled, they were coming to "North America" where, they had always heard, the first requirement for mobility and success was to learn the English language. Thus even in Montreal, the vast majority of immigrants aligned themselves with the anglophone community and sent their children to English schools, thereby reinforcing the longstanding francophone belief that large-scale immigration was at bottom a plot to swamp Canada in a sea of new recruits to the English-speaking majority.

Still, French-speaking Canadians always felt that the security of their language and culture would continue to rest on the sheer size of their community — 29% of Canada's population versus only 6.1% and 3.5% for the next largest non-British groups, the German and Italian Canadians. Above all, it rested on their status as a "founding race" of Canada that had endured for nearly 400 years. When the "newer" and smaller ethnic groups who had joined the English-speaking majority suddenly asserted claims to cultural and language rights of their own, and Canada was officially styled a "multicultural" country in 1971, many francophones saw the devil again. As the *Fédération*



des francophones hors Québec put it, multiculturalism was yet another anglophone Trojan horse intended to undermine their very existence — because it “far too easily and subtly relegates us to the level of just another ethnic minority.”

While francophone suspicion of an officially multicultural Canada can be understood, French-speaking Canadians ought to understand why things look very different to millions of ethnic Canadians. They look particularly different in western Canada, where far more of the population is of neither French nor British origin than in the East.

A Ukrainian Canadian in the West, for example, might wonder why his favourite U.S. cable channel should be forced off the air to make room for a French channel understood by only a handful of the population. Or why his son should have to master a language he has virtually never heard if the boy wants to rise to the top in the armed forces or public service of his country. Or why a neighbour in the feed grain business has to go to the expense and trouble of labelling his product in a language none of his customers understands.

Such questions are by no means asked exclusively by the non-Anglo-Celt who lives in western Canada. But to him, the questions have an added force. It comes from feeling, rightly or wrongly, that he is frozen out of a particular conception of the country — the view of Canada as “an equal partnership between the two founding races.” He says that *his* part of Canada was “founded” by *his* “race,” by his Ukrainian or Finnish grandfather who settled there before Alberta or Saskatchewan even became provinces. For many of the 6.5 million or so Canadians of neither French nor British ethnic background, the idea of “two founding races” seems downright insulting, because they feel it suggests they are somehow regarded as second-class citizens in their own land.

The conclusion can hardly be avoided: there must be a more practical basis for national acceptance of the duality of modern Canada than a “founding race” concept that is widely rejected among nearly a third of the population. It may lie in the simple recognition that there exist in Canada two language communities, each with the talent, resources, and numerical strength to go it alone and sunder the country. Or to work and live together as Canadians, on the basis of respect for each other’s language and culture in all parts of the country.

If for no other reason, English-French linguistic equality makes sense because all but 1.5% of Canadians speak one of the two languages. That certainly does not — indeed must never — imply an inferior status for Canadians who are of neither British nor French ethnic origin. A pervasive source of resistance by ethnic Canadians to special protection for French language and culture outside Quebec is the hard memory of how roughly conformity to the majority was forced upon *them*. Through much of the past century, many of them, like many Quebecers, lived the experience of a country where, as the Winnipeg youngster in the novel testified, “the only people who count are the English.”

Oddly enough, these days it sometimes appears that the only people who *don't* count are “the English.” At a time when nearly everyone in English-speaking Canada celebrates being an “ethnic,” and the *Québécois* are busily “freeing” themselves from *les anglais*, about the only put-down that seems to be universally acceptable in polite society is to call someone a Wasp. In fact, the contribution to Canada of the English, Scotch, Irish and Welsh could hardly be more immense. No one has done more to build Canada into a modern nation, from the CPR on. Nor are their contributions material alone. Canada’s constitution, its parliamentary democracy, its criminal and (except in Quebec) civil law all flow from its English inheritance. Retired Senator Eugene Forsey notes that most of the voices in Canada’s multicultural choir are “full and strong, even *fortissimo*. I see no reason why the Anglo-Celtic voice should be *pianissimo*.”



In truth, there has never been a "typical" experience shared by all immigrants to Canada. Today, a world of difference exists between growing up as the son or daughter of an isolated Greek or Lebanese immigrant who runs a *donair* (meat sandwich) stand in a small Maritimes town, and the life of an Italian Canadian teenager in Toronto. Metro Toronto's Italian community is now almost as large as the entire population of Florence, sustained by strong community and social organizations, its own churches, newspapers and radio station. It even has its own *Italiense* vocabulary, a mixture of Italian and English extensive enough to have been studied by academics. Some examples: *bisini* (business), *bordi* (boarders), *fruttistendo* (fruit stand) and *scrima* (ice cream).

At the turn of the century, western Canada was the chief destination for the largest wave of immigration in Canada's history, and the first after Confederation that was significantly non-British. Responding to Sir Clifford Sifton's campaign to fill the farmlands of western Canada with "stalwart peasants in sheepskin coats," more than three million immigrants arrived between 1896 and 1914, many of them from Eastern Europe. Sometimes living at first in unheated sod huts, many settled in their own isolated farming communities, which still persist in the distinctive ethnic checkerboard pattern of some parts of the Prairies. Cities bear the imprint, too. Rather than just the inevitable statue of Queen Victoria, outside one entrance to the Manitoba Legislature is a bust of the Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko. Along Winnipeg's North Main St., all in the space of a few blocks, a visitor will find the Polish Combatants Association, the Cracovia Trading Co., the Carpathia Credit Union, the Ukrainian Trading Co. and the black and gold onion domes of Eastern churches.

The immigrants came to an English Canada basking then in the high noon of the British Empire, with Anglo-Celtic supremacist attitudes to fit. In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan alone attracted some 40,000 members on the Prairies. The tone had been set during World War I, when western businessmen regularly dismissed non-Anglos from their jobs for "patriotic reasons" — and then demanded their mass internment because they were "idle and impoverished." No more logical was the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire of that time. The good ladies approved a resolution demanding that new Canadians be made "100 percent British in language, thought, feeling and impulse" — and then passed another inveighing against "foreigners" who were taking British names.

Assimilation, of course, was never even a choice for the Canadians who are now called "visible minorities" because their skin colour is not white. West Coast orientals were for decades the victims of oppression, and on the Prairies, provincial and local statute books were littered with barriers to prevent their permanent settlement. The comfortable image of a tolerant, openhearted Canadian "mosaic" was never more seriously shattered than by the internment of the Japanese Canadians (paralleled by a similarly atrocious act committed by the U.S. government against Japanese Americans). In 1942, 22,000 West Coast Japanese Canadians, most of them native-born citizens, were stripped of their civil rights and property, and imprisoned in internment camps. Most lost their freedom for three years and were never fully compensated for their loss of property.

The popular notion that Canadians discriminate racially less than Americans may have been less inaccurate in the days when far fewer white Canadians had other races to discriminate *against*. The situation has changed considerably since Ottawa introduced its supposedly racially-neutral "points system" into the immigration laws in 1967. Until then, only 7% of Canada's immigrants came from Asia, the Caribbean, and Central America. Less than a decade later, fully 41% of new immigrants were from those heavily non-white areas. Now, ugly incidents like "Paki-bashing" occur in cities like Toronto and Vancouver. A Canadian Civil Liberties Association survey in Ontario a few years ago showed that the vast majority of real estate and employment agen-

Within a tolerant,
comfortable mosaic:
"Thatsa my boy."

cies were screening out non-white applicants whenever their clients requested them to do so.

In a report last fall on police-minority relations in Toronto, Roman Catholic Archbishop Emmett Cardinal Carter deplored "the tendency to exclusivism and possessiveness in practically all of the white English-speaking population of Canada." The Cardinal's point was painfully underlined when Toronto's Tony Lupusella rose in the Ontario legislature to urge action on the Archbishop's report. An Italian Canadian, he was repeatedly interrupted from across the aisle by another member yelling insults like "Mamma Mia," "It's the wop show," and "Thatsa my boy."

Charles Caccia, a longtime Italian community leader and federal member of Parliament from Toronto, believes that official adoption of multiculturalism as a state policy enables Canadians with a strong ethnic identity "to be less inhibited and more at ease than we would be in the United States. Here we know there's nothing wrong with it — because the state is officially telling us so." A different view of official multiculturalism is that highlighting ethnic differences has the effect — and, some suspect, even the purpose — of heightening inequalities, and hence perpetuating a top-dog position for a basically Anglo-Celtic establishment. This was the argument of the late John Porter, whose study *The Vertical Mosaic* described a Canadian political, business and intellectual establishment overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic and Protestant. The mosaic has become somewhat less vertical in the 15 years since Porter's study was published, notably in many university faculties and the senior levels of the federal government. The Joe Clark Cabinet was the first with a significant number of names like Hnatyshyn, Paproski and Mazankowski.

The official ideal of cultural pluralism has obviously not built a Canada free from racial and ethnic abrasions. No large group of Canadians knows that better than Canada's native population.

The country's 300,000 or so status Indians are so diverse that they speak languages as different from each other as Danish and Arabic. Most of them live on poor and isolated reserves, or in the native ghettos of western Canadian cities, where Indians and Métis often arrive at drop-in facilities with the somewhat Orwellian name of Native Friendship Centres. Some drift aimlessly into skid row areas like Vancouver's lower Hastings St. or Calgary's 7th Ave. East. During the early afternoon in a beverage room off Regina's South Railway St., the customers are Indians in baseball caps and windbreakers glumly drinking beer, their silence punctuated by the whistle of a freight train crossing the prairie.

In recent years, Canada's native communities have produced a new generation of Indian — as well as Inuit — leaders. Some, like the chiefs of B.C.'s Nicola Indian bands, now run their own businesses and reserve social programs. Many native leaders are newly articulate in demanding land rights and other claims. They are getting a more attentive hearing from governments, courts and business corporations, partly because of fears that native land claims will prevent development of vital resources. "The larger society," says National Indian Brotherhood President Noel Starblanket, "has no divine right to take our lands and resources," or to deny the "inherent sovereignty of the original people of Canada." His rhetoric sounds very much like that of some of white Canada's leaders when they talk about "their" resources, or Quebec's "inherent sovereignty."

Beyond the Balance Sheets

Canadians have been hearing talk of renewing the country on sounder foundations for almost as long as they can remember. But the issue no longer actively engages only Quebecers. As the western premiers and other leaders have



demonstrated, there is now a wider coalition of Canadians who see clearly the need to make things work better for everyone.

Chipewyan Indian of northern Alberta.

What is standing in the way? For more than a decade now, politicians, professors and pundits have been talking about reforming Canada's institutions and constitution, dispensing prescriptions as fast as a corner drugstore. But usually questions like "What does Quebec want?" or "What does the West want?" are answered as if they mean "What does the Quebec *government* or the Alberta *government* want?" The question seldom asked, and vital to answer, is: "What do the Canadian *people* want?"

What Canadians want is what they have always worked so hard to build: a society of fulfillment and opportunity, of freedom and personal identity — a society where all men and women are treated with respect.

Canadians enjoy so relatively high a degree of personal and political freedom partly because of the value they place on local identity in place of stifling national conformity. This aspect of the Canadian character drew from the late American literary eminence Edmund Wilson the salutation: "All power in its recalcitrance to that still uncoordinated, unblended and indigestible Canada!" But if Canada, in a more relaxed fashion than most countries, gives to each of its citizens a large measure of personal freedom and elbow room, preserving it will require something *from* each Canadian as well.

One of the noblest phrases in the literature of democracy are the three simple words that begin the U.S. Constitution — "We, the People." But how long has it been since the people of Canada, of whatever region, language, or culture, spoke those words together? These days, Canadians too often psyche themselves into a state of mind where, instead of "We, the People," there is only a "we" and a "they."

We anglophones speak "the language of business, the language of North America"; *they* do not. We francophones have our own profoundly original culture and identity, as well as our special privileges as a "founding race"; *they* do not. We in central Canada own "our" industries, and we in other provinces own "our" resources — and *they* better not get in our way.

So many Canadians are clutching economic and cultural chattels to their breasts, or making fists in their pockets as they watch others clutch theirs, that they seem to have all but forgotten the fatal flaw in such feelings — that "they" *is* we.

It is difficult, for example, to see a secure future for the distinctive and independent Canada beloved by English-speaking nationalists — unless it embodies a national commitment to preserve a distinctive French-speaking culture based in, but not confined to, Quebec. It is difficult to see greater respect for the equality and dignity of French-speaking Canadians, wherever they live or travel in Canada — unless francophones also honour the absolute equality of Canadians of other descents, wherever *they* happen to live.

Similarly, a stronger western Canada need be no threat to central Canada. On the contrary, a West that is at last coming into its own, along with a stronger Atlantic region, are vital elements in a more balanced, stable national economy. At the same time, provinces will have to continue to share the benefits from their resources if Canada is to preserve an economically manageable and socially progressive federation.

It is only by such sharing that Canadians, wherever they live, can be assured a decent standard of education, health care and social services. Or that the whole nation can cushion workers and their families, in particular industries or communities, against calamities caused by economic forces beyond their control.



Three of the noblest words in the literature of democracy.

The principle of sharing does not imply a special burden for — or waving a finger at — any province or region. Today, funds which might otherwise flow to the Alberta Treasury are helping to subsidize home-heating costs in Quebec and P.E.I. In earlier years, equalization funds and job opportunities provided by central Canada assisted Canadians from the West. Just as the Maritime provinces were among the most prosperous when Confederation began, Newfoundland may be — if oil gushes — five or ten years from now.

The instrument of sharing and redistribution is the federal government in Ottawa. It alone performs such functions, though it almost never does so to anyone's complete satisfaction. In recent years, Ottawa's self-assurance has been undercut by new regional realities with which it often has seemed out of touch. At the same time, the provinces have been exercising powers undreamed of more than a few decades ago — and certainly not by the Fathers of Confederation, who foresaw that the provinces would play a role no more significant than that of "municipal appendages."

Some appendages. Apart from owning everything from airlines to television stations, and largely controlling the development of natural resources, the provinces administer billions of dollars in health, education and welfare programs. They receive more than half of all tax revenues, and together with their municipal governments spend 48% more than Ottawa does, compared with 28% less than Ottawa did 25 years ago.

If the voting public seems undisturbed by the trend to greater provincial power at the expense of Ottawa, one reason is that many Canadians have increasingly questioned whether Ottawa is "their" government, reflecting their concerns. Witness, for example, the fury of western farmers over the decay of the country's grain handling and transportation system, which has cost them up to \$2 million a day in lost sales. Or the ire of Newfoundland because Atlantic air-sea rescue equipment was located for many years on the mainland, where it could not respond effectively to emergencies off the island's coast.

It is little wonder the Task Force on Canadian Unity found that Ottawa is widely regarded as "a remote shambling bureaucracy that exacts tribute from its subjects and gives little in return." Many argue that the parliamentary system in its present form virtually guarantees that regional voices will not be effectively heard in Ottawa, that the doctrines of Cabinet solidarity and strict party-line voting in the House of Commons undercut the ability of ministers and MPs to act as effective regional spokesmen.

Complaints about Ottawa have fuelled demands to decentralize, to give even more power to the provinces. An alternative course would be to reform federal institutions, making them more sensitive to regional concerns. Surely most ordinary Canadians do not want a weaker national government, but a more effective national government, more responsive to all regions, yet still strong enough to equalize the benefits and burdens of the nation's wealth.

But Canadian federalism is not primarily a system of economic partnership — a fact which appeared to escape many on both sides during the run-up to the Quebec referendum campaign. In recent months the dimensions of Quebec's debate have broadened, with publication of the Parti Québécois government's proposals for a politically sovereign Quebec, economically associated with Canada, and of Liberal leader Claude Ryan's detailed blueprint for a "New Canadian Federation." But for most of the last three years Quebec City and Ottawa bombarded each other with statistic-laden *dossiers* purporting to demonstrate in dollars and cents how much a) independence, or b) remaining part of the federal system, would "cost" Quebec.

Obviously, Quebec as well as the rest of Canada would lose economically if Confederation broke up. Just as obviously, Quebec — with more resources, higher incomes per capita, and a larger area than the vast majority of

Flag-bedecked farmhouse in Wakefield, Que.



the world's sovereign nations — could exist economically on its own if it really wished to do so. And so, for that matter, could any other region of Canada.

But the economic balance sheet approach to Canada (which is also popular among some regional grievors in the West and elsewhere) falls gravely short of grasping what the debate over Quebec's future — and Canada's — is all about. As Quebec's Finance Minister Jacques Parizeau acknowledges, "Very few men and women are going to change their country for the price of a few bottles of beer a week." Indeed, the most profound questions that all Canadians should be asking themselves about the future of Canada and its federal system go far beyond economic profit-and-loss columns.

"They," in the End, Is All of Us

Nothing is morally sacred, or fixed eternally in marble, about a country's territorial borders or form of government. Rather, the only sensible justification for preserving — or changing — them is that doing so would clearly provide the greatest amount of liberty and well-being to the people who live there.

That proposition leads to a number of questions which should be put to those who propose to separate Quebec from Canada, and to those who favour reforming a Canada which includes Quebec. For example, would their proposals give the 23 million people of Canada greater strength to cope with (and even modestly help overcome) international economic and political challenges? Greater collective security for their language and cultural identities? Greater individual liberty? Greater opportunity for their children and grandchildren to lead fuller, more caring lives?

Federal systems like Canada's are very different from an economic association, such as the one proposed by Premier Lévesque. This is because federalism is not an economic common market but a political system — a way for different people to live together as citizens of a common land that is the home and inheritance of them all. A federal system is certainly no political wonder drug for all that ails modern society; neither, for that matter, is democracy. But federalism is a widely successful means, as Harvard's professor of government Samuel Beer has written, "to divide power so as to avert the evils and realize the benefits of free government."

Dividing, and thereby limiting, political power is particularly important in a country like Canada, with two official language groups and many regional and ethnic communities, all of which are "minorities" in one place or another. When power is divided between two levels of government, total power becomes infinitely more difficult to achieve over any particular minority, by either the national or provincial majority. At its best, federalism also provides a central government strong enough to champion nationally felt imperatives over locally entrenched special interests. And it empowers provincial governments to preserve community identities and interests against domination or uniformity threatened by a national majority.

Canadian federalism also divides power at the provincial level — ten different ways. For the individual citizen this can mean a freer and wider choice of lifestyle within his own country. For Canadian society as a whole, it means a larger range of economic and social experimentation and, as a by-product, more opportunities to discover solutions to common problems developed by others. Ottawa, for example, learned so much from the superior design of the Quebec Pension Plan in the 1960s that it remodelled the Canada Pension Plan along Quebec's lines. All of North America was the beneficiary because Tommy Douglas' Saskatchewan government had the freedom to experiment with public hospital, medical and auto insurance. During an age of big, pervasive government, perhaps yet another benefit of federalism for the citizen is "the unlikelihood," as an Ottawa mandarin has dryly put it, "that all eleven



governments will decide at one time to do the same foolish thing to people."

Living in a pluralistic federal Canada has its difficulties and heartaches, above all the suspicion and hostility that are almost bound to occur where different races and cultures live together. They can of course choose to live apart, particularly Canada's English and French language groups — each large and powerful enough, as they are, to break up the country.

The Parti Québécois choice is to do just that, no matter the incalculable loss to Quebecers and to all other Canadians. Another choice, which seems to appeal to an ominous number of English- as well as French-speaking Canadians, is the creation within Canada of two gigantic language ghettos. But with Quebec speaking only French, and the rest of Canada only English, the two would have less and less to talk about, and would inevitably one day drift apart.

There is a more promising choice. A country's political framework and values are not something to be knocked down this Monday and built anew by next Friday. They are more like a garden, to be nurtured in harmony with the landscape. The Canadian landscape began to shift two decades ago, and now the season has come for change.

It should begin with recognition that the existence of two great language communities and many regional and cultural realities, which we so often insist are problems that cripple us, are in fact opportunities that can enrich and free us. For "they," in the end, is all of us.

Additional copies available in English or in French
on request from:

The Seagram Company Ltd.
P.O. Box 1087, Station 'H'
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 2N1

Photo Credits

de Visser, John, pp. 3, 4 (top), 8, 10 (top),
10 (bottom), 22, 25, 27, 29 (top), 32.
Grant, Ted, p. 12 (top right).

Image Bank:

Caron, Derek: p. 20; Cook, Rodney F.: p. 4
(bottom); de Visser, John: p. 34; Weber,
Roland: pp. 18, 19, 21.

NFB Phototèque:

Hunter, George: p. 6 (top right), p. 6 (top left);
Versteeg, J. M.: p. 6 (bottom right).
Pierce, Bill, pp. 12 (top left); 14 (top left),
14 (top right), 14 (bottom right), 14 (bottom left),
15. Springmann, Christopher/Black Star, p. 16.
von Baich, Paul, p. 29 (bottom), 30.

Color Separations/Meco Ltd.

Printed in Canada by:
Imprimerie Canadienne Gazette

© The Seagram Company Ltd. 1980

