



*Public Archives of Canada.*

*A frequent Canadian theme: Man dwarfed by nature. This view of the forests of British Columbia was sketched in 1882 by the province's Governor-General, the Marquis of Lorne.*

# Canada

Americans have many things in common: Washington's Birthday sales, summer reruns, FICA, the Goodyear blimp, to name only a few. Canadians, it is sometimes said, have in common only a map. Still, it is a very large map. And lately, it has been appearing in the news. Canada and Great Britain severed their last formal constitutional links in March 1982. Ottawa has taken steps to curb U.S. economic and cultural "imperialism." Quebec separatists have edged closer to secession. Oil-rich Alberta is resisting Ottawa's move to tighten up the world's loosest federal system. Considering everything above the 49th parallel to be like everything below it, most Americans pay little attention to their neighbor "upstairs." Yet Canada is a very different place, with very different preoccupations, and it lacks the luxury of being able to ignore its neighbor. Here, Kristin Shannon and Peter Regenstreif review the past decade's tumult up north. Robin Winks looks at the Canadian character—if, he muses, there is such a thing.

## HANGING TOGETHER

*by Kristin Shannon and Peter Regenstreif*

"Some countries have too much history," Prime Minister Mackenzie King once said; "Canada has too much geography."

The intense cold and forbidding landscape of northern Canada—thick forests, mountains, frozen tundra—have discouraged settlement ever since the first permanent colonists, led by Samuel Champlain, stepped ashore in New Brunswick in 1604. Even the Vikings, visiting Newfoundland some 600 years earlier, found ice-bound Greenland more congenial than "Vinland." Today, three-fourths of Canada's people live and work where it is warmest, within 100 miles of the U.S. border.

Human beings are rare in much of Canada. The nation is second only to the Soviet Union in land area, encompassing more than 3.8 million square miles, but, with only 24 million

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people, its population density is less than that of arid Saudi Arabia. English poet Patrick Anderson once called Canada

America's attic, an empty room  
 a something possible, a chance, a dance  
 that is not danced.

Isolation, reinforced by ethnic differences, has bred distinct regional cultures in Canada. The country, it is often said, is a "mosaic," not a "melting pot." Descendants of the original French colonists dominate the province of Quebec. But Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island—these are bastions of the descendants of early English and Scottish settlers. Further west, Ukrainian and German communities dot the landscape. The result is strong local allegiances.

In 1907, Canadian nationalist Henri Bourassa lamented: "There is Ontario patriotism, Quebec patriotism, or Western patriotism, each based on the hope that it may swallow up the others, but there is no Canadian patriotism."

Optimists, especially provincial politicians, extol Canada's "unity without uniformity." But regional economic and cultural differences have, since the early 1970s, become increasingly troublesome. Canada's constitution leaves many responsibilities in the hands of its 10 provincial governments, and their leaders have been feuding bitterly with the national government in Ottawa and among themselves over the division of governmental powers. In French-speaking Quebec, a powerful movement has been pressing since the early '60s for independence of some sort from the rest of Canada.

Owing partly to these domestic difficulties, Canadians are becoming increasingly unhappy over the influence of their southern neighbor. In 1974, Parliament established a "takeover tribunal," the Foreign Investment Review Agency, whose approval is needed for new investments or purchases of Canadian corporations by foreigners (Americans, for the most part). In 1975, Parliament barred Canadian companies from taking tax deductions for advertising in media—print, television, radio—

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with less than 75 percent Canadian ownership and content. One result: "affirmative action" for Canadian rock musicians as top-40 radio stations scrambled to meet the new content rules.

To most Americans, all of this comes as something of a surprise. As recently as 1970, University of Minnesota historian William Kilbourn described Canada as the "peaceable kingdom." But a few years later, peace gave way to confrontation. American businessmen were astonished to find themselves suddenly regarded as representatives of "foreign" interests, as though they were Arab sheiks. American tuna boats were seized off Vancouver Island for fishing within the expansive 200-mile territorial limit claimed by Ottawa. Militant separatism, chronic political squabbling, and sporadic outbreaks of terrorism within Canada all added to the impression abroad that Canada was no longer the gray Good Neighbor it once seemed.

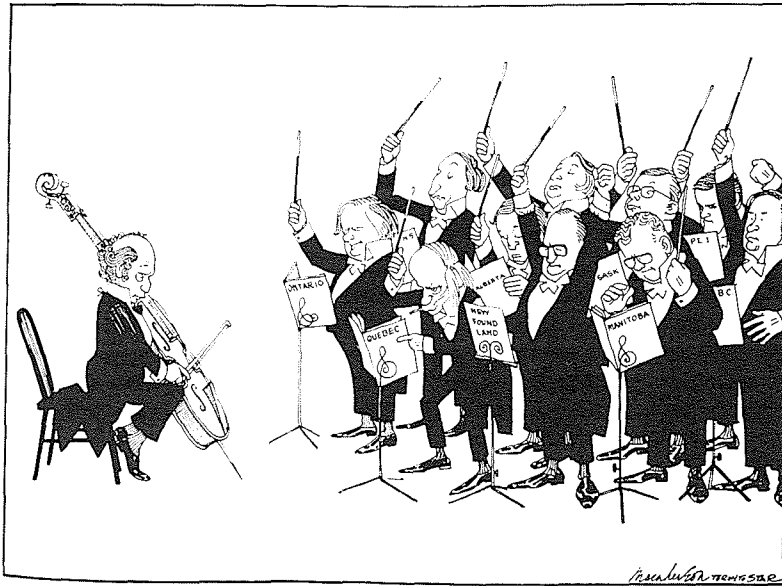
#### Five Canadas or One?

In truth, Canada is showing the strains partly imposed by sheer geography. In addition to the vast but nearly uninhabited Yukon and Northwest Territories (both governed directly by Ottawa), there are five distinct Canadas inside Canada:

¶ British Columbia, like the American Northwest, enjoys a relatively mild climate and is rich in natural resources—lumber, fish, copper, and zinc. Cut off from the rest of the country by the Canadian Rockies, and with a California-style ambience, the province tends to look south to the United States and across the Pacific to Japan and other Asian customers whose ships dock at the port of Vancouver, Canada's third largest city.

¶ The Prairie "breadbasket" provinces—Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba—produce more wheat each year than 10 South Dakotas, making Canada the world's No. 2 grain exporter. Germans, East Europeans, and Ukrainians (refugees from another breadbasket) and other relatively recent immigrants make up about one-quarter of the population here. Alberta, enjoying a Texas-style economic boom led by petroleum (the province contains 85 percent of Canada's proven oil and gas reserves), has been one of the chief obstacles to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's attempt to gather more power in Ottawa's hands.\*

\*Canada must still import about 25 percent of the oil it needs annually, but it also exports relatively small amounts of oil and gas to the United States. The Northwest Territories and the Yukon are thought to contain vast hydrocarbon deposits, and Alberta's virtually untapped Athabasca "tar sands" could yield between 650 billion and 1.3 trillion barrels of oil. (Saudi Arabia, by comparison, possesses proven reserves of 200 billion barrels.) Development of the "tar sands" has been slowed by high costs and technical problems; only one small processing plant is in operation.



Reprinted with permission—The Toronto Star.

*Who's in charge? Prime Minister Trudeau fiddles as provincial Premiers conduct. Quebec's Premier, René Lévesque, is front row, second from left.*

¶ Ontario, the most ethnically diverse province, is the nation's commercial and industrial heartland. It contains Ottawa, the placid capital, and Toronto, Canada's financial center and, with almost three million people, its biggest city and home of the world's tallest structure, the 1,821-foot-tall CN Tower. To the American Midwest, it sells autos, auto parts, and other manufactured goods, mostly produced by U.S.-owned companies.

¶ To the east of Ontario lies the province of Quebec, the heart of Francophone Canada (80 percent of its citizens are of French descent). Quebec's economy is based on mining, forestry, and light manufacturing—e.g., clothing, furniture, and newsprint for U.S. newspapers. All of these industries are in decline because of the worldwide economic slump and brisk competition from the Third World, where labor is cheap. The bright spot: Quebec's flourishing hydroelectric industry, centered on James Bay, which will export electricity worth about \$120 million annually to the United States during the 1980s, equivalent to 15 percent of New York City's electric bill.

¶ On the rugged east coast lies a fifth Canada, the Atlantic

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provinces—New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island—dominated by the descendants of early British, particularly Scottish, settlers. Dependent chiefly upon fishing and forestry, the Atlantic provinces have long been Canada's economic poorhouse. Brightening their prospects is the recent discovery of offshore fields of oil and gas near Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

### Strikes, Separatism, and Taxes

Despite diversification and an abundance of oil and gas, Canada's \$274 billion economy is in the doldrums. The lingering effects of the 1973–74 and 1979 OPEC price hikes, tight money, and high interest rates account for much of the problem. Unemployment reached 8.6 percent in 1981, inflation 12.5 percent, uncannily similar to the corresponding indices south of the border. The Canadian economy is (and always has been) heavily dependent upon exports, which amount to 25 percent of gross national product, and the United States is its chief customer. When the United States catches cold, Canada sneezes.\*

Thanks in part to high tariffs that long shielded Canadian industry from foreign competition, Canada's labor productivity is about 20 percent lower than that of the United States, adding to the price of Canadian products. Productivity growth has been hampered by strikes. Canada loses more working days (782 per 1,000 employees) due to strikes each year than any other country in the world except Italy. One reason: Canadian trade unions, particularly in Quebec, are highly politicized. In Canada, writes Toronto journalist F. S. Manor, "strikes [become] battles in a class war."

In general, the West, paced by Alberta, has fared better than the East, deepening rifts between "have" and "have-not" provinces. Ottawa's attempts to remedy some of the inequality via taxation—encroaching thereby on traditional provincial prerogatives—have stirred further animosity. A new Western separatist party won its first seat in the Alberta legislature in February 1982.

Underlying all of these controversies is one question: Must Canada remain a loose collection of 10 provinces, or can it become a genuine political community?

Canada's form of government was laid out by Great Britain

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\*The export problem has been eased somewhat by the decline of the Canadian dollar, which has been worth between 81¢ and 84¢ (U.S.) since 1979, down from about 96¢ in 1974. This makes Canadian exports cheaper. It also makes imports more expensive. The United States buys 73 percent of Canada's exports and provides an equal proportion of its imports.

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in the British North America (BNA) Act of 1867. This act gave Canada partial independence and today serves as its constitutional foundation.\* The act established a "Westminster" parliamentary system modeled after Britain's, with a popularly elected House of Commons and a largely ceremonial (and appointed) Senate, analogous to the House of Lords. At the same time, the BNA Act also established a federal system; it granted each province many more powers than the U.S. Constitution gives to the states. For instance, the provinces, each with its own legislature and laws, have responsibility for public health, education, and welfare—responsibilities that did not loom large in 1867. Yet the BNA Act also left all powers not specifically granted to the provinces in the hands of the federal government, leaving room for shifts in the balance of power.

### Dividing the Spoils

During the Great Depression and, later, during World War II, Ottawa's power grew as Parliament tried to cope with new crises. Later, the absence of any immediate external threat and the widespread prosperity that began during the 1950s seemed to reduce the need for strong federal leadership. The provincial governments took on more functions in such areas as labor relations, economic policy, the environment. They built bureaucracies and local constituencies that undercut Ottawa. Today, polls show that more than half (56 percent) of Canada's people identify more closely with their province than with the country as a whole. Only Ontarians tend to look to Ottawa's leadership, and then only by a narrow margin.

By the end of the 1970s, the fault lines in the Canadian federal system were becoming increasingly apparent. With the help of the Supreme Court, Americans had sorted out most of their "states' rights" versus "federal powers" issues during the 19th century. By contrast, *Canadian Trend Report* studies showed that Canadian politicians in 1980 were hotly debating some 70 jurisdictional disputes.

Chief among these, as noted, was the question of taxes. The issue: Who would have the right to tax what? Ottawa, for instance, wanted to increase its levies on oil and gas production, mostly at the expense of the producing provinces. At stake were some \$212 billion in total tax revenues expected by 1986, and

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\*Canada became a constitutional monarchy under Great Britain, but the mother country retained crucial powers, especially in foreign affairs. These powers have been ceded to Canada in stages since the turn of the century. The last of them, the formal power to amend the Constitution, was ceded this year.

the Constitution offered no clear guide to division of the spoils.

Some of the less monumental inter-provincial disputes illustrated the extent of the problem. Could Quebec bar Ontario's eggs from its markets? Could Ontario, in retaliation, restrict sales of Quebec's chickens in its markets? Such ques-

### NORTH AMERICA'S BIG ATTIC



- Potential petrol basin
- Oil and gas fields
- Existing pipeline
- "Tar sands" deposits
- Distant Early Warning Line
- Planned pipeline

Source: Canadian Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources; *International Petroleum Encyclopedia* (1970); The Northwest Alaskan Pipeline Company; *The Times Atlas of the World* (1977).

*Not shown: potential offshore oil and gas basins. The \$23 billion Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline will stretch 4,800 miles from Prudhoe Bay to Chicago and San Francisco when completed in 1987. The 31 radar stations of the U.S.-Canadian Defense Early Warning (DEW) Line watch for any Soviet missile attack across the Arctic.*



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tions rarely arise in the United States, because the U.S. Constitution was designed in part to resolve just such ambiguities that had caused problems under the earlier Articles of Confederation. But, in Canada, each province has scores of rules that constrain the inter-provincial movement of people, goods, services, and capital.

The dilemma of modern Canada is reflected in the situation of its dominant political party, the Liberals. Headed for 15 years by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the Liberals have held power in Ottawa for 74 of the last 86 years. They have been in charge since 1963 (except for an aberrant nine-month interlude in 1979–80). The Liberals, in other words, are the “natural” governing party of Canada. But, in recent years, Quebec separatism and the disputes over energy policy and the division of powers have worn away the “Liberal consensus” that long gave the country a sense of direction.

### Phase One

Trudeau, an advocate of a more centralized regime, first became Prime Minister in 1968, propelled into office by “Trudeaumania,” a wave of enthusiasm for the Kennedyesque Justice Minister. Trudeau was not only young (he was then 48) but also, as Henry Kissinger described him, “elegant, brilliant, enigmatic, intellectual.” The Liberals suffered a defeat in the 1979 election thanks mostly to the country’s sagging economy, but Trudeau was returned to power the next year when Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark’s government fell. (Clark’s proposal to sell off the government-owned oil company, PetroCan, and to impose an 18¢-per-gallon tax on gasoline caused a popular uproar and was rejected by Parliament.) But with only 44 percent of the votes, Trudeau and his party had no clear mandate.\*

By 1980, the Liberals’ strength—and that of their foes—had become highly regionalized. The Liberal Party held all but one of Quebec’s 75 seats in the House of Commons and 51 out of Ontario’s 95. But out in the rich, booming West, it reaped only two of 80 seats. There, the socialist New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Progressive Conservatives predominated. At the provincial level, the Liberals lost control of all 10 governments. The NDP, with its nationalistic program calling for greater federal intervention in the economy, was making inroads in tradi-

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\*The Liberals did gain a majority in Parliament by coming out on top in winner-take-all contests. They hold 147 seats to the Progressive Conservatives’ 103, and the New Democratic Party’s 32.

### CHURCH, HOCKEY, AND THE BLUE JAYS

An American visiting Canada notices several things immediately. Road signs give distances in kilometers. Gas is sold by the liter and is a few pennies cheaper than it is in the United States. Cross from Vermont into Quebec, and the road signs are in French, while the houses change colors: New England reds and whites on one side of the border; pastels on the other.

About 10,000 Americans emigrate to Canada every year. Their lives change in ways large and small. Of course, it is colder, and, as the U.S. State Department advises its personnel posted there, clothing is more expensive. To judge by the statistics, the new Canadian will learn to drink more hard liquor (2.19 gallons annually) and less beer (22.9 gallons) than before. The newcomer's chances of taking a turn in a snowmobile will increase enormously—one of every eight Canadians uses one—and his chances of getting divorced will be cut almost in half. About 25 percent of all Canadian marriages end in divorce. He cannot expect to live longer, but his chances of being murdered will be only a quarter of what they are south of the border. If caught, his murderer will not face the death penalty, but he can be tried on evidence illegally obtained.

Apart from the weather, daily life is not extraordinarily different in much of Canada. Children pledge allegiance to the Queen (instead of the flag) every morning at school and may well recite a prayer, but they pass through 12 grades, as in the United States. They will get a day off in May to celebrate Victoria Day; Thanksgiving, which falls on the second Monday in October instead of the fourth Thursday in November, may seem a bit early. Only about a quarter of high school graduates will go on to college, half the U.S. proportion. On Sundays, most Canadians take their children to church, if only because there is not much else to do. Even the oil boom town of Calgary shuts down on the Christian Sabbath.

Neither is the workaday world much different. Bankers, bureaucrats, and tool and die makers are far more common than loggers. Income taxes (provincial and federal) are high, amounting roughly to what an average New York State resident would pay to Albany and Washington. But government benefits are usually more generous in Canada. All families with children are eligible for a monthly family allowance of \$18.65 per child (1980). Everyone is covered by mandatory medical and hospitalization insurance: In some provinces, one need never pay a medical bill.

Hockey is the Canadian national sport, and the transplanted American would be well advised to cultivate a taste for curling and skiing. But he need not abandon the American national pastime: Canada has two professional baseball teams, the Toronto Blue Jays and the Montreal Expos. In French-speaking Montreal, of course, the fans sound a little different. When the Expos come up to bat, one prays for a *circuit* (home run) and curses every *retrait* (out).

## ECONOMIC CONTRASTS

PERSONAL DISPOSABLE INCOME  (in U.S. dollars)	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980
	CANADA	890	1,248	1,533	1,712	2,429	4,807
Nova Scotia	671	941	1,180	1,297	1,926	3,835	5,561
Quebec	769	1,083	1,354	1,567	2,192	4,341	6,351
Ontario	1,069	1,472	1,777	1,954	2,815	5,265	7,390
Alberta	899	1,262	1,550	1,690	2,427	4,953	7,681
UNITED STATES	1,362	1,664	1,947	2,448	3,390	5,075	8,002

Source: *Bank of Canada Review* (Dec. 1972 & Nov. 1981); *Bank of Canada Statistical Summary Supplement* (1965); The Conference Board in Canada; Statistics Canada; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Prosperity varies from province to province, but on average, Canadians do not lag far behind Americans. Canada's economy moves in tandem with that of the United States, sharing its ups and downs, its air pollution, even its unemployment rates. "Living next to you is like sleeping with an elephant," Pierre Trudeau once told President Nixon. Canadian industry has been especially hard-hit by chronic recession south of the border. The Canadian Science Council warned in 1979 that the country was moving "away from an industrialized economy back to one based on the export of raw materials"—timber, ores, grain, gas, and oil. The council charged that U.S.-based multinationals had deprived Canada of 200,000 skilled jobs by locating assembly plants in Canada while keeping research and management operations in the United States. Ottawa's solution: a \$1 billion program to aid domestic high-technology industries (e.g., aerospace, electronics, medical equipment) and new laws curbing foreign investment. Results are not yet in. Predictably, foreign investment has fallen off—a mixed blessing.

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tional Liberal urban strongholds in Ontario. It controlled the provincial government in Saskatchewan and was the official "opposition" (No. 2) party in Manitoba and British Columbia.

After the February 1980 election brought Trudeau back to power, Liberal strategists assessed the vote and decided they would have to move quickly to reassert their presence country-wide. Their plan: shift leftward (to head off the New Democrats) and establish a firmer constitutional basis for the stronger role that they needed Ottawa to play in order to enact Liberal policies. But before Trudeau and the Liberals could take any action at the federal level, they had to deal with the approaching referendum on the status of Quebec. A May 1980 vote was scheduled in the province. The issue: Should Quebec, for all practical purposes, secede from Canada? Countering secession became Trudeau's Phase One campaign. Trudeau, himself a Quebec native, told an audience: "It takes more courage to stay in Canada and fight it out, than to withdraw into our walls."

### **Surviving by Habit**

Quebec's position within Canada has always been unique. Much of present-day Canada was French territory until 1759, during what Americans call the French and Indian War. In September of that year, a British army under General James Wolfe defeated an outnumbered French force under the Marquis de Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham, just above Quebec City. In a 1763 treaty, King Louis XV formally ceded much of New France to King George III except part of Newfoundland (later sold to Britain) and two tiny islands, St. Pierre and Miquelon, that today are departments of metropolitan France. But under the 1774 Quebec Act, London granted French-speaking, Catholic Quebec substantial political and religious autonomy.

Quebec remained relatively quiescent for nearly 200 years. That began to change when Canada, like the United States, experienced a boom in industrialization and urbanization during the 1950s and '60s. "Prosperity was creating not only industrial development but a new type of French Canadian," notes Quebec journalist Peter Desbarats, "educated, aggressive, and eager to play an active and complete role. . . . This was the beginning of what is now called 'the quiet revolution'—a revolution by French Canadians against the conservative Catholic ideals of a poor agricultural society and against dull acceptance of their position as a minority group."

Soon, the province's political leaders began rebuffing the English-Canadian and American investors who sought tax

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breaks and low public outlays as the price of new investment. They initiated a pension plan and medical care programs, and pushed reforms in labor relations, the civil service, and government contracting. One of the leaders in this change was René Lévesque, Natural Resources Minister in Quebec's Liberal government during the early 1960s. He came to personify the slogan *Maîtres chez-nous* ("Masters in our own House") when he spearheaded the provincial government's takeover of 11 privately owned hydroelectric companies in 1962.

The Quebec government began demanding—and getting—increased taxing powers from the federal government. But the pace of change was not fast enough for some in Quebec. In 1963, the radical *Front de Libération de Québec* began a wave of random bombings. In 1967, Lévesque himself left the Liberals to form what in 1969 would become the *Parti Québécois* (PQ), uniting most of the French separatists and nationalists under its banner. Lévesque advocated "sovereignty-association" for Quebec. As first conceived, this meant that the province would be politically independent of the rest of Canada, though tied to it by economic agreements like those that "unite" the member nations of the European Common Market.

The PQ won 21 percent of the vote in the 1970 provincial election, 30 percent in 1973. Opinion surveys indicated that *Québécois* sympathized with the party and trusted Lévesque, but many were reluctant to back the PQ because they feared a complete break with the rest of Canada. To assuage their fears, Lévesque, before the 1976 election, promised that, if he won, he would not try to change Quebec's status within Canada before submitting the issue to a referendum. That was enough, and Lévesque swept to power. This was the situation confronting Trudeau.

The May 1980 referendum asked Quebec's voters to authorize the provincial government to begin negotiating for "sovereignty-association." It spurred a heated debate. Trudeau declared that a "*Oui*" vote would lead to a stalemate, and he promised that a "*Non*" vote would clear the way for a "renewed federalism" and new Constitution. On May 20, 1980, almost 60 percent of the voters said "*Non*."

With the Quebec question at least temporarily shelved, the Liberals were free to move to Phase Two, the Constitution.

In a June 1980 conference, Trudeau laid before the 10 provincial Premiers a 12-item constitutional package that would strengthen Ottawa's powers. In addition, Trudeau proposed to "patriate" the BNA Act: Britain would give up its last formal hold over Canada, the authority to approve amendments to the



### BACON, EGGS, AND CULTURE



*In The Nine Nations of North America (1981), journalist Joel Garreau described life in Quebec, the "improbable" ninth "nation":*

To love Québec . . . is to love the Pontiac Firebird Trans Am with a 205-bhp, 301-cubic inch V8 and a flaming eagle painted on the hood. Québécois are the worst gas guzzlers left in the world, statistics show. Any street in Québec is testimony to their affection for full-sized LTDs and vroom-vroom Corvettes. . . . It's a formidable combination in the 1980s to drive like a Frenchman in high-horsepower North American iron.

Their prides are different. Québécois make a very big deal over how terrific their women look, and, indeed, compared to some of the brown thrush understatements of which English Canadian women are capable, Québécoises can be very attractive. Women here are routinely referred to as "*tres chic*," and, in fact, the most striking statements are made by women whose heels are higher, make-up and perfume more pronounced, and fashions more Europe-conscious than others. . . . Even the politics and culture of good looks are different in Québec from those elsewhere.

They swear differently. And not just because it's in French. In order to get nasty, they don't modify with references to excrement or sex. They modify with words like "tabernacle," "sanctuary," "Chalice," and "host." If you really want to lean into a curse, you string them all together, until you get something like: "*Lui, c'est un maudit, chrisse, 'osti, calisse de tabernac'*." That'll get you a bar fight anyplace in the Gaspé.

They even think about their similarities with the rest of the continent in a different fashion. In making the point that, while Québec was French, it was also a distinctly North American culture, one observer said, "Our culture is the way we do things; the way we eat. When we have breakfast, we eat cereal, we eat eggs, we eat bacon."

It's tough to imagine another North American culture [bringing] attention to its singularity by the fact that it eats bacon and eggs.

From The Nine Nations of North America by Joel Garreau. © 1981 by Joel Garreau.

Canadian Constitution. The most controversial of Trudeau's changes was a proposed national Charter of Rights (similar to the U.S. Bill of Rights), particularly its guarantee of bilingualism throughout Canada. This would require that education and public business be conducted in both French and English.

Some of the Premiers from English-speaking provinces objected, but Lévesque protested loudest of all. Canada is officially bilingual even now, but Quebec, taking advantage of the porous Constitution, has been taking steps to curb the use of English in

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its domain—for example, by prohibiting the language on commercial signs in the province.\* Under Quebec's Bill 101, passed in 1977, only children with at least one parent who attended an English-language school are entitled to an education in English. All others must attend French-language schools.

British Columbia, Alberta, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, meanwhile, objected to provisions of the Trudeau constitution that would strengthen Ottawa's hand in setting oil and gas prices and taxes.

Throughout the bickering, Trudeau warned the Premiers that if no agreement were forthcoming, he would go over their heads and ask the Canadian and British Parliaments to pass his proposals. Ultimately, he did just that. But after the Canadian Parliament approved the package, Canada's Supreme Court ruled that Trudeau was bound by tradition (though not law) to obtain provincial consent.

Trudeau went back to the conference table with the Premiers and emerged with a compromise: All of his proposals remained intact, but an escape clause was added allowing any province to exempt itself from the Charter of Rights for five years at a time. Nine of the Premiers agreed to the new formula. Lévesque dissented. Last December, the Canadian Parliament again endorsed the package and sent it to the British Parliament, which finally voted its approval on March 25, 1982.

In November 1980, only four months after unveiling his constitutional package, Trudeau launched Phase Three: a new National Energy Policy (NEP). Essentially, the NEP gave government a massive new role in the energy business. It imposed new excise taxes, reduced depletion allowances, and established a price below world levels for domestic oil consumed at home. It gave Ottawa a larger cut of the tax revenues and "encouraged" Canadian ownership through a Petroleum Incentives Program that gave tax advantages to domestic firms to increase their share of the energy business.

The Liberals saw their new energy policy as a chance to accomplish two things at once. First, by fostering economic nationalism ("Canadianization"), they took a step to the left—to steal the NDP's thunder. Second, they garnered vastly increased tax revenues.

Canadian ownership is a particularly touchy issue. Canada has the highest level of foreign investment in the industrialized world. Non-Canadians own about 60 percent of Canadian indus-

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\*Last year, the national government spent \$373 million for printing documents in two languages and for bilingual education and related programs. This was a slightly larger share of the federal budget than NASA received in the United States.

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try. Trudeau hopes to reduce foreign (mostly U.S.) ownership of oil and gas production from the current level of 79 percent to 50 percent within 10 years. (So far, it has been reduced by about five percentage points.) To show that the government was serious, its PetroCan bought the Canadian holdings of Belgium's Petrofina corporation for \$1.5 billion.

It would appear from the events of the last year or so that, in domestic politics, Canadians and Americans are heading in opposite directions: Canadians toward increased federal government involvement; Americans under the "New Federalism" toward a reduced role for the central government. But this is slightly misleading. Despite Ottawa's heavy-handed intrusion into the energy field and Trudeau's success in amending and patriating the Constitution, the future will probably see a lowered profile for government in general, and for the federal government in particular, and a greater emphasis on provincial values—this is what Canadians themselves seem to want.

It is becoming clear to Canadian politicians across the spectrum that direct intervention in the economy can be politically and economically costly. It is far easier to achieve improvements in the environment, occupational health and safety, the distribution of jobs and income, and other areas of social policy by *regulating* corporations than by *owning* them. This is probably the future direction of Canadian public policy, despite the often-heard contention that Canada's natural drift has long been toward "socialism."

It is far more difficult to say how the Quebec issue will evolve. René Lévesque was reelected last year and he has vowed to continue his fight. Early in 1982, he implicitly abandoned the idea of holding another referendum, saying instead that he will regard victory in the next provincial election, which must be held by 1986, as a mandate to pursue "sovereignty-association." The outcome may well depend on how much freedom of action Quebec enjoys under the new Constitution.

Yet Canada will surely endure, if not as a "peaceable kingdom" then in fractious cohesion. As former Progressive Conservative Party head Robert Stanfield concluded five years ago: "I suppose there are times when we ask ourselves whether we deserve to survive as a country. But I believe we will survive somehow, if only from habit."



## AN ORPHANED DOMINION

by Robin Winks

Most Canadian intellectuals profess to find their country's history as dull as dishwater. But, in fact, it is a very interesting history, and one of its most intriguing aspects is the obsessive search by Canadians, especially Canadian intellectuals, for a "national identity."

Apparently, Canadians believe that all other nations have one and, hence, know exactly what they are all about. Canadians sense that they are somehow different. The editors of the Toronto-based news magazine, *Maclean's*, ran a contest some years ago asking readers to complete the sentence, "As Canadian as. . . ." The winning entry: "As Canadian as possible under the circumstances."

Canadians have tended in the past to view their identity in negative terms—as "not being like the United States"—and through the nostalgic glow of their ties to the once powerful British Empire. They also believe that they are set apart from the rest of the world by their English-French "biculturalism." It is not a unique condition. Canadians share biculturalism, and bilingualism, with South Africa, Belgium, and, increasingly, the southwestern United States, as well as with less familiar countries such as Cameroun and the Sudan.

During the past two decades, English- and French-speaking Canadians have discovered that what they long believed to be true of themselves was a mixture of fact and fiction. But this has only increased the fervor of those who would define, capture, invent, or otherwise create a "Canadian identity." They have followed the nationalist's usual path: asserting the moral superiority of their society; making language a tool of self-awareness; increasing the power of the state.

In politics, Canadians have been preoccupied by three issues. The first is the "patriation" of their Constitution, recently granted by the British Parliament. At bottom, this was only a symbolic issue—no British Parliament would have refused to approve any reasonable (or even unreasonable) amendment Ottawa wished to make—but this last vestige of colonialism irked many Canadians.

The real problem is the second issue: Whither Quebec? René Lévesque and his *Parti Québécois* want to move the province

into a relationship with the rest of Canada that, with magnificent obscurity, they style "sovereignty-association." No one is able to define precisely what this means. All agree, however, that it would bring far more independence to Quebec as a political entity.

The third issue is the taxing and pricing of oil and natural gas, which has pitted the west against Ottawa. The westerners are also angry over Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's concessions to Quebec, such as allowing the province to restrict the use of English.

None of this is really new. Canada has always run the risk of being, as *Forbes* magazine called it recently, "one nation divisible." The Canadian flag ought not to display a maple leaf, some say, but a boxing glove. There have always been politicians and entrepreneurs in the United States who have thought that Canada, like the fruit of Shakespeare's medlar tree, would become rotten before it became ripe and fall into the American Union. Yet somehow it never did.

Canadian intellectuals have always been ambivalent about their culture, often putting it down (though not wishing anyone



Public Archives of Canada.

*Quebec as it appeared around 1700. American attempts to take the city in 1775 are forgotten in the United States, not in Canada.*

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else to do so), and declaring what they are not: not American; not British; not French. But they are not so sure what they *are*. As one Canadian has remarked, Americans at least thought they knew what the purpose of the House Committee on Un-American Activities was, since they could generally agree on what it meant to be an American. But who could imagine a Royal Commission on Un-Canadian Activities?

### The "Quiet Revolution"

History does set Canada apart in several obvious ways, even if these differences are not as pronounced as Canadian history textbooks tend to portray them.

There is, for example, the fact of Canada's dual culture. Many Canadians think this unfortunate, and yet in some ways the situation is a blessing. Despite the mystique about "two solitudes" in Canada, with neither culture speaking to the other, there is in fact a constant dialogue, often at the top of the lungs, that is unmatched in most other bicultural societies.

Many western Canadians refuse to learn French and decry the Liberal Party's efforts in Ottawa to turn Canada into a bilingual nation. French-speaking Canadians still learn English, mostly because it is rapidly becoming the world's *lingua franca* of trade and technology. They may be the only truly bilingual Canadians. Learning a second language seems a waste of time when the "other party" can already speak one's own first language, but one day English-speaking Canadians will realize that they will have to give way. If Paris was worth a mass (as the Protestant Prince Henri decided when he was offered the French throne in 1574 on condition that he convert to Catholicism), Canada is probably worth learning to speak French.

But language is not really the issue. The issue is mutual cultural respect. It is unfortunate that Canada chose to call itself a Dominion in 1867 (a title quietly dropped in recent years), with the Biblical connotation of having "dominion from sea to sea." Domination is what the debate has been all about: the centuries-old presumption by English-speaking Canadians that their culture was expansive, innovative, and most likely to develop a true Canadian identity, and that the "other culture" was

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conservative, priest-ridden, rural.

Goldwin Smith, a misguided British-born 19th-century historian, wrote that "French Canada is a relic of the historical past preserved by isolation, as Siberian mammoths are preserved in ice." So long as French-Canadians kept to themselves in their preserve of Quebec, the rest of Canada could go its own Anglophile way. But the *Québécois* did not wish their province to remain forever a cultural enclave, and with the "quiet revolution" that began in the 1950s they began to assert themselves.

Some of the separatists took up the language of Marxism because they meant it, some because they knew it would ring in Canadian ears like a fire bell, and some because they believed it would provide a fashionable vocabulary of protest. (Not all separatists claim to be Marxists, though.) But the issue was not language, and it was not Marx; it was whether two genuinely different cultures could coexist within a single state.

Long before, Lord John ("Radical Jack") Durham had said they could not, in his famous 1839 *Report* on the causes of and remedies for the rebellions of 1837 in Canada.\* The Americans seemed to confirm this judgment when the clash between their own cultures of North and South resulted in Civil War. But by the 1970s, in the context of post-Cold War international politics, Canadians had to ask themselves whether they could afford *not* to coexist within the bosom of a single state. The alternative was political fragmentation, loss of influence in the world, and possibly even piecemeal absorption by the United States.

### Waving the Flag

Originally, it was Canada that threatened the United States, to use modern political terms for an older geography. The French had settled New France (largely, present-day Quebec), while the English had settled the eastern seaboard from Nova Scotia south to Georgia. By moving beyond those seaboard colonies, down the Mississippi River to Louisiana, the French had cut off British access to the far west. The British called this "the Gallic Peril." It was eliminated only toward the end of the Great War for Empire—a series of five wars beginning in 1689 and fought mostly in Europe, culminating in the Seven Years' War of 1753–60. By that time, there were some one million British colonists in North America and about 70,000 French.

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\*The rebellions, led by William Lyon Mackenzie in English Canada and by Louis Joseph Papineau in French Canada, arose out of demands for greater local autonomy. They enjoyed scant public support and were quickly put down. Lord Durham, however, sympathized with the aims and recommended that Canada be granted more self-governing powers.

### OTTAWA'S VIEW OF THE WORLD

"Ever since the Second World War, Canada has been cultivating the image of an international nice guy," Canada's External Affairs Minister, Flora MacDonald, declared in 1979. "We're friends to everyone, the honest brokers."

Inevitably, the United States looms large. The two nations are linked through NATO (1949) and by the 1958 North American Air Defense (NORAD) pact. Some 25,000 Canadian servicemen served alongside the Americans in Korea. After the Soviets' 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, Ottawa joined Washington in boycotting the Moscow Olympics and embargoing wheat shipments to Russia. Opinion polls indicate that 60 percent of the Canadian public favors such close ties to the United States. To Moscow, the country seems a pliant U.S. ally. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko once called Canada "the boring second fiddle in the American symphony."

Ottawa has tried, nevertheless, to keep a certain distance from the United States. As the British writer V. S. Pritchett observed, "The Canadian spirit is cautious, observant, and critical where the American is assertive; the foreign policies of the two nations are never likely to fit very conveniently." During the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, Ottawa refused to participate in an alert of the joint NORAD system, and in 1963, over Washington's objections, it arranged sizable grain deals with the Soviet Union and China. In 1968, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau cut Canada's 10,000-man NATO contingent, largely based in West Germany, by 50 percent. As a proportion of government outlays, only Luxembourg spends less on NATO than Canada does, though recently Ottawa has been modernizing its forces.

Citing a tradition of "international altruism"—the nation's 1981 foreign aid budget (\$1.2 billion) is the world's fifth-largest—Canadians have often been more accommodating than Americans toward the Third World. In 1975, Trudeau backed demands for a New International Economic Order, urging "an acceptable distribution of the world's wealth." He caused an uproar at home (and in Washington) a year later by crying "Viva Castro!" during a speech in Cuba. Canada's ties with Caribbean nations are surprisingly strong, although most foreign aid still goes to Bangladesh, Pakistan, and other British Commonwealth countries, or, enhancing bicultural amity at home, to the French-speaking nations of West Africa. Canadian units have served in most United Nations peace-keeping forces, from Lebanon to Cyprus.

Yet world issues seldom stir much attention in Ottawa. The House of Commons did not once debate foreign policy between 1960 and 1977. And Trudeau himself has declared that Canada's "paramount interest" in foreign affairs was to "ensure the survival of Canada as a federal and bilingual state."

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Most Canadians term the war's result the British Conquest. The French colonists and their descendants have used a different word for this political transition: the *Cession*. Behind the alternative word lies an alternative view of history. The British felt that they had conquered New France fairly in war. The French settlers were convinced that France could have defended its North American colony successfully but that Mother France had elected to abandon her children in exchange for gains in Europe and Asia.

The French-Canadians were a bit like the Afrikaans-speaking Boers of South Africa, who felt distant from a Holland that cared little for their needs and who saw themselves not as Europeans but as white Africans. The French-Canadians sought to protect their culture with the bulwarks granted to them by Britain under the 1774 Quebec Act: their own legal code, their religion, and their language. The British tried leniency to secure the loyalty of their new subjects, and it worked. According to an old cliché, the last hand to wave the British flag in North America should be that of a French-speaking Canadian.

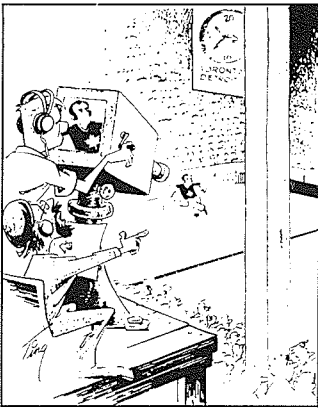
#### **Independence by Installment**

The cliché had substance for a very long time, partly because the expanding United States, pursuing its "Manifest Destiny" before the Civil War, posed a threat to Canada, and especially to French-speaking Canadians. Were the British North American Provinces (as they were called) to be absorbed by the ravenous new Republic, the English-speaking Canadians would lose only their sovereignty and, perhaps, some of their property. The French-Canadians stood to lose their way of life. Thus, they had little choice but to remain loyal to the only available countervailing force: Great Britain. During the War of 1812, the Quebec Militia fought shoulder to shoulder with the redcoats, and as late as 1940, during the battle of Britain, the French-Canadian 22nd Regiment (the "Van Doos") stood guard at Buckingham Palace.

Meanwhile, English-speaking Canada was also developing along lines different from those of the United States. After the success of the American Revolution, an influx of some 30,000 Loyalists from the new United States helped ensure that Canada would, at least initially, be anti-American, property-conscious, loyal to the Crown, oriented to the extent possible toward Britain (not toward Europe, of which Britain thought itself no part), and politically conservative.

Americans, with brash dogmatism, have always insisted

CANADIAN SELF-PORTRAITS



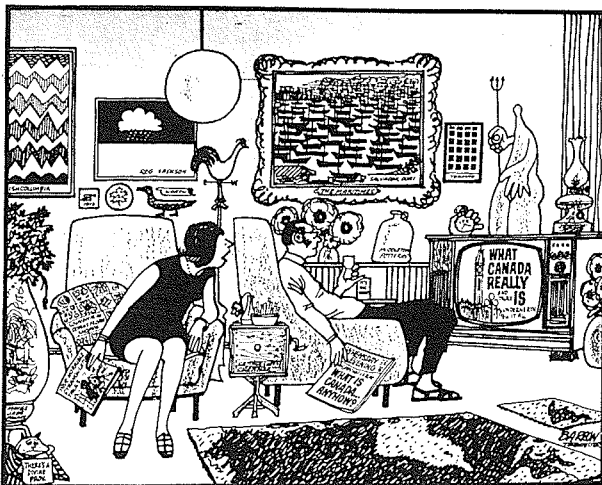
Courtesy London Free Press.

*"Stay with the Leafs. We gotta get our 60% Canadian content."*



Peterson/Vancouver Sun/1973.

*Pierre Trudeau*



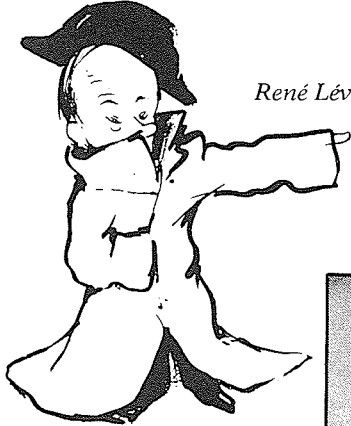
*"... you want to know what Canada is all about ... I'll tell you what it's all about ... it's YOU reading and listening to all these media people in Toronto telling you what Canada is all about ... THAT'S what it's all about ..."*

Reprinted with permission—  
The Toronto Star.



*"A little self-restraint,  
s'il vous plaît."*

*Reprinted with permission—  
The Toronto Star.*

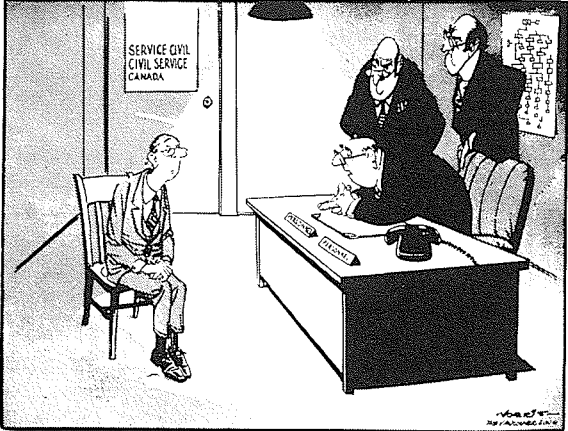


*René Lévesque*

*Hudon/Le Devoir/1961.*

*"We have ways of  
making you talk  
French . . ."*

*Norris/Vancouver Sun/Rothco/1972.*





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that they became independent on July 4, 1776. They could say that they became independent merely by declaring themselves to have become so, ignoring seven years of war and the 1783 treaty that truly conferred independence. Canadians looked on, a bit jealously, even as they themselves—French- and English-speaking alike—secured independence on the installment plan.

This is another cliché of Canadian history, though it is no less true for being one: that Canada is different from the United States because it acquired its independence through evolution rather than revolution.

Although Canadians celebrate July 1 as their national holiday (once called Dominion Day, now Canada Day) in honor of the promulgation of the British North America Act of 1867, Canada was in no significant sense independent then or for some time thereafter. Britain still held much of the land as Crown domain and could manipulate taxation. If Britain declared war, Canada was automatically at war as well (which is what happened at the outbreak of World War I in 1914). Surely one of the truest tests of independence is whether a people can decide for themselves whether to go to war.

### **Taking the High Road**

The confederation created in 1867 united only four of the British North American Provinces. It was really not until 1948—when Newfoundland, which had remained a separate dominion under Britain, elected to join—that the present nation was totally formed. Canada was an independent nation well before the Constitution was patriated this year, but constitutionalists can make good cases for arguing that this status was not reached until (take your pick) 1911, 1919, 1927, 1931, even 1939. It is not important to know when Canada became independent; it is important to understand that no one really knows.

Of course, no one really knows when Britain or France or Germany actually became a nation. Canadians are not alone in having to settle for an evolutionary definition of identity. They would probably not make so much of the issue were it not for the fact that it helps them to feel quietly superior to the Americans, who had to resort to violence.

This, too, is part of the Canadian character: a tension between putting oneself down and putting everyone else down. By many objective criteria, Canada *is* superior to the United States. It has far lower crime and divorce rates; it spends substantially more per capita on education and health; its parks are cleaner,

its cities more pleasant, its highways better paved, its children better behaved. Canadians are particularly proud of their national health insurance plan, administered by the provinces (hospitalization insurance was established in 1961; medical insurance in 1965). There is far less venality in politics. Only two national Canadian politicians have ever been assassinated, and then not while in office.

But this is not enough for Canadians. They must also be seen as *morally* superior. Thus, evolution is better than revolution; Americans are ignorant of Canada but Canadians consider themselves quite well-informed about the United States (a half-truth); the Mountie always gets his man, while the American cop on the beat is a crook or an incompetent. The Canadian writer George Woodcock summed up his countrymen's attitude in 1970, when he wrote of Canada's "great potential role in the world, not as a leader so much as an exemplar, a country conditioned to politics as a process of cooling and reconciliation."

There is no better symbol of this peculiar quest for moral superiority than a historic plaque on the banks of the Detroit River, where the industrial city of Windsor, Ontario, faces Detroit's downtown Renaissance Center. The plaque is dedicated to the fugitive slaves "who found freedom under the lion's paw" by making their way on the Underground Railroad to Canada during the 1850s. The plaque, like most Canadian monuments and history books, ignores the fact that the schools of Canada West (as Ontario was called) were segregated at the time, that chattel slavery was legal in Canada until 1833, and that patterns of racial prejudice in Canada were (and are) similar to those in the Northern United States.

### "Vital Lies"

At the beginning of the 20th century, Canadians identified themselves as a linchpin or golden hinge in a "North Atlantic Triangle." These constructions "explained" how Canada was a midpoint between Europe and North America; they implied that Canada followed the path of peace, was a mediator, a showcase to the world of how cultures (and therefore nations) could coexist. Such constructions were partly true, at different times, but no longer.

The new Canada differs from the historic, stolid Canada in important ways. Just as in the United States, where a portion of the population does not realize that the old America of the frontier is gone, there are Canadians who do not recognize that the old happy Canada is gone. History has become myth, or what

### A CITY UPON A PLAIN

*The English writer V. S. Pritchett, visiting Canada in 1964, described a Winnipeg that is little changed today. Canada's fifth-largest city lies 150 miles north of Grand Forks, North Dakota:*

In this hot, dusty growing city of half a million, one meets at last a real, well-rooted Canada. Winnipeg is not as polished as Toronto or anywhere near as sophisticated as Montreal, but it is as individual as all other Canadian cities and puts the fundamental Canadian case. The first things to catch the eyes are the onion domes of the Russian Orthodox churches of the Ukrainians. Here the non-British immigrant becomes important. The Ukrainians came here in 1900 from the richest wheat-bearing lands of Russia. . . . Up at Selkirk, on Lake Winnipeg, are the Scandinavians and Icelanders; in the city itself is a new Jewish population, as well as the German and Italian settlers who arrived in the last few years. The original population includes a very strong outpost of French-Canadians, the descendants of French marriages with Indians and of the men of the fur trade. . . .

Flying out of Winnipeg you get one more shock to the eye. First of all, the city spreads for miles as if it were printed on the land. The print moves out to the scrub and forest of the Shield, the enormous slab of pre-Cambrian rock that stretches to Hudson Bay. . . . The second shock is the sight of thousands of lakes, gay eyelets of blue looking out of the face of vegetation, and you realize how much of Canada is wild water. It is forest and lake all the way to the Great Lakes, and hardly a road anywhere. There must be trails of some sort, for occasionally there is the white speck of a settlement. The Great Lakes themselves are forest bound. One understands why this country was crossed by water first, not by land.

Reprinted with permission of Travel/Holiday.

U.S. historian Hans Kohn called "vital lies," essential parts of a nation's sense of identity.

Three developments have destroyed the old truths: immigration, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the new power of oil-rich nations. If Canadians are able to adapt to these conditions, the 21st century may yet be theirs, as they once insisted the 20th would be.

The most important problem remains the dual culture, now changed by postwar immigration. It was not Marxist rhetoric, or the Cold War, or the Catholic Church's suicidal opposition to labor unions, strikes, and reforms in Quebec that shocked French-speaking Canadians into looking squarely at the question of cultural survival. It was the great wave of post-World War II immigration into Canada from virtually everywhere: Britain, Holland, Eastern Europe, Italy, Greece, the British West

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Indies, Haiti. During the 19th century, the French had made up nearly one-third of the total population of Canada, and—in part through a conscious pursuit of a high birthrate (the “revenge of the cradles”)—they had maintained this ratio.\* In Parliament, the united votes of the West and Ontario were still required to overcome the opposition of Quebec’s legislators on matters the latter deemed threatening to French-Canadian *survivance*.

### Savoring the Uncertainty

Immigration changed all this. The French had expected that the new immigrants would distribute themselves in roughly equal numbers across the provinces. Quebec would maintain its relative power within the confederation. *Québécois* also assumed that many immigrants would arrive knowing French, the second language of many Europeans, and that many others would choose to assimilate into French-speaking rather than English-speaking Canada.

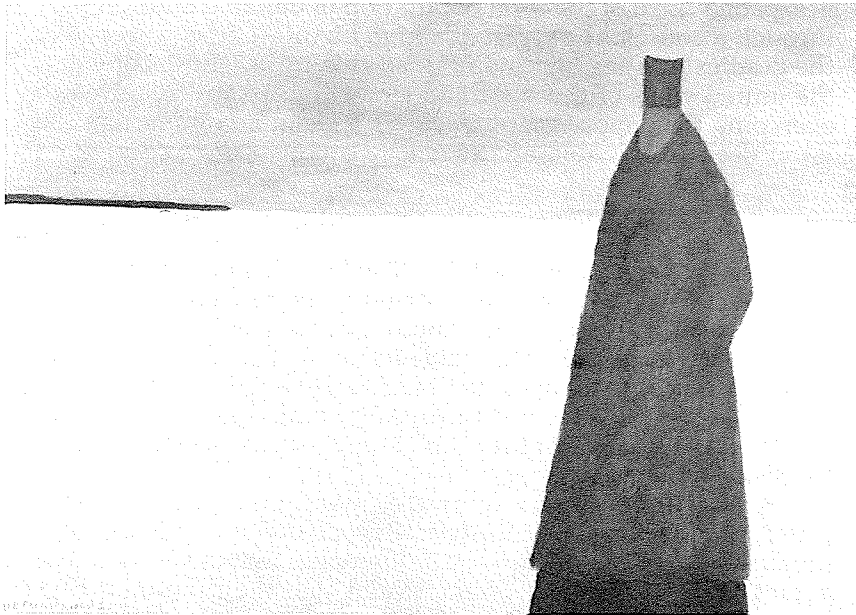
By 1960, it was evident this would not be the case. Immigrants—especially Eastern Europeans and the Dutch—preferred to maintain their own languages and customs to the extent that they could.† To the extent that they couldn’t, they generally chose to learn English, for two reasons. It was rapidly becoming the world’s second language, and since many immigrants came to Canada as a way station on the road to the United States, being able to speak it would improve their chances of making the next step. By 1971, two years after the formation of the *Parti Québécois*, and five years before the PQ won power, nearly a third of the Canadian population was neither French- nor English-speaking in origin. It was a vast new Canada that, as the French-Canadians had feared, would opt for the English rather than the French route if forced to choose.

Even moderate French Canadians, alerted to the danger by census statistics and school registration data, judged that the time had come to take steps to protect their culture. Such protection, they concluded, would best be afforded not by waving the British flag but by taking giant strides toward institutionalizing a separate identity. That was the impetus behind the growth of the *Parti Québécois*.

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\*“During the last two centuries,” notes demographer Jacques Henripin, “world population has multiplied by three, European population by four, and French-Canadian population by 80.” Since the 1950s, the growth rate has slowed to nearly zero.

†Today, immigration to Canada is down to about 100,000 annually, half the level of the early 1960s. Pakistanis, West Indians, Vietnamese refugees, and other nonwhites account for 40 percent of new arrivals.



National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Le visiteur du soir (*The Night Visitor*) by J. P. Lemieux.

Were René Lévesque never to hold another referendum, never to define “sovereignty-association,” he would have achieved what must have been his major goal: concessions—on language and local governance—significant in their own right, but also so angering to the remainder of Canada as to loosen the confederation and give Quebec even more room for maneuver.

At the same time, had the world not been polarized into two camps after World War II, things might have been different. Canada might have developed in another way; it might have accommodated Quebec more easily. But the end of the war “placed Canada directly between the United States and its late ally and inevitable rival, the Soviet Union,” observed Canadian historian W. J. Morton.

With its fate so closely tied by defense needs and geography to that of the United States, Canada was not entirely free to pursue its own path, either at home or abroad. Dependent on

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U.S. investments, it could not evolve gradually toward socialism, as some Canadian intellectuals thought it would, and it could not be cavalier about forging stronger links to the Third World. Canada's U.S. ties prevented Ottawa from even thinking about making common cause with OPEC after 1973, for instance, and this restraint in profiting at the expense of the Yankees (and Canadians in the nonproducing provinces) was and is a key cause of the western provinces' threats to unravel the country.

It is an irony of Canadian history that so much of it has been influenced by the nations—first Great Britain, then the United States—that bought its exports. Canada's freedom of choice has been further restricted by the realities of the world markets for the succession of raw materials, from furs to codfish to timber to minerals, that the country sold abroad. In its next phase, the history of Canada may be determined as much by the course of OPEC and the world price of oil as from sharing a continent with and relying upon the United States. When oil prices go up, the Westerners will try to drive a harder bargain. When prices go down, the Canadian economy will suffer.

Canada's traditional common values—based on an Anglo-Saxon heritage and membership in a powerful empire—are slipping away. Nothing can readily take their place. In the years ahead, Canadians must have the courage to remain—perhaps even to truly become—pluralistic, respectful of, even drawing strength from, the fissiparous qualities of Canadian economic and political life. To remain the superior people Canadians consider themselves to be (and probably are), they must be willing to be unpredictable, taking joy from their ambiguities, finding tolerance in their duality, and content to have no single, embracing national identity.



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## BACKGROUND BOOKS

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### CANADA

A Canadian fantasy:

The President of the United States, desperate for Canada's Arctic natural gas, announces the unilateral annexation of Canada. A 15,000-man U.S. occupation force airlifted to Canadian cities is rounded up on the ground by bands of outnumbered, outgunned, and outraged Canadian militiamen. ("Ah didn't know you Canadians had that much gumption, but ah sure know it now," a captured American general admits.) As U.S. armored columns race toward the Canadian border, the hotline rings in the Oval Office. Moscow vows nuclear war if Canada is invaded.

In Richard Rohmer's **Exxoneration** (McClelland, 1974, cloth; Paperjacks, 1977, paper), the United States loses not only its face but also one of its oil companies. Canadians found the potboiler cathartic enough to make it an instant best seller.

But belligerence, even in fantasy, is out of character for Canadians. The United States has always been "the great Canadian hang-up," concedes James Sloan Dickey, professor of public affairs at Dartmouth, in his comprehensive, though slightly dated, **Canada and the American Presence** (N.Y. Univ., 1975), yet "anti-Americanism need not be, and rarely is, malevolent or even unfriendly." Rather, it is Canada's way of emphasizing its individuality.

The United States is an overwhelming cultural presence. Half of all books purchased in Canada are published south of the border. While Canadian academics once lamented a "brain drain" to the United States,

today 15 to 20 percent of Canada's university teachers are Americans. Small wonder that Canadians dwell on the qualities that set them apart.

One of these qualities, writes poet Margaret Atwood, is a preoccupation with simple **Survival** (House of Anansi, 1972, cloth & paper). Where the American frontier held out hope and excitement, she argues in this idiosyncratic reflection on Canadian literature, Canada's forbidding emptiness bred anxiety. "Our stories are likely to be tales not of those who made it but of those who made it back, from the awful experience—the North, the snowstorm, the sinking ship—that killed everyone else."

Canadians have been driven not by the pursuit of glory but by sheer necessity. In **Canada and the Canadians** (Faber & Faber, 1970; rev.ed., 1973, cloth; Macmillan, rev.ed., 1973, paper), journalist George Woodcock concludes that, partly as a result, the Canadian today "sees himself as unheroic, but as rational and decent and at times willing to endure and suffer for reason or decency."

Decency seems to mark Canadian political history. After putting down the 1837 rebellions against colonial rule without much bloodshed, the British Governor-General pardoned most of the rebels, exiled eight, and executed none.

This was Lord John Durham, whose 1839 **Report on the Affairs of British North America**, 3 vols. (Kelley reprint of 1912 ed., 1970), offers an image of the provinces during the early 19th century.

Durham's Canada compared unfavorably with the United States. Its people were "poor, and apparently unenterprising, though hardy and industrious, separated from each other by tracts of intervening forest, without towns and markets, almost without roads, living in mean houses, drawing little more than a rude subsistence from ill-cultivated land."

Lord Durham favored creation of a united, more independent Canadian nation in part to prevent American hegemony and guarantee the pro-British sympathies of at least one government in North America.

Independence offered other advantages. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli considered Britain's colonies "millstones around the Mother Country's neck." During the U.S. Civil War, cross-border strikes—by Confederate agitators attacking in one direction, fanatic Irish Fenians in the other—were frequent. Annexationist sentiment ran high in the Northern states. London deployed 15,000 troops in Canada for the duration of the conflict.

In 1864, John A. MacDonald of Canada's Conservative Party, George Brown of the Reformers, and the French-Canadian Georges Etienne Cartier formed a "Great Coalition" to draw up a constitution. Historian Ramsay Cook describes the task of Canada's three Founding Fathers in his graceful **Canada: A Modern Study** (Clarke, Irwin, 1963; rev. and enlarged ed., 1977, paper only).

MacDonald was elected the first Prime Minister of the new Confederation. His "National Policy" featured high tariffs to encourage domestic industry and government-financed construction of a transcontinental railroad to open up the West.

Nothing could insulate Canada

from the worldwide economic slump that began in 1873. But the dark clouds lifted with the Klondike gold rush in the Yukon between 1896 and 1898, the last of the great North American gold strikes. As historian W. J. Morton notes in his scholarly **The Kingdom of Canada** (Bobbs-Merrill, 1963; McClelland, 1969, cloth & paper), the gold rush "drew into the Yukon, British Columbia, and the prairies many people who never saw the gold, and much capital that was merely attracted to the magnetic neighborhood."

The gold rush set off the "Laurier Boom," named for Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier (1896–1911). Mining and lumber companies prospered; new railroads crossed the continent. Between 1901 and 1911, the population of the wheat-farming prairie provinces tripled to 1.3 million. Then came World War I, which boosted demand for Canadian manufactured goods—uniforms, weapons, ships—and made light and heavy industry the leading sectors of the Canadian economy (as they are today).

Canada's tradition of public ownership of business dates back to the first trans-Canada railroad. But not until the early 1960s did Canada begin erecting a liberal welfare state. As with Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, "Prosperity, the sense of security arising from the stability of postwar society, and the general reformist orientation of the media made this full measure of reform possible." So write Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English in their comprehensive **Canada since 1945** (Univ. of Toronto, 1981).

While many of the provinces had already fashioned social "safety nets" of their own, action on the federal level awaited the efforts of Lester B. Pearson, the Liberal Prime



### OUR BEST SELLERS AND CANADA'S

*Judging by what they read, Canadians and Americans have quite different things on their minds. The nonfiction best-seller lists from Maclean's and Time for the week of March 29, 1982, show that American book buyers seem to favor sex, self-help, and humor; the Canadian list tilts toward current events and history.*

#### *Canada*

- 1 **THE ACQUISITORS**, by Peter Newman: The second volume of a study of the Canadian business establishment.
- 2 **CONSEQUENCES**, by Margaret Trudeau: The Prime Minister's estranged wife tells all.
- 3 **THE LORD GOD MADE THEM ALL**, by James Herriot: The life of a Yorkshire veterinarian.
- 4 **THE NEW CANADIAN REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT GUIDE**, by Henry Zimmer: How to get rich without really trying.
- 5 **THE GAME OF OUR LIVES**, by Peter Gzowski: A year in the life of the National Hockey League's Edmonton Oilers.
- 6 **THE HOLY BLOOD AND THE HOLY GRAIL**, by Henry Lincoln, Michael Baigent, and Richard Bardmont: A theory that Christ had descendants who today form a secret society among the English aristocracy.
- 7 **FLAMES ACROSS THE BORDER**, by Pierre Berton: The Canadian-American conflict during the War of 1812.
- 8 **JANE FONDA'S WORKOUT BOOK**, by Jane Fonda: A physical and philosophical regimen for women.
- 9 **I REMEMBER SUNNYSIDE**, by Mike Filey: A history of a Toronto amusement park and how people spent their leisure time in bygone days.
- 10 **MEN OF PROPERTY**, by Susan Goldenberg: A profile of the top 10 land development corporations in Canada.

#### *United States*

- 1 **JANE FONDA'S WORKOUT BOOK**, by Jane Fonda.
- 2 **A FEW MINUTES WITH ANDY ROONEY**, by Andy Rooney: Musings by the *60 Minutes* television commentator.
- 3 **A LIGHT IN THE ATTIC**, by Shel Silverstein: Humorous cartoons and verse.
- 4 **NOBODY'S PERFECT**, by Hendrie Weisinger and Norman Lobsenz: How to make friends and influence people.
- 5 **HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO A MAN**, by Alexandra Penney.
- 6 **WEIGHT WATCHER'S 365-DAY MENU COOKBOOK**, by Weight Watcher's International.
- 7 **WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE**, by Harold Kushner: Words of solace from a Massachusetts rabbi.
- 8 **WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MEN**, by Joyce Brothers.
- 9 **THE I LOVE NEW YORK DIET**, by Bess Myerson and Bill Adler.
- 10 **THE INVISIBLE BANKERS**, by Andrew Tobias: An exposé of the insurance industry.

Minister elected in 1963. Within two years, national medical insurance and social security had been introduced, and Ottawa was embarked on ambitious job training and public works programs. By 1971, social spending accounted for 24 percent of the federal budget. Special beneficiaries: Indians and Eskimos.

Wrangling between the provinces and the federal government, not popular resistance or sniping by interest groups, was the chief obstacle to the new measures. Indeed, to judge from journalist Peter C. Newman's encyclopedic group portrait of **The Canadian Establishment** (McClelland, 1975), even Canada's business and financial elite are not all that interested in national politics per se.

Newman sets out to describe "the 1,000 or so men who really run Canada," from oil-man John A. Armstrong to Hartland de Montarville Molson, patriarch of the beer-brewing clan. What he proves is that the rich, in F. Scott Fitzgerald's phrase, are "very different from you and me," no matter where they live. He cites the example of one mogul who paid \$10,000 (Canadian) to have a fallen meteorite pulverized into gravel for his driveway. The Canadian Establishment is an exclusive club: Few non-WASPS gain admission. French-Canadians, Ukrainians, and other ethnic groups, Newman contends, have not gotten their fair share of wealth and status.

Peter Desbarats' **René** (McClelland, 1976, cloth; Seal, 1977, paper) and Richard Gwyn's **The Northern**

**Magus: Pierre Trudeau and Canadians** (McClelland, 1980) are the best full-length biographies of Canada's foremost political sparring partners.

Trudeau, scion of a wealthy French-English family, was educated at the University of Montreal, Harvard, the Sorbonne, and the London School of Economics. He taught law at his Montreal alma mater and edited *Cité Libre* magazine before entering politics in 1965. René Lévesque, son of a country lawyer, gained fame as a television news commentator. He was elected to the Quebec legislature in 1960.

During the late 1950s, the two men joined an informal discussion group of Quebec intellectuals and politicians. They often disagreed. But Gwyn writes of their long duel: "While each wanted passionately to win, neither, down deep, wanted to destroy the other."

No matter what the outcome of the Quebec issue, Canadians will probably continue to agonize over their national future, wondering who they are and where they are headed.

In **The Canadian Imagination** (Harvard, 1977), a collection of essays on Canadian poetry, fiction, and theater, edited by David Staines, literary critic Northrop Frye suggests that what Canadians need to do is to stop viewing themselves as visitors to their own country. Frye recalls an anecdote about a city doctor traveling in the north with a native Eskimo guide. A blizzard closes in and the doctor panics. "We are lost," he moans. "We are not lost," replies his guide. "We are here."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *Many of the titles in this essay were recommended by Kathie Meizner, a librarian at Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library, who was formerly on the staff of the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C.*