

MARLET MAGAZINE

Vol. 2

SPECIAL

NOVEMBER 24, 1966

NUMBER

No. 10

Beer and Poetry in Quebec



A Minor Confrontation

By A. N. GLAZE

Tell us about Quebec, write about the cultural confrontation, what it's like to live with the frogs, I was asked one day when I expected it least. So I pondered over my memories of Quebec, since that's all I have to go by, and I didn't attend the last inter-provincial tax sharing conference. But I honestly didn't think there was anything to say, because, shucks, I only lived there, only one lousy year.

Well, to start at the beginning, I have to admit there is one thing that always gave me a kick, and I guess not even the average French Canadian would ever notice it. It's just that, well, they speak French there, and I somehow couldn't get over that very insignificant fact. From the very first day that I got into the city of perdition, Montreal, I was sort of going around on cloud nine because people were speaking English less and less, and being an average WASP myself, this was a big change, and I just thought it was wonderful. I wandered the streets of Quebec City for weeks after singing and whispering to myself over and over the words from the Seven-Up and Pepsi ads, or the words of the traffic signs, like STOP, Yield Right-of-way and Advance Green.

That was the poetry that made my life, and it gave me something to think about while I worked up the courage to go into a cafe and order something complicated like a cup of coffee, and if it worked I would tip the waitress mightily and swagger out with a lump in my throat, and if it didn't I would storm out, my brain swirling with cries of EXCELSIOR! for the frogs had something that I

A. N. Glaze is a pseudonym for a University of Victoria Arts student who last year studied in Quebec.

wanted, and I was determined to stick around until I got the hang of their lingo.

When I was finally established in the venerable institution that is called Laval University (for strange as it seems, I was in Quebec City for a purpose), life became a day-to-day struggle with the chamber maid, the concierge, the cafeteria cashiers and bus-drivers, who stared patiently into my eyes, as I struggled and strangled on the end of my linguistic rope. And they thought it was nice that a nice American like me should want to come up to Quebec to study French, for it was inconceivable that people would ever be so naive as to leave their cozy homes in Ontario, and when I said it was not Ontario, it was Colombia, they thought of South America.

DULL COURSES AND REAL PEOPLE

Then I began to settle down and I said to myself, this place is not so bad, and aren't all universities more or less the same? But I woke up one day in the cafeteria and found myself surrounded by a swarm of nuns and an almost equal number of very non-latin looking frog male students, trying their best to live up the ideal of the black suits and Classical College blazers they unsmilingly wore whenever they left their rooms. And it was equally painful to see their equally dull civil servant fathers and mothers give a standing ovation to Gilles Vigneault, because it was probably the only stand they would ever take, and I know now that Laval is a rich man's son's university, which makes it by definition a drag. Thousands of robots hurrying about, intent on their M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s and research. Not too many interested in the fact of their own lives.

It didn't take long to find out that I had a pack of godawfully dull courses on my back, and it was no way to learn French, and in my case studying was a very bad habit to have. So by virtue of my talent for diligent exploration I found that the real people lived in the Latin Quarter, not in the cell-block university residences, and that records by Leyrac and Leveillé, unlike grammar rules, were not made to be broken. And after a while I met Carrol, a sculptor, who had changed his nationality from Canadian to that of Ivory Coast, and whose father lay dying in Lévis. "Père", he said to his dad one day, "please don't die on a weekend, because on the weekends I'm so busy. Try to make it some time between Monday and Friday." He told me his dad was a fanatic for English stuff. He was the head of his local Legion and he watched English T.V. and spoke English to his wife and he loved the Queen. "I don't understand a word of English," said Carrol. But he tried to make up for it by saying 'hi' and shaking hands with his Anglo-Saxon friends whenever he met them.

In March we celebrated Ghanian independence day by holding a beer party and singing Harry Belafonte songs. Later we went over to the plains and re-enacted the taking of Quebec, charging across the acres of lawn, screaming, "Montcalm, thy honor is redeemed!" But all we found was a concrete erection on which some wit had inscribed "ICI MOURUT WOLFE," and it is a matter of fact that he died in 1759 and lost his head again in 1961.

OUTDOOR CHAPEL AND LOUSY PAINTINGS

Once I hitch-hiked from Quebec to Halifax, and I went from Rivière-du-Loup to New Brunswick with a travelling salesman who took the trouble to show me around some of the tiny villages that are strung

editorial

SANS FACON

Uvic had a project.

Named the "biggest ever" started by students here, it was a bold plan to bring some of Canada's most important VIP's together to discuss, debate, analyze, predict and otherwise assess the manifold aspects of our bulky country.

Paul Hellyer was coming and so was Tommy Douglas. Dief the Chief would wheel in and so would Robert Bonner. And there'd be Premier Bennett and Premier Dan Johnson. Leaders all—and all to lead Uvic to the forefront of Canadian intellectual life.

The stage was set and organizer Mike de Rosenroll was elated. Everything was going well. Even the Martlet Magazine was planning a special number with articles on Canadian affairs to compliment the project.

But then inflation struck the national airline and its employees struck back.

The size of Canada being what it is, few of the politicians could make it to Victoria and the project was left sans speakers, sans inspiration and sans everything.

"We'll try to hold it in the Spring," wept Mike sadly.

So all that remains of Canada 99 now are thoughts of what might have been Uvic's glory.

And the Martlet Magazine. Now it appears we are Canada 99. So when you read us this week try hard to pretend that you're sitting in a packed, sweaty room listening to the drone of one of our national figures. And when you're finished, close your eyes, take a long drag on a cigarette and think hard about the meaning of Canada.

Presto, a journalistic happening, sans doute.

—JIM HOFFMAN

along the Trans Canada, two or three miles apart, so that as soon as you leave one you can see the steeple of the next. We stopped in a place called Ste. Rose du Déglé, so called because the river that flows by it never freezes in winter. And we went up a nearby mountain to see an abandoned outdoor chapel that years before had been built under the directorship of an enthusiastic priest. Now all that was left of it were a cracked statue of the Virgin and a few wooden benches facing uphill toward a glassed-in altar — it had a startlingly pagan atmosphere — and when my salesman friend went into the bushes to take a crap, he found a pair of abandoned panties.

(continued on page four)

CANADA 99 NUMBER

TONY EMERY.

POP EXPLOSION IN CANADIAN ART

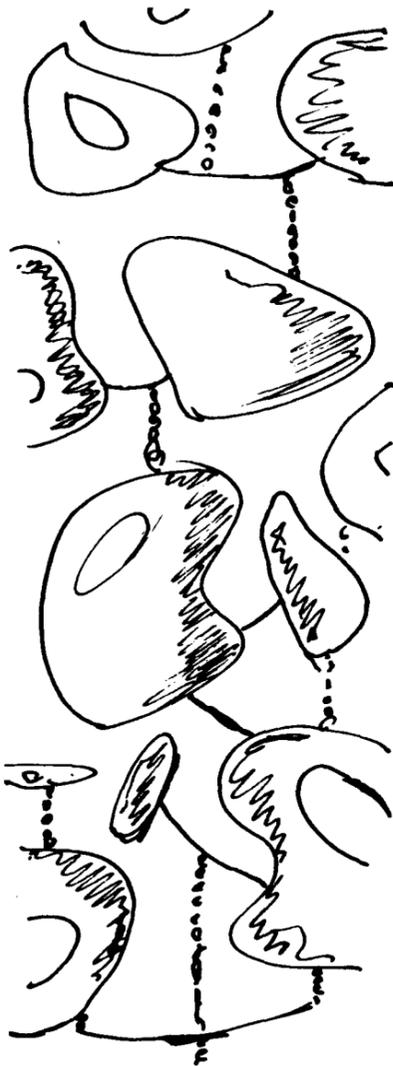
One of Canada's favourite indoor sports is the seminar, symposium, colloquium or panel discussion devoted to the earnest examination of the evidence for the existence of a vital national culture. Every couple of months, it seems to me, some foundation, business organization or wealthy citizen is milked of a sum large enough to pay the travelling expenses and honoraria for experts and interested parties to be brought together from every part of Canada to take part in a gabfest which usually bears some such title as "Whither Canadian Art?", or "Art in Canadian Life Today?" or "Where Stands Canadian Culture?"

These activities do no particular harm; they enable people to meet who are normally kept at a great distance from each other by the harsh facts of Canadian geography; and in listening to the predictable utterances by the usual speakers the audience is at least stimulated occasionally to the point where it expresses something of its agreement or disagreement with the proffered platitudes. But if the meetings do no great harm, they cannot be said to do much lasting good either. The activity is too reminiscent of the over-eager gardener who digs up the seed ten minutes after it has been planted, to see how it is getting along, and one cannot long resist the suspicion that the money spent on these glib galas would be better laid out in commissions for the artist.

ART PRODUCED FOR CONSUMER DEMAND

My own views on national culture as expressed in the steady flow of works of literary, dramatic, musical or pictorial art are simple and unoriginal to the point of banality, but I offer them for what they are worth. It is clear to me that this steady flow can only be begun and maintained if there is a universal and continuous demand for books, plays, pictures, operas, works of sculpture, symphonies and sonatas. All the great art in the history of the world has been produced in response to consumer demand: it is what remains when the bad stuff has been allowed to settle to the bottom. There must be a huge demand for novels in order to provide the opportunity for the emergence of a Flaubert, of plays to allow the debut of a Shakespeare, of frescoes to bring to notice a Masaccio. No big demand, no big supply — and both have to be big enough to provide the economic and social motivation necessary to

Mr. Emery, a University of Victoria Fine Arts professor, was recently named to a national committee to advise the government on art to be placed in airports.



attract both consumer and producer; no big supply, no great chance of turning up the one good painter out of fifty mediocre ones, the one great painter out of a hundred good ones, the one genius in every fifty years that is all the most encouraging milieu can reasonably expect.

I would imagine that the demand in Canada for painting was very small before 1946, that it was directed almost exclusively towards imported works from France or England, and that it was satisfied by the international dealers of Paris and London. The reception accorded to the aesthetically unadventurous Group of Seven at whom epithets were hurled that might have been thought too extreme if applied to the Picasso or Matisse or Kandinsky of that period gives us some notion of the state of the public mind in Canada a generation ago.

GROUP OF SEVEN DRAWS ATTENTION

The importance of the Group of Seven in Canada resides precisely in their struggle to get acceptance for the artist in a culture that had, in the East at least, moved far enough away from its pioneer phase to be able to afford an "unproductive" class of creative people. The battle drew the attention of an indifferent public to the possibility that artists might be expected to appear in Canada, and gave encouragement to people who otherwise might have lacked the desperate bravery needed

to embark on a career as a painter in a country where little art was produced, and less consumed.

The picture today, after little more than thirty years, is greatly changed. The explosion of contemporary art in Quebec in the 1940s produced in Riopelle and Borduas the first two Canadian painters to achieve a truly international reputation. Ten years later it was the turn of Vancouver to produce in Shadbolt, Binning and Gordon Smith three painters who won national recognition. And in the last five or six years one centre of energy and activity has been Toronto, for so long derided by Montreal as a grey desert of the soul, and another has been Regina, which could hardly have been foreseen.

POPULATION EXPLOSION AND OVER-PRODUCTION

Something of a boom in art occurred between 1952 and 1962 in Eastern Canada, and certain painters sold so well that they were able to leave their teaching or commercial work or whatever activity had paid their rent and food bills up to then, and to devote themselves full time to painting. Patronage increased, both from private citizens, industry and government; art galleries sprang into existence in a number of cities which had never had such things before; art schools and art departments in universities increased in size and numbers across the country.

At this moment there is something of a recession in progress, as one might guess by the recent closing of

big galleries in Toronto and New York, and there is a perceptible crisis of over-production. There are still signs that patronage is here to stay (e.g. the Department of Transport is spending \$250,000 on art for Montreal and Vancouver airports; the Provincial Department of Public Works is commissioning an encouraging number of paintings and sculptures for the new museum; the universities in British Columbia taken together are spending enough to keep one artist free from financial worry) but there are more alarming signs that a population explosion in the ranks of young artists has produced more of this class than our economic culture can absorb.

This is a precarious situation, and it is worsened by the fact that the public at large is not educated to the point at which it can find most of the current works acceptable, even as outright gifts. Education is certainly the answer, and the university seems to be the place to give it. A more encouraging sign than any that I have mentioned is the diffuse, sporadic but apparently genuine interest of young Canadians in art in general. If this is maintained we shall live to laugh at the spinsterly concern once shown for our "lack of culture."

You Came Back . . .

You came back here.

WHY?

Old faces,

but where are they now?

It is raining out.

Macs and leathers

drying in the closets;

yellow of the lamps

on the black, street surface.

It is night.

The streets are

still and glistening.

The hill curves upwards,

suspended beneath the lights

while walking,

looking;

corners, curbs,

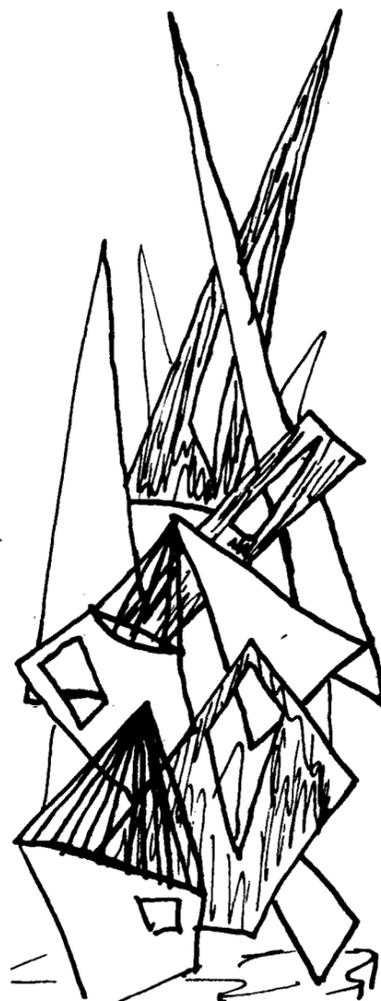
streaking rain,

moneyless pockets.

It is night

and the sky is crying.

They are not here.



—FARLEY RUSK

letters

NO CIVIL WAR

Sir:

I am a New Canadian. I became one in May, 1965. My ancestry is Dutch, and until I had to renounce our Crown in order to become a Canadian I was a Royalist — for the Crown in Holland is the rallying point of many petty differences.

When I became a Canadian therefore, I became one unconditionally, with no holds barred. I love this country but I am scared stiff of one factor that is a cloud on its horizon. The prospect of a Canadian Civil War . . . let's say in the 1980's or so. Impossible, you say. Granted. But let's take a look at how this nation is shaping up today.

The Liberals in Parliament today are bending backwards — turning a humiliating somersault — in being forced by a minority of our population, the French Canadians, to listen to their demands.

They are, the public contention is, discriminated against. They jolly well should be.

The charge of discrimination fills every thinking Canadian with horror. Possibly this is due to the fact that we, from Canada's childhood on, have subconsciously associated ourselves with our giant neighbor, the U.S.A. And to be charged with discrimination today is a very bad thing.

Why are the French Canadians being discriminated against? Because, the Federal government has repeatedly stated, their education is not on par with that of the rest of the English speaking population. How is that possible, you might ask. Because, I firmly maintain, ever since Canada was discovered, the educational system of French Canada was, and still is, in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, an institution which, until Pope Paul VI, was the most reactionary organization in the world.

In British Columbia you damn well don't teach youngsters until you have a British Columbia Teacher's certificate. Thus you conform or you just don't teach. You, as an individual, have the choice. Why should this nation, therefore, desiring so very much to become united and strong, have to bend over backwards to a minority, conservative, poorly educated, patriotic to its own fleur-de-lis and scornful of the symbol of the largest number of Canadians, the Queen of England?

Have you already forgotten the gangster-Mafia Black Hand tactics of the F.L.Q.?

Let us really work for a united Canada, for a country of our own which has a tremendously good name in Europe, which has a record of courage in battle only equalled by Britain in the Second World War, and whose potentialities are really envied abroad. Let us not sit back and allow a Civil war to happen to us. Let not our petty loyalties to the old world spoil this tremendous

country for the generations yet to come. We owe it to the future to become truly Canadian. Just that.

Ineke den Hond, B.A.
1425 Fernwood Road

TORY CONVENTION

Sir:

The Conservative National Convention held last week in Ottawa will forever be remembered as the convention that stunned Canada with the exhibition of needless malice, and aggravation by student delegates.

Ignorance can be excused, but rudeness never. Youth and age don't always see eye to eye and it has always been so, and will continue to be in succeeding generations. But surely to insult the leader of the party in such a manner as has been done is unexcusable.

The party wreckers have now returned home having completely disgraced the party in the eyes of the public. Mute testimony to this is the recent Gallup Poll. Our popular vote has dropped from 32% to 26%. What a wonderful way to introduce our party to the Centennial year — ruined and shattered.

Where did this "Dump Dief" plan originate? The answer is in John Diefenbaker's own words. "There has always been a coterie in the financial streets of Toronto and Montreal who have tried to dominate the Conservative Party." What did John D. do to students that he deserved such treatment?

Friday saw one of the finest moments in Diefenbaker's life when — after going through all the torments of the convention, the Liberals, led by the Prime Minister gave Diefenbaker a standing ovation when he entered the house.

Camp will now turn his energy to repair the damage done to party unity. It will be hard. Gordon Churchill is petitioning members to consolidate loyalty to Diefenbaker; he now has over seventy signatures. Eight Saskatchewan M.P.'s are threatening to quit the party and become pro-Diefenbaker independents. This dissension, plus the fact of declining support highlights a period of East-West partisanship in the party.

Camp succeeded but what can happen now is a matter of speculation. Probably the worst thing that could happen to the party now would be a national election. The national Conservative president has tried to meet with The Old Chief, but it is rumored that Dief will not see him. The damage done by this rift is deep: it may take long to heal but Conservative survival depends on it.

Ian Baird
2 Arts



The Old Entertainer

To listen to Diefenbaker telling the years at the recent convention was a moving experience. Therein lies the tragedy. It was like seeing an ageing comedian pleading for laughs, yearning towards a strange audience that no longer knows how to enjoy itself. Diefenbaker was fighting for his political life, and trying to call back a rebellious party to the glory of the old dream. But his mode of feeling, or thinking, his perspectives and his style, are not those of a modern industrial democracy. Nobody doubts the depth of his passion or his own brand of integrity, but the nation has seen the renegade in power and remembers his government by caprice and his fits of irrelevant rigidity.

To hear the Diefenbaker cheerleaders as he addressed a meeting of loyalists outside the main convention, was to be reminded of the euphoria of Temperance warriors or the snipers at Darwin. "Don't leave us John. We need you John. You're an honest man, John." As the woman of Canterbury, in T. S. Eliot's play, wail "God is leaving us. Thomas is leaving us."

DIEF CAN HELP LEADER RESTORE UNITY

But as Dalton Camp knows, a Tory vote based on the Diefenbaker mystique is dying out. The faithful of the old agrarian radicalism are, literally, dying. Once, Diefenbaker was the saviour of his party, but if he is allowed to fight his last fight, it will be the party's last fight too. The scene was a tragic one as the party dismembered itself, and it is true that the convention unleashed a bitterness which will not easily be forgotten. But for all the cruelty, Camp's campaign was a painful necessity. The progressive Conservatives will never regain power under Diefenbaker. So they have committed themselves to a leadership convention before 1968. Diefenbaker has been invited in definite terms, and by a clear majority, to hand over with dignity to a successor. It would be a bitter and an unworthy thing for this populist leader of a people's party to scorn the wishes of the people. He can still serve his

party by helping to restore unity under a new leader and taking his place as a rightly honoured elder statesman.

Centennial year gives the PCs a breathing space. It is unlikely that Pearson will call an election during Canada's birthday year; and the Conservatives must know that it would be folly to force one. The Tories must take this chance to find a leader who is capable of finding new support among the dramatically rejuvenated electorate. Few people vote for Pearson for any passionate cause. He would be no match for a younger energetic leader with a sense for the issues of the day.

CAMP REGARDS UNDECIDED ELECTORATE

In a sense, Camp's position has been given new urgency by the latest Gallup poll. The ascending path of the NDP and the descending path of the PCs have met. Each party attracts 26% of the decided voters. More significantly, all the parties except the NDP, have less committed voters now than they did in the last election. In actual support the Liberals have declined from 40% to 25% and the PCs from 33% to 18%. One third of the electorate is undecided, and Camp must have that one third in mind. These figures are bad for the Grits too. Douglas has held on to his new 1965 voters, and is also looking for support among that one third.

So it looks as if Centennial year may bring us that long awaited realignment. It is no longer fanciful to claim that after one or two more elections Canada will have a true political polarity in Ottawa. The odds are against the PCs, but there is still a chance that with a new leader and some relevant and engaging policies they could seize the right wing position from the Liberals. Imagine the next election. Douglas will be there, as an established national figure, garnering the uncommitted, as Mr. Pearson calls lamely again for a minority and a dashing Mr. Fulheescamp makes a bid for power. Camp knows very well that the PCs are facing their last chance to have a Conservative, instead of Mr. Pearson, facing Mr. Douglas' Loyal Opposition.



Martlet Magazine

Editor

Jim Hoffman

Associate Editors Guy Stanley
and Martin Segger

Contributing John Hanley

Art Martin Springett

Make-up Kathy Tate

Secretary Steph

Unsolicited material, including articles, poems and short stories, should be clearly addressed to the MARTLET MAGAZINE and either mailed to or left at the Martlet office. Contributions to the anonymous column, CERBERUS, should be signed and consist of about 700 words of topical, political opinion.

