This is the 286th issue of the Imperial Oil Review. It celebrates ♦️ 50 ♦️ years of publishing by looking back at the 8,095 pages the Review has devoted ❤️ to articles about Imperial Oil Limited ★ the entire petroleum industry, the arts, business, Communism, dowsing, Eskimos, farming, geology, health, ink, jets, Kootenays, Leduc, maps, nylon, oil, pollution, quackery, royalty, safety, travel, unemployment, victory, war, Xena (Sask.), youth, zinc, etc., etc., etc.
Review in Review/Who did it?

How much has the Imperial Oil Review changed in 50 years? Its design is different and its range is wider, but in spirit and identity it hasn't changed much, really. The name is an example. It was called The Imperial Oil Review until June, 1946; now it's called Imperial Oil Review.

Inside, there were fewer pages—only 15 that first issue in May, 1917, compared to the plump 35 in this one, and a concern that the magazine wouldn't be misunderstood. In three different places on page 2 of that first issue (the cover was page 1) the purpose of the magazine was stated twice, and the object once. They were all different, and that's the way the Review has remained: you can pin it down only in a general sense.

Still, those statements all had one aim in mind for the Review; it was to explain The Imperial Oil Company Limited, as the company was then known (it's now simply Imperial Oil Limited), to its employees and provide a means for the employees to explain themselves to the company.

As the years passed the Review's field of interests widened to include the oil industry in general, business itself, and eventually almost every aspect of life in Canada. Its audience has grown from employees to include dealers and agents, shareholders, schoolteachers and librarians, legislators, commentators, and a host of individuals who just wrote in and asked to receive it.

Part of the credit for the Review's popularity belongs to its contributors, and they have included many of Canada's professional journalists as well as a number of the country's most respected authors.

The first person to be listed as editor in the magazine was Robert Collins, and his name first appeared in September, 1939. According to Prendergast the first real editor, although he wasn't called editor, was W. G. Charlton, now manager of the editorial division of Imperial's public relations department. Charlton got out the Review in the short-lived-1940s and, due to the fact that it is considered bad form to tantalize people with things they can't have, he began the process that changed the magazine from an employee publication that pushed the company's products to an externally-directed journal that dealt with broader questions relating to the oil industry in general. George Lawrence, Jack Birt and Roy Cottier continued the process.

Before Charlton, the fellow who got out the Review was a girl—Mary Newberry—and before her a Scottish geologist named John Neas who had a sense of humor and a facile pen, although it's not clear any more whether he got out the magazine, or acted as a contributor. The further back one probes, the hazier it all becomes. In the 30s when Frank Prendergast, as advertising manager, was responsible for the magazine, the actual getting-out was done by a number of other people including John Doherty, who now has his own public relations firm in Ottawa, and Ray Lister, who at that time worked for the printer (Saturday Night Press then) and who remembers the operation as very casual, although there were some rules: 'Anything that came out of Sarnia was gospel,' Lister remembers, 'and if we even touched any copy from manufacturing, the phone would jump off the hook.'

And who was responsible for creating it in the first place? That distinction belongs to Victor Ross, a man who rose from the ratliff ranks of crime reporting for the Toronto Daily Star to the vice-presidency of Imperial Oil. Along the way he created both The Lamp, the prestigious magazine still published by Standard Oil of New Jersey, and the Review. In a sense, this issue is a tribute to him. 

Imperial Oil Review
Editor: James Knight
Design: John Orr

Published in English and French by Imperial Oil Limited, Suite 505, 50 Avenue Road West, Toronto, Ontario. Editorial material may be reprinted in whole or in part without special permission. However, mailed copies will be appreciated. The Imperial Oil Review copyright is being protected by United States Copyright laws.

Editorial/What's this all about?

This is the 206th Imperial Oil Review. It commemorates 50 years of publishing and seems as good an occasion as any to answer the question: Why does Imperial Oil publish a magazine? Well, there's a man in Cincinnati who evidently thinks it's put out to sell stock—he became an Imperial shareholder just to get the Review. However, while it's nice to think the magazine has such an effect, enticing people to buy stock isn't its main purpose.

Its main purpose is to tell its readers about Imperial Oil Limited and the Canadian oil industry generally—to report new developments, to interpret trends, to describe problems facing the company and the industry. Another purpose is to present Imperial's views on the role of business in the community. In this respect, it expresses Imperial's basic philosophy that any company or industry is a social entity, influencing and being influenced by the social problems of contemporary life. And finally, the Review reflects the fact that Imperial is a Canadian company, operating in all parts of Canada: it brings to its readers articles on things about the country that are of interest to a Canadian reader.

Thus everything that appears in these pages reflects the policy of Imperial, its attitudes, and sometimes its difficulties. If the piece is amusing, it's because Imperial has a sense of humor; if it's historical, it shows Imperial respects tradition; if it's cultural, it shows our commitment to the aesthetic spirit; if it's businesslike, it shows we know the value of a buck.

Imperial Oil Review
September 1987
Volume 51 Number 5

Published in English and French by Imperial Oil Limited, Suite 505, 50 Avenue Road West, Toronto, Ontario. Editorial material may be reprinted in whole or in part without special permission. However, mailed copies will be appreciated. The Imperial Oil Review copyright is being protected by United States Copyright laws.

What's this all about?
Inside Imperial Oil Review
Victi' Ivreis
Half a century of Heartlines
Otto Wagner
The way magazines look
Robert Fulford
The free north
Hunter & Weller
Up in the air
Freid Amersky
Classic car buffs.

Plan your own event in the

Imperial Oil Review

This page is a part of the Imperial Oil Review, September 1987. The review is a bimonthly publication by Imperial Oil Limited, a subsidiary of Imperial Oil Inc., and is distributed to employees, customers, and others interested in the company's activities.
In 1917, gasoline was being defined as a clear, nervous liquid composed of speed, noise and trouble in equal parts.

'By the aid of gasoline we can travel 100 miles an hour through the air (and) 75 miles an hour over the land ... with the greatest ease.'

John Hough smirks when he hears that description today. He took it seriously when he first read it 50 years ago. At the time, he was a 25-year-old clerk with Imperial Oil in Fort William. Air travel was in its infancy then and it was difficult to imagine being able to drive 75 miles an hour by car when Fort William had mainly dirt roads and the only way of getting any distance from town was by rail or boat.

'A gallon of gasoline can do as much work in an hour as a horse can do in a day ...' This was the description of gasoline in The Imperial Oil Review of May, 1917. It was the first issue and it told John Hough about tank wagons and the 1917 sales conventions, Gargoyle Mobiloils and crude oil markets, gasoline and the Maxwell Endurance Car's 5,000-mile run. 'The Imperial Oil Review has been created for you,' he read. 'Its purpose is to tell you about the company you are working with, to inform you of its aims and its business methods, its ambitions.' Any of the 5,000 employees was invited to 'air his opinions on any matter relating to his work.'

'First-rate magazine,' young Hough thought as he finished. He still thinks so. Hough, now retired and living with his wife in Toronto, has watched the Imperial Oil Review grow from a house organ to what is called an external company publication received by 110,000 people: employees, retailers, dealers and agents; school-teachers; elected members of the federal and provincial parliaments; newspapermen, broadcasters and television personnel; and people who have written to the company asking to receive it. The Review's aims have changed along with the mailing list. In the beginning it confined itself to employee news and company subjects like product advertising and sales contest results. Today its contents are divided equally between articles that deal with major developments in the company and the oil industry, and those that reflect the breadth of Imperial's corporate viewpoint in their coverage of such diverse subjects as travel, art and music, science and technology, education and safety, history and Canadiana.

But John Hough remains nostalgic about those early issues. The man who remembers when copper pennies were worthless west of Fort William is not completely at home with today's Reviews. The 25-year-old John Hough saw the Review as the voice of the Imperial Oil family—bringing news of company picnics, introducing new members of industrial councils, confiding the irritations that occasionally beset the company.

Like, where are all those steel barrels? This plaintive query echoes from that first Review when western salesmen were notified that, due to the shortage of steel barrels, they were please to persuade farmers to use the new portable farm wagon gasoline tank. What had become of them? 'A large percentage of them,' the magazine guessed, 'are lying around at the back of our customers' stores, almost any place you want to look, from Vancouver Island to Cape Breton.' That was July, 1917, and the next issue carried this reminder: 'How many steel barrels have you rounded up ...'

The Review reflected its readers' problems too. John Hough had to support his wife and daughter on $585 a month. That was a long way then, he recalls—and the Review helped it go further. Thrift was a major theme as World War I ended; people were urged to save money then as vigorously as they're told to spend it today.

'No matter what your income, you should save a part of it ... occasional impulses and resolves to save are not thrifty,' one back-cover article lectured the parting reader. Another article hinted What you can have for nothing urged readers to avoid patent medicines and injurious substances like alcohol to 'feed the mind with wholesome mental food instead of trash or morbid literature that easily decomposes and poisons your whole life.' The magazine suggested 10 ways to conserve food, including: Save crumbs from the breadboard (you will be surprised to see how many there are) and don't leave soap lying in the water ('fat is scarce today').

Thrift was more than a practical need: it was a virtue, and the Review saw its task as reminding readers about virtue. Back covers featured thoughts on cooperation, forethought, self-control and ambitions. Inside pages outlined The Seven Deadly Sins of Business and similar evils. Space at the bottom of the page was thriftily devoted to one-liners on both company and private virtues: 'Imperial service calls for our best efforts' and 'It is far better to believe all you say than to say all you believe.' But take care, warned a poem, 'It isn't the motto that hangs on the wall, but the motto you live that counts.'

Many other lofty ideals were expressed in rhyme. Readers were told, verse by verse, how to win. 'It takes a little courage/ And a little self-control/ And some grim determination/ If you want to reach a goal.' The 'splendid' of work inspired Angela Morgan to write an exuberant poem in its praise which started:

WORK! Thank God for the might of it,

The ardor, the urge, the delight of it

Work that springs from the heart's desire

Setting the soul and brain on fire.

Oh, what is so glad as the best of it,

And what is so kind as the stern command

Challenging brain and heart and hand?

Those early 20s are fondly recalled by John Hough. Imperial Oil employees danced the Tank Wagon Shake to mark the opening of new offices in Saint John, N.B., and they consumed Leather Oil Salad with roll, washed down by an Ioco Shake (Smootheast drink on the market) when Frank Key was transferred from his job as chief clerk at Brandon. The Imperial Oil Athletic Association in Regina listened to speeches about the value of clean outdoor sport. The Review of August, 1921 recorded the girls' baseball game which sent 'many a callow youth and even staid benefactor... home that night softly murmur- ing to himself "Shades of Scapho, what curves."'

Company picnics were the levelling of early Reviews, and were considered important enough to merit a special issue in 1923. They were always the 'best ever'-at least until the next year—and, well you know how company picnics are described . . .
Because "all work and no play makes everybody tired" the staff decided to set aside July 29th for a picnic. The day dawned bright and clear an ideal picnic day. On arrival at the lake the tempting waters proved an irresistible magnet and all else was forgotten as the naturalists dispersed themselves among the trees. Miss Baker and the ladies of the refreshment committee even surpassed their previous efforts when they provided a veritable picnic banquet. A good programme of sports was carried out despite the later attentions of Jupiter Pluvius who poured out his visits on the happy crowd. The Baby Show threw a tremendous responsibility on the judges, who found it a difficult task to make a decision from the galaxy of infant pulchritude which confronted them. They evaded their decision by giving all the awards to female entrants, knowing well that the male competitors would be too gentlemanly to raise a hull. A dance was held in the evening and a goodly number of picnicers remained to trip the light fantastic till the end of a perfect day.

Well, company picnics are great but they don't make Fort William any warmer in winter. Once John Hough had to shovel two feet of snow off a 400-foot driveway. And all the time the Review kept running articles about summery Peru where Imperial Oil had a subsidiary, International Petroleum Co. Ltd. Then, one day in 1926, after 12 years in Fort William and another two years with Imperial Oil in Sarina, John Hough went to Peru. He spent the next six years with the International Petroleum Co. refinery at Talara and enjoyed those tales about Peru, Colombia and Ecuador in the warm seasons.

Articles on South America appeared frequently in the Review until 1948 when Imperial sold its holdings in International Petroleum. During the Depression, Hough was transferred again, this time to Imperial Oil's head office in Toronto. He joined the 56 Church Street Club whose activities were faithfully reported by John Noss, a company geologist. Noss tried to brighten the Depression with his account of a bowling game in which pins fell like "shock quotations in '29."

This was a slim period for the magazine. The 184 pages printed by the Review in 1934 dropped to 116 pages in both 1938 and 1939; by 1941, the magazine had shrunk to a low of 80 pages due to editorial issues. During the war, the car production ceased and gasoline was rationed, and the Review stopped running articles about products readers couldn't buy. Instead, it gave tips on how to make a car last longer and deliver more miles to the gallon. It reported prices, dealt with the savings plans and named, in increasingly long lists, employees who volunteered for service. The automobile showed itself as those steel barrels into the news again.

The war's end marked a change in Review pages. The big volume of 1946 had a total of 244 pages. Pictures of joint councils, or annuals and benefits committees appeared for the last time in 1947, ending a practice almost 30 years old. Poetry has made only a few appearances since its heyday in the 20s and the last report of a company picnic appeared in 1936.

The Review has been worthwhile and contains news from John Noss and other correspondents since 1927, bowed out in 1936.

But other subjects remain as popular as a big oil strike. Education and safety have been the two concerns ever since that first issue with its hints for salesmen and warning about kerosene hazards. Education at first meant newspaper training and reports on company scholarships and schools for children of International Petroleum Co. employees in South America.

Early safety articles stressed industrial safety, driving safety and fire prevention. The emphasis now is on traffic safety; writers have investigated pedestrian safety, seatbelts, cocktail driving lessons for tests and for the deaf and outlined some of the psychological quirks that cause accidents.

The Review's half-century of fluctuations with cars began in 1918 with a talk about the unaccustomed problem of drivers wanting to keep cars off Prince Edward Island. The faithful horses in Imperial Oil service were still being paid tribute by 1926: cars were credited with "performing a great work for humanity." Not everyone agreed with this opinion; in 1932 the Review repented a plea for "the harried motorist who is going around almost ashamed to admit he has a car these days which is asked by everyone and made to feel that he is responsible for the ill of a disorganized world."

Stories over the past 15 years have dealt with soup-up cars, trailers and sports cars; more cars and oil changing time; cars of the future and Toronto's traffic computer; taxi drivers and the man with not one, not two, but three Saleen Royances.

The magazine has covered other topics as faithfully, if not as often. Articles on Cana- dian legends, weed control, plowing methods, annual reports and map-making appear from time to time. The first medical story-paraphrase treatment for burns-appeared in 1918 and in 1923, Dr. Austin Evans, the company's public health officer, began writing a medical column that was to appear nearly a dozen times over the next 13 years. Since then, stories have dealt with moral transgressions, the health hazards of noise, child care at the Montreal Children's Hospital and company programs for preventive medicine and occupational diseases.

Medical stories are just one indication of the Review's interest in people. Other articles have looked at the varied occupations of men and women outside the oil business. Review pages have detailed activities like cheese making, candlemaking, maple sugar- ning, oyster farming, pea roast processing, and tree farming. The magazine has written about artists, toy testers, a rain maker and a man who eliminates moles. There have been stories on fishing, skating, skiing, sky diving and sports car racing; on wolf hunting in south Saskatchewan, and sealing in Peru and seal hunting off Newfoundland's coast.

The Review seems to have held a special regard for women, ever since they stepped into the jobs vacated by men during World War I. In February, 1918, the Review reported the "innovation at Sarina refinery in the employment of girls in the chemical and testing laboratories." It added, with apparent surprise: "It has been found that girls possess the qualities (required by the work) even in a greater degree than men." The same sur- prise that women could or would do jobs previously done by men was made in 1918: women-wearing sturdy jodhpur-like trousers-moved into the service stations. In Van- couver, "society girls" took on this form of war work; one result, reported in the October, 1918, Review, was that "Society columns of the papers are invaded by filling news as much as with the gossip of afternoon teas.

In 1923, the Review devoted an entire issue to women as "a tangible mark of recognition of the women of the organization-an offering of encouragement-and a gift of appreciation for endeavor in the past." Since then, the magazine has chronicled women's progress into the traditionally male fields of geology, air traffic control, climatology, sports car racing and flying.

And then there's oil. Masses of it. Oil appears in every issue. It's obviously a story about the big Leede strike in 1947, as subtle as the oil in the ink on this page. Review index files show the wide scope of stories directly related to oil; under "Petroleum" are sub-headings on chemistry, conservation, consumption, exhibits, exploration, exports, finance, industry, laboratories, marketing, prices, production and products, prospecting, refining, storage, supply and well drilling.

But oil has just as important-if not obviously-a connection with a story about chewing gum. Chewing gum contains a substance called polyvinyl acetate to make it pliable. And polyvinyl acetate is one of the thousands of substances that may be derived from crude oil and which affect virtually every part of our daily lives. These derivatives are the justification for articles ranging from golf balls (with covers of synthetic rubber) to hair coloring (whose basic formula starts with petroleum-derivediline).

Stories on all forms of transportation are in the magazine for two big reasons: the company's interest in gasoline and other transportation products; and the company's trucks and other conveyances to move its products. Articles on general subjects have appeared, but they are drawn to the company directly or the company because they represent the company's interest in the commonwealth. The company has outlined the broad problem and described what the company was doing about it. Education articles range from reports on company scholarships to the broad field of program- ming culture. Subject controls encompass both. An article on film-making is made into a film for Imperial-Oil and the National Youth Orchestra.

And then, preventing any easy generalization about what's been in the Review, there are articles on habits and the quality of life. There's a look at the phenomena of Dinosauria of Alberta and Russian Communism before 1924. The story on Communism deals with the problem. It's not an industrial council plan. But roast pig? Dinosaurs? They have no connection with oil. The reasons for the articles are always clear to the editor thought the readers would enjoy them.

The Review never reported the traction to these particular articles but readers' com- ments have been noted historically. In September, 1917, the editor mentioned the "very flattering" interest taken in the Review and the omission of many of the very few readers' letters ever published. Readers' reminiscences have occasionally appeared and mistakes caught by the magazine have been acknowledged, but the magazine has never printed a regular column of correspondence.

A lot of people find the Review useful. The many and varied topics covered in the Review make it one of the very few readers' letters ever published. Readers' reminiscences have occasionally appeared and mistakes caught by the magazine have been acknowledged, but the magazine has never printed a regular column of correspondence.

A lot of people find the Review useful. The many and varied topics covered in the Review make it one of the very few readers' letters ever published. Readers' reminiscences have occasionally appeared and mistakes caught by the magazine have been acknowledged, but the magazine has never printed a regular column of correspondence.
How to live through half a century of headlines
by Otto Wagner

Among other places, the Review is mailed to a dank little town in northwestern Ireland called Strabane, to the parents of an Imperial employee. It is the only Canadian publication they ever see. Yet if they'd been getting the magazine since it first began they'd have a pretty fair idea of what's been happening in Canada over the last 50 years.

The Review began as a house organ devoted to the employees of Imperial Oil and was primarily concerned with company picnics, presidential messages and the latest line of oil heaters, but it soon moved into matters of more general interest. It has been reporting on the Canadian scene for half a century and there is hardly a news event that has gone unrecorded in its pages.

The back issues of the Review have articles about World War I, the Halifax explosion, the unrest of the early 20s, the era of the flappers, the financial collapse of 1929, the Great Depression, the Royal visits, hockey night in Canada, World War II, the battle of the Atlantic, VE and VJ Days, the Winnipeg flood, the postwar boom and the quiet revolution. Suez is there, and so is automation, art, science, technology, education, urbanization, farm mechanization, aviation, nuclear development and the teenage revolution. It has touched on just about everything except politics (unless you count a 1924 piece called A Survey of Russian Communism), the Dionne quintuplets, sex and the rearing of children or pets.

World War I was raging in 1917 when the Review was born and those first issues were punctuated with wistful letters from Imperial employees who had gone off to join the fight. Here’s an extract from one of those letters, published in the Review in June, 1917:

. . . our artillery is ponderous, and the way they have pumped stuff over is great, and they are able to pound Fritz off any line he may go to. No living thing can stand it, and if the Boches stand much more of it, it will surprise me. I do not think it possible that they can, and I think you can figure on having that Christmas dinner for me.

And in 1917 the proud old city of Halifax suffered the greatest single disaster ever to hit Canada. An explosion killed 1,630 people, destroyed 1,000 buildings and shattered windows 60 miles away. Halifax still bears the scar in the two square miles of the city that had to be rebuilt. An Imperial executive reported on the explosion in the July, 1918, Review:

On December 6th, 1917, an incoming steamer collided in the Narrows which separate Halifax Harbor from Bedford Basin, with an outward bound Belgian relief ship. The incoming vessel was loaded with a cargo of T.T.N. and beer, which took fire and exploded a few seconds later. The force of the explosion razed the northern sections of Halifax and Dartmouth.

The war ended in November, 1918 and in December the Review included this line in its Christmas message: ‘Rejoice with the whole world in the appropriateness of the Christmas message, Peace on Earth.’

But the effects of war don’t end on the day the armistice is signed. The cost of living began to rise sharply in 1919, partly due to the scarcity of materials caused by the war, and partly to the too-rapid expansion of currency and credit. The year 1919 was one long mangle of labor problems. That summer the Review reported: ‘At the moment of writing, the eyes of all Canada are fixed on . . . Winnipeg, and Western Canada.’

Eyes were on Winnipeg because the workers there, unhappy with wages that were not keeping pace with the rising cost of living, paralyzed the entire city by going on strike. It started with the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council supporting the cause of striking metalworkers in their demands for higher wages and a 44-hour week. This action sparked a general sympathy strike and other unions went on strike to back up the metal-workers. The city tried to get a guarantee from the police that they would not join the strike, but the police refused and the entire force was fired. Sympathetic strikes broke out in Brandon, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert. There was a general return to work with the appointment of a Royal Commission of In-quirry, which was followed by a series of important labor conferences. But the year 1919, with its 136 strikes and lockouts, racked up a time loss of 300,500,925 working days—the highest, as a percentage of the labor force, this country has ever suffered.

In 1920 the country was still trying to shake off the after-effects of war, but there was at least one encouraging after-effect. Men had taken war into the skies in World War I and strove to outdo each other in building better airplanes. Now, in the peace of 1920, they felt ready to attempt spanning the continent by air. The Review reported: ‘On October the 17th, the flight from Halifax, N.S., to Vancouver, B.C., was successfully accomplished, an achievement, the magnitude of which is not fully realized by the majority of our people.’

By 1924 the country had weathered the postwar depression and it began to pick up speed. It was a short joy ride though. It hurtled into 1929 with record production and bumper crops, only to collide with the Great Drought and the Great Depression. The drought was so bad that only twice in the 10 years from the beginning of 1929 to the end of 1938 did the wheat yield even touch the average yield of earlier years. And, as if the drought were not bad enough, Wall Street panicked on October 29, 1929, and rang in the Depression.

By 1930 the pinch of the Depression was being felt in Canada, but there was still hope that the pinch would not develop into an iron...
lives at sea during World War II. Imperial shipping used to carry more than 100,000 tons of cargo, and it came out of it with less than half the tonnage.

The text goes on to discuss the impact of the war on the Canadian economy, mentioning the role of the Depression and the effects of the war on industries and employment. It highlights the challenges faced by Canadian businesses during this period, including the need for new strategies and the importance of innovation.

The text concludes with a note on the future, emphasizing the importance of planning and preparation for future challenges. It suggests that while the immediate effects of the war may be difficult, the country must look forward to the post-war period and prepare for the changes ahead.

The article is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Canadian people, who faced a series of challenges during this period and emerged stronger as a result.

---

The text snippet from the Rivetor talks about the impact of the war on the Canadian economy, mentioning the role of the Depression and the effects of the war on industries and employment. It highlights the challenges faced by Canadian businesses during this period, including the need for new strategies and the importance of innovation.

The text concludes with a note on the future, emphasizing the importance of planning and preparation for future challenges. It suggests that while the immediate effects of the war may be difficult, the country must look forward to the post-war period and prepare for the changes ahead.

The article is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Canadian people, who faced a series of challenges during this period and emerged stronger as a result.

---

The text snippet from the Rivetor talks about the impact of the war on the Canadian economy, mentioning the role of the Depression and the effects of the war on industries and employment. It highlights the challenges faced by Canadian businesses during this period, including the need for new strategies and the importance of innovation.

The text concludes with a note on the future, emphasizing the importance of planning and preparation for future challenges. It suggests that while the immediate effects of the war may be difficult, the country must look forward to the post-war period and prepare for the changes ahead.

The article is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Canadian people, who faced a series of challenges during this period and emerged stronger as a result.
Prize of period, a sin particularly tempting to the young; makes every assumption that the style of his own time possesses the greatest virtue. Thus, something unconscious, within us says that the magazine style of now is 'right', and those of the past somehow 'wrong'. But anyone who has lasted through several visual eras—and they are coming on faster and faster these days—must have discovered by now that in design there are no final answers and no rule. Once I thought I knew exactly how a magazine place should be written and displayed; since then I've had to alter my opinions several times, and always simply because they were wrong.

On any magazine, each individual editor and art director leaves his personal stamp; but none of them ever escapes entirely the texture of his period. If the 1920s lean toward a free, romantic time, then a magazine editor will find himself reflecting it; if the images of pop art dominate the 1960s, then an editor will discover himself—perhaps before he knows it—adapting those ideas for his magazine too.

When The Imperial Oil Review was born in May, 1917, the respectable magazines of North America looked uniformly dull and solemn. There were a few respectable outsiders, like the Police Gazette magazine, whose typography and illustration suggested a certain gaiety on their cover of life, but most of the middle-class magazines—like Maclean's here and The Saturday Evening Post in the United States—were published in straightforward, no-nonsense style. The 1917 design style was long finished, and its view of life had persisted on the battlefield of 1914, but in 1917 its design style still lingered on the pages of the popular magazines.

by Robert Fafard
The first issue of The Imperial Oil Review was faithful to its period. It contained traces of certain modern industrial developments and some information from the recent elevation of Imperial Oil Mac at the Front—a new way of boiling water for tea without attracting the enemy’s attention. But in the type face, the use of pictures and the over-all design there was no suggestion that the modern period had begun. In European fine art, the first non-objective pictures were not so thousands old and the greatest days of Cubism had come and gone; but none of this had affected the look of the magazines that middle-class North Americans produced and read.

The 50 years since then have brought to magazines a succession of design revolutions, and the Imperial Oil Review has been involved in most of them. One was the assimilation of styles taken from contemporary fine art; in the end everyone from Pablo Picasso to Pablo Picasso was to influence our magazines, sometimes profoundly. Another was the ‘clear type’ revolution, inherited from those German architects and industrial designers (Mies van der Rohe was the most famous) who, in their affection for the machine and its possibilities, created the look of the period in which we now live. A third, perhaps the most crucial, was the revolution in the use of pictures initiated by Henry Luce with Life magazine in 1936. Each of these upheavals becomes clearer when you compare the leading articles in the May, 1917, issue with the leading article in the February, 1967, issue. In the first case the typographical convention is restrained and traditional, much like the typewriter used to this day in hard-cover books. The photographs are carefully staged, treated more as records of an occasion than illustrations of an event. Pictures and text are carefully separated: there are grey borders around every one of the photographs.

In the second case the most obvious change is in the typography: the headline, in the clear, bluish, sans-serif style made popular by Life, is big and bold, occupying nearly a quarter of the page. The illustration is a drawing of a drill rig which, in its loose and roughly sketchy style, gives no imaginative perspective (the rig seems to be leaning to one side), demonstrating the freedom that commercial artists inherited from modern painting. And over the page, the large resolution runs its head: the photograph of the rig on Leduc No. 1 in 1947 occupies an entire small corner. It would have in 1917, when photos in magazines were afterthoughts but not an entire page. Like most magazines, The Imperial Oil Review (in and the definitive article until 1946) began breaking out of 19th century design shortly after World War I.

The country as a whole was more ambitious than in the past, and the designs who were reflecting the period’s mood were beginning to fix their muscles. In 1920 the Revues had a certain uniformity, and the decorative borders (cont) then merely a swirling around the photographs) became so large it overwhelmed the

---

The Imperial Oil Review

December, 1926

Photographs sported fancy borders

December, 1926

October, 1927

May, 1925

September, 1926

Summer, 1940

Foliated-around-with photographs, June, 1927

A selection of covers from 1923 to 1940

Vignettes and borders, February, 1927

---

The country as a whole was more ambitious than in the past, and the designs who were reflecting the period’s mood were beginning to fix their muscles. In 1920 the Revues had a certain uniformity, and the decorative borders (cont) then merely a swirling around the photographs) became so large it overwhelmed the
picture it was bordering. For the Review, this was a period of optimism and progressive-excitement-thinking. A further performance was the "one-back-cover message. Ambition in that genre which gives great desire for things which he knows, said another. A third argued against one of the words 10t, on the grounds that it was "a kind, heist, critical".

And the front cover's decorative border showed a "sympathetic" male figure with arms outstretched, holding a banner "HEAT-LIGHT-LUBRICATION". The mood was consistent.

The little trick that wandered outside the circle of the design on the November, 1923, cover may remind us of other, book interior of the magazine. In the 1926, 1927, and 1928 issues, a photograph of a tree with a bird perched on its branch, was used in the design. This trend was maintained through the 1930s. The Review was established in 1926 and maintained through the 1930s. It was closed in 1939 with the assistance of the RCA. The magazine had a strong influence on Canadian magazine design.

Among designers of magazines during the 1920s and 1930s, there were many who were interested in the use of photographs. Some used them as a way to compensate for the lack of text on the page. Others used them to add a touch of class. Even the most rudimentary design was limited to the covers, but more began to appear inside as well. Certain colors began to turn up here and there, typography grew slightly eccentric and there appeared what I have come to think of as "The Fezled-around-With Photographs."
You can chart pretty clearly the conflicts between magazine design and the visual life of the 1930s and 1940s. The Imperial Oil Review, in the 1930s, was more serious in appearance than was a Broadway play title of the period had it, no time for comedy. Those whimsical little design slants of the 1920s vanished, to be replaced on the cover by serious industrial photographs or sculptural, symbolic figures. In wartime, of course, the illustrations grew more serious still, and the tone was deadly earnest: what could you do with a photograph of a warship except paint it straight? The dreams of those days was the occasional smiling photograph of an Imperial Oil staff member, who had joined the Wrens. Much the same mood continued through the late 1940s, the postpone boom, in these pages anyway, was pictured as a very serious business. It was in the 1950s that the Review took on, after a 30-year lull, a new personality. It was lightened considerably. This was partly the result of some enlightened individualism in the leadership at Imperial Oil, but it also reflected the country's spirit. Canada was more internationalist this time above, highly conscious of its place in the world, eager to become sophisticated in art and similar matters. Businessmen, for the first time, were expected to show an interest in culture, and Imperial Oil led the way. The Review began commissioning artists of the calibre of Harold Town to design its covers and illustrations, and soon its material began showing into Art Directors' Club shows at the Art Gallery of Toronto and elsewhere. By the middle 1950s anyone interested in Canadian magazine design had a little issue of the Review.

In the 1950s, Abstract Expressionism dominated the art galleries, so illustrations borrowing from Abstract Expressionism turned up in the Review. Escher, of course, became fashionable (partly through Imperial Oil's assistance) and so an Escher print appeared on the cover. In 1962 Louis de Nerverville's paintings were widely talked about, and de Nerverville was an illustration, but just a painting was reproduced on front and back covers. By now the Review was deeply involved in the Canadian cultural scene: it had managed to make a close connection between business and the larger visual arts on the other hand. Free from the pressures of mainstay sales, the Review had managed to reproduce covers (and sometimes illustrations, too) that were among the most sophisticated and elegant in Canadian publishing. As magazines will sometimes do, the Review was not only reflecting the tendencies of the period, it was helping create them. It's natural that the Review of today fits in with the tendencies of today. The revival of Art in Canada, for instance, is part of the visual culture of the 1960s; you see it in everything from women's dresses in the titles on James Bond moves. And, sure enough, there is it in the Imperial Oil Review: one recent issue, in fact, had some of Art Nouveau's meandering lines in almost every illustration. Unless I'm entirely wrong, the "minimal art people" whose sculpture and painting is cropped down to the basics of squares and cubes will soon begin to influence magazine design. You'll see magazines whose severity will make all that earlier clean design look positively frivolous. And save your old copies: in no time at all they'll be quaint Camp artifacts. Things are moving faster all the time, and magazines are floundering to keep up.
What is the north? The Review tried to define it in a 1960 special issue. There’s the Arctic Circle—a line 1,100 miles from the Pole marking off the area where, at least one day a year, the sun doesn’t rise and, at least one other day, doesn’t set. There is the true Arctic—a million square miles marked by the tree line which meanders sometimes north of the Circle, sometimes south. And there is the sub-Arctic, a transition zone having similar climatic and geographic features.

The ‘north’, in Review articles over the years and in the minds of most Canadians, means the Arctic and sub-Arctic, 115 million square miles comprising about 40 per cent of Canada. It is a marvellously contradictory place. It can drop to 70 degrees below zero in winter. Yet the annual snowfall at Resolute, 1,200 miles from the Pole, is less than Ottawa’s. The highest recorded temperature at Fort Smith, NWT, 103 degrees, beats New Orleans’ by one degree. The north has 17,000-foot-high mountains, more lakes than the rest of the world combined and Canada’s largest river system, the Mackenzie.

‘It is anything but ugly, that special issue went on. ‘In summer, wild forget-me-nots and deep green grasses colour the tundra between the myriad lakes. The north has pines, firwood, purple lichen, Arctic cotton, mosses, lichens, blueberries and black cottonwood. From the air, countless lakes glow with rich green and rusty red, signifying copper and iron. For the north has minerals, as well as furs, fish, game, water resources. It is the home of a people whose very existence and way of life are as strange as you will find. It contains one of the five largest unexplored areas in the world; the Barrenlands, 100,000 square miles from Yellowknife in the west to Hudson Bay in the east.’

Since the time of the earliest explorers, this great silent land has fascinated man. Some day, the dream always goes, the north will become the hub of the world. It is nowhere near such status yet. Its weather, terrain and sheer immensity pose problems of transport, living conditions and outright loneliness that white men so far have been unable to solve.

Still, northern development is measurable and much of it is due to the oil industry. Often weren’t the first pioneers. They came far behind trappers, missionaries, Hudson’s Bay traders and the Mounted Police. But the oil search and the technology made possible by oil have opened the north more than any other factors.

The beginnings were in 1919. ‘Set down upon the banks of the Mackenzie River there is a squaw log cabin that marks an exclamation point in two thousand miles of frozen silence,’ cried the December Review that year. This was the site of a five-man Imperial Oil wildcat drilling rig, 53 miles north of Fort Norman and 1,100 air miles from Edmonton.

Five years earlier, western Canada’s first big oil discovery at Turner Valley had encouraged companies to search elsewhere. Geology of that day indicated what we now know for sure: potential oil bearing sediments lie under much of the prairie provinces and Northwest Territories. So in 1919 the Imperial crew chose to drill near Norman Wells.

In July they went in by railway and river boat, through boiling rains and clouds of black flies, with a drilling rig, a winter’s supplies and a black ox named Old Nig. They started the hole that autumn and weathered a bitter winter, although the bay ran out and Old Nig, friend and chief log-baulker, had to be turned into steak. In August, 1920, the well came in at 783 feet.

The strike was a remarkable feat but, since there was no economical way of shipping the crude oil south, Imperial built a small steam still to provide product for the area. Some was used to run heaters; some to run engines that operated lighting plants; some was used in aircraft. Imperial, with lights in and out of Norman (see page 22), was the first company to use planes in the north.

For many more years, though, most travelers depended on boats in the summer and dog teams in winter. In February, 1922, company courier Ronald MacKinnon, who later became the first manager of Imperial’s Norman Wells refinery, trudged 1,200 miles from Norman to Waterways, Alta. It took 45 days and he described it for the Review this way:

‘At four o’clock in the morning the alarm clock rings and you crawl out from your sleeping bag and light a fire in a stove improvised from a four-gallon gasoline can. The fuel is dry driftwood picked up along the river bank. You thaw some snow for tea and you thaw out some baking powder biscuits which were made for you at the last post. These are rich in butter or lard so and when they will thaw more readily, also because of this climate plenty of fat is essential.’

About 6 a.m. each day MacKinnon hit the trail, carrying a candle set in a coffee tin to light his way until daylight. There’d be rest stops with tea, beans, bacon and biscuits. At 3 p.m. he began looking for wood, trimmed a tent-site, laid stumps and spruce boughs for a floor, pitched his light silk tent, thawed whitefish for the dogs and made a supper of tea, currant and jam. At 9, before bedtime, he washed his ‘duffles’—heavily, closely woven woolen slippers worn inside the moccasins. This was the most important chore of the day because ‘the man who trots 1,300 miles must be very careful of his feet.’

Imperial brought in a second well at Norman in 1925. Then the place lay dormant for seven years until mining stimulated a need for more oil products. Diesel-operated supply boats plied the Mackenzie. Men and supplies flowed to the silver and radium discoveries around Great Bear Lake, running, as the Review later remarked in 1937, ‘well-substantiated hopes that the drive against the scourge of cancer may now be speeded up’.

In the early 30s, Imperial built a full-fledged refinery at Norman and an 8½-mile pipeline around rapids, providing a smooth land and water route to the mines.

Norman went along quietly, producing about 300 barrels a day until World War II. By
1942 North America scored to need a mass
military establishment in the northwest to
Alaska and perhaps one day strike Japan, which had occupied two of the
Aleutian Islands: Kiska and Attu. This called for the best fuel supplies that would not
be menaced by Japanese submarines. Suddenly Norman Wells had a new customer:
the United States Army.

Imperial men went to Washington to hear an awesome plan: a joint military-civilian force
would build a highway from Dawson Creek to Alaska, a railway to Whitehorse, a north
western Defence strategic route and a 596-mile pipeline through the unirritated wilderness between
Whitehorse and Norman Wells. Norman
itself would be expected to provide 3,000
barrels of crude oil per day.

Was it possible? Nobody knew. A series of
Review stories chronicled what happened next: in May, 1942, the Canol (for "Canadian oil")
contract was signed and Imperial agreed to
produce the oil for the total sum of one
dollar plus expenses. In June the first freight
made its way to Norman. By mid-July the
first new well came in. By 1945 there
were 64 producing wells, a 30-million-barrel reserve and production of 6,000 barrels a day.
The rest of the project sprang to completion.

It took 25,000 men and 10 million tons of
equipment and materials to build 1,000 miles of
road, string 1,000 miles of telegraph and
lay 1,600 miles of pipeline, the Review
recounted later.

Canol and the Alaska Highway were never
needed for war defense but they opened the
northwest for peace and taught valuable
lessons in northern living and northern
drilling. In the late 40s and 50s, the Review reported the postwar surge: nickel mining at
Rankins Inlet with Eskimo employees: the
annual six-week dash (between thaw and freeze-up) of a Hudson's Bay Company
supply ship through 1,400 miles of ice-locked
waters from Yukon to Peguismin, Bathurst Inlet, Cambridge Bay, Holman
Island, Sachs Harbour and back; Canadian
aircraft exercises out of Fort Churchill; a
truck-postman's hair-raising 918-mile trip
up the Highway three times a month; the
long-lost summer homes of the Mackenzie
River tugboat "vikings."

Oil companies were in the thick of it, facing
problems unknown to the southern oil
search. In 1951 photographer Harry Rowed wrote the Review a letter one night from a
seismic exploration camp north of Peace
River: "It's a mean night with the temperature
freezing out at 47 below zero. To add to the
frigid discomfort, a dirty wind has hustled
down from the north and snow flurries from
the high drifts are blowing into the lights of
trucks and diesels which drivers have been
afraid to turn off in fear they'll never get
them started again in the cold..."

The winters never got warmer but as years went by other Review stories told how
technology eased the life of the oil seekers.
Beaver and Otter oilers struggled constantly to
and from civilization, flying crewmen out
for two weeks' leave after six weeks' work and
flying in excellent food. When aircraft
couldn't fly, two-way radio was the constant
lifeline. "Every day of the year," said a 1955
Review story, "the airways crackle with
drilling or geological reports, orders for
groceries or machinery, important family
messages for crewmen, urgent calls for
medicine or an airlift to hospital." One camp
even radioed home for instructions on how
to cook a chicken, which were radioed back.

One problem they couldn't fix - and the
main reason for working in died of
winter - was muskeg. Muskeg is a mixture of
water with dead and living vegetation. In summer it
breeds insects and drowns everything from
to enormous tractors. A 1958 Review article described it:
"Stretching across the north of Canada is a mass of spongy ill-smelling territory that has
probably done more to hold back northern
Canadian development than anything else... Muskeg covers 500,000 square miles of
Canada. It has cost Canada countless millions of dollars. The petroleum industry
alone has lost an estimated $100 million as a
direct result of muskeg.

Science was-and is-still studying ways of coping with it:
streaming, categorization of muskeg types,
vehicles equipped with wide treads to
distribute weight. Imperial now uses such light
stepping vehicles but they haven't really
solved the problem. Winter, when the muskeg is frozen, is still the best time
to travel or work on the ground. In summer you take to the water or the air.

In 1964 Imperial parties did both, probing
the Arctic around Aklavik by helicopter and
barge. 'The helicopter plunged on steadily to
the northwest at 70 mph,' the Review reported.
'...to the blue water off the Arctic Ocean
farmed out into infinity... So it
had gone all summer. Collect rocks samples,
looking for fossils that would indicate the
age of the rock. Measure rock formations for
thickness and lateral changes in the rock
structure. A thick section of rock in the mountains
often tends to pinch out toward the plains; somewhere in between may be a "pinchout"
which could be a trap containing oil..."

That summer barges also hauled a drill rig
into the high Arctic for the first wildcat well. It was a dry hole but the search
went on. Sometimes crewmen work by the light of
mines' lamps strapped to their heads during the
short winter days. Imperial has also
employed these expert northerners, the Eskimos, on its geological teams.

Eskimo activity has left more of a mark on the
14,000 Eskimos than on their country.
The Imperial Oil Review September 1919

The party consisted of . . . Gorman, in charge, flying the Rene machine, E.G. Fuller

One of the greatest contributions to the development of aviation in Canada was made by Imperial in 1923 when it introduced an aviation marketing policy. A later review reported: "On instructions from the commercial aviation companies, Imperial Oil arranged to deliver supplies of gasoline and oil to these companies' cachets throughout the north country. The importance of this with regard to the development of northern flying in Canada cannot be over-emphasized. Knowing of these supplies and their locations, the northern airmen were able to fly confidently in the most remote areas with the knowledge that they were never very far away from fuel and lubricants"

In 1927 the Review noted that a daughter of the chief engineer of the tanker Imperial was learning to fly. The following year the young lady, Miss Eileen Vullock, earned her place in Canadian history as the country's first licensed woman pilot.

The year 1928 reports a Review article near the close of that year, was 'our first flight in the sky and in civil and commercial flying'. The article reported 18 active flying clubs-all formed that year-and 33 companies operating air-
craft. The scene somehow set the writer to moralizing: 'To expect that aircraft will attain perfect within a few years,' he wrote, 'is as groundless optimistic as to expect perfection of the motor vehicle within the next century. Man has not yet learned to demand that instrument be perfect before he will apply to its uses . . .'

One man who didn't demand perfection was Pat Reid. An article in the Review in 1933 called Pat Reid 'the pilot who has flown over more Canadian territory, probably, than any other.' Reid, who became Imperial's western aviation manager in 1931 and later aviation fuel sales manager, won the McKee Trophy, the Oscar of Canadian aviation, for his 'keen interest in the advancement of aviation' for the joint years 1942-43.

In 1928 Reid achieved the first aerial cir-
cumnavigation of Hudson Bay. In 1929 he took part in the first air search and rescue in the high north when an American ship was reported trapped in an ice pack off the Siberian coast, 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Carl Ben Eidolon, famous for his April, 1928, flight over the North Pole with Sir Hubert Wilkins, attempted to fly supplies

Air Mail, September, 1918

On earth did this happen? Leonardo da Vinci designs a plane and in 1505 an-
unciates: 'There shall be wings. If the ac-
complishment be not for me, 'is for some other.' In the next 398 years a few kites and balloons get off the ground and a lot of men dive into the ground trying to prove man-powered flight possible. Then, in 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright put together an airplane with a motor in it and flew a few feet. Then in 1909 they flew for 7.5 miles. 'Propelled the machine off the ground. In next to no time men are shooting at each other from airplanes over Europe and before World

How on earth did this happen? Leonardo da Vinci designs a plane and in 1505 an-
unciates: 'There shall be wings. If the ac-
complishment be not for me, 'is for some other.' In the next 398 years a few kites and balloons get off the ground and a lot of men dive into the ground trying to prove man-powered flight possible. Then, in 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright put together an airplane with a motor in it and flew a few feet. Then in 1909 they flew for 7.5 miles. 'Propelled the machine off the ground. In next to no time men are shooting at each other from airplanes over Europe and before World

The party consisted of . . . Gorman, in charge, flying the Rene machine, E.G. Fuller

One of the greatest contributions to the development of aviation in Canada was made by Imperial in 1923 when it introduced an aviation marketing policy. A later review reported: "On instructions from the commercial aviation companies, Imperial Oil arranged to deliver supplies of gasoline and oil to these companies' cachets throughout the north country. The importance of this with regard to the development of northern flying in Canada cannot be over-emphasized. Knowing of these supplies and their locations, the northern airmen were able to fly confidently in the most remote areas with the knowledge that they were never very far away from fuel and lubricants"

In 1927 the Review noted that a daughter of the chief engineer of the tanker Imperial was learning to fly. The following year the young lady, Miss Eileen Vullock, earned her place in Canadian history as the country's first licensed woman pilot.

The year 1928 reports a Review article near the close of that year, was 'our first flight in the sky and in civil and commercial flying'. The article reported 18 active flying clubs-all formed that year-and 33 companies operating air-
craft. The scene somehow set the writer to moralizing: 'To expect that aircraft will attain perfect within a few years,' he wrote, 'is as groundless optimistic as to expect perfection of the motor vehicle within the next century. Man has not yet learned to demand that instrument be perfect before he will apply to its uses . . .'

One man who didn't demand perfection was Pat Reid. An article in the Review in 1933 called Pat Reid 'the pilot who has flown over more Canadian territory, probably, than any other.' Reid, who became Imperial's western aviation manager in 1931 and later aviation fuel sales manager, won the McKee Trophy, the Oscar of Canadian aviation, for his 'keen interest in the advancement of aviation' for the joint years 1942-43.

In 1928 Reid achieved the first aerial cir-
cumnavigation of Hudson Bay. In 1929 he took part in the first air search and rescue in the high north when an American ship was reported trapped in an ice pack off the Siberian coast, 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Carl Ben Eidolon, famous for his April, 1928, flight over the North Pole with Sir Hubert Wilkins, attempted to fly supplies

On earth did this happen? Leonardo da Vinci designs a plane and in 1505 an-
unciates: 'There shall be wings. If the ac-
complishment be not for me, 'is for some other.' In the next 398 years a few kites and balloons get off the ground and a lot of men dive into the ground trying to prove man-powered flight possible. Then, in 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright put together an airplane with a motor in it and flew a few feet. Then in 1909 they flew for 7.5 miles. 'Propelled the machine off the ground. In next to no time men are shooting at each other from airplanes over Europe and before World

How on earth did this happen? Leonardo da Vinci designs a plane and in 1505 an-
unciates: 'There shall be wings. If the ac-
complishment be not for me, 'is for some other.' In the next 398 years a few kites and balloons get off the ground and a lot of men dive into the ground trying to prove man-powered flight possible. Then, in 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright put together an airplane with a motor in it and flew a few feet. Then in 1909 they flew for 7.5 miles. 'Propelled the machine off the ground. In next to no time men are shooting at each other from airplanes over Europe and before World

In the pretty town of Cranbrook, high in the mountains of southeastern British Co-

Stovman has a paper to get out. What's he supposed to do? Stop and murrmur sky-
way? 'Oh, it's a DC-4. Fully loaded the weights 355,000 lb. She's nearly seven miles up and if the winds are right she's doing about 625 m.p.h. People are up there laughing and eating and reading and sleeping. Nifty little stewardsesses are walking up and down.

In less than half an hour, before I've taken my first picture at this hockey practice, that little speck will be a great, heavy bank of metal sitting at Calgary Airport?" He knows all that. For goodness sake Cranbrook was settled in 1864 before the Wright brothers were even born. And in cities and towns and across the country, for 30 years ago the people turned out in droves to see a daring barnstormer prove he could actually make a plane fly, the aerials today attract little attention. After all, they fly every day. Soon some of them will be flying more than 900 people at a time and others will be skidding along at 1,800 m.p.h.

The Imperial Oil Review September 1919

The party consisted of . . . Gorman, in charge, flying the Rene machine, E.G. Fuller

One of the greatest contributions to the development of aviation in Canada was made by Imperial in 1923 when it introduced an aviation marketing policy. A later review reported: "On instructions from the commercial aviation companies, Imperial Oil arranged to deliver supplies of gasoline and oil to these companies' cachets throughout the north country. The importance of this with regard to the development of northern flying in Canada cannot be over-emphasized. Knowing of these supplies and their locations, the northern airmen were able to fly confidently in the most remote areas with the knowledge that they were never very far away from fuel and lubricants"

In 1927 the Review noted that a daughter of the chief engineer of the tanker Imperial was learning to fly. The following year the young lady, Miss Eileen Vullock, earned her place in Canadian history as the country's first licensed woman pilot.

The year 1928 reports a Review article near the close of that year, was 'our first flight in the sky and in civil and commercial flying'. The article reported 18 active flying clubs-all formed that year-and 33 companies operating air-
craft. The scene somehow set the writer to moralizing: 'To expect that aircraft will attain perfect within a few years,' he wrote, 'is as groundless optimistic as to expect perfection of the motor vehicle within the next century. Man has not yet learned to demand that instrument be perfect before he will apply to its uses . . .'

One man who didn't demand perfection was Pat Reid. An article in the Review in 1933 called Pat Reid 'the pilot who has flown over more Canadian territory, probably, than any other.' Reid, who became Imperial's western aviation manager in 1931 and later aviation fuel sales manager, won the McKee Trophy, the Oscar of Canadian aviation, for his 'keen interest in the advancement of aviation' for the joint years 1942-43.

In 1928 Reid achieved the first aerial cir-
cumnavigation of Hudson Bay. In 1929 he took part in the first air search and rescue in the high north when an American ship was reported trapped in an ice pack off the Siberian coast, 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Carl Ben Eidolon, famous for his April, 1928, flight over the North Pole with Sir Hubert Wilkins, attempted to fly supplies
to the ship but he disappeared. Reid set out to find Eielson from Fairbanks, Alaska, and was forced to make a crash landing between the Yukon River and Nome. Reid and his companions in the plane were delayed for a week while they repaired a damaged wing. One newspaper, assuming helplessly lost, went ahead and printed their obituaries. But Reid took the expedition on to find the ship and, close to it, the bodies of Eielson and his mechanic and the wreckage of their plane. Later Reid flew supplies to the trapped ship to keep the crew going until the ice broke up.

By the early 1930s the editors of the Review seem to have become addicted to aviation. Almost every second page carried a picture of an aircraft. And the record breakers were hard at it. Charles A. Lindbergh, whose signed receipt for Imperial fuel was reproduced in the June, 1928, issue, appeared again in 1931 as Imperial refueled his plane at Ottawa on a flight to Tokyo. The story of Wiley Post and Harold Gatty flying around the world in nine days in the summer of '31 was carried in the Review. Also in that very air-minded year the Review had a picture of the London Flying Club; an article on the inauguration of the Winnipeg-to-Toronto air mail route; a story on the fueling of planes searching northern British Columbia for two missing aircraft piloted by Capt. Paddy Burke and Pat Renahan; a photograph of the huge S.S. Beijing, 1,000-tonner from St. Hubert Airport, Montreal; a story on aircraft fuels and lubricants; a story about a service station in Victoria with facilities for fueling seaplanes; an item about Capt. T. D. Parkin establishing a new altitude record of 22,000 feet; in a small blimp over Quebec using Imperial fuel; a photograph of a Consolated Mining and Smelting Co. plane used for transporting prospectors and miners in British Columbia; a picture of Pat Reid standing by the Imperial entry in the Trans-Canada Air Pageant; a picture of a Parachute Monoplane, built by hand in a Stratford, Ont., garage; a story of the loss of the two-man crew of a mail plane catapulted from the deck of the S.S. Beaver off the Atlantic coast of Canada. In 1932 in England Capt. Cyril Unwin flew to 45,000 ft., an achievement hailed by the Review as 'one of the greatest in aeronautical history.' Today that altitude is within easy reach of most airliners, though they rarely climb above 30,000 ft. That same year Jimmy Mollison made crossing the Atlantic seem like a breeze. He flew from Ireland to New Brunswick in 22 hours and 50 minutes in a standard 120-h.p. de Havilland Puss Moth, the first east-to-west solo flight from Great Britain to a landing in Canada. The Review ran a photograph of Amelia Earhart before she took off in her Imperial-fueled Lockheed Vega from Newfoundland in 1932 to become the first woman to cross the Atlantic solo.

In July, 1933, startled Newfoundlanders saw a spectacular cluster of 24 planes fly in from the Atlantic sky. The twin-engine flying boats made up Gen. Italo Balbo's Italian Air Armada, on its way from Rome to Chicago's World Fair via Iceland, Labrador, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Quebec. The Review quoted Gen. Balbo, on his triumphant arrival at Chicago, as saying 'Our 48 engines did not miss a single explosion throughout the flight which is proof that engines as well as fuel have justified themselves.'

Planes were buzzing everywhere in Canada in the early 1930s, flying into the north, moving men and equipment, making aerial surveys and mercy flights. Aviation companies were growing stronger and the bush pilot was in his heyday. There was even talk of a trans-Canada airway. In 1933 an air mail on the regulation of aviation in Canada, written by J. A. Wilson, controller of civil aviation, reported that the average major airport in Canada was priced at $85,000: try that against Toronto's current $32 million international airport. Altogether, in 1933, Canada had 61 airports and 31 seaplane ports and the whole complex was valued at 4½ million dollars.

'The ultimate aim,' wrote Wilson, 'is to link Halifax with Vancouver by a trans-Canada airway and build such feeder lines as are necessary to give every important section of the Dominion adequate air connections. Progress in this work has been recently slowed by the world-wide depression. The whole airway has been surveyed, however, and sites chosen for a chain of safe landing fields from coast to coast.'

As the trans-Canada airway was nearing reality in 1937, the proposed operations were described in an article in the June-July Review that year by Capt. Arnold H. Sandwell, Canadian aviation historian. 'The latest schedule calls for a plane to leave Montreal (St. Hubert) nightly at 9 p.m., carrying on the mail which left the Atlantic seaboard some five hours earlier, and landing it to the mail truck at Vancouver about noon next day.' That's about 18 hours, from Halifax to Vancouver. Today air mail can be carried from Halifax to Vancouver in eight hours and 45 minutes, including time for stops at Montreal and Toronto.

In 1939 the manager of the Atlantic division of Pan American Airways, Col. Carroll Cone, wrote a first-hand description for the Review of the first commercial flight by his airline over the northern airway: Belled. New- foundland, to Foyles, Ireland. The plane, a big-bellied, 42-ton Clipper with accommodation for 74 passengers, made the flight easily with 17 passengers aboard in the summer of 1939. Concluded Col. Cone: 'Europe, already, is only overnight away and aviation


Winter, 1945. The jet plane opens a new chapter in the story of flight

has crossed one more mighty frontier to world progress.'

Aviation was firmly established in Canada when World War II came. By the end of the war Canada was the fourth greatest air power in the world after the United States, Britain and Russia. The manufacture of airplanes and aviation fuels hounded ahead: 'Employing less than 1,100 men and turning out scarcely more than 120 planes in 1939, reported the Review in the spring of 1941, 'Canada's aircraft industry now has more than 17,000 men and women on its payroll and a backlog of orders exceeding 110 million dollars.'

The war, too, brought to the fore the talents of Canada's pilots of the wilds. Under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, a major contribution to the war effort, civil pilots became instructors overnight and thousands of young Commonwealth airmen were trained under the plan in 73 air bases across Canada. Imperial's Pat Reid organized supplies for this plan. The famous pilot made his last appearance in the Review in 1954 in the form of a salute to a great Canadian. That year Pat Reid died with his wife in the crash of an airliner at Moose Jaw.

By 1943 Trans-Canada Air Lines was flying the Atlantic and in 1945 an important off-spring of the war made an appearance in the Review - the jet aircraft. The article on a Gloster Meteor jet fighter, test flying on Imperial's Intaway Turbo Fuel, noted: 'The plane flew from Montreal to Ottawa in 12 minutes.'

And from there the throttles were wide open. TCA increased its passenger service from 2,086 in 1938 to 156,884 for the year 1944. Now, as Air Canada, the airline almost five million passengers per year. Canadian Pacific Airlines, born in 1942 from the amalgamation of 10 small independent air services, now links five continents.

Canada's first turbo-prop airliner went into service in 1955. That was the first of its kind to be used on the North American continent. And those DC-8 jets that whizz across Canada have been flying for seven years now.

Today engineers are already looking beyond the supersonic transports, to hypersonic transports which would fly at more than 6,000 m.p.h.

What stage will we have reached in another 50 years? The answer was given in the Review in 1948. 'In my optimism, air transport and air aviation progress in the 10 years between then and 1955. "He who would prophesy," the author wrote, "would indeed be rash."
The warning signs were there in 1917. Now, if you leaf through past issues of the Imperial Oil Review you can clearly see today’s kind of farming taking shape, logically, inevitably, an avalanche that no one could hold back.

Tractors, combines, chemicals, business techniques, fertilizer, huge land holdings, college graduates, test tube ideas from the labs, all adding up to ‘science’. Even 50 years ago the unscientific farmer was doomed although nobody realized it, not even the few who were fumbling toward a surer way of farming.

But the clues were in that first Review of May, 1917, which urged Eosaro operators to capitalize on the new-fangled tractors. Farms were too widespread and roads too awful, especially in the west, for an agent to go door to door. But, said the crafty Review: ‘And you get that mental image of agents cruising behind village pool halls with order books and oversize butterfly nets. Every farmer in your territory has to come to town for one thing or another occasionally and that is your opportunity to determine what market for oil and fuel he represents. Keep tabs on the visits of your farmers to town and don’t let them get away without securing their order for the season . . .

More than half of Canada’s eight million people were rural then. They raised sheep, cattle, barley, rye, flax, fruit and vegetables, largely in the east, and some 300 million bushels of grain a year, mostly on the prairies. Somehow, in most of the Review’s stories of those 50 years, farming and ‘prairies’ are synonymous, partly because Alberta and Saskatchewan were still frontier until the 30s, the land still new and fertile, and wheat, as a Review story put it, ‘the symbol of prosperity’.

Homesteaders were still pouring into those two new provinces after World War I, though it was a poor time for a beginning: 1918 and 1919 were drought years. But a 1920 Review story on how to harvest a short crop (by using an improvised low-slung reaper) expressed the perennial hope of Canadian agriculture: ‘Everybody is looking forward to a good crop in 1920!’ Everybody always looked forward to next year, no matter how bad last year was. This great adventure in farming with the land and the elements kept thousands of unscientific farmers trying, fairly happy and sometimes prosperous for two more decades.

But a few men with a flair for machines jumped into an early lead. In 1920 the Review told of farm families who eased their labors with the stationary engine, which ground feed, pumped water, ran the electric light plant, the washer and the cream separator. Not many farmers lived that luxuriously, but 21,000 of them bought tractors between 1919 and 1921, bringing the western total to 38,600.

Tractors then, as recorded in a May, 1924, Review, were big-wheeled monstrosities that pulled implements with an ease that horses could never match and, during harvest, ran the threshing machine. Harvest was a splendid time. The 20s were the heyday and the climax of harvest excursions. The prairie farmers might be able to seed his land single hampers (in those days usually a half-section – 320 acres) but he needed many more men to harvest it. So they came from the east by the
drought and, in the autumn, tumble in dry
yearly regiments across the fields to pile
(shoulder-high along the fencerows). Russian
rye wasn’t tall that. Pile and interlocked,
 made a fine for or, at Christmas concerts,
 suitable for the Baby Jesus. Harvested green
 and mixed with grain and molasses, it made
passable livestock feed, although it caused
violent cases of diarrhea. In the spring
farmers went to the fields and burned the
remaining thistle, a futile, defiant gesture.
But the smoke rose bravely into the sky, as
if to say: ‘Here we go again, this way the
year will be better.’

When better years finally came, Canadian
agriculture was forever changed. Farmers
knew now that drought, insect plagues and
plant diseases could be counteracted with soil
management, mechanization, chemicals,
fertilizer, greater efficiency, more science.
Such was the Hatz farm of central Ontario,
7,700 acres owned and managed by two
doctors and described in a 1938 Review. ‘It
is run like a clinic. Every day’s work is
scheduled six months in advance. Sowing
dates are set in February. Every piece of
machinery must be housed at eight. A
machine shop with lathes, drills and welding
equipment is maintained to meet break-
downs.’ Two years later the magazine cited
another example: a federal agriculturalist at
Scott, Sank., had invented a way to beat the
drought. With tractor and snowplow he
built snow ridges in fields in early winter; the
ridges caught later snowfall and as it all
melted in the spring the ridges held the water
and prevented runoff gullies from forming in
the soil.

But drought was no longer a problem. The
rains came. So did the wheat. So did the war.
Canada now needed other kinds of food-
stuff. There were, said a 1943 Review, ‘two
totally new tasks of feeding armies overseas
and rationing at home, and of finding food for
the hungry mouths in allied and occupied
countries . . . Canada’s goal is 4,388 million
pounds a year; 20 million tonnes of wheat,
25 million of barley, 200 million of potatoes,
50 million of oats, 27 million of vegetables,
90 million of meat, and 18 million of dairy
products for the United States alone.’

The farmers coped, the veterans came
home, restrictions came off farm machinery
sales and the new era was on. By 1950, nearly
half of the country’s 705,000 occupied farms
had tractors.

The rate of change in Canadian farm life
has possibly never been so rapid as in the 10
years since the outbreak of World War II,’
said the Review in 1950. ‘While the number
of people engaged in the agricultural industry
has gone down, the farmers’ cash income has
varied from $22 million in 1939 to an esti-
mated $2,474,499,000 in 1949. In 1939
farmers bought $16 million worth of ma-
chinery; in 1948, $146,956,254 worth.’

From then on the story of the new agriculture
tumbled from the pages of the Review. One
evidence of it was the December, 1953, report
on the first annual Lasso-sponsored world
plowing match, the Olympics of farming.
The opener was at Cobourg, Ont., and an
Ontarian, Jim Eccles of Brampton, won.

There were stories of tobacco farming in
southern Ontario (‘so less than 30 years
it has sprouted from an insignificant sideline
to Ontario’s largest single cash crop, $64
million last year,’ said the November, 1952,
issue, ‘and has made Canada self-sufficient in
cigarette tobacco’); chicken farming in the
Maritimes; flower and vegetable growing in
Ontario. In all cases, oil heating—in kilns,
brooders and greenhouses—helped in the
scientific raising of these crops. There were
tales of the flying farmers and ranchers of
the west; of how irrigation farming had
turned dried-out southern Alberta into
Canada’s largest sugar beet land; of how
some farmers grew Christmas trees as a
profitable sideline.

By now there were new frontiers. The Peace
River country had produced a rash of world
championship wheat titles. ‘Here, about
2,000 feet above sea level, the land of the
Peace is one of our most promising and
exciting pioneer regions,’ said a 1951 Review.
And in 1960 a special issue on the north
specialized on northern agriculture. Already,
in isolated plots, northerners were raising
cabbages as big as soccer balls at Arctic Red
River, sheep and geese at Fort Chipewyan,
strawberries at Whitehorse. The trick, said
the Review, was to find early-maturing
varieties to beat the frost, ways to supple-
ment the moisture (much of the north is arid in
summer) and ways to enrich the soil, espe-
cially the sandy tundra soils. The result was
a challenge for science. One answer might be the
development of hydroponics—growing plants
without soil. Ottawa researchers had done it in graved
the Russians, in asbestos tile. One way or
another, the Review concluded, there were
three million potentially producible acres in
the Canadian north and some day, maybe
not in this century, this area could feed six
million people.

The problem of feeding people, everywhere,
cropped up increasingly in the issues of the
60s. In 1961 an article speculated on foods of
the future—krill, a shrimp-like crustacean;
chlorella, single-cell fresh water algae; deep
fried beers—and also guessed that one day
science, by controlling the chemistry of
genes, might create new breeds of creatures
that could be made to live on whatever
plentiful food was available and themselves
produce great quantities of food for man. A
special issue on agriculture in 1963 told of
a soy-bean ether that can be made to look,
taste and feel like any kind of meat.

That special issue closed up, once and for
all, the true nature of Canadian agriculture.
It is merely part of something greater called
agribusiness: involving not only the growing
of crops, but chemistry, physics, genetics,
economics and mathematics; employing not
only farmers and ranchers but the makers
and sellers of machinery, fertilizers, chemi-
cals, oil and gasoline; of government scientists
and administrators, of food processors and
distributors. ‘It is by far the most important
business in Canada,’ the Review said. ‘It
accounts for 40 percent of Canadian con-
sumer spending, one fifth of our total exports
and employs 40 percent of our labor force.’

The issue described the agricultural marvels
that are still news today: dairy farmers
eating their cows on the advice of an
electronic calculator, infra-red radiant heat
in cows barns, photoelectric cells regulating
the lighting in hen houses, lazy-Susan silos
with push button feeding controls, experi-
ments in cytogenetics (the juggling of plant
chromosomes to produce new specialized
strains). Oil’s contribution to farming had
become infinitely more sophisticated than in
the early times of harness oil, wagon grease
and special gear lubricants for windmills. By
1963 oil provided gasoline, lubricants and
diesel fuel; plastics for irrigation pipe,
greenhouses, experimental mulch and the new
flexible pickup teeth of combines and hay
balers; fertilizers; waxes to coat vegetables
for shipping; insect sprays. In the future,
maybe food itself, extracted from oil.

There were other tantalizing glimpses of that:
future: farms operated by push-button con-
sole or two-way radio in the living room,
automatic irrigation, controlled radiation to
kill weeds, the discovery of the secret of
phosynthesis (the process by which plants
utilize the energy of the sun) and the con-
sequent elimination of plants from food
production. Farming is, the Review conclu-
ded, ‘a big business where efficiency counts
most; a way of life almost unrecognizable to
the farmer of 20 years ago; an industry beset
with change, problems and paradoxes. For
trained men with financial resources it is still
the best of all lives. For others, their future
in agriculture is a question mark.’

All of these things hold true today. The trend
toward specialization, fewer farms, bigger
and efficiency goes on. And for those who
remember it all, the farming of 1917 is a
nostalgic curiosity from another age.

Ken Hall 2004