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There was a wide, flat hayfield on our ranch, with a stream winding through it. Flooding events with barely a ripple, looping around and doubling back a couple of times before it finally slipped away at the far end of the meadow and became part of the Red Deer River. The ranch was in the Alberta foothills, about 80 km north and a good bit west of Calgary, and it was very much off by itself. Nobody knew about the hayfield or the stream because nobody even knew about the ranch, except for the occasional RCMP officer who would drop in, perhaps once a month, to make sure we were surviving. So the stream, with all its wildlife, was left in peace. I was eight years old when, on a warm evening in August, I discovered the joy of the stream; I learned that the animals in general and a family of beavers in particular were so secure in their isolation that they didn’t mind if I watched them.

I’d been reading a book called *Paddy the Beaver* by Thornton W. Burgess, and beavers sounded like great little guys. Clever and full of fun. Burgess wrote for kids and he attributed all sorts of human characteristics to animals. For instance, he suggested that clearly the Beaver had a fine sense of humor. I wasn’t so naive that I believed this but I did develop a pretty keen interest in beavers, partly because they’d built a large, neat dam across the stream in the hayfield.

On this particular August evening I went out to see the beaver dam and, as I approached it, I heard the sharp thudSound that a beaver makes as a warning by slapping the water with his tail. When I reached the dam I could see rings still widening on the water of the quiet pond above the dam, so I sat down and waited, hoping the beaver would show again. And it did. It didn’t just pop up for a look around; it swam back and forth, slowly, beside the dam, its nose laying out a long “V” as it cut through the water. Then it turned sharply and swam almost directly toward me. It came to the bank and waddled out of the water, sat up, bracing itself with its tail, and began to comb itself with its paws. It was about 30 feet away. I could hardly believe it.

It finished combing and then picked a couple of twigs from the ground and, holding them with its forepaws, chewed and ate them. Finally, with its tail dragging awkwardly, it waddled over to a slim, young poplar at the edge of a stand of trees about 20 feet from the water’s edge and started to cut it down. The chips of wood fell in a flurry and I could hear the teeth slicing. In a few minutes — maybe five or six — the poplar swayed and, despite its small size, seemed to topple with a sort of majesty, right toward the stream.

I sat there astounded by the beaver’s skill. It had obviously lined things up just so: *If I cut it here, it’ll fall over there toward... Such precision!* A few minutes later the beaver slipped into the water, swam to the centre of the pond, and disappeared. I ran home with my big news and my dad, who believed nature was fascinating enough without exaggerating it, let me in on the truth about beavers. It broke my heart.

He explained that the beaver had been plain lucky to fell the poplar so that it landed in the water; beavers often do manage to cut down trees so that they fall into streams but this is simply because so many trees growing along the banks of streams tend to lean naturally toward the water; their branches on the stream side get more sun so they grow thicker and the weight is in that direction. The beaver, my dad told me, does things by instinct. It picks a cutting position on the basis of comfort. And (I could hardly believe this) it’s not all that unusual for a beaver to kill itself by dropping a big tree smack on its own head. I was distraught. Thornton W. Burgess had told me that Paddy always... made sure that a tree was going to fall clear and just where he wanted it.

Shattering as it was, the revelation that beavers do some dumb things — that they act chiefly on instinct — was far from a total letdown because I began watching them regularly and saw their beaver lodge rise through the pond in readiness for winter. I watched them build up their food supply (a giant pile of poplar that also grew until it rose through the water in front of the lodge); I saw the dam altered so that it rose neatly and evenly, blocking its headwaters and flooding another chunk of meadow so the beavers could have the protection of water as they gathered more winter food from another stand of poplar. What a piece of engineering that dam was! Fifty feet across, four feet high, hardly a stick out of line. And placed just so, obviously after careful calculation... wasn’t it?

A man named Lars Wilsson killed this idea in the 1950s when he made some experiments with beavers in Sweden. He got interested in them when a hydroelectric dam began raising and lowering the water on a river and threatened to wipe out

by Dick Brown/Illustration by Anita Kunz

The Review, Number 2, 1978


several beaver colonies. Wilson saved a number of beavers and observed them in the act of washing that makes them decide where to build their dams. He proved it makes sense, too, for they broadcast the sound of rushing water. The beavers hear it and recognize the danger, right at the source of the sound.

Disappearing for beavers fans but never mind. In Wilson’s book, The Beaver Colony, and in all sorts of other books and pamphlets and assorted notes to the tune of eight million miles, as the most interesting animals in the world. Certainly no other animals can match them. Neither can the way beavers do their astonishing construction. It may be instinct but it’s still pretty impressive.

When beavers build a new lodge they start it in the autumn. Sometimes it’s attached to the bank of the stream but often it’s out in the pond, which is meant by it’s surrounding water. The beaver starts construction by pushing a stick or two into the mud first — into the mud at the bottom of the pond. Next it builds upward in a solidly bolted a house: a chamber above the water level and divides it into two sections: one for living, one for storage. It leaves the top in dip quarters with silvers of wood as a kind of mattress. Then it fills the outside of the top of the lodge with wet mud, pushing it in between the sticks, using some of the mud as it makes it. If the winter freezes the stream, it turns the mud atop the lodge into something solid. In the spring beavers may have small areas in the centre of the top clear of mud and this gives ventilation. Instead of air holes, the air vents of beavers will raise the temperature to a sub zero above freezing, which is snug enough for all winter. When an winter freezes underwater the ears, it turns the mud atop the lodge into something solid. In the spring beavers may have small areas in the centre of the top clear of mud and this gives ventilation.

The beaver’s body may not be designed for underwater diving, but most part, it’s a study in efficiency. The eyes have transparent lids that close when the beavers are underwater. The ears now have valve systems that shut out the water. Their feet are webbed and have a thick stock. There are folds of skin inside in mouth, just behind the big chewing teeth, to hold food they’ve eaten while swimming underwater so that it can use its teeth without filling its mouth. The beaver has no ears on its forepaws and uses one of them like a thumb to grip a piece of wood to chew it. On the hind feet, the two inside nails, also used in gripping wood out far, helps keeping it to work. There have been reports that the beaver always travels with a piece of wood stuck between its big front teeth.

In her book, The Fur Trade, Louise Dickinson Rich writes: “The old fur trade was formed by the men who ever intended to dream America...they followed strange riv- ers and lakes, up rocky mountains, over towering mountain ranges, crossed wide prairies and nameless lakes, providing themselves with food and shelter. Through their explorations, the geography of North America was known to them in a manner it might otherwise have been. They opened the way for settling the West.”

Trapping beavers is still a very big business. During the last harvest in 1975-76 for which figures are available was $343,914 — compared to $325 000 back in 1917-18 — and they were worth $672 001. Some traps are so designed that they can be used to trap skunks. These are placed on the ground next to a stream and a hole is dug in the ground next to it. The beaver walks out to drink from the stream and then falls into the trap which is set. It is then taken out of the trap and killed. The skin is then taken to a market and sold. There are many varieties of beaver skins, ranging from the white beaver to the black and brown beaver. Each variety has its own market and price range. The white beaver is the most valuable, followed by the black and brown varieties. The beaver is known for its thick, soft fur, which is used in making high-quality clothing and accessories. The beaver’s fur is also used in making hats, scarves, and other accessories. The beaver is known for its intelligence and its ability to build dams and lodges. Its sense of smell is also very good, which helps it to find food and avoid predators. The beaver is a social animal and lives in families called lodges, which are built in rivers, streams, and ponds. The lodges are made of branches and mud, and are usually located near the water's edge. The beaver is a nocturnal animal and is most active at night. It spends most of its time in the water, where it feeds on plants and small animals. During the daytime, the beaver is usually active only in the early morning or late evening.
One sunny morning last August, David Stares, his wife, their 15-year-old son, and their 11-year-old daughter climbed into the family automobile and set out from their home in St. Catharines, Ont., for a month-long motor vacation to the west coast.

Along Ontario’s Macdonald-Cartier Freeway they stopped for gas at a service centre and Stares was surprised and dismayed to find himself charged 15 cents more per gallon for regular gas than he had been in the habit of paying in downtown St. Catharines. A careful consumer, he made a mental note to keep an eye on gasoline prices, particularly since he expected that under the best of circumstances his total gas bill for the round trip would come to about $500. Even a few cents more per gallon could make a difference in quite literally, the long run.

As the trip progressed and service centre followed service centre, it did not take the price-conscious Stares very long to reach the conclusion that, in his own words, “motorists were being ripped off by the oil companies along the Trans-Canada highway.” This view, which was shared by a number of American tourists he talked to, was reinforced by the discovery that, if he was willing to make a short diversion from the highway into any sizable town along the route, gasoline could be bought at prices roughly equivalent to those he was accustomed to paying at home.

Travelling westward the Stares noticed both local and provincial variations in gasoline costs. Skirting the northern shore of Lake Superior they encountered “the worst prices of the entire trip.” Filling stations were few and far between and there were no towns in which to seek cheaper gas. In Sault Ste. Marie they were lucky enough to find themselves in the midst of a gasoline war and filled up for about 80 cents per gallon. But by the time they reached Marathon, Ont. (pop. 2,283), with the gas gauge hovering around the “empty” mark, all signs of warfare had vanished and gasoline was selling for considerably more than a dollar per gallon. They were grateful to find hostilities resumed at Thunder Bay, where a gallon could again be obtained for a little less than 80 cents.

The Stares regarded gasoline prices in Manitoba as “quite high,” although they noticed that prices showed progressive signs of abatement as they crossed Saskatchewan and Alberta. This improvement continued through British Columbia until, on Vancouver Island, the journey’s end for the outward leg of their trip, they discovered what they believed to be “the lowest gasoline prices in the whole of Canada.”

Stares returned home perplexed and annoyed. He had not expected to find gasoline selling for the same price across the country but, at the same time, he had not been prepared for variations of 15 cents and occasionally more per gallon at stations within a short distance of each other. He was at a loss to understand why the price should change radically from province to province, from town to city, and from highway to side street. He reasoned that since “lower-price gas stations were not charitable organizations” the ones selling at markedly higher prices had to be indulging in profiteering.

Indeed, the conviction grew in Stares’ mind that he had been, as he expressed it later, “suckered in.” “The oil companies can tell us all kinds of things in their television advertising,” he said, “but it’s the gas pump that tells the real story. We did not find these prices at all exorbitant. But when we found a 20-per-cent difference in prices at stations less than a mile apart it became clear that we were the victims of a blatant rip-off.” Stares registered his concern in letters to Imperial Oil, to his local newspaper, and to the Ontario provincial government.

It is quite possible that the Stares family did fall victim to the occasional rip-off. Indeed, it would be unusual if, during the course of a 10,000-km-plus journey, they had not encountered a single lesser-than-scrupulous gasoline dealer, just as the odds are that they ran into at least one less-than-scrupulous restaurateur or motel keeper.

But, in truth, what the Stares actually experienced was not a “blatant rip-off” on the part of the oil companies but a concentrated course in the complexities of gasoline marketing in Canada. In fact, had they deliberately set out to run the full gamut of gas prices they could scarcely have chosen a better itinerary.

Within the space of about 10 days they traveled from gasoline stations with extremely high operating costs to those with modest overheads; from large urban areas of intense competition to remote rural locations where competition was minimal; through provinces where gasoline taxes varied by as much as nine cents per gallon; from places where gasoline had to be transported as far as 1,500 km from the nearest refinery to others where the refinery was within an easy hour’s truck drive from the gas pump.

All of these factors, at one time or another, influenced the price the Stares paid for gasoline and, taken in combination, they could easily account for the 15-cents-or-more price spread. By retracling the vacationers’ route it is comparative-

ley as easy for a gasoline marketer to explain the price variations that were the cause of Stares’ perplexity.

When they elected to stop for their first fill-up at a service centre on the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway in Ontario, the Stares were choosing a high-priced outlet. These gasoline stations, with direct access to the highway, are built on land leased from the province. Because the number of outlets and their locations are determined by the province, the effect is to restrict competition, since the number of stations does not, as elsewhere, reflect market demand. Rent is charged on the basis of a percentage of sales, up to a maximum of 23 percent. (When the province reduced its rental rates in late 1978, prices fell by nine cents per gallon in some locations.)

Operating costs of these freeway stations are extremely high. They are generally located away from urban centres, they are open 24 hours per day, and staffing problems are often acute. Despite the high operating costs associated with these outlets, their operators do make strong efforts to keep prices within sight of the nearest off-highway prices and, in fact, are frequently forced by competition to sell gasoline for a minimal return.

As the Stares discovered, they almost certainly could have bought cheaper gas by diverting to the nearest large town, if they were willing to accept the inconvenience. In every major centre, competition is inevitably brisk and lower operating costs also contribute to reduced prices. In large urban markets a further strong element of competition is injected by the activities of private retailers.

The private retailer, or private brander as he is known in the business, has no fixed allegiance to any oil company and buys his gasoline from the refiner who offers the lowest price. Because his operating costs are generally lower than those of the major oil companies (for one thing, he does not provide credit), the private brander can usually undercut the competition.

Like the supermarket operator who compensates for a low unit profit by selling by the ton rather than by the bin, the private brander relies on volume to offset his low “margin.” The same principle has been adopted by the growing numbers of self-service gasoline stations that are to be found in most parts of Canada and that have demonstrated their ability to compete effectively with the private brander.
The hazards of the private brander are considerable. He generally buys his gasoline directly from the refiner, has to cover his own operating costs, and enjoys neither merchandising support nor guaranteed continuity of supply from the oil company, as do its regular dealers. He does have his own independent批发市场, however, and this is a significant situation in most of Canada, less well in times of product shortage when he is in a poor position to bargain with refiners on wholesale prices. The private brander is a creature of the urban environment and one is unlikely to find his kind in Marathon, Ont., or Eyebrow, Sask. There are a couple of good reasons for this and they help to explain the high prices that the Stares had to pay in their progress through the remote reaches of northern Ontario and the Quebec provinces: high gasoline transportation and distribution costs and the fact that the amount of gasoline sold in these areas is often insufficient to attract new retail competitors.

It is another question, however, whether the prices charged in such isolated communities constitute a rip-off. In most urban areas of Canada today competition is such that dealers have to pay their costs and recover what profit they can from a margin of eight cents on a gallon of gasoline. But in thinly populated areas, gas stations are few and far between and the dealer can sell at a profit for a long period of time. In some areas, the dealer can make a profit on each gallon he sells, whereas in other areas he may be forced to sell at a loss or break even.

The Stares, however, were not the only ones to suffer. The prices charged in these isolated communities were often much higher than those in the urban areas, and this was particularly true in the northern Ontario and Quebec provinces. The high prices were due to the high transportation and distribution costs, as well as the low volume of sales.

The Stares, along with other independent dealers, were forced to pay a premium for gasoline, which was reflected in higher prices at the pump. The result was a substantial increase in the cost of living for these communities, and a decrease in their purchasing power.

The Stares soon realized that they were not the only ones to suffer. Other independent dealers were also experiencing high prices and low profits. They decided to band together and form a cooperative, with the goal of negotiating better prices with the refiners.

The cooperative was successful in its efforts, and the prices charged by the Stares and other independent dealers soon began to drop. The cooperative also worked to educate the public about the true cost of gasoline, and to encourage them to use public transportation and carpooling to reduce their gasoline consumption.

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ALBERTA INVITES YOU TO TOUCH THE PAST

At the Glenbow

by Paul Grescose/photos by John Reeves

Glenbow’s philosophy is to let the objects speak for themselves.

- The handwritten letter in the display case is a melancholy reminder of the life Indians once led on reserves. In 1911 an elderly Blackfoot asked a missionary to write the federal government on his behalf. “My name is Northern Axe. As I am blind, old and unable to work, I recommend my self to the good will of the people. I will be thankful for any kind of little assistance, such as something to eat, clothes or some old cloth or a few cents.”

- The denture-filled pocket mirror, lying amid World War I memorabilia, has a melodramatic history. The girl who gave it to a Canadian soldier mentioned that it might someday save his life. It did, stopping a bullet during the Allies’ 1917 assault on the Germans at Passchendaele, Belgium.

Those are two of the thousands of items from our past at the Glenbow Centre, Calgary’s stimulating new museum, art gallery, library, and archives.

The centre successfully humanizes Canadian history by transforming it from a dull textbook preoccupation with dates and places to a lively chronicle of real people, reflected through the things they left behind.

Without stinting on the predictable—Indians, immigrants—Glenbow reports on bootleggers and bible-thumpers, housewives and assorted heroes.

The focus is western Canadians, fittingly enough, because its founder, Calgary oil-magnate Eric Harvie, accumulated a fortune in relics of the West, including what’s believed to be the world’s largest assortment of western-Indian artifacts. But before his death three years ago at age 62, he had branched out to collect anything his.

Items that are too valuable to be touched are placed in almost-invisible glass cases.
tonic, from whole battalions of medieval armor to a pair of Queen Victoria's bloomers. In 1998 the philanthropist gave all of his scattered Glenbow Foundation assets and a $5-million cheque to the people of Alberta. Ten years later the provincial government opened the Glenbow Centre, an $8.75-million, eight-storey structure that became part of a new hotel-and-convention complex in downtown Calgary.

The centre is more than a museum. As well as containing about 90,000 objects of cultural and ethnic history, it has an archive of 130,000 photographs, a myriad of printed matter on the West, an art gallery with 22,000 works, a 39,000-volume library, and a busy lecture theatre seating 380. On a typical day a visitor can view an exhibition of paintings by such western artists as Paul Kane and Gerald Tall Feathers, a temporary display of ancient instruments of torture, and a silent movie with cowboy star Hoot Gibson.

Backstage, four craftsmen restore the artifacts. Jack Res (at 77 Alberta's oldest active blacksmith) and three education officers prepare 16 different programs that 65 volunteer docents present to 28,000 schoolchildren each year. In the World War I program, high-school students can don a gas mask and toss an 18-pound artillery shell.

No more than a tenth of the Glenbow's massive collection can be shown at any one time on the three well-organized floors of exhibition space. Subdued lighting emphasizes the artifacts instead of the surroundings. Whenever possible, the museum pieces are open to the public's touch. These objects too valuable or too fragile to be handled are placed behind almost-invisible cases. There's a maximum of labels. "It is our purpose to be a three-dimensional book," says Duncan F. Cameron, director of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute. "Because objects are sources of data the name of the game is to let the artifacts speak for themselves."

They speak eloquently, as demonstrated in a display of native culture. Before white men made their progeny felt in the West Blackfoot were following the buffalo from what's now southern Manitoba into Saskatchewan and Alberta. Glenbow demonstrates that their only agriculture was buffalo growing, accompanied by an elaborate ritual involving the planting of stick "people" in the fields, who were miniature tipis and carried food.
bagg and tobacco pouches as provi- sions for their task of protecting the coast. The sea-rich west-coast tribes portrayed at the museum would hold potatoes — festivities to show off a man’s wealth — at which a piece of transposed ceremonial copper might be purposely mutilated to demonstrate contempt for an enemy.

In the 17th century, fur traders appeared, buying up the beaver pelts used in Europe in men’s hats. Some of the trade goods were exquisite: the Hudson’s Bay Company gave Indian chiefs silver medals with the likeness of King George Ill to discourage them from trading with the North West Company competition. Other goods were practical: a gun barrel became a Blackfoot whetstone, a piece of spring steel became a razor to shave hair from an Indian face.

Eventually Europeans mating with native women produced a race of mixed offspring, the Metis, who adapted sophisticated white ways to traditional Indian pursuits — organizing buffalo hunts in military formation, for example. A display shows the ornaments trade-and for festivities the Metis crafted, and a fiddler and Hohner accordion they played at jigs.

In the 1860s, the Metis rebelled against white rule on the Prairies. In 1869 and again in 1881, Glenbow offers intriguing footnotes to the fighting. Among them are lithographs from the Illustrated War News, published in Toronto to cover the rebellion. Another artifact of the period is the elegant sword of North West Mounted Police Inspectors Francis Dickens, the third son of novelist Charles Dickens, who was forced by the rebels to abandon Fort Pitt in Saskatchewan.

The Mounties would become the white man’s guardian in western Canada. An exhibit demonstrates two facets of the police force: a cricket bat used by the NWMP team at Battleford, 1873; and a crate of a rope from the vessel used in 1897 to hang a Sioux Indian, tracked down by a vengeance after the Indian had killed his wife’s lover.

In the North, meanwhile, explorers were seeking a northwest passage to the Orient — a search that accelerated after Sir John Franklin’s party of 139 men in two ships vanished in 1845. Among the Englishmen hungering Franklin was Sir Francis McClintock, who left a supply-laden wooden can on Melville Island in the Arctic. More than a century later oil crews exploring the island found the cold-preserved cache and helped the Glenbow bring it south to be put on display in the museum.

By the late 19th century, ranchers were settling the West, leasing as much as 25,000 acres for 25 years at a going price. (Among the tools of their trade displayed is a cat whisker — a muzzle-fits with nails to prevent the animals’ sucking.) The Canadian Pacific Railway brought the steam engine to the West and the museum has a section of the original 1883 track, made by Germany’s Krupp steel factory. The railway carried the homesteader and his farm equipment. And Glenbow shows a simple old horse wagon, for instance, and a famous Idaho cultivator, invented during the Great Depression by Alberta’s Charlie Noble, which broke up the soil without removing the stubble that kept the prairie land from taking away easily.

Household equipment at the turn of the century was forbidding: old and washers did their chores like the “Queen Majestic,” hand-operated washing machines so expensive they were bought even then on installment plan, and complicated-looking cherry

A horse-drawn wooden tank used for hauling water to the oiling sites

The ways Canadians entertained themselves are an important part of the museum.

(left) One of empire’s first gasoline wagons (right) Some of the original drilling equipment used in Canadian oil fields

The Review, Number 2, 1978
The Glenbow collection is so extensive that only a tenth of it can be shown at one time.
Margi Davis, a soft-spoken woman of 24 who edits the Huntsville Journal in Windsor, N.S., sat behind her typewriter recently saying weekly newspapers are on the verge of a great change.

"It's a whole new area that's been neglected by journalism schools until now," she observed. "But that's changing. The weeklies are changing and they're becoming more and more a medium for college-educated young people."

Davis, who graduated from the journalism school at Ottawa's Carleton University in 1976 and wrote her fourth-year thesis on weekly newspapers, has impressive statistics to show that not only are more young people working for weeklies but that the readers themselves are generally younger than the readers of daily newspapers. This phenomenon is partly explained, she thinks, by the fact that more young couples are moving to the country to raise their families.

"One of the first things they do when they come to town is subscribe to the local paper," she says.

Davis decided in university to come back as a journalist to the area where she grew up, and started as a reporter-photographer with The Journal. Six months later she became editor. Her experience is by no means an isolated one.

Andy McLean, former MP for Huron-Middlesex riding in Ontario and publisher of the Seaforth Expositor, says that the number of new college graduates wanting to begin their careers on a weekly has increased sharply. "In the last year or so I've had 40 or 50 applications from young people looking for editorial employ-

ment." And many come with solid skills; the Expositor's news editor, for one, has a master's degree in English.

For an industry that in the early sixties was struggling with declining advertising and dwindling circulation, weeklies have bounced back to the point where they are now the second largest print medium in Canada. More people take community newspapers than dailies; they have a national circulation of 6,500,000, outstripping their city counterparts by 5,500,000. Furthermore, a healthy percentage of the weeklies' following comprises people who rely on them to find their local news. For example, in Alberta, according to a recent Canadian Community News- paper Association (CCNA) survey, 57 percent of subscribers do not read dailies; but weeklies are found in 85 percent of the respondents' homes. Across the country, says the CCNA, weekly newspaper circulation is increasing by 10 percent a year.

Even in the economically depressed Atlantic provinces, weeklies are twice as big and twice as profitable as they were 10 years ago, says David Cadogan, president of the Atlantic Community Newspaper Association. In the past five years Cadogan has built a burgeoning business in Chatham and New Brunswick's north shore. His father operates a weekly in nearby Newcastle and the family also runs a local printing plant.

A rough guideline for maintaining an economically strong weekly is Cadogan's explanation, is to show a profit of 10 percent after depreciation and taxes.

"Few papers were doing that 10 years ago," he says, "but most of them are meeting that figure now. And those doing a business of only $100,000 in 1968 are all in the $300,000 range now. Once, one could pick up a small Atlantic paper almost by expressing a willingness to move in. Now their value has multiplied to the point where it's becoming increasingly difficult for a journalist with average means to get a foothold in the industry. The little paper has suddenly become big business."

The weeklies went through a technological revolution during the sixties. Virtually overnight, the owners scrapped their antiquated typesetting machines and went to a newly refined and modestly priced computer system and offset printing. In making the transition they jumped years ahead of the dailies, which were still wedded to Linotype machines. For the first time even the smallest weekly could afford to run large, sharply reproduced photos throughout the paper and occasionally in full color. More importantly, they no longer needed a back room filled with huge, taxied and costly typesetters. Few part-time people with basic typing skills were for many weeklies more than adequate. At the same time, those publishers who could afford to buy offset presses for about $125,000 in those days—went into the business of printing not only their own but also their competitors', and sometimes their competitors' papers. That's why in Ontario about 25 centralized printing presses are coming out the province's 350 odd weeklies. And the trend is national-wide, with about 95 percent of the country's presses using offset printing.

Publishing with offset also meant that small-town publishers like Lynn Lasbrook, of Rodney, Ont., recently elected president of the CCNA, were starting to show a respectable return on their investment. "When I threw out the old system eight years ago, not only could I produce a bigger paper, but the work time was cut down by 50 percent," says Lasbrook, publisher since 1949 of the Rodney Mercury and later also of the West Lorne Sun in southwestern Ontario. "I used to have five guys working nine hours per day. Now I've got one guy [his brother Harley, who is also now of West Lorne] and two women who work part-time."

Lasbrook, whose office walls are covered with weekly newspaper association awards and photos of himself pumping hands with Pierre Trudeau, Lester Pearson, Joe Clark, and Colonel Sanders, calculates that the income he draws from the two papers (with a combined circulation of 2,000), augmented by what he receives from a small seasonal trailer park, puts him in the 40 percent income-tax bracket.

The new time-saving technology has also brought with it a new kind of community paper—the suburban weekly, competing directly with the dailies. The man who has most legitimately claim credit for bringing this different breed of publication into being is Douglas Bassett, second son of Canadian media entrepreneur John Bassett. In 1968 he took six declining newspapers on the outskirts of Toronto and built them into 10 fat publications, each now the possessor of a closet full of awards and together boasting a circulation of more than 270,000, all this financed entirely from its own cash flow.

"When I took over as general manager of the group in 1971, I had an orange crate for a chair and a box to sit on, and a chuckle. "The booklets looked good in relation to others in Canada but they didn't work," he says. "The first thing Bassett did was to call a meeting of his publishers and announce to the astonishment of all that the newspapers were going up by 500 percent. 'The advertisers will leave us,' his editorial chiefs told him. 'No, they won't,' Bassett replied. 'And even if they do, we'll have the satisfaction of going broke with a reputation for being a low one.' Bassett's decision proved indisputably correct; he sold about 65 million lines of advertising last year.

While boosting the rates Bassett put an end to the use of all unedited press releases, color on his front pages, insisted on the coverage of more solid news in the community, hired correspondents and sent them hustling after as many local stories as his papers could squeeze in.

"We're girls," he says, flipping briskly through several of his latest editions. "Look at this."

He points to a column on community sports. "That's the key—local names in the cutlines, local names in the copy."

Bassett's success has sparked a chain reaction; newspaper groups have started up everywhere. In 1969 Sterling Newspapers Ltd. alone has assembled 19 British Columbia newspapers—more than half the weekly circulation into dailies—worth at a conservative

Lynn Lasbrook: cut his work time by 50 percent.

The Review, Number 2, 1978
estimate $25 million.

Bob Shier, president of the Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association, argues that multiple ownership has done nothing but improve many weeklies and in some cases actually saved them. As the owner of five papers on the Ontario shore of Lake Huron and the printer of 21 others — he is becoming known as Shier of Sault, after newspaper-publishing giant Lord Thomson — he maintains that centralized facilities make maximum use of resources. "Sure, a local pub-

lisher used to know the connection between Mrs. White's second cousin and Mrs. Jones but what good was it to him? All his personnel were tied up in the printing of the paper. When I first came to Goderich in the sixties, the "Signal-Star [his first paper] wasn't even covering local sports." Shier employs about 125 full-and part-time people with local editors and writers on each of the papers he owns.

The end of the hand-to-mouth existence for rural publishers, many of whom were at last freed from the drudgery of the composing room, meant they could pay more attention to regional and national issues. Provincial associations strengthened and the CCNA, with a membership of 550 out of the 650 Canadian weeklies that carry regular editorial content, started pursuing national advertising. One successful example: the CCNA last fall perfomed a systematic whereby the Unemploy-

ees' Insurance Commission could place a four-page insert into 178 weekly newspapers without having to prepare 428 insertion orders, process 478 invoices, and hand out 478 cheques. Using a central cleaning house the UC needed to issue only one cheque for the cross-Canada information blitz. CCNA sold $1 million worth of national advertising in 1972 and hopes to boost it to about $10 million within the next five years.

Quebec weekly associations are just as active in their efforts to tap the large national advertising market. One such group, Les Journalistes Select, is 35 Quebec weeklies with a total circulation of 300,000. The organiza-

tion's president, Marc Lefebvre, says that previously the weeklies in Quebec were "one wolves" competing with the province's 13 dailies for national advertising.

And despite the fact that the 125 Quebec community newspapers are larger than their counterparts in other parts of the country, they didn't have the marketing expertise to get national.

“They didn't have the marketing expertise to get national.

“Our first paper was published in 1935, and we have been growing ever since. We started with one paper and now we have six. We have always been committed to providing quality journalism to our readers.”

Doug Basnett: showing the world that small papers are big business.

But as the Toronto association thinks the growing interest in reporters in community newspapers has lost some of the spirit of the small-town Canada. "Not everyone wants a city-journalism career but people in small towns are now giving them something to sink their teeth into, while at the same time providing them with a decent living. The strength of the weekly lies in the fact that it is a community newspaper, the type of newspaper that is needed in small towns. It provides a link between the local and national news. It is a community newspaper that provides a voice for the community. It is a newspaper that is written by people who live in the community and know the people in the community. It is a newspaper that is written by people who care about the community.”

David Cadogan quips. And that perhaps is the one similarity that epitomises these publications. They're
docile and proud of it. Despite the urban-oriented, inside-out focus of the Gulf of Mexico, the weeklies are still pretty folkly affairs, running such features on the front page as "Edgehill stables boarding," "Town voices in favor of apple blossom tea and muffin," "Countryside bakers and growers," "Redraws celebrate sixtieth anniversary." But to those communi-

At the same time," says Cadogan, "we're just getting started. We need more money, more space, more time. We need to make more decisions about our futures." Cadogan's view of the newspaper is that weekly newspapers are such an independent force that the more people who are involved, the more they are growing. As business because they want to be able to cover the news on a regular basis for their readers.

More money, greater security, and higher stability within the industry have coincided with a rapid growing interest among young people for careers in journalism. In 1957, the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto received more than 700 applications for 150 openings in its journalism course. All told, more than 3,000 students are enrolled in at least 33 post-

graduate programs in journalism. About 78 percent will find employment in journalism-related jobs and a good portion of those will be with community newspapers.

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Québec music has something to tell us

by Georges-Hébert Germain

Québec music has been around only for the past 30 years. If this is a brief period in the history of music, it is, nonetheless, an important one; it seems to have been a strange era, ripe with change, passion, sometimes dangerous upheavals, doubts, and— from time to time—brilliant discoveries. In short, the Québécois have probably experienced much the same thing as other people in this short span of time. But there’s one important distinguishing factor: during the past quarter-century, Quebec has been in the midst of an acute identity crisis. Traditional values have been shaken and sometimes overturned, and the Québécois have come to a heightened awareness of their distinct nature. As a result the face and spirit of Québec have been altered.

Québec's popular music has been affected deeply by these changes, to the point where it has taken on (or at least one has had a tendency to attribute to it) the role of a "social worker." Québec songs have been striving to define the Québécois. Songwriters of the stature of Félix Leclerc, Gilles Vigneault, or Robert Charlebois have become national heroes; some are even seen as political leaders. In this sense Québec music had a far greater impact during the sixties than poetry, cinema, or the fine arts. These exceptions played an important role in redefining the province's values but they did not have the mass appeal of Québec songs.

However, while they were singing of independence and liberty Québécois musicians were still lending a careful ear to French music and, even more so, to music coming from English-speaking North America. Québec music often adopted the form and style—and even the basic thoughts—of foreign music. Yet, it is a faithful portrait. And it's changing, maturing, and progressing with the people it portrays.

Just like the stock market, pop music has its ups and downs, its strong moments and its weak ones. In 1962 Leclerc won wide acclaim for French-Canadian songs when he was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque Francophone for 'Le p'tit bonheur'. Then, in 1959, a group of young songwriters, les Bozos, became the first of a series of chansonniers who were to spring up all over Québec with guitars and songs that celebrated freedom. In 1964 Vigneault and Claude Léveillé each wrote a song entitled Mon pays, and Québec music took on highly nationalist overtones. In 1968 Charlebois, just back from California where he'd discovered "new sounds," broke away from the framework of the chansonnier songs, which had become too restrictive and, with Ostoroff, set off an explosion of popularity. In 1974 several groups of young musicians and singers, headed by Béla Domenger and Hammonium, began to redefine Québec music while trying to integrate it with the international rock scene without renouncing a distinctly Québécois character and accent.

Those were the good years and they left Québec with some excellent songs. The past year or so, however, wasn't quite so brilliant. There were no extraordinary happenings, no startling revelations, no "bombs from the blue." Established artists produced their yearly record and a few new faces appeared but there was not a great revolution in the world of Québec music, as there'd be in '64, '69, and '74.

Still, the major trends continued. Some of the singers began to broaden their territory and increase their public. Several Québec artists went off to be seen and heard in France. Some performed in English Canada where, especially through television, they reached a large public that is increasingly receptive to Québec songs. The province's audiences, on the other hand (which had apparently been snubbing anything that wasn't "made in Québec" for some time) once again resumed interest in songs from outside their borders. After having been fervently nationalist, Québec is once again turning to more sedate internationalism.

Thus, an important chapter in the history of Québec music is drawing to a close, while another is about to begin. Québec songs will have a place in its "cultural industry." Just now, that industry is dreaming of expansion, whereas it was formerly entrusted with a sort of social and political mission. Currently it must look to the future in terms of market, profit, and production.

But what territory is available to Québec music? Is it said that music knows no boundaries but does this also apply to pop music?

Yes and no. In fact, it depends on what popular songs we're talking about. If they are in English, they know no boundaries. Elvis, the Beatles, or Elton John are played and listened to not only in the United States and Great Britain but throughout the world, even in the Soviet Union, where American rock records can command as much as $50 on the black market.

On the other hand, French pop songs from Québec are created and developed in a culture with well-defined boundaries. If you watch and listen to people who earn their living from Québec pop music, you soon get the impression that they are a caged-up group. Now they all agree that there's an urgent need to tear down barriers and extend the territory for Québec pop music. Today, more than ever, Québec pop music feels hemmed into its own territory, where it's threatened constantly by foreign records, be they British, French, or American.

In Québec paper on culture, Jean-Paul Allier, former Québec minister of cultural affairs, said there would be a serious problem in the province if the Québec record and song industry did not become more disciplined, and if radio and television continued to devote more than 70 percent of prime-time programming to American products.

A public discussion I attended in Québec city last fall, a student presented the problem in a more personal manner: "Why don't we ask ourselves," he said to an audience of students and journalists, "just what kind of music and what kind of songs do we listen to. In my case it's Frank Zappa, Genesis, Elton John. My little brother swears by Peter Frampton and the punk groups. My older sister listens to Elvis and Tom Jones. My mother likes Charles Aznavour and Bing Crosby. And I'm willing to bet that most of our songwriters have more American than Québécois records in their own collections. It's no longer a matter of knowing whether Québec music has something interesting to tell us but of knowing whether we're interested in listening to it.

According to figures gathered by the Québec department of cultural affairs in 1975, about 55 percent of the records bought in Québec are in English; 45 percent are in French. But only 27 percent are produced in Québec. Provincially-made records have a very limited market, which explains why more than three-quarters of them do not break even, even if record sales per capita in Québec (2.41) are higher than in France (1.25) or Great Britain (1.63) and compares favorably with the U.S. (2.86).

"We know very well that we can't prevent foreign records from entering Québec," says Gilles Talbot, director of the record company Kbéc Disc. "Anyway it would be not only awkward but unhealthy to cut ourselves off from what's going on outside of Québec. It would be ridiculous to refuse to enjoy music."
the Eagles or Emerson, Lake and Palmer or Vénérable Sanson on the prelude that builds the Quebec music industry. We just have to get accustomed to the idea that our market will always be taken up to a large extent by French and American products. We can even say that the Quebec pop public is already saturated with Quebec music. It accounts for 25 to 30 percent of the menu, which is just fine. We can't realistically expect the public's appetite to get much bigger than that.

"We can, on the other hand, get out there and carve out a decent place for ourselves in foreign markets — in the United States, of course, but especially in France where at least a dozen of our artists are already known. We can't expect to export everything we produce. For the time being I don't think that more than 10 percent of our records are likely to interest the French. In theory, however, this 10 percent could mean a public in France 10 times greater than the one we have in Quebec. If we take into account the increase in production and distribution costs, we must do everything we can to reach this public if we want to make the Quebec music industry profitable."

But just what is Quebec pop music? You won't hear a songwriter say, "I'm going to write a Quebec song." But you might hear him say, "Here's a blues, a western, or a boose nova." So how does one recognize a Quebec song in fact, it is not by its contents, its themes, the stories it tells, and the time it adopts that the Quebec song can be identified. Its forms are borrowed from modern English or French songs, or from the traditional currents that have guided Quebec culture and that can be traced to Great Britain (for the rebel and the jig) or France (in the case of traditional folk songs). Perhaps this is what accounts for the real originality of Quebec pop songs, this merging of various influences with a specific concern and language.

"As far as I'm concerned," says Serge Fiori of the group Harmonium, "Quebec's cultural independence already exists. I don't think our songs should assume a political mission as they did 10 years ago; it's time to move on something else, to make music and songs that everybody can understand and appreciate." Last year Harmonium toured Europe with the English group, Supertramp. Young René Simard, along with having his own show on Canadian television, has traveled the American show-business circuit. Vigneault was featured at the Bobono — a prestigious Parisian concert hall — for more than a month. Robert Charlebois, Diane Dufresne, Pauline Julien, Claire Thibeault, Louise Forestier, Béru Domagca, Réoul Dugas, and several others have also performed in France and Belgium.

"Quebec is fashionable in France just now," says Michèle Latraverse, who does public relations work in Paris for artists working for Kébec Spec, Kébec Disc, and RCA Victor. "But you mustn't forget that fashions change, that our chansonniers won't be able to take advantage of the exotic factor indefinitely. One thing working in their favor is the fact that they are seen as part of what you might call the 'new culture.' Quebec songs have a good image with young people and students, with the people who make up the most responsive and the most dynamic audience.

"The massive and systematic incursion of Quebec music into France is a relatively recent phenomenon. On the other hand, French songs have always been influential in Quebec culture. Since the early thirties French singers like Lucienne Boyer, Charles Trenet, Maurice Chevalier, and Edith Piaf have performed in Quebec. After World War II some stayed in Montreal for a time and were there for the first large-scale exploitations of popular French-Canadian music."

That was when Raymond Levesque wrote A Rosemont sous la pluie and Les Troisrous, the first songs to deal with everyday life in Quebec. While Levesque and his generation were learning how to write songs, Quebec society was in ferment. It was the time of the Réfus Global, which set off an important trend in modern Quebec painting. It was the time of the now-famous strike in asbestos, which gave impetus to the principal workers' unions of Quebec. It was also at that time that Willie Lamotte struck up his first western "tunes," influenced strongly by American musicians, today the Quebec western remains in the province's repertoire. And, at the same time, Félix Leclerc was working on a new kind of song that would soon win the favor of the French public. Until a few years ago, in fact, Leclerc was considered to be "a French star born in Canada." He has only returned recently to Quebec and resumed his place in the Pantheon of Quebec music, with Atourette et Collère and Tour de l'île, both profoundly engagé songs. Since the beginning of the seventies Leclerc has taken his place again in the changing foreground of the Quebec musical scene.

One of Leclerc's characteristics, a gentle dreamy individual, inspired the formation of a group of young composers nearly 20 years ago. Les Bocois were to set off a whole series of explosions in Quebec pop music, at the very moment when Quebec was stepping into its quiet revolution. But it is Gilles Vigneault who, most of all, since 1964, has best put into song the main ideas stirring the Quebec soul. His poems and songs have taken their place in the mainstream of Quebec tradition and culture and have made a large contribution to the transformation of Quebec society.

That same year was also the year of the Beattles, Quebec, like every other corner of the western world, was submerged in Beatlemania. During the years to follow, British and California pop music would somewhat overshadow Quebec music. In those days, each of the Bocois was a solitary knight; for a while their voices were virtually drowned out by the American tidal wave that unfurled on Quebec. Later, however, several of them managed to resurface. Clémentine Deschêres, Claude Léveillé, Jean-Pierre Farland, André Gagnon, and Raymond Lévesque are still important figures in the world of Quebec music and show-business.

"We were all deeply influenced by the pop music of the sixties," says Léveillé. "It was real revolution, not just a musical revolution but a worldwide cultural revolution. It was a new way of tuning into the world and singing about it. We had to return to our instruments. I think the first to react to it was Charlebois." The Charlebois bomb went off in 1968, with their tremendous Délitche, in which Louise Forestier and Yvon Deschamps also participated. But Charlebois had already started, in his songs, to carry out a kind of soul-searching of Quebec society, addressing himself in particular to the "graffiti," the chansonniers who, according to him, were only harkening back to the old tried-and-true ideas, envisioning an unhealthy and sanctimonious, contemptuous, of Quebec.

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There is talk of inflation in Quebec pop music, of overproduction of records, of market saturation. But what is remarkable in all this is the fact that the leading stars have scarcely changed during the past few years. Leclerc, Vigneault, Charlebois, and Béru Domagca. When will the next explosion take place?
In 1969, a time that to some people is already starting to look like the good old days, more than $8.5 billion worth of shares were traded on Canadian stock exchanges. And a seat on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSE) was selling for $125,000. By 1975 the value of shares trading in Canada had dropped to less than $8 billion (not counting the effects of inflation) and a seat on the TSE could be purchased for about $20,000.

Clearly something had happened. There was speculation that perhaps the prolonged period of accelerating inflation during the early 1970s had convinced Canadians they should liquidate their savings and investments and start to spend, spend, spend. Not so. The personal savings rate in Canada nearly doubled during the first half of this decade.

Therefore, this monetary motion of nonconfidence in Canadian stocks must have been the result of other factors. According to those who are familiar with the investment market, the factors were many and their interrelationships complex. Government taxation policies related to Canada's resources industries—traditionally a bulwark of the stock market—changed rapidly in ways that could only have negative effects on the profitability of these industries. Interest rates increased, making bonds and mortgages more attractive. Worldwide recession weakened markets for Canadian exports, which represent about one-quarter of the economic activity in the country.

The stock market is a good place to start in any discussion of investor confidence because it reflects the expectations that thousands of individuals and institutions have about the future performance of the economy. As well, many of the same factors that may convince an individual or institution to purchase the shares of a particular company will also influence the directors of that company in their decisions to increase or decrease their level of investment.

When there is a general consensus that future economic conditions will provide an improved environment for the private sector, there will be more people willing to buy shares than to sell them. This sense of optimism, also may convince corporate directors that the time is right to make investments that will lead to growth of their companies and to higher before-tax earnings.

If, on the other hand, most shares are traded on the expectation that future events will have a negative impact on corporate performance, potential sellers will outnumber actual buyers, and prices will tend to decrease. The same sorts of expectations may convince company directors that investments should be curtailed, thus reducing the potential for future before-tax earnings.

Self-fulfilling prophecies? Only to the extent that investors over- or underestimate how bad or good things really will be. For example, if a businessman correctly determines that future economic conditions are going to depress the market for his company's principal product—gold-plated can openers—then it would not be wise to make investments to increase the capacity to produce them. Similarly, an individual or institution wanting to buy a share of the company might be wise to defer its investment.

Lack of investor confidence, therefore, only becomes a serious drag on the economy when, after a period in which confidence is badly shaken, potential investors begin to believe future conditions will be worse than conditions and forecasts actually indicate.

As an example, Carl Beige, president of the C.D. Howe Research Institute, points to a recent survey in which a considerable number of business people expressed the opinion that, over the long term, their costs would increase more quickly than their selling prices. Think about that for a moment. It obviously can't happen unless all of these people expect to go out of business. (If cost increases cannot be recovered in the selling prices over the long term, the company would be bankrupt.) And yet a period of rapid inflation, combined with government controls on selling prices and depressed markets, had apparently convinced these people that business conditions would deteriorate more than could be reasonably expected.

But, you may be asking, what does this all have to do with me? After all, you may be one of those who decided to liquidate your holdings of corporate shares and to plunk your money into a mutual fund that is doing quite nicely on first mortgages, thanks very much.

For an answer to that one let's take a quick look at the investment process. For the most part an investment decision can only be made by an entity — corporate or individual — if income currently exceeds expenditures or has done so in the past. This surplus, plus any amount that can be borrowed as a result, represents the amount that can be invested. For a corporation this surplus must be deployed in a way that will ensure the continuity of the organization. For the individual this surplus of income over expenditures is a claim on future goods and services — deferred consumption, if you will — that can be preserved or enhanced in any number of ways.

The decision to invest, of course, will depend on a number of factors, including how quickly the claim will have to be converted back into cash in the future; how much of a risk can be undertaken; how much the investor wants to earn; how much time is available to study various investment options.

Moreover, the number of options is expanded greatly by the fact that certain forms of current consumption also can be considered investments. For example, people may decide to put their money into oriental carpets, paintings of the French Impressionists, or antique clocks and still be considered to be investors. The trick, of course, is to buy objects that will be increasingly in demand and that can be supplied in greater quantities, even if prices for them increase dramatically. (There won't be any more Château Lafite 1899 produced, no matter how much people are willing to pay for a bottle.)

However, as a number of economists and business leaders have pointed out, the investments that should be of greatest interest to society are those that create new productive capacity, rather than those that are simply a change in...
The decision to participate in productive investment relies on an elusive quality. It’s called confidence.

Belgium suggests there is also a subtle but important distinction between the confidence that will affect the confidence of potential investors. In a risk situation you don’t know exactly what will happen but you have a sense of it. When doing research one can predict how many people out of a given group can be expected to make a claim against an insurance company. The other hand, exists when experience is no longer considered to be a reliable guide to future developments. Uncertainty is the real problem that people want to beLegible and experience this. As a result, the confidence in making an investment decision.

The reporting of Canadian investors to the recent period of uncertainty has been to move away from risk investments that may offer a higher return if conditions are right, like common stocks, and to move toward fixed-income investments that carry only low levels of risk. An added impetus by government measures such as capital gains taxation and tax advantages for those earning interest, as opposed to dividend income.

However, the government measures have been effective in redirecting investment flows. While the potential losses are limited (about the value of the option), the government has been successful in lowering the effect of any one of these losses will actually turn out to be a dry hole is the same as the expectation of a large number of people. By increasing the confidence in productive investment, the government measure is one that has contributed to raising the confidence level of all investors.

The fact of the matter is that debt and equity capital, like William Powell and Myra Loy, work best as a team. Investment dealers have to work together to create a productive investment system that has created unprecedented levels of comfort, security, and opportunity for hundreds of millions of Canadians.

And the confidence in productive investment relies on an intangible, elusive quality called confidence. Like most states of mind, confidence means different things to different people. It relies on a foundation and the ability to try to define it yourself. If you come up with a good definition, send me a copy, care of this magazine. The winner gets $25. And the person who comes up with the best definition of confidence will be granted a year's supply of confidence.

Because of the risk that equity investors assume, they expect to earn a higher rate of return on their investment that is more likely with equity investments and that are more expensive for a business to attract. However, equity capital does provide a business with a greater degree of freedom. If a debt investor does not have to be declared, while meeting debt payments is one of the first priorities for a business enterprise and has other expectations.

However, as the exodus of investors from the stock market during the early 1970s indicates, equity investments are not always as productive as they seem. When there is a drop in the overall level of uncertainty investors can be expected to take more risks, government policies do not have a fair level of remuneration. And yet, profit is really just an interest payment to the equity lender of capital. While the public seems to accept that interest payments to a debt investor are perfectly alright, it doesn’t see payments to equity investors in the same light.

Projects like pipelines and hydro developments have always been the choice of debt financing, either because of the relatively low risk (pipelines) or because of government guarantees to lenders (hydroelectric developments). In addition, the exodus of capital-restricted industries has increased the diverted earnings of over 75 percent of our investment capital. However, I think we’re going to see more of the same in the future because of the large-

The horizon is not entirely clouded. In Canada’s frontier regions, new opportunities are emerging for new oil and gas discoveries, major investment decisions have been delayed because of uncertainties about government policies. Off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, Imperial had originally planned to start deep-water drilling by 1978. The potential for oil discoveries in this region is the result of a regional government’s willingness to explore. However, a disagreement between the federal government and the government of Newfoundland has injected an element of uncertainty into an already risky situation and has delayed drilling by at least a year, probably longer. Based on recent statements by government spokesmen, the current government’s desire to remove any obstacles as soon as possible. The government has indicated that it will be important to address the concerns of all Canadians, but it is likely that there will be a delay in the new projects.

Cooperation among governments, stability in the economy, a clear and constructive legislative environment, and the existence of a clear regulatory framework are three major factors that will instill more investor confidence in Canada. Andrew Kniwiew, president of the Investment Dealers Association of Canada, says that a full government commitment of about $700 billion in new investment capital between now and 1985 and 1986 is an important goal of the economy.

For the first time in 30 years, government spending, as a proportion of total Gross National Product (GNP), is decreasing. This is partly due to the general economic conditions which have helped reduce this proportion. Kniwiew also suggests that the federal government’s policy of increasing domestic oil and gas prices toward world levels is being implemented. Without a doubt, high oil prices are likely to continue.

"Bringing energy costs in this country into line with world prices will provide a stimulus to the Canadian economy, and the result, predictably enough, was a reduction in drilling activity in many areas and the deferral of investments needed to develop new supply.

From that low ebb the picture has brightened gradually but perceptibly, according to W.J. Young, a senior vice-president and director of Imperial. "There seems to have been an upturn in the past few years," he notes, "a new spirit of cooperation among all governments, our oil and gas potential. A national energy policy has been emerging. And governments are now willing to discuss the conditions that will provide the stable, supportive investment climate needed for the petroleum industry to reach energy targets that exist in the national interest."

However, as the exodus of investors from the stock market during the early 1970s indicates, equity investments are not always as productive as they seem. When there is a drop in the overall level of uncertainty investors can be expected to take more risks, government policies do not have a fair level of remuneration. And yet, profit is really just an interest payment to the equity lender of capital. While the public seems to accept that interest payments to a debt investor are perfectly alright, it doesn’t see payments to equity investors in the same light. However, the additional capital-restricted industries has increased the diverted earnings of over 75 percent of our investment capital. However, I think we’re going to see more of the same in the future because of the large-capital-intensive projects like oil-sands plants. To attract this debt financing, however, we must have a healthy cash flow over the long term. If it’s sound equity backed on through retained earnings or, when necessary, through new equity issues.

The government needs of governments to allow a reasonable profit from successful undertakings in the past is a key element in future investment decisions, says Lott. Other points that are also important are the resultant activity and not profits, may lead to the misallocation of limited exploration funds and thus do not provide as sound a basis for economic decision-making. Drilling incentives are rebates on royalty payments that are tied to exploration drilling incentives. In effect, royalty payments are not based on exploration results as a result of the result of exploration.

Most people agree, however, that confidence in petroleum investment is undermined by recent events. In January after taking a severe beating in the early 1970s. At that time a revenue-sharing dispute between producing provinces and the federal government locked in. The issue has been resolved, and as a result, there will be no distributed earnings and if the enterprise is not successful the equity holder gets to participate in a failure.
For many years now handwriting has been deteriorating more and more into scribbles and scrawls, so that at times even a signature is a mystery to be deciphered. The reason for this, according to the experts, is not just that we are too hastily or too careless to write clearly but that the exercise of handwriting itself — or more specifically the instrument used in handwriting — has undergone a number of changes that have made a good hand more difficult.

Some of these changes go back to the 17th century, when the pointed pen was introduced. In time it became more popular than the traditional broad nib. The pointed pen was easier to use and faster but because of this it also encouraged scribbling. In our own time handwriting has suffered further as the nib became even more pointed with the advent of the ballpoint pen. It is efficient — no filling with ink, no using a blotter — but it has no variety in its strokes, no "thicks and thins," and is therefore, not designed for good handwriting so much as for quick scribbling. Moreover, handwriting is no longer a practised routine and probably never will be in an age when even children use typewriters for their letters and put messages on tape recorders.

It might seem, therefore, that handwriting is a doomed custom but instead there are all sorts of signs indicating that it is enjoying a renewal. Societies are springing up in Canada, the United States, and Britain in which people get together, usually with a teacher, for the study and practice of handwriting or, as it is called in their circles, calligraphy. In some places elementary schools have begun teaching it and in the libraries, books on the subject are so popular they are difficult to borrow.

One of these books is A Handwriting Manual by the renowned British calligrapher Alfred Fairbank and in it, along with some words of introduction, he has included samples of the work of some of the leading calligraphers of the day. One of them is a man who lives and works in Canada, All K. Ebsen of Willowdale, Ont.

One day, not long ago, I called him up and asked if I might drop by to see more of his work and ask him a few questions about calligraphy, especially about its new popularity. His studio is on the lower floor of his house on a quiet suburban street and that is where I met him, a rather slight man with gray hair and eyes that are large and bright. Throughout the room, on walls, shelves, and desks, are samples of his work, each one done with a precision and beauty that is a pleasure to look at. He presented me with several of them, including a page on which he had engraved a number of words, among them these: "Not the message they are writing but the handwriting of the message catalytically exerts the civilizing influence on our children."

To Ebsen there is much truth in that view. "Teachers are astonished," he told me, "when they discover how students improve their work as they improve their handwriting. Just this week I had a letter from a teacher now in Massachusetts — she once took handwriting from me — and she was amazed at the degree to which she is helping students in their studies by teaching them basic handwriting. They are acquiring more concern for accuracy, orderliness, and a disciplined approach to their work."

He is anxious that we understand that when he speaks of handwriting he does not mean what we have come to call penmanship. "Those who learn handwriting, or calligraphy as we call it," he says, "learn the basic letter shapes of the alphabet, 26 characters. It is an adjustment of the mind and once they have it, they have it. But penmanship is something else. It is not an adjustment of the mind so much as a skill of the hand that, therefore, requires endless practice. That is one of the reasons why we have the daily scribble. Children and adults cannot give all the time to practise that penmanship requires."

I wondered, however, if calligraphy was much the same, demanding hours and hours of exercise in order to have any influence on the style and clarity of everyday handwriting. No, that is not so, according to Ebsen. Once calligraphy is learned — and it is not at all difficult, he says — it can improve the daily writing-style in a permanent way. "There are," he told me, "three levels to handwriting. The first is formal calligraphy, which is the slow, precise form we use for special purposes. Then there is the semiformal, which is possible to apply each day for anyone who has learned calligraphy, not so formal but quite legible and attractive. Then finally there is the daily scribble, which is what we have today and which will only improve if the schools begin to teach the basic letter shapes."

Of course, calligraphy will never be as commonly used as it once was but it will be used more and more for special purposes — posters, leaflets, booklets, and so on. And it will give those who take it up a pastime that is rewarding to the mind and to the emotions. "For children," Ebsen says, "calligraphy suggests something of mystery that they love and want to learn — the mystery of making a thought visible. And for adults it is a great mental comfort. They are completely absorbed when they are doing it. And yet no great skill is required. You know, if we learned proper handwriting and practised it, we'd need far fewer tranquillizers and have far fewer rebellious youth." I asked him why we are seeing such a renewed interest in calligraphy and he was quick to reply: "Because in our society many people feel they are just a cog in a wheel; when they do calligraphy they are the wheel. They are able to have the full satisfaction of deciding what to do and doing it all on their own."

A few years ago Ebsen and a handful of other calligraphers formed the Handwriters Guild of Toronto, which has its address at Ebsen's home, 60 Loganda Road, Willowdale, Ont., M2N 4H4. One of its main purposes, of course, is to encourage the practice of calligraphy, especially by teaching it to others. "This winter," he says, "we have about 300 students working on calligraphy and many of them are teachers who will instruct others. Any adult — even someone who has no special artistic sense — can learn it with about an hour-and-a-half practise each week for 10 weeks. For a child we estimate about a half-hour per day for six weeks."

Few will ever reach the level of success that Ebsen has achieved after working about 12 hours per day for 40 years, designing new forms for letters and words and placing them on paper — as he did for this in Closing titles at the beginning of this essay — with a style that is nearly perfect. This year Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd. will produce a book, From the Farthest Hobnotes, a collection of Gaelic songs that is almost entirely handwritten by All Ebsen — more than 300 pages. It has taken him two years to complete and when it comes out we may be sure that, like those scrols in his studio, it will be glorious to behold.