Between earth and sky by Wynne Thomas
Culture is a corporate affair

Business is part of the act, down among the props and puppets

by Paul Grесcoe

When the Canadian Opera Company made its two-month tour of the United States last winter, a few American patrons were shocked by the stylized masks and puppets painted on the stage for Verdi’s La Traviata. And some of the opera-goers expressed their indignation in letters to Imperial Oil’s head office in Toronto.

When the National Ballet of Canada appeared in New York’s Lincoln Center last summer — for the first time without relying on Russian superstar Rudolf Nureyev as a drawcard — critics compared the company favorably to Britain’s Royal Ballet. This time the Plumbing Group brought smiles to Imperial.

Perhaps it seems strange that reaction to two leading Canadian cultural organizations performing in the United States should have any connection with an oil company. The explanation, if not obvious, is simple. Imperial has supported each organization with a variety of corporate donations.

In the case of the opera production, the company was identified in theatre programs as a major sponsor of a successful tour through western Canada, Ontario, and the United States. The National Ballet’s appearance in New York featured Mad Shadows, an ambitious new work by Canadian choreographer Ann Ditchburn, with a musical score by Andre Gagnon, and based on a novel by Quebec author Marie-Claire Blais. Imperial contributed toward its creation.

In 1978 Imperial expects to spend almost $500,000 to help further the careers of the creative and performing arts in Canada. Not surprisingly, the company donates to national opera and ballet groups, but it also assists regional theatres, struggling symphony orchestras, expanding museums, and new art galleries. In 1976 it even supported a popular puppeteering troupe. Imperial helped to purchase props and puppet heads for the Edmonton People Players of Toronto, a company of 11 young puppeteers, who are regulars on television and have appeared with the Liberace stage show in Las Vegas. What most of their audiences don’t realize is that eight members of this captivating troupe are mentally handicapped.

Invariably the money goes to projects with the widest public appeal, a such as subsidizing a series of six family concerts by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra that quickly sold out at a subscription price of only $15. Or sponsoring a three-week maritime tour of playwright James Reaney’s trilogy about the notorious Black Donnelly family of southwestern Ontario.

In channeling its cultural contributions, Imperial makes some unpredictable choices. Its philosophy is well defined by Dick LeSurur, who manages the corporate contributions division: “We look for areas where we can make constructive, perhaps innovative contributions to the arts.”

And this year alone the company is supplying technical consultation and promotion work as well as money to send Theatre Direct Canada to several parts of the country and into senior elementary classrooms to tell the story of energy. The small, Toronto-based group of performers will be both educating pupils in an entertaining way and encouraging their appreciation of energy conservation.

Besides all this, Imperial has been investing in noncommercial movies like The Neighbors, a series of seven historical Canadian films being shown on the CBC network; collecting art by painters and sculptors of the calibre of R. York Wilson and Sorel Etrog; and, in an unusual once-only grant, helping save the 90-year-old Canadian magazine, Saturday Night.

As a leader among major Canadian corporations supporting the arts, Imperial is in good company. Many businesses have an unquestioning belief in the principle of bettering the quality of life through contributions to culture. “It’s no longer being debated here,” says Ralph Hubard, public-relations manager of the Hudson’s Bay Company. “We just accept the fact that companies now are expected to play a part in community activities by contributing funds and talent. A high priority is the arts because they affect a lot of people and they don’t have as much government support as areas like education and health.”

Hudson’s Bay concentrates on the mainstream performing arts groups — orchestras and theatres — and last year, when the company discovered $20,000 surplus in its budget, it distributed it to arts groups across the country. MacMillan Bloedel Limited is another Canadian showcase of cultural awareness. The Vancouver-based forest-products company is well known for sponsoring superbly crafted world-premiere television specials on Canadian networks, such as Arthur Miller’s After The Fall, starring Toronto-born Christopher Plummer. But it also has purchased and shown sumptuous collections of Eskimo sculpture, Indian art, and the internationally acclaimed paintings of birds by J. Frankl Landolme of British Columbia.

Rothmans of Pall Mall Canada
Limited, the tobacco company, recently completed a significant investment in art deco and realism to tout the country’s art galleries. Mutual Life Assurance Company of Canada donated $10,000 to Vancouver’s Playhouse Theatre last fall to promote its production of Pysgemen. And IBM Canada Ltd. contributed $40,000 to help singer Harry Belafonte and his 23-member troupe do a nine-city tour last December, which raised more than $300,000 for Canadian Symphony orchestra.

Canada’s tradition of corporate sponsorship of the arts is not as richly rooted as it is in the United States; foundations set up by the Carnegies and Rockefeller’s have been providing funds for culture since the early 20th century. The custom continues today with the contributions of large U.S. companies. So Philip Morris Incorporated, the tobacco and beer company, helps sponsor a world tour of the American painter Jasper Johns, whose paintings are featured in a music magazine ad to encourage other companies to do something equally progressive in the arts. The company’s subsidiary, the Canadian Company Ltd. in the United States, invests $250,000 to send 21 first-rate playwrights abroad to perform. French Abbey, a promotional document 1,000 county courthouses of architectural and historical interest, and Exxon Corporation, with a budget of $3 million yearly to underwrite programs on the U.S. public broadcasting network, deals with downtown theatre and arts. An Exxon publication, The Other Dimensions of Business, states the reasoning behind the support of arts as a way to develop better public expectations in these areas and to show through its actions that we believe the prosperity of this company is clearly related to the vitality of the communities in which it functions.

All this American liberalism may sound a bit rich for the blood of Canadian businessmen, but the fact is that the economic development of this nation is not always increasing in Canada; business grants have risen to an estimated $15 million per year from $8 million in 1972.

One reason for the increase of corporate interest has been the existence of the Canada Council for the Arts in Canada. It originated in a 1954 Ottawa conference on business support of the arts and began with a $100,000 grant from local arts leaders. It was supported by chief executives of 50 of the country’s largest companies and chaired by First Base, president of Norcan Resources Limited. At Boyse’s request, Arnold Edborough, the distinguished writer and editor, became president of the council, which now has 97 member companies, including Imperial, that each give an annual membership fees of $1,000.

Edborough and his staff of two in the council’s office provide an inde-
vendent research service for corpora-
tions keen to support worthwhile cultural organizations. Of course, Imperial does its own research on such organizations but, at times, Edborough is consulted. “Dick LeSueur at Imperial may tell me he’s had an enquiry from an Alberta theatre company asking what do I know about them? Well, I say, they attracted 100,000 people last year, they have a total budget of $132,000 but that’s down from $164,000, so they’re work-
ing at it. I know that their board of governors is good, there’s a new chairman, I was talking to them the other day, and this is what their program is. They’re solidly based. Yes, I think they’re worth helping.”

The council also has published a pamphlet: 50 Ways Your Company Can Support the Arts in Canada, among its suggestions are the assign-
ing of company representatives to the company’s promotional staff and to produce an advertising cam-
paigns for arts groups and the correspondence of a Canadian company to the funder to new werk creating an event of regional or national signifi-
cance.

In turn, Edmonton asks the major visual and performing arts organizations for full details of their operations and financing — how much of their funds are from box office, subscriptions, government, corporate donations and whether from individuals, private foundations, or corporations. Individually and in seminars across Canada LeSueur offers best advice about how to approach com-
panies in a business-like manner (such as furnishing a potential donor with the organization’s audited statement). Edmonton is supported by the evangelical of culture: “I try to sell the businessmen that there is a creativity, a dedication, and a frugality amongst the people in the arts that their workers and planners could emulate to some extent.” As a result of a crucial decision during its early work, the council has reckoned that Canadian corporations have given $20.5 million in 1972 according to its annual survey. For example, the Vancouver Board of Trade reported that the arts in the city received total private donations to the arts in 1977 they did in 1970.

This year another reason for the business world’s burgeoning interest in culture is the public’s rising expectation that a company’s role in the community should go beyond making money. "More and more," says Imperial’s public-affairs manager, Robert Landry, "it seems people are looking at the corporation as a member of the community, and as such it should make some contribution to the cultural life of that community. In addition, the arts are an essential ingredient in the quality of life.

Landry points out that if an em-
ployee were being moved to, say, Edmonton, he would be interested in knowing whether the city is a lively centre for the visual arts, classical music, and theatre — all of which (For example: Edmonton’s exciting new Citadel Theatre opened recently after a funding campaign which Imperial contributed to). "The quality of cultural life is one of the socioeconomic measures of a community’s standard of living," Landry says. And such quality has special meaning for a national company, like Imperial. "A lot of people are moving to various parts of the country so it’s probably even more important for us to be interested in the arts on a national scale."

Landry sees another, more tangible rationale for private enterprises to stimulate Canada’s artistic life. "There may be an unexpected dividend to the corporation: it allows the nurturing of creative people in the country — be they writers, editors, photographers, composers, or painters. And the corporation of any consequence has the need for their services at one time or another, whether it’s to produce an annual report, do films on its operations, or create audio-visual presenta-
tions for its employees. The dividends the corporations get back from nurtur-
ing the arts in the community is the availability of this bank of high-
hurt talent.

There’s certainly intelligent self-
interest in the business community’s concern for the arts. The public-
relations value of such enlightened contributions has already paid off in increased exposure. It is obvious it helps maintain public goodwill. But there’s another way business can contribute a return on its investment in the arts. Well-run cultural groups have an economic impact on communities in which they are located. For example, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is a telling example. It’s a model of management. It has an international reputation and its season-subscription list of more than 38,000 is among the world’s highest. Even so, last season it lost $35,000 — mainly because the Canada Council now subsidizes only 15 percent of the orchestra’s budget, compared to 22 percent in past years. Still, business might have a more altruistic motive for helping keep a company like this going. It’s simply that, more than ever, arts groups are desperately in need of financial trans-
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Even with statistics, charts, and indices, miracles are never easy

by Patricia Clarke/drawings by Eric Nasmith

Joseph. The Bible tells the story of how he predicted for the pharaoh of Egypt that there would be seven years of bumper crops, followed by seven years of famine. It all turned out, the Bible says, “as Joseph had said.”

Joseph had the advantage of a timely word from the Lord. But there have been precious few miracles recorded in forecasting since. Indeed, if any of today’s forecasts were to prove as accurate as Joseph’s, the most surprised person would be the forecaster. Since Joseph’s time, forecasters have had to puzzle things out for themselves with whatever help they could get from oracles, crystal balls, and now computers. Today forecasting is more scientific than ever, but it is still not an exact science. In fact, most forecasters would agree that the one certain thing about their analysis is that there is a real possibility it may be wrong.

Yet, inexact as it may be, forecasting is essential to government and business planning. It may be a question of how many schoolrooms will have to be built in a new subdivision or how many farm tractors can be sold next year in Saskatchewan. The object of the forecast, says British forecaster James Morrell in his book, Management Decisions and the Role of Forecasting, published by Penguin, is “to minimize uncertainty and to identify and evaluate risk.”

The key word is minimize. The forecaster is something like a gambler at the races. They both check the past performance charts and the current track conditions. They both try to get the best odds. But when they put their money on what’s going to happen, both of them are gambling. As Mark Twain wrote, “It is difference of opinion that makes horse races.” Gamblers, studying the same charts, bet on different horses. And two forecasters, analyzing the same data, often come to different conclusions. For forecasting is “a confusing pattern of art and science,” as William Butler and Robert Kavcek describe it in their book, How Business Economists Forecast, published by Prentice-Hall. It depends on basic economic concepts and on an impressive array of economic relationships. But it is more than ratios and formulas. Hunches still are part of it.

Traditionally the business forecaster works from three basic assumptions. The first is that there is a relationship among economic factors, such as production, income, and demand. The second is that changes in the future may come from causes that are present today. The third is that we can learn what those causes are and what their consequences will be by studying the past.

For instance, a forecaster might observe that the ratio between the amount of energy used and the level of economic activity has stayed relatively the same during the past 20 years, as in fact it has. So he might conclude that it would be the same in the future.

Or he might take into account the jump in energy prices and the government’s campaign for energy conservation, and guess that these will cause some drop in our relative use of energy.

How big a drop? That’s where the forecaster’s hunches and his optimism or pessimism come in. Larratt Higgins, Ontario Hydro’s chief forecaster, gives an example. The use of electrical power in Ontario dropped sharply and unexpectedly in late 1977. He thinks it was because people were turning off lights, turning down thermostats, and putting in insulation. But how does he interpret the change? Does he say this is the first sign of a permanent reduction in the
growth rate? Or does he say it is a plateau, maintained while people adjust to higher prices before energy demand moves to a new and higher level? Depending on the interpretation, Ontario Hydro might build an expensive new power plant that turns out not to be needed or it might not build such a plant and then be unable to meet the demand. Higgins shrugs cheerfully: "Do you prefer the frying pan or the fire?"

Forecasting is like throwing a die. You can calculate the probabilities but you don't know what will happen or how the number of dots. And you won't know until the results are in.

"We try to make a measure of our uncertainty," he says. "We make it knowing we are going to be wrong. And the farther into the future we go the more theoretical we have to be and the more wrong we get. Our biggest mistake would be to assume we're not going to be mistaken."

Forecasters tend to make statements like that. Defensive. They don't have Joseph's word from the Lord and they want to be sure it's not expected that they do. The most they expect, in many cases, is to catch the direction of a trend. "Any time a forecast comes out right," says Higgins, "who has been forecasting for Ontario Hydro for 25 years. "It's either just luck or on its way from being too high to being too low."

It's not just that the forecaster is likely to come up with the right answer. He is also unlikely to come up with the same answer as any other forecaster.

"Take, for example, the economic predictions for 1977 made by two agencies in the same week from the same building in Ottawa. The Conference Board in Canada predicted the Canadian economy would grow by three percent in 1977; the Economic Council of Canada predicted a growth of 6.4 percent. (Actual growth was below 2.5 percent. Both were wrong.) The Conference Board predicted consumer prices would be up 7.3 percent; the Economic Council said 5.6 percent. (The average increase was eight percent.)"

Private economists often fare no better. The Financial Post asked 14 professional economists to forecast the year 1975. They were fairly accurate in predicting growth and employment. But they were fooled by food prices, failed to anticipate a strong surge in building, and predicted gains in corporate profits ranging from five percent to 13 percent when the actual change was zero.

In the field of energy forecasting the situation is so fluid that major changes can occur in a relatively short time. At Imperial's recent shareholders' meeting, for example, president J.A. Armstrong said that as a result of intensive exploration and development during the past couple of years, the supply outlook has improved to the point that the company expects by 1985 "that oil production capability will be in the order of 200,000 barrels a day more than previous estimates have suggested." Demand assumptions have also changed. Price increases, conservation measures, and the recent economic slowdown have influenced total energy demand, so much so that in Canada it has fallen annually from almost six percent on the average in the 1960s and 1970s to about three percent last year. The growth in oil demand has fallen off even more dramatically.

All forecasters work with the same basic principles: Why don't they come up with the same answers, let alone the right ones? It's because so many factors are unpredictable, and each forecaster weighs them with his own mixture of experience and hunches. Who really knows, for example, what effect conservation will have on energy demand by 1985? Some long-term weather forecasts indicate our weather is getting steadily colder. Do you build a factor for extra home heating into your forecast? Or do you accept the view of some other weather predictors that in time our weather will be warmer, not colder?

Imperial Oil Limited, for one, thinks the effect of conservation will be significant. "I'm turning down my thermostat to 18 degrees Celsius at night instead of leaving it at 20 degrees Celsius," says Gordon Haight, vice-president and general manager of Imperial's production department. "Collectively, decisions like that have quite an effect."

Because of the effects of conservation, he says, Imperial expects that energy use will grow more slowly than in the past.

If factors such as those were all a forecaster had to consider, he would have a sporting chance. As Haight puts it, the chances of accurate forecasts today are actually less than they used to be because of unpredictable political policies. "Government actions are definitely influencing energy developments," he says.

All the forecasts for energy prices, for instance, went out the window a few years ago when international oil prices jumped in 12 months from $3 to $12 per barrel. "Nobody in the world could have guessed that would happen," Haight says. Then Canadian governments, in an attempt to capture a big part of the price increases, unilaterally changed the tax and royalty rules. "You can't forecast that, either," he adds.

Such uncertainty is a problem for every industry. It's a particular problem in the energy business, where estimates of demand have to be made far into the future if the supply is to be ready to meet it. The lead time for producing a new car is five years. The lead time for a new electricity-generating plant is 12 years. The lead time for getting a new oil or gas source into production could be 20 years.

The estimate of petroleum demand begins with a forecast of total energy requirements. That means making assumptions about population, changes in economic growth rates, and energy prices, among other factors.

The next step is forecasting what shares of that market will be filled by different sources of energy, such as hydroelectric, nuclear power, oil, gas, and coal. The share of hydroelectricity has declined and the use of coal has remained about the same; will that trend continue? What will the relative prices of the different forms of energy be? To what degree might pressure from some public-interest groups delay development of nuclear power plants, thereby leaving more of the demand to be filled by petroleum? What new laws might governments make on lower speed limits and lighter cars, and what effect will they have on demand for gasoline?

Then the forecasters try to break down the market into its components — home and industrial heating, auto gasoline, airplane fuel, and so on. Look, for example, at the complexity of estimating the demand for motor fuel. First, estimate total auto sales for, say, 1980. That will depend on how much money people have, how many are employed, and how high prices are for cars, fuel, and other essentials.

Second, estimate what share of that market will go to subcompact, compact, intermediate, and full-size models. Each, of course, will use different amounts of gasoline, and totals of each vary according to certain economic indicators.
Third, add the estimated sales for each model-type to the numbers of that model already on the road. Then apply the "retirement ratio" — the rate at which each model of a given year comes off the road. There are 36 different ratios, depending on the model and the province in which it is driven.

Now you have an estimate of the number of each model likely to be on the roads in 1980. Next, estimate the number of kilometres each type will be driven during the year; and for each model-type divide the number of kilometres into city and country driving to get a kilometres-per-gallon figure. Then adjust that figure by whatever fuel economies people may be practising by 1980.

Forecasts from other oil companies, working with the same factors, are almost certain to come up with different totals. What would be really surprising would be for anyone to be exactly right.

Once a demand forecast is made, most industries can expect to supply enough product to meet the demand (barring strikes or disasters).

But supply forecasts in the petroleum industry depend on a large part on oil and gas that has not yet been found. It may or may not exist; if it exists, it may or may not be discovered; if discovered, it may or may not be economic to bring it to market.

Each oil company makes its own estimate of supply, stretching as far ahead as 1995. So does the federal government. They are all different, just as all the estimates of future demand are different. But the difference is only in degree. They all agree on this: the supply of Canadian oil is not going to meet the demand during at least the next decade.

Despite all the vagaries of forecasting, says Gordon Haight, "we're sure of one thing: there's going to be a net import requirement of oil for many years to come."

Yet only a few years ago, Canada's oil forecasters seemed to take an opposite view. Official estimates from the federal department of energy, mines, and resources were much higher in 1973 than in 1977. Industry estimates were optimistic, too. They were interpreted by many as grounds for confidence that Canada had enough oil and gas to carry it easily into the next century.

What happened? The president of Imperial Oil, J.A. Armstrong, puts it candidly. "We're human. We made the best judgment we could on the evidence we had. Thus far, oil discoveries haven't been as significant as we originally thought."

In fact, it's more complex still.

First, the forecasts were forecasts. They included what the government used to call "potential reserves" — oil that might be assumed by geological inference to exist. The term was misunderstood and should no longer be used without qualification. And estimates about the potential have been scaled down. First by more sophisticated measuring techniques, and second by the hard facts of drilling.

Factors affecting forecasts of conventional oil supplies in western Canada haven't changed greatly. Geologists have pretty accurate estimates of the recoverable oil in proven, existing fields. And even in this well-explored basin, some new discoveries were anticipated.

But it wasn't on western Canada's conventional oil fields that much of the optimism of the early 1970s was based. It was based on the frontiers and the Alberta oil sands. And two major changes have dampened that optimism.

One is that drilling on the frontier hasn't lived up to its promise for oil — although substantial amounts of gas have been discovered. The more wells you drill the more you know about a geological area. If, as it has happened, most of them are dry, your estimate of the potential goes down proportionately.

And Haight gives an example. "We saw a very good sedimentary section in the Mackenzie Delta. We selected a good position and in early drilling we found oil, flowing at a high rate. Everything seemed to be going for us. It's unusual to find oil early and not follow up with other discoveries. But that's what happened, although we did find substantial gas reserves."

Elsewhere on the frontiers the lack of oil discoveries were similarly disappointing. Drilling in the Arctic islands has found gas almost exclusively. What drilling has been done off the east coast has found little oil or gas. Original forecasts for the Grand Banks of five billion barrels of oil have gone down in direct relation to the number of wells drilled — all of them dry, says Peter Stauff, Imperial vice-president and general manager of exploration.

The second major change was economic, in the cost and lead times required to get new oil supplies to market. The estimates of oil in Alberta's oil sands haven't changed but, Haight says, "We've got a much better perception of the economics of getting it out." The technology for extracting more than a small percentage of it still has to be proved commercially. The cost of new plants will be at least $4 billion each. Agreements are slow in coming on the tax and royalty terms. Such agreements are needed to make it clear whether such an investment could be justified. For all these reasons forecasters are still uncertain about what contribution the oil sands can make to Canada's oil supply by 1990.

The changed expectations of the forecasters, justified as they may be, have provided a weapon with which to attack the credibility of both government and industry. Author and broadcaster Pierre Berton has claimed that "the oil companies said we had enough oil for hundreds of years," and, therefore, "I don't see how we can trust them with our future." A brief from GATT-FLY, a group funded by Canada's major churches, charges that "reserve estimates seem to fluctuate with the interests of the oil industry." The large estimates of the early 1970s were "an excuse for exports," it said; smaller recent estimates are "to justify exploration" in the North.

Such statements, Armstrong says, are based on a misunderstanding. "Assessments are just that — assessments."

Acquisitions of bad faith also are directed at other energy suppliers — such as Ontario Hydro — when they attempt to plan for the future. Larratt Higgins sees the criticism as a troubling part of the 1980s revolt against hierarchy and authority. "The consensus in society on decision-making has broken down," he says.

Yet unless such organizations make the tough decisions today, there won't be the energy available to meet our needs tomorrow. Armstrong sums up the problem:

"I know right now that, with all the variables that make up petroleum forecasting, what we are predicting today will be different from what actually transpires during the next decade. But you have to make your best shot according to the data you have and according to conditions as you expect them to develop."
Flowing in the Wind

A lonely passion. A sweet soaring joy

by Wynne Thomas

A summer evening in rural England 25 years ago.

Urged by a pilot friend to sample the pleasures of motorless flight, I find myself standing on the crest of a heather-clad moor that falls away steeply for more than a thousand feet to a wide, farm-dotted valley. Alongside it rudimentary hanger, a half-dozen gliders are parked, each resting on a wingtip to form a curious lop-sided formation. High above us, five or six other gliders drift lazily, sustained by a westerly wind blowing across the face of the ridge.

The machine in which I am to fly is facing into the wind, about 50 feet from the edge of the escarpment. Like the hangar, it looks distinctly homemade. A square, fabric-covered fuselage accommodates an open cockpit with side-by-side seating for two. A pair of miniature windscreens provide the only protection against the elements. Overhead, a one-piece wing is supported by four struts, and other struts brace the tail. It is an altogether flimsier contrivance than I, accustomed to powered aircraft, had envisaged.

We clamber aboard, fasten our harnesses, and are ready for takeoff. We are to be launched by an elastic rope, literally catapulted into the sky. A tine at the midpoint of the rope is attached to a hook under the glider’s fuselage and on each side four volunteers, holding the rope, take up their positions, awaiting a signal to run on divergent courses down over the face of the slope. Behind us, another helper lies on his stomach and clings to our tailskid. His job is to hold back the glider until the task proves beyond his strength. Yet another volunteer holds a wingtip, keeping us level until the moment of takeoff.

A thumb-up signal from the pilot, a glimpse of running men, a bump or two, and we are off the ground. Within seconds we have escaped the lip of the escarpment and are poised high over the valley. I had expected a rough flight and am unprepared for the smoothness, the almost uncanny absence of any sensation of movement. Flying into the wind we gain height slowly and steadily, in almost perfect silence. Below us the evening shadow has already touched the valley floor but we climb in bright sunshine under the leading edge of a great horn-shaped cloud. Three thousand feet above our take-off point we join the other gliders and, being able to rise no higher, hang suspended in serene equilibrium between earth and sky.

I try the controls, stick and rudder, and am embarrassed by my clumsiness. "Not bad," says my companion but it is an uncritical judgment. Gliding demands a more subtle touch than mine and the green ball on the climb-and-descent indicator in front of us, which for most of the flight has been steadily indicating "up," is replaced by a red one, signaling that we are losing height.

I hand back control and turn to the view, unimpeded by an engine. It is one of the finest that England can offer. Below and behind us lies a poet’s landscape: the Shropshire of A.E. Housman, with Wenlock Edge barren, gold in the setting sun. An abiding landscape: the Roman legions have been here for 2,000 years but the roads they built, invisible from the ground, can still be clearly traced from the air.

Abroad, to the west, the mountains of my native Wales march to the horizon. We remain in the air for more than an hour, watching darkness capture the land below, savoring the illusion of timeless and perfect buoyancy. We fly purposefully but in no particular direction, seeking no destination beyond the next upcurrent. It is enough to be airborne. Air borne. Gradually the wind dwindles and dies. The red ball indicator climbs its tube: workaday gravity is reasserting itself. We head back toward the airfield and soon we are rolling to a smooth stop within a few yards of our starting point. The end and a beginning. For I have already resolved to master the glider-pilot’s art.

It was a magical introduction to the sport of gliding. I did not know then but it was also an extraordinary case of beginner’s luck, and many years were to elapse before I would experience another flight of such unalloyed perfection. For, in truth, very little of a glider-pilot’s life is spent in Olympian contemplation of the cosmos. He is generally too preoccupied with more mundane matters toponder immortal- ity, and perhaps that is just as well. It would get very dull.

Gliding has changed a great deal during the quarter-century that has elapsed since I took my first flight, and what has changed most are the gliders themselves. By today’s standards the machine in which I flew was indeed a crude affair. The modern glider is sleeker, stronger, more durable (wood and fabric have been replaced here and there by metal and fiberglass), easier to fly, and of markedly superior design and performance.

It flies faster and farther than was then thought possible. On good soaring days cross-country flights routinely made at average speeds of almost 80 km/h (you’ll be doing well to manage that in the family car), and the Canadian speed record around a 100-km course stands at 103.6 km/h. (In gliding, as in so many other activities, we have come to worship the god of speed.)

Twenty-five years ago a distance flight of 300 km would have been close enough to a world record to warrant a major celebration; today you are lucky if it earns you a free drink in the clubhouse on your return.
flights of 500 km are regular, if not common, traceable to a distance of 1,000 km, equal to a 3-hour flight. This has led to the development of a new technology called "catalyst". The catalysts are used in the design of the aircraft and have been discussed as a serious project.

As gliders have changed, so have methods of flight testing of the aircraft. They are, rarely, if ever, catapulted into the sky by an elastic rope any more. Most modern gliders are now launched into the air by a tractor that is already airborne. The traditional method, where a glider makes a short, one-storey flight, is being replaced by a more modern technique called "glider". In one study, the glider was launched at high speeds and was found to be able to fly over water for up to 15 minutes before landing.

But it is certainly easier to define the challenges of gliding than to describe its pleasures. The challenges of the sport are common to all participants, its pleasures are intensely personal, and the demands placed on the pilot are a mixture of skill and satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment at many different levels.

The student gets as much enjoyment from his first solo as does the expert. He is learning the operation of the airplane, the selection of his equipment, the skill in using the equipment, and the ability to react to unforeseen and unscheduled events. The student is learning to become a pilot, and the enjoyment he finds in this process is a reward for his hard work.

The pilot in the air is not only skillful, but also happy. When he has achieved a clear line of vision, he can make it worthwhile continuing, that his oxygen supply is getting dangerous; that he is not flying at a speed that is too far below the speed of sound or that his fuel reserves are running low. The pilot knows that he is getting better at his job.

Like most dangerous sports, its accompanying thrill of danger and the high demands it makes on stamina and judgment, exercises a powerful influence on the pilot's morality and conscience. After you have spent six or seven years flying over strange territory, frequently low and occasionally too, to watch your aircraft airborne in the distance and to know that you have enough height to be able to reach the horizon; you have seen a heady mixture of relief and excitement, of anxiety and excitement. You have taken over from sailboats as the "with" against which to judge the effectiveness of your own flying is a flight very reminiscent of my own introduction to the sport and I am pleased that a good fortune to experience such conditions, when the air is "alive" and the world is beautiful.

I recall an evening flight of rare perfection with a prospective pilot, a young woman taking her first ride in a sailplane with me. We have climbed to 800 feet in a clear blue sky and now float steadily in a layer of silk-smooth air. Thanks to excellent visibility, the rolling southern Ontario countryside slips by without even the hint of a cloud. In such a sport as gliding, it is a flight very reminiscent of my own introduction to the sport and I am pleased that a good fortune to experience such conditions, when the air is "alive" and the world is beautiful.

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The other Gaspé
Man, the land, and the sea. In perfect harmony

by Monique Provencher/photos by Richard Pierre

The Gaspé peninsula juts into the Gulf of St. Lawrence at the southeastern extremity of Quebec. Highway 132 winds around the peninsula for 800 km, faithfully following the river that is so broad here that it is called, by some, the sea. The highway seems in many places to have been drawn right out of the shoreline, while in other spots it climbs hills and then follows steep-sloped cliffs. And while the Gaspé provides a series of marvelous unfolding panoramas, it also serves as the backdrop for a spellbinding symphony, a melodic mixing of the sound of waves breaking on pebbly beaches, and the cries of birds wheeling and circling in the wind. This is the Gaspé that everyone knows, visited each year by thousands of tourists who, keeping one eye on the villages that can be spotted from the highways, rush toward Percé and its celebrated rock at the tip of the peninsula.

Perhaps these people do not even suspect that only a few minutes off the main route there is another Gaspé — calm, mysterious, unpopulated — with no billboards and no souvenir stands. This other Gaspé contains some of the most beautiful sites in the province — the high summits covered year-round with snow. This is the Gaspé of the forests, of mountains crisscrossed by footpaths. You may spend a whole day climbing, filling your lungs with pure air, drinking water from glacial streams, and experiencing the delight, once you have reached the top, of contemplating a magnificent landscape stretched out below.

For fishing enthusiasts there are
rivers — the Sainte-Anne, MRCsul, Rivière-a-Claude, Rivière-a-Pierre, Madeleine, and Cascapedia — flowing through deep gorges and lush valleys. These rivers abound in speckled trout and Atlantic salmon.

This is also the Gaspé of the scientists. Geologists have found rocks of volcanic origin more than 400 million years old, while botanists come here to study the peninsula’s rare flora.

The road to one such earthly paradise begins at Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and leads to the interior of the peninsula, to the Parc de la Gaspésie. The first stage is Mont Albert with its sparkling white Le Gîte hotel nestled in a setting of greenery. From there, a scenic route winds around the McGerrigle mountains up to Mont Jacques-Cartier, the highest accessible peak in eastern Canada. The road then goes to Mont McWhirter and Mont Richardson, ending a few hundred yards from the starting point. And if you are not fortunate enough to see the caribou that live at the peak of Mont Jacques-Cartier even in summer, or one of the black bears that haunt the mountain-sides, you will be enchanted by the majestic landscape and seduced by the pervasive calm. You will return to Highway 132 rather reluctantly, wanting to come back for a longer stay.

The highway is squeezed between the mountains and the beach, giving the illusion that you are sailing rather than driving — particularly in some places, where the white-capped waves, breaking on the shore, spray your windshield. You will inhale the scent of seaweed, your skin will be damp from the spray, and there will be a tangy taste of salt on your lips when you drive through hamlets whose names are inspired by the sea: Ruisseau-Castor (beaver stream), Cap-au-Homard (fox cape), Ruisseau-a-Contreb (backward stream). Then suddenly you will be at Mont-Saint-Pierre, imbedded between two mountains. If you feel like climbing again, there is a path that will take you to the summit, where your efforts will be rewarded by another of this region’s magnificent vistas.

As your trek continues you will see village after village, all somewhat alike — modest houses clustered around the

(above) Rough-hewn sculptures of fishermen are indigenous to the Gaspé
(right) The day’s catch is unloaded
(below) A fisherman takes his ease
church. In the small harbors there are modern fishing trawlers, while on the docks sturdy, suntanned fishermen with liling voices go about their business.

Legends blend with history in many of these hamlets. In Cloridorme, for example, you will surely find an old chap who will give you a detailed account of how a beautiful girl from the village, whose name was Rose Latulippe, danced all night with the Devil disguised as a seductive swain. On the stroke of midnight she was saved by the village curé, who burst into the party and drove the Devil away by tracing a large sign of the cross.

Seventy kilometers farther — at Cap-des-Rosiers, where the St. Lawrence River becomes the Gulf — there is a magnificent lighthouse, the highest along the coast. It has been a plaintive witness to some of the worst shipwrecks in Canadian waters. And it is told that from the top of this cape, in 1759, a French officer on guard duty first spotted the English fleet bringing Wolfe and his army. He dispatched a messenger to Quebec but he was unable to change the course of history.

Just east of Cap-des-Rosiers you will suddenly be plunged again into untamed nature, for Highway 132 crosses the Forillon National Park, an immense preserve created by the federal government to conserve the region's flora and fauna. To explore all its marvels you should first walk the paths. Then drive along the gravel roads and you will discover very high escarpments on one side of the park and on the other side a coastline indented by beaches and coves, hidden among the rocks.

When you leave the park the road comes to the magnificent Baie de Gaspé, and once again the thread of history unwind in chronological disorder. First there is Cap-aux-Os, settled by United Empire Loyalists after the American War of Independence. And a few kilometers farther is Penouill, from where the first contingent of Canadian troops left for Europe in 1914. It was here, too, in a Viking settlement established in the 11th century, that Eiriksdottir, the illegitimate daughter of Eric the Red, landed, thus becoming the first white woman in America. Then comes Gaspé, a historic town situated at the back of the magnificent bay of the same name. It was here that Jacques Cartier, after his first voyage in 1534, planted a cross to claim Canada in the name of the king of France. You may stand in front of the large granite cross, erected on the mountainside, and reflect that the sailor from Saint-Malo and his companions certainly had no idea of the vastness of the territory they had just given to their motherland.

Just outside Gaspé the road back home begins again. It is with some regret that you will take the steep highway that leads to Percé. But your first sight of the celebrated vacation spot, from the top of the hill, will fill you with admiration. The scenery is grandiose, it
is here that the last folds of the small chain of mountains known as the Chic-Chocs disappear into the sea. About 3.5 km off the coast, île de Bonaventure looks rather like a seashore whale. The island has been turned into a provincial park, and it shelters waterfowl that are protected by strict laws. The most famous of all the birds to be found there, the île de Bonaventure (their English name, gannet, is more prosaic) form a colony of 50,000 noisy-winged creatures. If you land on the island you may admire them up close. They are not particularly impressed by their visitors.

Perce is also a meeting place for unusual and variegated crowds of people. You may or may not like its coastal atmosphere but it is impossible to be indifferent or even to escape the enthusiasm that is aroused by this unique panorama.

Then you'll take to the road again, with one last look at the place you now must leave. You will cross the Anse-aux-Beaufils, Cap-d’Espoir, Grande-Rivière, and several other villages, where codfish are set out to dry on vast beds of pebbles, imparting their particular odor.

This is the beginning of the Bass des Chaleureux, dotted with towns like Chandeller, an industrial town with its sandy beach, or Newport, famous for its production of Christmas trees. And then's Anse-aux-Grappins with its beach, rich in agates. The road goes from villages to towns, their names sometimes English, sometimes French, and sometimes Indian—Shigueah, Hope Town, Pequod, Saint-Samson, New Richmond, Malia--names that are a sure indication of the ethnic origin of the first inhabitants. Then, at the end of a cove, you come to Carleton and Mont Saint-Joseph. A fine road will take you to the top of the mountain with its exceptional view of the Bass des Chaleureux and the coasts of the Gaspe and New Brunswick. The landscape is less spectacular after this village but there is a peaceful quality to its tranquil beauty, rather like a shadowy corner after several hours in the sun.

This road goes most into the Matapédia Valley, squeezed between the mountain and the river of the same name, nicknamed with some accuracy "the river with 223 rapids." You will cross vast green stretches where placid heads are greasing, oblivious to passersby, and slowly you will return to Sainte-Flavie, the beginning and end of this tour of the Gaspe. It is an unforgettable corner of the earth where man, the land, and the sea exist in perfect harmony.

Translated by Sheila Windham
Great expectations aren't enough
To grow or not to grow: that is the issue

by H. Ian Macdonald

Canada is in the midst of a potentially far-reaching change in the character of its economic life. It is experiencing much more than a periodic downturn in its economic performance. Franklin, it is undergoing a major restructuring of its basic economic characteristics. The danger is that a failure to recognize this fact and to behave accordingly could well mean that, not only our conventional policy equipment, but our economic system itself could become totally irrelevant. It is time to reflect seriously on the future of Canada's economy.

Is our system failing because it is unsuited to the times or because it has not been given a chance to work? Can it be restored to working order by recognizing the unfair burdens imposed upon it or do we require a totally new system? If we require a totally new system, have we the capacity and the institutional capacity to design it peacefully and rationally or will it be the aftermath of social breakdown in the midst of which new strong forces will seek to impose their will? I do not pretend to have the answers to those questions but I hope that the course we choose is the product of reasonable debate, and not the consequence of default and failure to recognize our true condition.

We are faced now with a dichotomy in our economy. Our aspirations for increasing consumption and enlarging our standard of living continue unabated. On the other hand, our work performance, productivity, and output are not keeping pace and even the process of economic growth is being challenged. We cannot have it both ways.

But, at the same time, we are becoming more and more concerned about conservation of resources and environmental enhancement. And therein may lie the best hope for reconciliation of rising expectations and slackened economic growth — the avoidance of waste and the more efficient use of our resources.

We are also expecting more and more from the public sector without maintaining and enlarging the productive base upon which public goods must depend. We are seeking to distribute wealth before we have created it. We lament the loss of agricultural land yet we complain about the shortage of housing. We inhibit competition, enterprising and initiative while expressing surprise at the decline of the effectiveness of the marketplace. And we complain about the interference of government in the affairs of the citizen, while urging government to assume an apparently limitless role.

Our first task should be to clarify our view about the future of economic growth. If we wish to have less growth, then everyone must be made to understand the meaning of lower horizons and expectations. If, on the other hand, we are to continue to pursue a higher rate of economic growth, we must do a better job of planning the economy and of resource utilization. We also must reassess the resources that are available to us and the method by which we utilize those resources economically, producing as little waste as possible.

The basic problem revolves around the aggregate level of demand for goods and services, whether purchased privately or provided by government, and the level of work and output. It is quite evident that in Canada, notwithstanding the worldwide factors bearing on inflation, our general level of expectation has surpassed our increase in productivity and our general work performance. It is also clear that Canada has one of the highest levels, relatively speaking, of consumer credit and personal debt. We have embraced the philosophy of "buy now, pay later" to excess and demonstrated, at the same time, an unwillingness to work hard.

The inconsistency of so much of our public discussion and debate about the relationship of economic growth to expectations is ironic. There is a great deal of well-founded opinion that says we must prepare for a lower rate of economic growth, devote greater attention to conservation, and slow down the consumption of our resources. Yet there is little evidence that we have accepted the consequences of doing so — a decline in the rate of improvement in our standard of living or an absolute reduction.

Canada has produced an extraordinary life-style for many Canadians. The two-income family, with summer cottage and power boat, is found not just among the elite. Rather, such families are found at various levels in our society. Similarly, Canadian tourists abroad represent a wide spectrum of the Canadian public. This is an immense transformation in life-style compared with the period prior to World War II.

Now we face a fundamental choice. Do we wish to continue with that life-style? If so, we must rediscover the road to greater effort and higher productivity, and, if we are to retain our resource capacity, to a willingness to declare a "war on waste."

The existence of chronic unemployment and the aspirations of the young suggest that higher economic growth is the only realistic option. Incidentally, higher rates of economic growth are not to be equated just with more material goods. The belief is as much a part of the Gross National Product as brickmaking, and scientific research is as important as the production of trucks.

However, if we decide there should be less economic growth, a lower standard of living, and a reduction in the use of our resources, then we will require a completely new social and economic order, and a transformation that has not been made peacefully at any time in the past. Certainly such a change has not been made peacefully in a society with our degree of affluence.

Given that choice the first question is: how do we establish a consensus on the direction in which we wish to proceed? Indeed, is it reasonable to assume we will make the choice? Professor John Kenneth Galbraith has assumed we will not make the decision consciously. As a result, in order to protect ourselves from inflation and the inevitable collapse that endemic inflation would bring, he suggests we will inevitably accept wage and price controls, imposed on us by the government, as a continuing feature of our society.

This, of course, explains the serious difficulty faced by the Canadian government in deciding what to do about the long-term future of wage and price controls. In the spring and summer of 1975 I was among those who recommended the imposition of such controls in order to avoid the inevitable slide over the edge of an economic precipice. However, I coupled my recommendation with the equally strong urging that we use the time to consider the future and determine the direction we wished to follow. If we did not do so, I said, then we would be faced at the end of the control period, not only with a return of the situation that called for controls in the first place, but an even more difficult situation as a result of pent-up demands, on both the wage and the price front. Clearly that is the position in which the government now finds itself. It is a serious dilemma. The ultimate decision is of far-reaching significance because it will tell us a great deal about the future.

There are really only three alternatives open to government:
1. to continue with controls, in which case we drift willfully into the Galbraithian world;
2. to disavow all controls, in which case we might well face social and economic catastrophe;
3. to begin the process quickly of arriving at a consensus and then working as hard as we can to accomplish the goals that we set for ourselves.

I believe we should be discussing exactly how we establish that consensus. To arrive at this, all-party committees of parliament should be traveling across the country in order to explain the situation in simple terms and to try to develop a green paper that would set the course for the future.

If, as I suspect, the majority of Canadians would opt for continuing economic growth at this time, then certain conclusions follow. We will need as much freedom of competition as possible within the market mechanism. We
have had a mixed economy for a long time and that would continue. However, we also would need to be much more rigorous in ensuring that competition prevailed in every possible realm and that successful competition would be rewarded rather than constrained or penalized. We would require a tripartite attack by labor, business, and government on productivity improvement, along with a challenge to the proposition that improved productivity is somehow a threat to jobs. (The countries with the highest productivity in the world are also the countries with the best record of employment.) Such a prescription seems to have widening appeal. Prime Minister James Callaghan of Great Britain has recently described his hopes for encouraging higher productivity, increased capital investment, and more business development.

We also should be establishing the "restorative society" in place of the "throwaway society." Therefore, the first matter on which business and labor should seek to agree is an improvement in the quality of goods and services that are produced in this country. It is remarkable how often we fail to realize that the great bulk of consumers in this country are those who are producing the goods and services. (Incidentally, our need for departments of consumer affairs would decline proportionately to the increase in the quality of goods and services.) We all know the constant frustration, annoyance, and disappointment at coping with inferior merchandise.

We should not take lightly the serious waste of resources that exists in several sectors of our society. The waste of the skills and talents of the elderly is scandalous. Our failure to motivate young people in the educational system is inexusable. The slow progress that we have made in the employment and equal opportunity afforded to handicapped people is intolerable.

The solution to these problems lies, not with government policy, but with ourselves. We require more forthrightness and honesty about our economic and social objectives, and more altruism in our own behavior. During my 10 years in government I found it difficult not to be disillusioned from time to time with the apparent selfishness and narrowness of many advocates of various policies, and their unwillingness to live with all the consequences. For example, I had been involved in many discussions concerning the conservation of our agricultural land, particularly the Ontario fruitlands, and I became interested in the fact that most of the ardent conservationists seemed to live in Toronto. When I went out to talk to farmers the story was very different; many of them could not wait to turn their green lands into asphalt and retire to Florida. And yet I also recall the outrage that accompanied the imposition of a land-speculation tax in Ontario. There is no point in people preaching piously about the preservation of agricultural land unless they are willing to compensate the farmer for what is otherwise his only source of retirement income. Likewise, there is no use saying that costs of pollution abatement should be the responsibility of industry unless we are willing to pay the higher prices that may result. And citizens should not be urging better planning in their local area and complaining when they are not allowed to sever their farm lots for residential development.

To the extent that public policy is required in regulating the economy, we must recognize the regional character of Canada, and not attempt to twist and bend every region into the narrow confines of a national policy straightjacket. We require a set of regional policies that can be harmonized with overriding national goals. We must ask fundamental questions, such as whether the increase in transportation and energy costs, and the concern about declining agricultural land do not imply that life must be lived more and more in large metropolitan areas. Personally, I hope that will not be the case. However, if it is, then the major effort in our policy planning must be directed at making life more civilized and safe in such large communities. In the process we should recognize the true social costs of change and development. Such an approach was well illustrated in a September, 1969, Harper's magazine article. In it, the author, John Fischer, analyzed the proposal of what he called "The Inhuman Real Estate Corporation" to build a 50-storey skyscraper in the most congested area of midtown Manhattan. "If 90 percent of the office space can be rented at $12 per square foot, it looks like a sound investment according to antique accounting methods. To uncover the true facts, however, we must investigate the cost of moving 12,000 additional workers in and out of midtown during rush hours. The first (and least) item is $8 million of new city buses. When they are crammed into the already clogged avenues, the daily loss of man-hours and traffic jams may run into a couple of million more. The fumes from their diesel engines will cause an estimated 9 percent increase in New York incidence of emphysema and lung cancer: this requires the construction of three new hospitals. To supply them, plus the new building, with water — already perilously short in the city — a new reservoir has to be built on the headwaters of the Delaware River, 140 miles away. Some of the dairy farmers pushed out of the drowned valley will move promptly into the Bronx and go on relief. The subtraction of their milk output from the city's supply leads to a price increase of two cents a quart. For a Harlem mother with seven hungry children, this is the last straw. She summons her neighbors to join her in riot; seven blocks go up in flames and the Mayor demands higher taxes to hire more police ... Instead of a sound investment, Inhuman Towers now looks like a criminal folly, which would be forbidden by any sensible government."

The so-called crisis of government is due to the failure of Canadians to decide on the goals, direction, and values they desire. Governments can never devise acceptable policy unless citizens are clear about the direction in which they wish to proceed. We had that direction for most of the postwar period, climaxcd in the buoyancy and expansion of the 1960s. Life today is not as buoyant and we have tended to grow apart, fortified by an enlarging "legalism" in Canada. The obstacle course over which such government initiatives as the anti-inflation program has run soon became a lawyer's dream and a citizen's nightmare. Establishing a consensus on national goals will not be an easy task. However, it is supremely well worth trying.

H. Ian Macdonald, former deputy treasurer of Ontario, is president of York University, Toronto.
I was only eight at the time and no more impressionable, I think, than any other child. But I still remember that day of long ago, right down to its very texture.

I was watching what Mother was doing. The trowe paper, which lined the bureau drawer that held her keepsakes, had yellowed and she was changing it to fresh, then she dusted each object taken from the drawer before putting it back. She was humming a little tune as she worked, until she came to one particular box.

Her humming stopped and then she held this box in her hand with such a broodless sort of silence, it made me stare at her face.

Mother always saved pretty boxes and this had once been pretty. But now it had faded with many years of age. Once, the cardboards cover had had a pattern of paper roses pasted on it, but as the glue had loosened, the flowers had browned and curled up at the edges.

I asked Mother to let me see inside the box. She still had that muff look on her face but she did as I asked.

When she opened the box, it was my turn to stare at what I saw. A tiny carved ivory cross, the section showing where wild flowers (now withered and fallen loose) had been woven to the cross. A small, hooded change purse. A tiny braid of hair, so golden it must have been the envy of the village.

I didn't have so ask her the meaning of what I saw. I knew instinctively that this was the last gift my father had given her. Never saw my sister Ruby, she had died at age six, years before I was born. But I'd heard again and again the story of what a rare and shining child she was.

"Was she so beautiful?" I asked Mother.

"Yes."

"Could she name wild birds?"

"Yes."

"Could she really recite a dozen psalms without getting a word wrong?"

"Yes."

I went outside to play. But things wouldn't seem to play with me. There was no quality in the air that I had never noticed before. Quieter than silence. Quieter than mysteries. Though it was June, there was none of that "whispering" together of things growing side by side in the fields. Things seemed oblivious to themselves. The leaves of the pear tree moved but without desiring to. Even the stones, which have their own way of speaking, were deaf and dumb.

It wasn't the bush of sadness. Sadness is active. It was simply the first time I had found out about distance, the distance in the language.

The feeling didn't last. The shadow of a leaf moved, having decided to. A chaffinch hopped across the sun. The "nonsense" came back to the stone. Everything in the day heard its own name and answered to it. It happened as if something you'd taken to be an object had turned out, on nearing you, to be a face. And Hay on my back in the grass, squirming my eyes to make patterns of the shadows, luxuriously thoughtless.

Young or old, we nearly always discover the nature of things by a chance illumination, touched off by what need be no more than a seeming-ly irrelevant trifle.

Let your eye "happen" at the right moment on a mossy-stem thingie that has lost all but one of its nails to the winds of the years, and you will know all there is to know about melancholy. Watch not a rock rising but a simple daisy, cleaner than diamonds, bowing to the sun-companioned fields and you may be struck in a flash with the victory of feeling over thought.

And so the chancer disclaims work in the light of hope, so with sorrow

And so with pleasures and so with pains.

My father was the quiet one of the family — outwardly at least. There were no fluctuating currents of feeling in his face as our activities busied and edged around his soberness. But I'm sure that he too knew moments when some small incident suffused him with total understanding.

I think of the morning we went to pick snow apples.

The ancient orchard was the site of what, years ago, had been my great-grandfather's homestead, but the forest had not quite reclamed it and turned it into a wilderness. The apple trees still bore fruit and the narrow road that led there was still passable for horse and buckboard.

I don't know why the journey to pick the snow apples had a sort of magic for me but it did. And the magic never dimmed, I remember how it was when, in the dawning light, we neared our destination. When I knew that one more turn in the road and we'd be there, a shiver would run through me. And I'd close my eyes to the scattered trees at the edge of the orchard, so that when I opened them I'd all at once have the whole clearing in view.

It was as if you were outside of time. In another light the ancient trees, gnarled and twisted as they were, might have stood for eternity. But here they spoke only of lasting, and the apples they still bore in plenty sang with a tart and tingling sweetness on the tongue.

A frost the night before had made them just right for picking, and when my father's bulky arms shook the boughs, the fruit came down in showers. The whole day smelled and tasted of apple, and when we knelt in the clariotion prayer of the ciders October light to gather the apples into baskets, it was like the gentlest of peace made flesh.

As for my father, through his face showed no outward change, I know that, as he lifted the ladens barret on to the cart as easily as another man might lift a paasul and as he too felt the sanctity almost of this bountiful day, he learned about strength and joy in their entirety.

When the containers were level full, Mother gathered apples in her apron to "top them off," and Father eagerly packed them into such a tight crown that no noise would joggle free.

And then it was time to go home.

In a curious way it was Mother who then seemed to be the centre of everything. It was always like that in the case of hope, And so with sorrow.

My grandfather (I see him now) doesn't look old — although there is a far-off look in his eyes sometimes. There is a gaze that isn't all there in the snapshot of him and grandmother taken (each young and smiling at the other's consciousness of the camera) the week before death overtook her so suddenly.

The gazed in there now as he kindles the kitchen fire. He knows how good the warmth will feel against his flesh, now that the beginning might chill has subbed us. He tips up the back cover of the stove to see if the kindling has caught, and a tendril of smoke spirals for a moment in the air. It is shapeless and yet on interlacing of all shapes as, ceaselessly changing, they twine and intertwine and melt, one into the other.

His eyes are no longer grave and inward-searching — they never are when I'm a chatterbox and he's my most indulgent listener. But as he watches the tendril of smoke, it is certain that he has discovered all there is to know about memory.

It would not be true to say that Ruby was constantly in the back of my mind. But ever since the day when Mother showed me the box of her things, the thought of her would sometimes cast a spell of silence on me. As if through silence (so like the silence of that first day) I could, most, somehow reach her.

One day in the quiet of the backfield, where I'd gone to search for four-leaf clover, I had the strangest feeling that I could reach her if I called her name aloud. I looked around. There was no one or nothing to overhear. I saw the golden hair again.

"Ruby," I called softly.

There was no answer.

"Ruby!" I called again in another strong voice.

There was no answer.

"Ruby!" I called softly again.

There was no answer.

I didn't find out about death.

Ernest Buckler was a novelist living in Bridgetown, N.S. He is author of the memoir Ox Bells and Fireflies.
in Closing

One evening in spring a little more than 20 years ago, I stepped off a bus in the town of Truro, Nova Scotia, on my way to the first job I ever held, filling in when the regular announcers were on holidays at the local radio station, which was known far and wide as CKCL, "The Voice of Colchester County."

It was, as I remember, a shining evening. The light was still in the sky and, when I stepped down from the bus, the air seemed touched with promise; just as it always is in those first weeks of spring in Nova Scotia when the ice moves out and the wind seems warm and wet.

I picked up my suitcase, and for a few minutes I just stood on the sidewalk and thought of how great it all was — the people strolling the streets, the girls chatting at the soda fountain, the farmers passing by in trucks, and most of all the feeling that I was on my own and on my way in a career that would surely offer excitement, glamour and, in all probability, enduring fame.

I began walking to the radio station. I was not expected, for it was a Friday evening and my job did not begin until the following Monday. But I thought I would get there early, just in case they might need me right away to read the news or perhaps introduce the orchestra of Glenn Miller on Make Believe Ballroom.

The studios of CKCL were at the corner of Prince and Pleasant streets, about a 10-minute walk from the centre of town and on the second floor of a wooden two-storey building that at one time had housed the local YMCA. When I arrived there, the lights were just beginning to glow through the evening, and I went to the side entrance and rang the bell. A man came, opened the door a crack, and began to explain that he was sorry but the offices were closed and I should come back in the morning about nine when they would reopen. Then he smiled slightly and said, "The only people here tonight are members of the operations group, announcers, and technical personnel." I was enthralled. Obviously I was on the verge of joining a mysterious and exclusive society. I explained who I was, whereupon he opened the door and gave me a warm welcome, even offering to take my suitcase.

I then admitted that he might have stretched the truth a bit by saying that the operations group was in charge for, in truth, he was the only person on the premises. He was the announcer, the operator, the newsreader, and the person who answered both the phone and the door.

I followed him as he raced back up the squeaky stairway, down the corridor, and into the control room where he slipped into a chair, donned a pair of earphones and, placing a finger to his lips, signaled me to keep silent. He switched on the microphone, gave the time and temperature, and then introduced a song that might have been chosen to suit my feelings in those exciting first moments at CKCL. Make the Town and Tell the People.

I began work on Monday. The man who had hired me said that I should go on the air the first day since, in his experience, it was wise for a beginning announcer to be at the station but not broadcasting. "The announcer knows he's got to do it sooner or later," he said, "and the longer he puts it off, the more nervous he'll get." He took me to the newsroom, a narrow rectangular space that seemed crowded with just two of us inside, and showed me the Toletype machine that supplied the station with national and regional news. Then he gave me some advice that seemed quite professional: "When you're looking after the news, try to get it ready at least 15 minutes before you read it on the air. That way you can check for words you may be unfamiliar with by going to the dictionary or by asking somebody. Don't be afraid to ask. And when you read the news, try to read it intelligently rather than pompously. Don't try to affect authority."

In the afternoon a technician took me into the control room and explained how I could operate the record turntables or switch from the studio to the sports announcer at the local baseball game or at the horse races. Then the record librarian showed me where the hymnals were since one of my jobs would be to look after the ministers when they delivered the morning devotions. That week I was assigned to a regular shift as a staff announcer, which meant that, along with morning devotions, I was responsible for the mid-morning program designed for housewives, and the hit parade, which came on every weekday afternoon at four and was aimed at teenagers.

One of the regular announcers, a stylish and friendly man who had taken an interest in my enthusiasm, came up to me one morning and said he'd been asked to do a new kind of program. He wondered if I'd like to work on the show with him, introducing it, reading the commercials, and just being there if he needed me. I said yes.

The program was called Call for Help, and it invited listeners, specifically housewives, to phone in with household problems — how to boil cabbage better, make crust flakier, or fry bacon crispier. The announcer would enlist the problem and then invite other listeners to phone in with solutions. If, while he was talking to a listener, the bell rang, the listener won a prize. The prize was not extravagant. In fact, it was rather modest, consisting of a pair of nylon stockings and two chocolate bars. Still, the program was quite popular and every morning scores of women from across central Nova Scotia would be calling, airing their problems or solutions, and trying for a prize. There was only one incident that came, strangely enough, on a day when the announcer admitted before the show that he felt a little giddy. Midway through the program he took a call and asked a woman what her problem was. The caller confided that it was rather serious. Then she said, "I have grass stains on my wedding gown." He said nothing. He simply got redder and redder, and finally fell off his chair and rolled beneath the studio desk, which he hoped would muff his wild laughter. I thanked the woman, asked her to call again sometime, and then played a song called Love is a Many Splendored Thing, which had just been released. My regular shift kept me busy but I wanted more work. Most evenings I went back to the station, hoping there might be something extra to do. So I was sent to read the commercials at the baseball broadcast, to introduce the speaker at political rallies, even to sign on the orchestra at a barn dance that I described as coming to listeners "live and direct from downtown Truro."

Some evenings I would accompany the sports announcer and we would climb a ladder to the roof of the grandstand at The Truro Raceway, where from a small booth we would describe the events below. There, with the sound of the trotters and the flicker of lights on the velvet dark, a young man could easily feel that all life's promises were being fulfilled and all his dreams were coming true.

That fall I returned to university. I have not been back to CKCL. In fact, I have rarely been back to Truro since that beautiful summer more than 20 years ago. But each spring I remember arriving on the bus and finding so much, so quickly, to be excited by and grateful for.

There must be many of us who have known similar enthusiasms in other springtimes. Now, as we see our years slipping through middle age, no one will really blame us if we look back fondly on those precious and fleeting moments, before the pages of our lives became worn from usage and before they lost that pure feeling of eagerness and optimism.

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