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The modern riddle of wind, water... 

by Wayne Thomas

At Spry Point, a scenic headland on the wind-swept eastern shore of Prince Edward Island, stands the Ark, an attempt at a tangible expression of one of Canada’s most intangible concepts — the "conserver society.

A functional combination of state-of-the-art home and greenhouse, the Ark was conceived four years ago as the country’s first “bio-shelter.” It was designed to pioneer living arrangements appropriate to the new kind of society that has been advocated by various organizations and individuals as a lifestyle to which Canadians should aspire.

Through the term “conserver society” is now more than five years old, the time that has elapsed since it was coined has tended to obscure rather than illuminate its definition. Usually, it appears that some people—or, the fashion of Humphry Durney, would have it mean everything they choose it to mean. “Its appeal,” the federal ministry of science and technology noted in a recent report, “lies in that it easily lends itself to meaning many things to many people.”

Thus, some see the conserver society as a necessity and, indeed, inevitable adjustment by Canadians to a future that is likely to be characterized by a diminishing and increasingly expensive supply of natural resources, notably energy. But others view it in the context of more radical social change.

To such people the conserver society represents a reminder of the industrial stale as we know it today and a return to a way of life less dominated by modern technology. The proponents of this interpretation envisage a society in which man lives in harmony with nature, abandoning what some regard as the ego-yakety; in favor of the ecosystem.

The term “conserver society” is a Canadian invention. It was first used by the licence Council of Canada in January, 1973 in a report on natural resource policy in which the council urged the need for new institutions to protect and control resource development in Canada. Two years later, when the term was beginning to emerge into general usage, the council addressed itself somewhat belatedly to the task of defining what it meant. It came up with the following provisional definition:

“The concept of a conserver society arises from a deep concern for the future, and the realization that decisions taken today, in such areas as energy and resources, may have irreversible and possibly destructive impacts in the medium to long term. The necessity for a conserver society follows from our perception of the world as a finite host to humanity, and from our recognition of increasing global interdependence.”

Other features of the conserver society have been advanced that imply varying degrees of social, economic, and political changes. However, the concept of “living more with less,” particularly in the use of energy, is either implicit or explicit in nearly all of them. This focus on energy is understandable. Not only does it fuel today’s industrial economy but, in every form or another, it is an essential ingredient of any conceivable future society, regardless of whether it is industrial or pastoral.

The conserver society, however, two distinct and mutually exclusive schools of thought have emerged. The first recognizes the desirability and, eventually, the inevitability of Canada’s becoming heavily dependent on renewable resources, such as gas, water, wind, and biomass for its energy requirements. However, it believes that for the transitional period we have no option but to depend on our remaining non-renewable resources and, indeed, that we will have to find more of them, especially oil and gas, to tide us over until renewables become a practical reality.

This view of energy development, of course, is not confined to such advocates of the conserver society. It is espoused by, among others, Canada’s energy industry and the federal and provincial governments. Its validity is also recognized by the Science Council. The authors of the council’s report on Canada as a Conserver Society urge a “preference for sources such as hydro, solar, wind, and vegetation,” but warn that this is a long-term goal. “In the century,” they write, “the contribution from renewable energy will probably not exceed 15 to 20 percent of total energy supply. Even these renewable resources become limited in the long run and provide a major share, present plans to open and develop new supplies of fossil fuels and electricity will have to continue.”

The other school of thought, exemplified in a now famous monograph by the British physicist Amon Lovins, holds that any continued dependence on fossil fuels and other high-technology sources of energy is undesirable and unnecessary, both socially and economically. Subscribers to this view claim that “the soft” technology required to develop renewable energy is well within our grasp, and they believe that much of our energy consumption could be reduced through small improvements in our daily activities. This approach is predicated on the belief that the technology of the future must be both simple and effective and that the initial investment required to develop such technology must be made as early as possible.

For Canada to turn its back on its hard-won non-renewable energy technology would result in the loss of all the benefits of that technology. This approach also has the advantage of being both logical and as logical as abandoning the wheel in favor of the loom and the internal combustion engine. But to some advocates of the conserver society it makes considerable sense. “A soft energy economy,” Lovins has written with specific reference to Canada, “is smoothly attainable only if we begin to transition to it promptly, before other commitments have depleted our stocks of money, time, fluid fuels, skills, and political will.”

For its bold and imaginative Ark project in Prince Edward Island, the New Alchemy Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to research and education in renewable technologies, chose the latter course of maximum reliance on renewable energy.

Such an approach was very much in keeping with the philosophy of the institute, which has already been established at Cape Cod, Mass., by a Canadian biologist, Dr. John Todd. Last year, in a brochure on the Ark, the federal department of fisheries and environment summed up this philosophy in these terms: “For present society to continue and improve, water technologies must be replaced by efficient, low-consumption technologies, powered by the renewable resources of sun, wind, and biologic systems.”

Thus, the Ark was meant to be self-sufficient. Two separate solar systems were designed to take care of heating requirements for the living quarters and greenhouse and to provide electricity for the Ark but to not to power the provincial grid. The project was conceived, however, not merely as an energy experiment. It had a more ambitious objective, being intended, according to New Alchemy Institute literature, as “a complete life-support system in which the inhabitants can raise vegetables and edible fish… Above all, the Ark represents a large and necessary experience, for which ordinary people can use science in their daily lives and take into their own hands the challenges of life in a resource-scarce world.”

Visitors to the Ark are allowed to come and see it for themselves. The project was officially opened in September, 1978. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau described the occasion as “a very important moment in the history of our country, and said that the Ark exemplified ‘living lightly on the earth.”

Now, almost two years later, it is possible to make a preliminary assessment of the success of the Ark experiment. Although criticism of the project has been muted, it is clear that not everything has gone according to plan. Some dependence on the grid was the fact that the Ark is connected to a grid system by one of the island’s independent power companies, in order to generate renewable energy on a small-scale basis require careful experimentation and development.

About 60 km from the Ark, in a historic red brick house on Charlottetown’s waterfront, Andrew Wells wrestles with bigger and more urbane problems in renewable energy. As executive director of the province’s Institute of Man and Resources, Wells has the responsibility for developing and promoting ways of increasing P.E.I.’s self-reliance through the careful use of its renewable resources.

Although the institute’s mandate allows it to examine energy, food, shelter, and transportation, the primary focus is on energy, and it is easy to understand why. With the exception of a small amount of imported electricity, Princes
Edward Island is entirely dependent for its energy on crude oil — and imported crude at that. Its vulnerability to any interruption in world oil supply is great.

Adding to the province's energy problems is the fact that its major industry, agriculture, is energy demanding to a degree unknown in most other regions. P.E.I.'s famous red soil, the pride of many a tourist brochure, is, in truth, in desperately poor heart. Depleted by decades of uninterruped potato growing, its mineral content is so low that the soil functions essentially as a holding medium, to which all nutrients have to be added. Under the best of circumstances, it takes a lot of energy to produce food. In P.E.I.'s case it has been calculated that it takes anything from five to 20 calories of energy from petroleum-derived sources for island farms to produce a single calorie of food.

Thus, no other province in Canada has more incentive than P.E.I. to develop its renewable-energy resources. "I sometimes think," Premier Alex Campbell has commented wryly, "we are so far behind in this province that we are ahead." As far as renewable energy is concerned, at least, he could be right.

Including its sponsorship of the Ark project, the Institute of Man and Resources is looking at seven areas under a federal-provincial program of renewable energy development. Priority is being given to establishing wood as an energy source. P.E.I. has about 600,000 acres of woodland — more than half the land area of the province. In normal commercial terms, most of it is useless. More than a century of "high-grading" (the practice of felling only the most valuable trees in an area and leaving the remainder) has left the province's forests with genetically degraded timber that badly needs to be cleared, but no one wants to cut it.

A program of forest clearance could provide an interim source of woodchip fuel that would, at the same time, allow the planting of fresh strains of genetically superior trees. These in turn could form the basis of a sustainable source of island energy, a possibility that also works wonders for the island's economy in terms of job creation and reduced imported energy bills. Little wonder that P.E.I. has been described as being "at the leading edge of renewable energy development in Canada."

Despite his enthusiasm for wood fuel and other renewable energy sources, however, Wells says that the chances of P.E.I. becoming self-sufficient in energy in the future are "quite remote." The need for crude oil will remain, he says, until some fluid fuel such as wood-derived methanol can be developed to replace those petroleum-based fuels that account for about 35 to 40 percent of the island's energy.

And, notwithstanding his support of the Ark, Wells has reservations about some of the aspirations of the more radical advocates of the conservator society: "I share a lot of the beliefs of these people," he says, "I believe in the prudent use of our resources and try to conduct my own life accordingly. I worry about where some aspects of our technology are leading us.

"But, at the same time, I am concerned with another aspect of these new Thoreausians. Most of them are middle-class, comfortably raised people who have, for one reason or another, been able to opt out of traditional jobs and who believe that other people should do the same thing. Most of the rhetoric we have heard about the conservator society has come from that kind of person, one who is able to take the time to tinker with solar collectors and wood stoves. They don't realize that most Canadians have to work long hours to feed themselves and don't have the time to devote to this kind of activity."

Wells' pragmatism finds a ready echo among federal energy planners in Ottawa. The understandable enthusiasm that members of the government's renewable energy resources branch display toward the potential of solar, wind, and biomass energy does not blind them to the fact that it will be a long time before Canada can look to renewables for a major contribution to its energy budget.

No one is more enthusiastic or more pragmatic than Dr. Harry Swain, the UNFSC adviser on renewable energy. A most untypical civil servant, he spends a good deal of time bombarding private industry with money-making ideas in renewable-energy areas. "There are incredible opportunities to make money right now," he says. "I have eight products ready to go."

Nevertheless, Swain does not think that a renewable-dominated energy economy is an immediate prospect for Canada. "There are some parts of the country that we can fill the gap (between future domestic supply and demand) with renewable resources. I don't think we can. During the next 50 years we are not likely to have any substitutes for liquid hydrocarbons in many areas."

Making haste slowly, in fact, seems to sum up the attitude of most energy planners in development of renewables. Many caution that such development should not be allowed to become uneconomic. In a report on solar energy prepared for the UNFSC, Professor M.K. Berkowitz of the University of Toronto points out that while self-reliance is a major objective, Canada might also aspire to self-sufficiency in, for that matter, anything else. The abundance and desirability of solar energy is evident. The problem is utilizing the sun in an economically viable way. In the same vein, Dr. E.P. Cockshutt of the National Research Council has warned: "The basic feasibility of solar heating has definitely been established, but there exists a wide diversity of imperfectly proven hardware systems. The commercial outlook for the next 10 or 15 years is far from certain."

Nor do those charged with the planning of Canada's energy future share the view of some supporters of the conservator society that renewables and renewables are mutually incompatible. Dr. Robert Durie, who as director of the federal environment department's Advanced Concepts Centre played a major part in the establishment of the Ark, has considerable experience in both areas. "Renewables and nonrenewables," he says, "are often seen as adversaries. I try to argue against that. There need be no conflict. In fact, there are a lot of opportunities for improving the environment in nonrenewable energy development."

Similarly, in another government study on renewable energy, R.J. Temple of the National Research Council, and one of Canada's leading wind experts, says that "no energy source is perfect, and it is probably misleading to think of the various sources, renewable or nonrenewable, as being competitors for future application."

This view is reinforced by a recent study by National Economic Research Associates, a U.S. economic consulting firm that has been engaged for many years in various aspects of government research, by Perry and Sally H. Streiter, see no evidence that the "hard" and "soft" energy paths are mutually exclusive. "Enough evidence does exist," they write, "to suggest that the program and soft technologies can exist side by side, both being used to the extent that they provide the lowest-cost source of energy."

"In the long run, however, the soft supply technologies have been unable in most instances to compete with the hard ones. In fact, a transition from mostly soft technologies — biomass (wood), windpower, solar energy to a more limited extent, and hydroelectric — took place worldwide in the past hundred years. This occurred not because the two types of energy are mutually exclusive — in fact, they continue to exist almost everywhere — but because under the existing conditions and under the constraints in operation, at least up until now, the hard technologies were generally less costly."

Fortunately there is no reason why Canadians need be unduly dismayed by the collective opinion of our energy experts that a totally renewable economy is not just around the corner. While Canada's storehouse of nonrenewable fossil fuels is limited, it is by no means exhausted. Our traditional sources of energy supply — oil and gas — are likely to play a diminishing role in the future, but even here the results of aggressive exploration suggest grounds for cautious optimism. Improved technology and more attractive economics have already resulted in a start being made on tapping the vast potential of western Canada's oil sands. In addition, coal — of which we have a plentiful supply — will play an increasingly important role, and hydro and nuclear power will also make important contributions.

When, to our still-extensive nonrenewable energy sources, one adds the effect on energy demand growth that more efficient use and conservation can have (which are already beginning to show), it becomes apparent that Canada does have the time to make an orderly and economic transfer to a renewables-based economy.

We may, indeed, be headed for some kind of conservator society, in the sense that today's values and standards will be replaced by others more in accord with future living conditions. But there is no reason, in the view of many informed observers, why that kind of society cannot function in a world that, with a new-found prudence, employs both renewable and nonrenewable sources for its energy needs.
Coming through the kitchen door, brushing dust from his denim jacket, Tom Keaton announced that he had found the three missing steers. "The wire was down in the east coulee," he said with a smile. "They were at Mike's place eating hay. I guess they like his feed better than ours."

"Maybe you should've left 'em there," ranch owner Will Smith joked. "With the price of feed these days, it don't pay for us to raise 'em ourselves."

Behind the gentle humor lay a harsh reality. The small, family ranches — and the most romantic, individualistic figure in the Canadian West, the working cowboy — are steadily vanishing from the rolling grasslands of southern Alberta. On the same terrain where their ancestors survived brutal storms, outlaws, and marauding Indians, third and fourth generation cattlemen are being defeated by rising operational costs and replaced by mammoth, mechanized agribusinesses. Yet hundreds are stubbornly hanging on, and Tom Keaton is one of them. "Cowboyin' got into my system young," he says, sitting over a cup of coffee at his kitchen table. "My dad was a rancher, and so was his dad. Me, I'm a drifter. When winter comes to Alberta, I go to Texas. When spring comes to Texas, I go to Montana. Long as there's some small ranches around, I'll work them."

Lean, balding, and 37, Keaton has never had a city job, but he did spend a month on a 250,000-acre spread near San Antonio. "It was like downtown Calgary. There were so many hired hands I didn't know their names. We
checked fences and rounded up cattle in jeeps. The only time the manager saw his land was from a two-seat plane. He’d get mail if he was in a corral and his jeans got mud on them.”

On the 10,000-acre Smith ranch, Keaton is the only hired hand. He bunkes in a tiny room upstairs in the white frame ranch house and, shunning Smith’s four-wheel drive, rides a baby everywhere he can. His wardrobe consists of two denim outfits, a worn black Stetson, and a narrow-lapel gray suit that he wears to Saturday night dances. “I used to go to rodeos. Never missed the Calgary Stampede. Not anymore. Working cowboys aren’t the big stars. For the past 10 years, special schools have been teaching city kids how to ride and bust broncos. Some colleges in the United States even give rodeo scholarships. There’s money in it now. Champions fly on their planes and do a rodeo a day. And some are gentleman ranchers — they’ve never worked on a real ranch.”

To Keaton’s chagrin, the people he meets on Greyhound buses (the way he travels across the continent) have little knowledge of what a cowboy actually does. They seem to think he sits on a horse all day, watching cattle and strumming a guitar. In truth, cowboying is hard labor. Up at dawn to build corrals, herd cattle, train cow ponies, or string barbed wire. In July cowboys endure mosquitoes and heat to brand calves. In January they hunt strays, dip water holes in froze ponds, or nurse sick cattle, all the while worrying about blizzards. One winter Keaton’s horse stumbled in a gopher hole, throwing him and breaking his leg. A blinding storm came up and, in agony, uncertain if he was going the right way, he crawled eight kilometres to the ranch house.

The experience didn’t dull his passion for cowboying. “I can’t say in words what it’s like to be in the hills, alone under a wide, blue sky, knowing you’re doing a good job; how it is when the seasons change. Those things you feel; those things you grow up loving.”

Although he is fully aware that the old-time cowpuncher is an endangered species, Keaton banks a healthy portion of his $450-a-month wages. When he’s $0, he says, he’s going to buy his own small ranch. “Everybody says I’m crazy, I’ll go belly up. Well, they said that about my dad, yet he has his spread 30 years. Like him, I’ll just do my best and see what happens.”

Of all the period novels glamorizing the cowboy, none has had the lasting impact of Owen Wister’s The Virginian. Published in 1902, the book’s hero, a soft-speaking, fast-drawing range rider, set the tone for future Zane Grey, Luke Short, and John Wayne characterizations.

Most of the cattlemen who settled southern Alberta in the 1880s were not like Wister’s hero. Many staid Ontario businessmen came west, enticed by a new law permitting ranchers to lease as much as 100,000 acres of Crown land for an annual fee of one cent an acre. Others were aging hunters, switching to cattle because the buffalo herds were nearly depleted. South African diamond dealer Isaac Robinson, Quebec Senator M.H. Cochrane, and the de Beaufray brothers (a Paisan count and a retired army captain descended from Louis IX) were among the novice ranchers. Hundreds of Americans drifted north, too, but they were fewer in number than the British. There were, in fact, so many Englishmen on the plains that polo was a prime leisure activity.

The calm, industrious lives that most cattlemen led were sometimes violently interrupted. The proud Blackfoot, struggling to regain their lost territorial supremacy, burned ranch houses, stole cattle, and fought whites at water holes. Then there were the rustlers. Texas Jack Dukins and his gang prowled Alberta for 10 years before a Northwest Mounted Police undercover agent caught him branding a neighbor’s steer. Some ranchers took care of rustlers themselves. Two thieves were thrown into a rattlesnake pit near Medicine Hat, and Willow Creek cattleman Will Mitchell, learning the dreaded Bear’s Paw Gang had taken his horses, went to their hideout, alone and unarmed, and declared: “I’ve come for my animals.” The bandits were as impressed by his courage that they returned the horses.

Frontier Alberta may not have had any quick-draw gunfighters, but it did have many larger-than-life characters. Black cowboy John Ware, defying a local ordinance, took his herd through downtown Calgary because the road was shorter. Sentenced to hang for killing, rancher Ernie Cuthrell left taunting messages all over Alberta after he escaped from death row twice. Pat Burns drove 1,000 steers over the Rockies and by steam and rifle from Calgary to Dawson City. And gambler Billy Morton, winning a holymoly loss in a card game, auctioned her off in a saloon.

The cattleman dominated the plains until the early 1900s. Then the lush
The stocky, slow-talking Shepard acknowledged his dislike for mechanical devices. But he said, even he has made concessions to modern history. The 17,000-acre Río Alto, of which he is part-owner, has electricity, running water, and phone service. The contrast to the days when he hauled well water, cut firewood, and burned kerosene.

"The gasoline engine really hurt ranching. Cowboys still work hard but they don't work as hard as they did before," said Scott. "Some of the really dry, faruthert east that ranchers need 50 to 60 acres per head of cattle. You learn a lot about life working with animals," he said, unhitching his saddle. "You have too many steps in a pen, in a pin, and things. The rules and prettys soon will be trimmed to death. Isn't that what's going on in cities? No, sir, you wouldn't get me in a city. I wouldn't give up this wonderful space out here. Not for a million dollars."

**The cowboys riding south from the High River region in April, 1884, expected problems. They were, after all, not only ranching on the Prairies' first big roundup and trail drive. Still, they did not anticipate the venture would take as long as it did — two months. Without fences, stray cattle wandered the vast, largely ungraded plains to the south, and the 30-iron cattlemen from the Bar-U, the Quorum, the Wildron, and other ranchers were offered orders to bring them home. Torrental rains, swift, swollen rivers, and hungry wolf packs complicated the task. The High River riders traveled 160 kilometres to rendezvous with wranglers working on ranches closer to the Montana border. Together, almost 100 cowboys chased slowly north, climbing crows' nests, crossing creeks, and river beds for cattle carrying their brand. A one-time Montana Indian fighting Cheyennes, former farmer George Lane, was the trail boss.**

**Accustomed to roaming free, the cattle resisted the cowboys' efforts to round them up. They also balked at crossing rivers. Men had to force the animals into the water and, to keep the cattle from returning to shore, they rode beside them, their horses swimming against the current. Wagons bogged down in mud, and on rainy nights wranglers slept in the open, under a blanket and the waterproof sticker they had worn all day.**

Despite the adverse conditions, the cowboys were immensely popular. They were joked, sang, and exchanged tall tales, and when someone brought a string of wild horses into camp at twilight, the man decided to hold a bucking contest. All ranchers employed bronc-busting specialists and, naturally, each claimed his man could tame anything on four legs.

**Standing under a warm noon sun, Atlas, who had painted his yard to a large, new barn and said he had cost more than $100,000. He was proud to have the building, he admitted, but he had to make a tough sacrifice to get it. He said "I use a big piece of land," he said, "That's not an easy thing for a rancher to do. You feel attached to the land, you've got it. But I had to make my operation. Either that or risk going out of business."**

The tall, genial Baker owns the Bar-U, the one-effluent spread that has survived through the decades from 100,000 acres to 100,000. A High River farmer, he brought the ranch in 1957 and, during the winter, he fist-fuit his horses working in a country rancher. With the same two, four-wheel drives, and other innovations, he feels the Bar-U has a better chance of surviving. I'm putting up my own feed," he says. "Eight hundred acres. Lots of cattle want under because they can grow enough themselves, and the market's always $50 and more for a ton of hay. Turned up, too. It used to go for $7 a bale, and now it's $3. Barbed wire, lumber, machinery, everything's sky high. Everything but beef prices. Producers have lost 100 million in the past four years and, even if beef prices rise, the operational costs are still bound to force the little guys out."
DOING GOOD
Not just a duty.

by Patricia Clarke

Differently
Almost a necessity

John Thorpe organizes flower shows. Ellen Speers reads to a blind university student. Carol Tornrelli sings in a chorus. Dick Hilgers tracks migrating fish. Barbara Murphy and a lonely child bake a cake. They are the new volunteers—a growing army of people who are investing their skills and spare time in ways that pay dividends in enriching their own lives and making their communities better places.

Volunteers supervise probationers and referee hockey games. They help prisoners with correspondence courses and perform in community orchestras. They teach the mute to speak and the blind to ski. They run art galleries, school libraries, pet shows, and political forums. They deliver well-cooked meals to shut-ins and well-argued briefs to legislators.

One in every three Canadians, according to a survey by the Canadian Council for Social Development, is involved in some way in such activities. Without them, most services that the community offers would cost more and some would not exist. Many do what we expect of volunteers—give service to the less fortunate in society. However, the explosive new growth is in volunteers who want to contribute to society, organizing self-help groups, running cooperatives, and protecting the environment.

You can’t measure how much their enthusiasm, skills, and sympathy do for the people with whom they work or for the community; nor can you measure how much the chance to serve does for the volunteers themselves. But you can try to measure the dollar value. A U.S. figure based on a Census Bureau study in 1974 pegs the contribution at $26 billion a year. In Ontario’s ministry of correctional services alone, it would cost $1.25 million a year to replace the 3,100 active volunteers with paid staff at a minimal salary.

Yesterday’s stereotype of the volunteer was Lady Bountiful, a middle-class housewife with time on her hands, zealous to dispense both soup and sermons. She was a do-gooder who might well do harm. The word volunteer itself, says Gordon Winch, who has worked with 600 volunteers at Toronto’s Distress Centre, “tended to be a put down. It meant someone who hadn’t anything better to do.”

For today’s volunteers, Winch and others prefer “trained lay people.” More often than not, he or she is employed. About 45 percent are men, the Canadian Council study showed. Forty percent come from moderate income families (in 1975 less than $12,000 a year). And increasingly they want to get more responsibility, more backup, and more training. One Ontario family agency, which uses volunteers as councillors, puts them
John Thorne: from sliding on his ankles to amateur competition to teaching others the art of speedskating — all in three years

through a three-year course. "The trend is for volunteers to be trained and integrated into teams with professionals," says Sindy Atkin, who coordinates courses of study for volunteers at Seneca College in Toronto. Yesterday's volunteer often seemed to operate from a sense of charitable duty. To say that is not to denigrate the real contribution they made to combating the afflicted and correcting the afflictions. Services for the aged, the ill, and the handicapped can be taken for granted today because volunteers saw a need and met it.

Today's volunteer, however, finds what he or she gets from volunteering as important as what is given. Though most have a strong religious commitment, according to a study reported in Volunteer Administration (a journal published by the Association of Volunteer Action Scholars in the United States), they see their work more as an opportunity than as a duty.

It's an opportunity to make a difference in one's community. It's also an opportunity to widen one's own life. Newcomers meet their neighbors. Housewives polish rusty skills or pick up new ones while acquiring experience to list on a résumé. Ex-offenders or those recovering from physical or mental illness ease their way back to full-time work. Young people try out possible careers. Retired people are reassured that they're still needed. Working people learn new skills and discover unexpected talents.

At the same time they widen the services their community can offer. It's not only that we couldn't afford to pay for them — "Volunteers bring a different quality, a different commitment," says Ruth Pitman, volunteer coordinator for Ontario's Correctional Services. "Without them we'd have a poorer service." They also bring to their work an experience the professional hasn't acquired — for instance, when one widow can counsel another.

more recently loved. As Joanna Wilson, community-relations officer for the North York (Ontario) Volunteer Centre, puts it: "Without volunteers we'd be down the drain."

George Holmans was working about 80 hours a week for a while last year. Half of that time was as an instrument mechanic at Imperial's Dartmouth, N.S., refinery. Half of it was with his Cub pack. It was worth it because it earned a 10-day trip to the Netherlands for 15 boys who might never have made it without him.

From the time they got on the plane — and it was the first plane ride for some of the boys — it was "just one exciting thing after another," says Holmans. The memories tumble over themselves: meeting Dutch Cubs and trading souvenirs, dressing up in wooden shoes for the photographer, whizzing down huge slides in an amusement park and, like home away from home, turning corner in Amsterdam and spotting a McDonald's.

First, however, they had to earn the $6,000 to pay for the trip. Holmans had to take a week of his vacation and borrow from the bank to buy a car in order to organize all the projects — selling raffle tickets for a boat, organizing spaghetti suppers, and manning stalls at 22 flea markets. He had been a Cub and Scout in Newfoundland, but when he first volunteered his services as a leader, he wasn't needed. (The Scouting movement is in better shape in the Maritimes than in some other areas of Canada.) He was accepted as an assistant Cubmaster with the Third Dartmouth pack four years ago when his son, Robbie, joined Cubs. Now that Robbie is of Scouting age, he is moving up with him. Scout leaders are harder to get, Holmans' Cubmaster Leo Senz admits; "not everybody is willing to cope with teenagers."

Those who are willing, Senz says, are helping the youngsters in their community learn special skills, enjoy the outdoors and, most importantly, discover how to live and work together by developing qualities of leadership, while respecting what others have to give.

Why does George Holmans do it? "I give all kinds of time to my kids, but I felt I had something to offer other youngsters as well." And besides, he adds, "it's a form of relaxation."

Looking after a pack of 24 boys — relaxing Scout's honor! At quitting time on the Friday before Mother's Day, the parking lot at Imperial's Montreal refinery is polka-dotted with colorful carnations. The come from not only to the women, who welcome them on Sunday but to the courage and dedication of a remarkable man.

He is Jean Raymond, a printer in the reproduction department, who has suffered from multiple sclerosis for 20 years and who devotes most of his free time to helping others who are afflicted with the same disease. Selling carnations for Mother's Day is only one of the ways the Multiple Sclerosis Society (to which he belongs) raises money for research and education. But Raymond is proud of the way sales and contributions at Imperial have climbed in three years — from $800 to $1,500. "Everybody supports me, everybody loves me," he says.

Aside from that, how much time does he devote to helping other MS victims? He chuckles. "I can't tell you. My wife is listening."

But he goes on to admit that the telephone rings "day and night." He is president of the coast-Montreal section of the society. He has been coordinating a government-funded project, employing seven people, to provide information and help to MS victims. There are money-raising projects to organize and lectures in the schools to arrange. And always calls for advice or solace from some of the more than 100 fellow sufferers in his section.

Multiple sclerosis is a progressive disease that attacks the nervous system. So far, there is no way to prevent or cure it. Often there are long periods without change. That is what is happening now to Raymond, although sometimes he has trouble with his vision or with his walking. "As long as I don't get tired," he says, "I don't have a problem."

Organizing, money raising, helping others — that doesn't make him tired. "When you do something you like, it makes you happy. If you give what you have to someone else, they give you back the happiness."

Barbara Murphy dearly loves her two teenage sons, but she always wanted a little girl. Now she has one, thanks to the Big Sisters.

At least once a week, after school and after work, the two of them get together. If little sister has her way, she will spend the evening with the Murphys where she likes to play darts or bake a cake. Barbara Murphy grew up in a small town and calls herself "a community-oriented person." So when she came to Sarnia five years ago and began work with Imperial as a data controller, she got involved with the Sarnia Little Theatre, then with Parents Without Partners, and three years ago as a big sister. The last two projects have kept her busy so that she has had to give up the theatre group.

Her current little sister is an "adorable, bubbly" seven year old who came from a broken family and had been bounced through several homes in five
years. Many other little sisters come from two-parent homes. What they all have in common is that they need a friend, someone they can trust and talk things over with. The big sister doesn’t have to have the answers. She just has to be there.

Sometimes you can see that what you do is making a difference in another life. Murphy says her little sister has “come a long way.” But sometimes you don’t know until much later, if ever. After a 12-year separation, one girl walked into her former big sister’s kitchen. “Just wanted to let you know,” she said, “that I’m doing okay.”

Barbara Murphy also counsels the 30-member teen club attached to the Sarnia chapter of Parents Without Partners. Both teen and adult groups offer much more than good times. Youngsters and single parents alike discover that they are not unique, that other people have the same problems, and that they can work together to overcome them. That sort of self-help, she declares, “saves the government a lot of money in psychiatrists’ bills.” Murphy works with youngsters because she enjoys it. “I need those smiles,” she says. “If I can brighten someone else’s day, it brightens mine.”

“But also,” she says, “I’ve always been concerned for the underdog. And I can’t sit in a neat little subdivision and close my eyes to other people’s lives.”

* * *

Some mornings, while Dr. Stanley Pocock is working in Esso Resources’ Calgary laboratories, there is an urgent telephone call. Dr. Pocock turns off his microscope and hastens to his kereta to the Glenmore Park Auxiliary Hospital. There he puts on a black gown and white surplice and, filling in for the regular chaplain, leads the Anglican patients in morning prayer.

Dr. Pocock is a palsyologist (that’s a branch of paleontology). He is also lay reader and assistant at St. Philip the Evangelist Church and assistant to the Anglican chaplain at the Glenmore hospital.

That double role means he occasionally is called to the hospital on weekdays when the chaplain is unavailable to conduct a service or visit a patient. (“Esso Resources has been very good about that,” he says.) It also means that he takes part in the Sunday morning service at St. Philip’s, spends a couple of evenings a week on reading and sermon preparation, and another evening with his wife, visiting at the hospital and leading its music club.

Glenmore Park is for patients who need continuous care and, during the seven years Dr. Pocock has been a volunteer there, he has come to know many of them as friends. That’s important in two ways. Some have no one else they feel they can talk to about their problems. And some are helped to recover if there is somebody working with them and caring about them. “Volunteers can make an enormous difference,” he says. “I’ve seen someone given up as hopeless recover sufficiently to go to a nursing home as a result of dedicated volunteers who care.”

Though Dr. Pocock has spent a good deal of his free time in study, training, and practice of his lay ministry since he left England 23 years ago, he has not considered the professional ministry. “I’m trained as a palsyologist. I can serve mankind best that way,” he says. But the volunteer work gives him the contact with people he doesn’t get in the laboratory and the opportunity to use and to develop his other talents.

“One has a duty,” he says, “particu-
lady if one is a believer, to use one's faculties the best one can. All work is dedicated service to God and mankind.

* John Thorpe didn't know how to skate when he came to Canada from Britain three years ago. He wasn't much at flower arranging, either.

But he learned fast. Now he coaches young speedskaters. And he wins prizes for his flower arrangements in Calgary's annual horticultural show. It was in order to learn how to skate that Thorpe joined the Dawson Creek speedskating club in British Columbia. The sport intrigued him. He made enough progress to compete one year, helped by his experience as a cross-country runner. Then he eased into coaching.

Now in Calgary, where he's an exploitation specialist for Eso Resources, he is president of the 70-member Calgary Speedskating Club. He also coaches a group of youngsters, among them his twin sons Stuart and Bruce. The club takes "almost as much time as I can give," he says, with administrative duties, coaching six hours a week, and competitions most weekends from mid-December to mid-April.

That season meshes nicely with the soccer season, which is fortunate because Thorpe also coaches a community team. That takes three to four sessions a week, each two or two-and-a-half hours, from mid-April to the end of June. And if his team makes the city championships, as happened in 1977, that means more soccer in September.

By September, however, his big job of preparing for the Calgary Horticultural Society's annual August show (of which he is a director) is over. He is also an enthusiastic contributor to the event. In 1977 he won first prize for his pampas. He has also won third prizes in men's flower arranging. Participation in sports gives youngsters a chance to exercise, learn a skill, and develop good sportsmanship. For a few, it's also a start toward national or international competition. Canada is among the top five in speedskating in the Olympics, and most of those who represent the country got their start in clubs like Calgary's, with amateur coaches like John Thorpe. But what does a flower show do to help a community?

"It generates people's interest in gardening and in taking better care of their own properties," he says. And it lets people see how wide a variety of species can survive in Calgary's climate. "Calgary is difficult for a gardener," he says, "but it's not impossible."

* "Blue days, all of them gone, nothing but blue skies from now on." The 63 women of the Burnaby chapter of the Sweet Adelines finished their first number at the senior citizens' home and paused routinely for applause. As it died down the elderly man in the front row leaned over to his friend, also hard of hearing and bellowed, "Wasn't that awful!"

"You couldn't shut us up that easily," says Carol Tortorelli with a smile. "We kept right on singing."

In fact, the Sweet Adelines keep right on singing everywhere they can. They sing at hospitals; they sing at retirement homes; they sing at shopping malls; they sing, as Tortorelli puts it, "at the drop of a hat." They sing for love, and they love to sing.

It was about five years ago when Tortorelli, a schedule at Imperial's loco refinery outside Vancouver, joined the Burnaby Sweet Adelines. It's one of five chapters in the Vancover area. What started her was a push from a friend who sang in the men's counterpart, the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America. "I haven't been able to pry myself loose since," she says.

Practices take at least four hours a week, more when the chapter is getting ready for a convention or for its annual musical. And there are "sing-out" or performances at least once a month.

The Sweet Adelines sing because it's fun. And as Tortorelli says, "If you have 63 happy women, you have 63 happy homes."

But there's more to it than just fun. It's "kind of nice," she says, to swing into an old Irving Berlin ballad and see the smiles of a roomful of old folk, who remember the days long ago when they first heard the song, and to hear their quavering voices join in the chorus.

What would the community be missing without the Sweet Adelines? "A lot of good music."

* You can tell the ones that got away from fisherman Dick Hilgers. They're wearing bright yellow tags.

When Hilgers goes fishing, in fact, most of them get away. But that's his way of improving the sport for the next generation of fishermen.

Hilgers is a founding member and director of the Steelhead Society of British Columbia. The steelhead, a scrawny rainbow trout, was one of the province's prime sport fish. Its numbers have been shrinking steadily, partly because of overfishing on the high seas, he says, partly because of pollution in the rivers where they spawn.

The steelhead of the Squamish River, which empties into Howe Sound near North of Vancouver, is Dick Hilgers' particular concern. And during the November-to-April season he spends most of his spare time on the river. At Imperial's loco refinery outside Vancouver, he works three 12-hour shifts a week as a technician.

He may wade chest-deep in the icy stream to catch the fish, record their sex and condition, tag them, and then turn them loose. The tags ask the next fisherman to notify fish and wildlife officials, so they can map the fish's range and migration patterns.

Or he may put on a wet suit and scuba gear and, with others, float downstream in the chilly water three or four abreast, counting the fish as they go by. The count gives information on the fish population in that watershed, and the government uses the data when establishing fishing regulations for the year.

Lately in addition to the tags, he has been inserting tiny radio transmitters into the fish abdomens. The signals show where the fish go to spawn. Those are the places where it's especially important to ensure pure water and clean gravel.

In summer he tours the spawning areas and maps the conditions, which vary depending on the snow of the previous winter. And he studies fish biology and talks to rod-and-gun clubs about the conservation program.

Despite the society's efforts, the steelhead haven't yet come back in the Squamish. It won't happen overnight. But the next decade's fishermen will find far more of the succulent prizes lurking behind the rocks, thanks to Dick Hilgers and what he calls "helping Mother Nature."

* Making music, coaching youngsters, tagging fish — for most volunteers the enjoyment they get from such work is its own reward. But, in fact, the community they serve benefits perhaps more. The cost of maintaining a high level of public service we expect would be "prohibitive" without the work of volunteers. Ontario's former deputy minister of health Stanley Martin told a hospital volunteers meeting in 1971. Ruth Pitman, volunteer coordinator for correctional services in Ontario, agrees. "We'll never be able to hire enough professionals to do the things the community can do," she says. "Not should we. These are community problems, and the community should be involved in solving them."

That so many people in a highly impersonal society are ready to give their time to help is, to the words of Ruthen Bartz, former executive director of the Canadian Council for Social Development, "a ray of hope."

Dick Hilgers (right) and his partner Mal Higgins: letting the big ones go.
Winifred Marsh’s northern encounter

A Woman and her Art

In the summer of 1933 I went to live at Eskimo Point, on the western shore of Hudson Bay, as a young bride just arrived from England and the first white woman to live north of Churchill. My husband, Rev. Donald Marsh, had already been living there for seven years. We had grown up together in England, north of London. Early in the 1900s, long before we were engaged to be married, Donald had been accepted by the Colonial and Continental Missionary Society of the Church of England, which was particularly active in Canada at that time. He had gone from England to study as a university student in Saskatchewan, where he was trained for the ministry. In 1926 he offered himself for Arctic service in the diocese of Keewatin, which in those days stretched from Kenora to the North Pole.

By the time I came to Eskimo Point seven years later, though my husband was only a year older than myself, he was already an experienced Arctic hand, speaking fluent Eskimo and acting not only as a preacher and teacher but also as doctor, dentist, builder, furniture-maker, undertaker, and friend to the Eskimos, the white trappers, and others who lived in the North. By contrast, to a completely untrained young woman who had just spent the last three years teaching art in North London, the prospect of my new life was the opening of a new world.

We arrived in Churchill by train at the beginning of July, expecting to proceed immediately to Eskimo Point. Instead, we had to wait a month before the Hudson’s Bay Company boat, the M.S. Fort Severn, appeared. (She had been caught in the ice pack.) With nowhere to stay and no resident English missionary in Churchill, we camped in a shack, perched high on the rocks, not far from the old fort. It was barely furnished — a bed, one sheet, a bedspread, one penknife, a few spoons, a saucepan, and a Quebec heater. Our diet was meager, and we lived in the daily expectation that the boat would arrive. Yet we had plenty of fun and often entertained, providing only that our guests brought their own penknives. Sometimes they enriched the meal with a gift of fresh fish. The subtle fragrance of the tundra filled our shack. For the first time I felt the delight of the North.

I met my first Eskimos at Churchill, men from Eskimo Point who had come by canoe down the edge of the ice floe to trade. These were members of the Padilmuit Tribe of the Caribou Eskimo, a people renowned for their skill in hunting who took their name from the willow or padle of the North. At the small settlement of Nooniel, I had my second encounter when I was suddenly surprised, as I stepped ashore from the canoe, to find myself being scrutinised by a row of Eskimo women who were sitting hidden in the long grasses of the shoreline — immobile, unkempt, worn, weathered, and terribly wrinkled. They looked me over, clasping frightened children, while an old grandmother brought out her breast for an eight-year-old boy to nurse. All the other women had their babies on their backs — such darling children that I knew at once that I could love them and that I would earn the mothers’ acceptance of me through the children.

I was to find that the mission to which I had come was much more than a preaching outpost and that our house would be much more than an ordinary home. In those early years the missions, of whatever denomination, provided the only medical, dental, or educational services available. Ours was one of many such missions scattered throughout the Arctic. A yearly grant of £200 was paid by the Canadian government to our diocese for our services to the local inhabitants. The department of Indian affairs supplied us with basic medicines, and the rest we bought ourselves. My husband received a stipend of £1 000 a year from the Church of England in Canada.
Winifred Petchey Marsh looks a little like the wildflowers she loves to paint—small, slender, dressed in vibrant colors, with white hair like a dandelion ready for the blowing. But that’s where the similarity ends, for Marsh, in a quiet and understated way, is a very determined lady.

At 28 years of age she left a promising career as an artist and teacher in England during the 1930s to marry an Anglican missionary stationed in the Canadian North.

At first the great silence of the land intimidated her; the lack of a common language precluded intimacy with the Eskimo women, and loneliness gnawed at the edges of her confidence like a sled dog worrying a bone.

But she soon grew to love the land and the Padlirmiut Eskimos of Hudson Bay. She delivered their babies under primitive conditions, served as a dentist, cleaned and decorated the little church, held English and Bible classes, and began to record on canvas the life of the Eskimo. She painted their ceremonies, their daily work, their children playing.

Winifred Marsh bore three children during her years with the Padlirmiut people. Her husband became bishop of the Arctic and was involved in his church’s work in the North until his death in 1973. Marsh now lives in Thornhill, Ont. She’s editing her husband’s diaries for publication. “It’s going to be an important book,” she says, “one that helps explain the Eskimo more clearly.”

The grandmother of the North, as the Padlirmiut called her, is still working for the people she loves.

Thelma Dickman

... and back

Avirlingmiut beadwork, front...
established my impression of the subject. I would at once transfer it to prepared paper, using watercolors. This was done within the comfort of home. Sometimes we jacked up the heat by increasing the number of lighted wicks of the kodkod (blubber lamp), making it comfortable for me to paint to my heart's content—puppies, snowy branches, and drying racks.

As soon as the days became warm enough in the spring, the women began to dry out the deerskins that had been shot during the winter. When the men went off sealing and walrus hunting, a party of women would gather mosses, twigs, and dried plants. On these occasions the younger children stayed at home and always knew how to make the most of life, even if it was only collecting old tin cans and playing "store" in the sand. Some went to scrounge for berries, others collected cranberry leaves, which they scorched in a frying pan and gave to their parents for tobacco. Almost every boy shaped his own boat and then proudly sailed it upon the lake behind our house. The country itself was fascinating. All the words in the world could never have expressed to me the secret of the charm of that land. The Barren Lands were formed from an old sea bed, left from the Ice Age. They are as flat as the unbroken surface of a pond, with here and there along the coastline some outcrops of rock that extended into Hudson Bay. Lovely flowers covered the land in the summer months, so that it was impossible not to walk on wild rhododendrons, saxifrage, lesser willowherb, and other Alpine varieties. Strolling on the lower ground levels, the unwary might suddenly plunge into large patches of deep moss. Often these areas led directly into grasses and sedges and finally into shallow, sandy-bottomed lakes. Around the edges of these moss patches, nested eider and other ducks, a variety of geese, ptarmigan, and smaller birds, while the red-throated loon (loona) would claim to small islands or promontories. The soft sweet smell of the tundra hung in the air, blending with the tang of the sea. The awesome silence and stillness were broken only by the gabbling of ducks or the shrill cry of tern or snipe. Glorious weather continued until the end of October, during which time rapid climatic changes took place. The snow would fall, making the land quite white. Within a few days the water would freeze to the depth of about a metre. The ice would be as clear as crystal and perfectly safe to walk on. It was fun to peer through it and see small fish swimming in the water beneath.

With change, everyone became busy—birds, beasts, and humans. Those of us who required lots of water for the winter cut several tons of ice blocks from the lakes and stacked them near our houses. The resident Padlimutu hitched up their dogs and went off on their sleds to hunt and kill caribou for winter meat. At home the children were training wees puppies to pull sleds. All day long they trailed up and down the lakes with perhaps one or two pups hitched to a miniature sled. Flights of birds passed overhead, densely packed, and with the whirl of many wings they sped away. They left in their wake a strange and solemn stillness—the land seemed suddenly desolate and devoid of life.

The Eskimo worked very hard during the winter. He was up and away at daylight to inspect his traps. In order to do all this he had to keep his sled in perfect condition. The runners of every sled were muddled by hand—not an easy job in a country where the temperature would be 40 degrees Celsius. Mud was made of decayed moss. After the mud had been hardened, it was coated onto the runners of the sled, allowed to freeze, and planed smooth. The Eskimo then would take a mouthful of fresh water, squat it onto a piece of bear skin, and run it rapidly along the runners. This produced a glassy surface that facilitated travel over the rough frozen wastes. The sleds made a thrilling sight at Christmas time when a great number of them glided into the settlement, bringing Eskimos from north, south, and west, all eager to assemble for their Christmas festival and to trade their pelts. Nature, too, usually gave her best to reproduce again the setting for the holy night. The land would be silent and still, and there was often one huge glorious star, close to the moon, that shone with particular beauty between the twilight and the dark, while the sky across the western horizon was that mysterious blue-green that fades into the pale yellow and gold of sunset. The northern lights seemed to hang in a complete circle overhead. The radio brought a real thrill of the Christmas spirit right into our home, and I cannot tell what a joy it was for us to have a radio at Christmas time. We turned night into day when we sat up to listen to the programs broadcast to the people of the North. We would have lovely Christmas services, and these would be followed on Christmas morn-

ing by a great feed for the huskies. I had never seen blizzards like the ones I came to know in the North. It would get darker and darker in the house, while the snow swirled thick in the air outside and piled higher and higher against the walls and windows. Sometimes our house would be completely buried. Then it was as black as the midnight's pit, with the storm still raging outside. In the morning Don would open the back door onto a solid wall of snow, dig his way up and out from the top, and then back two metres to the kitchen window. One day I painted a sketch of an Eskimo mother and baby in a beaded coat, standing beyond this cave entrance of snow, against a bright blue sky. I thought to myself, "I only can do it! What a subject!" The woman and child were a jewel of color and interest. I called this painting Arctic Cameo.

Perhaps of all the paintings that I did, the Drum Dance caused the greatest sensation. We had been invited to attend a drum dance, and later we reconstructed the section of the dance tent in our schoolroom. We set up lighting effects, and there, throughout the winter, members of our congregation and visitors to our settlement willingly posed so that they might be in the pictures. I had more than 40 models for portraits. It was only possible to catch when the Eskimos were visiting the post, which was about three times during the winter. The whole had to be done in artificial light, similar to the effect produced in a double carbou-skin tent. Yet with all that, I believe that it was and remains a true picture of Eskimo life.

The way of life that is recorded in my paintings has gone from the country of the Padlimut and, perhaps, before long will have vanished everywhere. The men and their land remain. I was very conscious of this 30 years later when I traveled again up that coastline of Hudson Bay by plane. The fog and ice still drift in from the sea. The wind and the tides constantly change the pattern of the ice. The wind from year to year, but the bay is still the same. It has always been a cause of amazement to me that the Inuit have bridged such an insurmountable distance from the Stone Age to the Space Age in the brief time that I have known them.

The article is adapted from Winifred Marsh's People of the Willow, published by Oxford University Press.
The Boom in the Bookstores
Surviving, thriving, sea to sea

by William French

During the siege of Leningrad by the German Army in the terrible winter of 1941-42, the old imperial capital was slowly bombarded and starved into paralysis. But among the last stores to close, as normal commerce and activity came to a halt, were the city's fine old bookstores. They remained open at great risk, not only as a symbol of defiance to the barbarian hordes at the gate, but by popular demand; the starving citizens of Leningrad were reduced to eating shoes and wallpaper, but they still cherished the intellectual enrichment provided by their bookstores.

I've often wondered if the same civilized affection for bookstores would be evident in Canadian cities in similar circumstances. It would be nice to think so, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Bookstores don't play a central role in the cultural life of most Canadians. There is no tradition of a weekly visit to the neighborhood bookshop to chat about books. According to one estimate, only eight out of every 100 Canadians regularly visit bookstores.

Yet despite the indifference of a vast segment of the population, bookstores survive and even thrive in Canada. If the number of bookstores is a reliable guide to a nation's cultural maturity, perhaps we're not yet ready to revert to eating with our fingers and grunting in monosyllables. We don't have a world-class bookstore, such as Scribner's in New York, Blackwell's in Oxford, Foyle's in London, or stores with an international literary reputation, such as Shakespeare & Co. in Paris, where Hemingway used to hang out. But we have some surprisingly good bookstores, often thriving in unexpected places, such as Cobalt, Ont. (The Highway Bookshop), Duncan, B.C. (Volume I), and even several good bookstores in Ottawa, where there are other preoccupations. (Machiavelli's The Prince is undoubtedly a steady seller there.)

And given the hazardous economics of the business, we're better served than we have a right to be. After all, the majority of book readers buy paperbacks from the racks in newsstand outlets and convenience stores. Or they buy hardcovers from book clubs or from an increasing number of direct mail outlets or borrow them from libraries or friends. For the independent bookshop owner in Canada, the problem is complicated by the aggressive expansionist policies of the three major chains, Coles, Classic Bookshops, and W.H. Smith, which gobble up the best locations in shopping centres.

Some book-buyers don't consider any store that belongs to a chain a real bookstore, catering as it does to mass-market tastes. Yet the chain store presence from sea to sea is undeniably the single most dominant factor in the retail book trade. About 240 of the 700 or so bookstores in English Canada belong to chains, and they account for 40 percent of total book sales, compared to 15 percent by chains in the United States, such as Brentano's. With such power in Canada, they are in a position to dictate to publishers and put enormous competitive pressure on the small independent bookstores. So those who see the chain stores as carbones on the carcass of culture have some cause to worry.

The dominance of the chains isn't nearly so great in the French-language bookstores of Quebec. Of the 300 or so such stores, the biggest chain, Librairie Garneau, the oldest bookshop operation in Canada, has 26 stores. A lot of the independent stores, particularly in smaller towns in both French and English Canada, sell stationery, toys, records, and other sidelines to help make ends meet. All in all, they are not doing badly; sales volume in bookstores across the country was up an average of 20 percent last year over 1976, in the neighborhood of $150 million.

What makes a good bookstore? It isn't just a matter of having comprehensive stock, including new titles not on the bestseller list; a good cross section of both important and obscure old titles; an intelligent selection of paperbacks; clerks who know the
difference between D.H. Lawrence and Margaret Laurence. Boswell and Tom Wolfe. There's an ambience about a good bookstore that goes beyond the recognition that those involved in its operation have a loving concern for books and their readers. It's a subtle and sensuous aura, not exactly like the reverential hush in a cathedral, but a tingling feeling that, in one enclosed space, is compressed much of the world's knowledge, the product of the labors of thoughtful men and women at their typewriters and inkstands through the centuries, anxious to communicate their burning insights. It's a joyful intersection of enlightenment and discreet commerce. Book-buyers have their favorite bookstores, as they have their favorite pubs, often for the same reasons—congenial atmosphere, wide assortment of stock, a relaxing and sometimes rewarding encounter with old friends, the prospect of discovery.

It's rare that anyone's favorite bookstore belongs to two of the chains, especially in a community where there are alternatives. Coles, in particular, with its supermarket approach to books and disregard of the esthetics and visual appeal that a good bookstore must possess, is scorned by the literati. Critics of the chains argue that they are interested only in the kind of rapid turnover provided by bestsellers and don't care if their clerks know little about books.

However, one of the advantages of the chains is that they can afford to open stores in marginal areas that would be too risky for an independent bookseller. Better a chain store than no bookstore at all. But to balance that claim, critics note that chains charge higher prices for all their books through a central buying office. Thus, someone who wants to buy one of the new novels, such as those in Edmonton, for example, would be interested in Regional books, which are more numerous now with the growth of regional publishing, are often bypassed, and a chain store can be a godsend to the interests of the local community.

If there is a bookstore close to world class libraries (in Canada, the Britnell Award, the Albert Britnell Bookstore in Toronto, Britnell's, in a prime location on Yonge Street at Bloor St., has become a landmark since it opened 50 years ago this year; it is the place to go to meet a number of established book buyers—mourners from nearby Rosedale, well-known politicians and their families. Among the store's customers have been Sir Wilfrid Laurier (in an earlier location), Mackenzie King, Vincent Massey, A.Y. Jackson, Marshall McLuhan, Mrs. E.P. Taylor, Arthur Hailey, Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster, and Morton Shulman. Britnell's has a thriving mystery business, too, mostly with customers who use it in Toronto but can't find a good one in their town. It's the old location.

The man who made Britnell's what it is, Roy Britnell, was a reluctant bookseller at first. His father, Albert Britnell, founded the business in 1935, which makes it one of the oldest on Yonge Street. Roy, the son of a lawyer, was meant for the law. In 1955, followed by the first bookstore for children, complete with scaled-down furniture.

For Melzak, books are more than merchandise to be moved off the shelves, though his 10,000 book store has a well-stocked library of 10,000 rare first editions of Canadiana was one of the most valuable to the collectors of the country. He gave it to the University of Missouri in 1972.

To become accredited, a bookstore must be 50 percent Canadian owned, the majority of its board members Canadian citizens, and the only books it can sell at a price fixed by the Quebec government, and must keep a certain number of books in stock. A new bookstore must have been in operation for at least six months to be considered for accreditation.

Obviously, although we may not be as well served with bookstores as in the past, there are still some good bookstores in this country. However, we must admit that in Leningrad, there are grounds for optimism. Indeed, the accent is more on retail and this trend is likely to continue. What comes out in Harrison Salisbury's The 900 Days, published in 1969, is that you ran out of stock, your local bookstore should have it.
in Closing

The other evening a man on the radio, who sounded quite young and very confident, was going on at a great rate, saying that we'll all have to get over the quaint idea that life is made better or worse by the influence of individuals — teachers, mothers, fathers or even leaders in high places. We have to come to terms with a new age of history, he kept stressing (he called it a "watershed"), in which human destiny has drifted beyond the influence of individuals and is now directed, willy-nilly, by bureaucracies, assemblies, councils, and other large, impersonal organizations.

Since this is the situation, he told us, we might as well face it and admit that it is pretty well all over for the notion that individuals wield power anymore. It's just as well anyway, he said (and this seemed to be the heart of his message), because we've given the individual too much say in life, with the result that he sees himself at the centre of the stage. The man on the radio was against all of this and called it by a number of names, all of them big and high-sounding, the most memorable of which was ultra-individuality. The program did not last long. Perhaps, therefore, the man did not have enough time to explain himself in detail. But he left me wishing that he would go home, have a hot bath, think it over, and then come back again sometime for another interview. After all, the subject he was tackling is just a little less important than the condition of Bobby Orr's knee.

There were some important ideas in what he had to say, but, because they were not considered one by one — and instead were put before us like a stew — they did not receive the attention they deserved or the explanation they required. The result of this mixture was that he confused two ideas that are distinct and ought to be kept that way — individualism and individuality. The first of these, individualism, is an attitude — some people might call it a style — in which we make ourselves and our satisfactions the goals of life. We may seek to achieve these, not just by surrounding ourselves with the usual symbols and comforts of status — stereo throughout the house, a sporty car or two, a trendy place in the country — but through some of the new movements for self-improvement, those that promise to deliver prowess and success by developing our self-

against the creation of a genuine human community.

It is dangerous, however, to conclude from this that we have come to the end of the line for the individual's place in society and that he must now be pushed aside in favor of large and powerful groups — corporations, unions, or governmental bureaucracies. Individualism, which is a convenient cover at times for hedonism, is one thing; individuality, which recognizes the unique and precious worth of every human being, is another. It is hardly helpful to have these confused and to be told that there is no longer room for individuality, that it must give up the ghost and become part of mass organization.

It won't work anyway. A few years ago, all across North America, thousands of people, some of them young, some of them entering middle age, launched out on an experiment in living together in communes. They took the view that individuals ought to submerge their own personal lives in some group personality. In many cases — as with certain religious communities of the last century — this involved a sharing of partners and children. It is now quite apparent that the experiment has not been a shining success. It has not yielded the utopia its pioneers dreamed of, and most of those who have studied it conclude that the reason is simply that people cannot so easily shed their individuality. "Are the participants prepared to grant the larger entity a life of its own, submerging themselves in its rhythms," asks Lawrence Vesey, a social historian and author of The Communal Experience. In the light of the failure rate, he believes the answer is no.

This fact is that if groups are legitimate, they exist to protect individuality against the power of larger institutions, such as the state, citizen groups, consumer organizations, neighborhood associations, and members of neighborhoods, associations, and members of neighborhoods, associations, and members of neighborhoods. Each one of us has his own set of fingerprints, his own set of features, his own start of mind and style of personality. At the very heart of life, there is an astonishing individuality.

But mostly this conviction comes, not from arguing over meaning or by examining nature, but by experiencing as many as we have had in which our lives have been touched, usually for the better, by another personality. Even in an age like this, so indifferent to the spirit, it seems natural for me to believe in such people and their abiding influence and to remain convinced that, in the long run, it is individuals who matter most.