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The Atlantic challenge
Pursuing the promise of the deep frontier

by Wynne Thomas

Shortly before dawn, on a chilly morning in mid-April, 71 men sailed out of Halifax aboard a strange craft as had ever been seen in those waters, on a mission as unusual as any to be mounted from that port in its 250-year history.

Their destination was a point in the Atlantic: 240 nautical miles east of St. John's, Nfld. It lay to the north-east of the Grand Banks and directly above a deep depression in the ocean floor known as the Flemish Pass, more than 1 900 metres below the surface of the sea. There they would initiate a search for oil under the seabed, starting the first of two wells to be drilled this year in the deep waters off Canada's east coast by Esso Resources Canada, a wholly owned subsidiary of Imperial Oil.

The vessel selected for the enterprise presented a curious sight to eyes long accustomed to ship shapes. Completed in Halifax in 1977, when it was prosaically christened the SEDCO 709, it more resembled an apartment block under construction than a sea-going craft.

Of rectangular design, the SEDCO's main features were eight immense steel columns rising from two pontoons, supporting a 36-metre-high deck, on which was mounted an array of revolving cranes and windlasses, the whole surmounted by a 50-metre drilling mast. It would have fitted reasonably snugly into a largish football field.

But what the SEDCO lacked in form it made up in function. Technically known as a semi-submersible, because of its loon-like ability to partly submerge at will (to improve stability), it was one of a select dozen vessels in the world capable of deep-sea drilling. Self-propelled, it possessed the invaluable property of being able to maintain position in waters too deep for anchoring by the use of eight special thruster jets, using them in much the same fashion as spacecraft use their thruster rockets for maneuvering.

In addition to its deepwater drilling equipment, the SEDCO carried the latest in satellite navigational aids, and its sophisticated electronics included under-water television cameras for monitoring operations on the seabed that would be well beyond the practical reach of divers. During the two years that had elapsed since its launching, the SEDCO had successfully drilled five deep-sea wells, demonstrating its rough-water capabilities by drilling in 20-metre waves off the Irish Coast.

Following a week of sea trials and adjustments, the SEDCO, making a brisk six knots, reached the vicinity of the Flemish Pass by early May and set about the delicate task of positioning itself precisely above the site of the proposed well. A few days later, its crew augmented by a score of additional specialists, the SEDCO started drilling.

Esso geologists had demanded an
accuracy of within a radius of 100 metres of their selected location. The actual position error turned out to be 29 metres, less than half the length of the vessel. "We could have got considerably closer," Phil Dingle, Esso's engineer in charge of the offshore drilling program, noted matter-of-factly, "but it simply wouldn't have been worth the time involved." (In terms of the hair-splitting accuracy required of remote-controlled systems, Dingle likens the operation to landing a man on the moon.)

And so began the slow, painstaking, and astronomically expensive task of exploring the hydrocarbon potential of Canada's deepwater frontier, an area that Imperial Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jack Armstrong has described as "probably Canada's best remaining prospect for a major oil discovery."

Whether or not a major oil field does exist under the Flemish Pass or, indeed, under any other portion of the ocean floor off the east coast is, of course, something that can only be determined by drilling an exploration well. Despite the many advances that have been made in seismology in recent years (permitting clearer analysis of earth structures) and despite much new technology that has taken some of the guesswork out of the explorer's task, a high degree of uncertainty remains. It is one thing to be able to identify sedimentary basins with a reasonable degree of confidence. It is quite another to be able to predict the presence of oil in them. Petroleum geologists and geophysicists are constantly seeking to unravel the secrets of the earth's distant past. They worry incessantly about what they call "source." Were conditions just right a hundred million years or so ago to favor the formation of hydrocarbons in a particular area? Was the likely source too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, too shallow, too deep, too anything? And if oil was formed, is it still there, trapped by some fortuitous accident of prehistory in a still-intact reservoir? Or has it long vanished — "migrated" in the geologist's term — along some subterranean escape route? Further, even if it is still there, does it exist in sufficient quantities to allow its extraction to be commercially feasible? Only the drill bit can provide definitive answers to these contentious questions.

Statistically, the odds are stacked against the explorer. Less than one exploration well in 100 finds a major oil field. Imperial's Armstrong told a Newfoundland audience last year that it was quite possible — "many people would say highly probable" — that Esso Resources will end up with two "dry holes" to show for its offshore exploration this summer. To date, more than 120 wells have been drilled, mainly in shallow water, off Canada's east coast, with largely disappointing results. Natural gas has been discovered recently in commercial quantities, according to some reports, but there have been only minor indications of oil.

Yet it is an index of Canada's crude oil plight that not only Esso Resources but a number of other companies are drilling underwater prospects off the east coast this year. In total, seven or eight separate groups of companies have been engaged in offshore drilling in recent months, in
areas ranging from Sable Island in the south to Davis Strait in the north. And if oil is discovered in the deepwater Atlantic, it will take up to 10 years to design and install the subsea production systems required to deliver that oil to the mainland.

It is reasonable to assume that the oil industry would not be going to such lengths, at depths in its search for new sources of oil and gas if there were easier prospects waiting to be explored elsewhere. But there are few such prospects left. Canada is slowly but inexorably running out of its easily accessible hydrocarbons, and it is going to need all the oil it can find and economically produce, at no matter what effort, if it is to have a hope of balancing its domestic oil supply with demand.

But what about all the new oil and natural-gas discoveries that continue to be made in western Canada and elsewhere? Aren’t they enough to take care of our future needs? Some people have assumed that they are, and it’s an understandable assumption.

In the case of natural gas, existing reserves plus new discoveries may well prove sufficient to meet our demands for this fuel at least to the end of this century, if the required transportation systems can be built to move the gas to market.

When it comes to oil, however, it is a different story. Canada’s and western Canada’s reserves have been much larger than previously thought, and now officially estimated to be as large as the US reserves. The reality is that we have not yet found the oil we expect to be in the ground. We have found many smaller deposits, some of which are in areas where there has been little or no exploration.

In the Arctic, on the other hand, we have found many deposits of large oil fields. The oil that has been found there has not yet proven sufficient to supply the demand of the future. This is due to the fact that it is located in remote areas, often far from existing infrastructure, and it is difficult and expensive to transport.

In the meantime, Canada’s proven reserves of conventional crude oil continue to decline. We need to invest in new exploration and production methods, and to develop new technologies, to keep our oil reserves productive.

To provide the necessary support for the Fleishman Pass well, Esso Resources required two of the largest-available commercial helicopters for personnel transfer (even so, the two-and-a-half-hour flight from St. John’s to the rig takes almost four hours each way), and three powerful supply boats, and a 25- man base unit, incorporating a full complement of weather forecasting equipment, and a full range of LOSS (lightning, ocean, seawater, and ship) monitoring of rig operations.

Weather, particularly fog of the Labrador or Banks varieties, which absorbs all the sunlight and becomes a constant problem in east-coast waters, and icebergs are a sufficient enough to prevent any one supply vessel to be available at all times for patrol duties and, if necessary, to tow any sinking vessels. Unscheduled trips to the Grand Banks to the southwest of the rig’s location, still serve as a reminder of those floating mountains of ice are deadly foes.

At the beginning of July, with its fleet of three oil tankers, Esso moved the SEDCO to a new location in the Davis Strait, some 150 miles off the eastern shore of Baffin Island, to take advantage of a shorter ice-free period. The ice is still far away, and even if it should start, it has not halted our Dependence on imported oil, with all the attendant benefits that can bring their investors rewards commensurate with the huge risks they assume in exploration and development. For the country as a whole there is a prospect of finding oil in sufficient quantities to reduce substantial, and even totally abolish our dependence on imported oil.
They were keen, poised, and knowledgeable, the very young people no politician wants as hecklers. A sharp group, aged 15 to 17, and all remarkably well-dressed. Not a square centimetre of blue denim in the hall. Girls wore dresses and boys donned three-piece suits. “If you dress as an adult the judge will think of you as an adult,” an ex-champion explained. “They pay more attention to your arguments. And when you put on a tie it changes your whole way of speaking.”

There were five rounds of debating, two in parliamentary style and three cross-examination contests, held in St. John, plus a day’s model-parliament sitting and an effective speaking competition in Fredericton.

The judges, all from New Brunswick, consisted of lawyers, politicians, teachers, and business leaders.

In parliamentary style, two three-man teams, one led by a prime minister and the other by a leader of the opposition, consider a measure put forth by the P.M. At the Saint John contest each proposition was to promote further foreign investment, but how this would be done was up to each government team to decide. The P.M. led off by outlining his plan, the opposition leader rejected it; the second and third government speakers elaborated upon it, while the second and third opposition members tried to demolish it. According to the rules only the government plan could be considered unless the opposition’s first speaker introduced a counterplan, in which case the opposition had to defend it. The P.M. wound up the debate by summarizing his party’s arguments and rebutting the opposition’s. Speeches were timed, usually to seven minutes, with extra minutes allowed for interruptions, and a Speaker ruled on points of order and privileges. Each debate lasted about an hour, after which the three judges criticized the performance of each speaker, awarded points toward a final appraisal in the championship contest, and declared the winning team.

The teams were chosen so that no two students from the same province appeared on the same team. This never worked out before and were allowed 90 minutes to meet before the debate and a line-up of “speakers” on the debate. This plan might fall apart under attack by the other side, so each debate had to design new responses as the debate progressed.

Cross-examination debates followed courtroom procedure. A speaker made an argument and was then questioned on it. Again the line of questioning could be prepared in advance, but had to be changed in a hurry if the line or argument was not what the questioner had anticipated.

Effective speaking was a straight public-speaking contest, with no question and answer, it was a test of style, articulation, and delivery, with some acting skill thrown in.

In the model-parliament session, held in Fredericton and greeted by the Lieutenant-Governor Hedared J. Rechichaud, all 88 students were given a chance to speak briefly and make one interjection apiece. Before proceedings began they divided themselves into caucuses of the governing and opposing parties. The theme was the same: foreign investment.

What did a bunch of high-school students know about a complicated topic that has bedevilled Canada since Confederation? Probably very little when the subject was announced, but they had six weeks to study it. When they arrived in St. John they knew that we would have had little secondary industry and far less foreign development without outside money; yet the person who pays the piper calls the tune. There is no such thing as a free lunch. And many Canadians say the country has sold out to foreigners, adding sadly that it happened because too many Canadians refused to invest in Canada, preferring to put their money into multinational stocks or handing it over in old deeds.

The students had the basic statistics on foreign ownership, and some had gone beyond the library shelves to question economists, politicians, and business leaders in their areas for new ideas on the depth and spirit of foreign investment. Some, however, argued both sides: whether increased foreign investment was a good or a bad thing.

During the opening session at the university in St. John, they heard a resource panel of experts give their views. Richard Currie, senior vice-president of George Weston Ltd., the food empire; New Brunswick’s commerce and development minister, Gerald Merrithew; James A. Coombe, vice-president of the New Brunswick Telephone Company Ltd. — all in favor of more outside investment in one form or another — and Donald MacCharles, an assistant professor of economics at the University, who was against it.

They questioned the panel from the floor, then interviewed members of Parliament on the Canada-Hawaii trade agreement, the American government’s intention to buy Alaska, and the changing face of the world in which we live. They asked for their perspectives on the future of our country. The debate continued for hours.

It was an experience in democracy; in debating there is no place to hide.
In round two she was on the government side. "In our plan there is no way that Americans or America
can come in... Investment will go to underdeveloped provinces... We are for the advancement of Canada and
not trying to destroy it or bring it to
tack and ruin as the opposition seems to think.
"Whelley did well against the
eren veterans. Her only complaint was that some of them used heavy sarcasm,
which she found rude. There were other Whelleys from small communi-
ties. Elizabeth White 17, from Whitehorse, Yukon, baffled with
delight after making her first speech outside her hometown school. ‘I was
supporting the resolution, which was
tough to do since I don’t agree with it at
all. We lost, but the judges liked my speech.’ Shawn Murphy, from Inuvik,
N.W.T, made the longest journey— ‘You have to go a long way to get
anywhere from where I live and hold his own, although he is only 14.
There were old hands who had been
debating for four years, had practiced
public speaking and amateur
dramatics, and developed impressive
expressions. ‘The vote in the	house was 185 to 84 in favor of
separation, and remember the
evoters were nearly all WAPs. It prompted
newspaper editorials across the
country. The chief judge, T.H.B. Symons,
law professor at Lakehead University, com-
pared it to the famous Oxford Union
debate of 1968: ‘That debate, in which
the students voted for the motion:
‘Members of this House will not
talk for King and country.’ is said to have
convinced Hitler that Britain was soft.
The drama at Port Hope sparked
interest in student debate. Legislation was
beaten off a year ago to cross Canada,
sitting up provincial programs with the help
of government grants and $25,000
from Ford of Canada. By 1972 all the
provinces and territories were
involved, and the Canadian Student
Debating Federation was formed.
Debating, an extracurricular activi-
ty in most participating schools, has
to compete with many other activities,
including public speaking. Although
most top debaters are also public
speakers, there is a tug-of-war for the
funds needed to organize contests and
transport competitions. Service clubs
have long provided money, forums,
and prizes for young public speakers.
Debating starred late in the fund-
raising contest. The president of the
debating federation, Robert McLaughlin, and his high school
delegation from St. Catharines, Ont., notes that his
school, Governor Simcoe, has won
every regional public-speaking contest
in the last five years, but upholds the
superiority of debating as a skill:
‘A debater has to gather a lot of
information and then present it in a
seven-minute speech, then react to
what someone else has said about it.
Debating helps a person to think and make judgments.
Debating champions will never
achieve the hero status of sports
champions, he says, but they can build their
task is to be achieved. Says McLaughlin, ‘I get a
student who’s pretty smart, but too
short for basketball and too light for football and say, they, you can repres-
ent our school.’ Then I expose him to the
leaders of the community: educational
and political and business people. I say
let’s explore debating as a way of how to develop the skills that will
make you the effective person you can be.

Scott Cooper, 1976 champion high-
school debater, is now at the Universi-
ty of Western Ontario, and he is
probably a good example of the result
of the debating program, although he
is not a Liberal. He was involved in the
fund-raising contest. ‘I am vocal and to the point. Positive. I am
19, from St. Catharines, and I am a
to Saint John as national coordinator of
debating students.
I was always a talker, and it was
just a matter of time until I found
something to which I could apply my
talents. For me, it was debating. It’s an
art where by forcing a topic into a
framework, a pro and con side, you
clarify a lot of issues. As a debater I
never found any difficulty in getting
things across — always see the local
M.P. I went to Toronto and walked into
different research libraries and
asked the students, please help me.” And they did.
I wrote letters to various companies on
that subject of multinational corporate
operations. When one didn’t reply I
showed up on its doorstep. Nobody
knew who I was. Then I approached
the president of Xerox of Canada and he
sent me a four-page letter, with all the
details. Many young people and
government people go through this process; they’re
going beyond the classroom, beyond the school and into their own protective environment.”

He recalls his first debating expedi-
tion outside of Ontario. He was 16,
had never been on an airplane. ‘When
I arrived in Winnipeg with two friends, we
were drawn into a debate and
saw three young people there. I knew
they were debaters, you can tell
someone has been in the line. They had
a very confident look. Talk to one for
awhile and you can bet he knows a
thing about my country. My parents
don’t mean he read War and Peace
for excitement on Saturday nights —
that’s not debating. It’s just a whole
and other extracurricular events — but
he has more confidence in himself than
the average student.

Cooper, a teacher’s son, is now
studying economics and business admin-
istration and thinking of a
Career in a large corporation. Or he
eventually may go into law and politics,
but he knows which way he’s
heading — up — and some of this
come from his experience as a high school debater. For him
the best in the land.

Canada needs leaders — we heard all about during the federal election
campaign — and the debating
program promises to provide some of
the well-informed, articulate, thinking young people. No other training is so
effective in developing them, accord-
ing to Willis M. Lee, a Toronto
businessman, who is treasurer and
director and fund-raiser for the
federation. ‘They’re so stimulated mentally
by debating that it affords their whole
thinking process. They’re warm, dedi-
cated, not just glib.”

Certainly they’re different. After
meeting them you could probably spot
five miles away. They’re not all born
talkers like Cooper, but they have
been given important things to talk about.

Elizabeth White: supporting some
resolutions with which she disagrees

The Review, Number 1, 1979
Any old piano

Gather round for the good old songs of yesteryear

by Teddi Brown / Illustrations by Doug Martin

When we were growing up during the 1940s, we lived in the little Quebec village of Old Chelsea, not far from Ottawa, and every parent still had its cherished old upright piano, and there was always time to enjoy it. Fifteen kilometres from Ottawa was filled with the frantic hustle of World War II, but in Chelsea, off in the Gatineau Hills, these were slow and gentle years.

We still did a lot of things people used to do back in the twenties. There was time for neighborly visits, corn roasts, church picnics, skating rinks, and family parties. And they all wound up around the piano.

Children in the village looked forward to their big days each year: Christmas, Halloween, and Sister Leonia's annual piano recital for her pupils. Every parent in Old Chelsea came to the recital, peering into the tiny kids' heads in the two-room schoolhouse. And every child in Old Chelsea performed in the recital, because they all took piano lessons.

The sounds of piano scales drifted out from house after house as we climbed the hill for Wednesday evening choir practice or walked up the side road to pick up the mail after supper.

The piano in our parlor was seldom quiet. My mother played, my father played, and all the children, four of us, took turns playing. Our piano was a massive dark walnut upright, and it spread across one wall like a grand old lady who had obviously known better days but was still, just as obviously, quality. My mother would have preferred a new, smaller piano but we couldn't afford it, and besides, my father loved every feature of this grand piano.

Right after the Charlie McCarthy program on Sunday evening, he'd switch off the radio, slip into the piano stool, and tinkle away at a few sentimental oldies... Me and My Shadow, Stardust, Little White Lies...

Then it was my mother's turn. She would chord while the rest of us sang, Poor Leaf Clover and Bye Bye Blackbird; we sang them all. Usually a neighbor or two would drop by and join the group around the upright.

Memories of family, friends, and home seem to be part of just about everybody's good feelings toward the piano. Maybe that's why we have the all-time, absolutely most popular and beloved of musical instruments. It was true in grandmother's day and mother's day, and it's still true now.

The piano endures. It's the favorite instrument of nearly every composer since Beethoven. It's still the number one choice of pianists who want their children to learn about the joy of music. There are more amateur piano players around than all the violinists, flutists, and guitarists combined, and most of them play the same way - a little.

The piano also endures because it's built to last. A good piano is one of the few modern products that will stand up through your entire life. It has the look of integrity and craftsmanship, and it comes by it the hard way - by hours and hours of hitting, regulating, smoothing, adjusting, and delicate balancing - all by hand - and then going into the assembling of a piano. It has a 12,000 parts, each of which has to fit properly. It takes about 12 months for Shirley & Sons to build one of their famous grand pianos. The wood frame (that goes into a Steinway) (silk spruce and maple) must be seasoned in lumberyards for a year before the craftsmen begin to work with it. In the end, all the secrets of pianoforte care are paid off. A large-copper grill, with its gleaming black and white keyboard and great curves of polished black wood, is one of the best looking things that man makes today.

Early pianos were fragile by modern standards - though not all that fragile. Bartolomeo Cristofori built the world's first piano in Florence, in 1709, and some of his pianos still exist. One is on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and, aside from a short keyboard (48 keys instead of today's 88) and a few abrupt corners instead of pleasing curves, Cristofori's piano doesn't look much different from a small modern grand.

But there is a big difference. Harpsichords broke completely in the early pianos and so did the strings. Beethoven was notorious for the string-snapping that accompanied his piano performances, partly the result of the heavy pounding he gave the keyboard as his deafness advanced. Craftsmen labored and experimented continually with the piano, trying to make it stronger. They added a great many improvements, but the strings were right on snapping until the 19th century, when powerful steel wire was developed to replace the old strings made of brass and iron.

The new stronger strings required a stronger frame to support them, and so a case was built to hold the piano's wooden frame, giving it that heavy, solid sturdiness. Without the iron plate, grandmothers' large uprights would surely have buckled under the pressure of more than 220 strings delivering a combined tension of anything from 18 to 20 tonnes.

A perpetual instrument such as the piano had to have its bizarre experiments. In the 1890s one of them invented a six-tiered keyboard. Six tiers! Most pianists have trouble enough with one. Fortunately piano builders are a traditional lot and slow to change. The only major change they have made in the keyboard is the last 25 years has been to switch from ivory to plastic keys. Plastic keys are reputed to be tougher, better, and a lot easier on the elephant population.

In Canada the piano is as popular as ever. William Furlong, the manager of the Mason & Risch piano factory in Toronto, figures we go out and buy about 20 new pianos a year. Then, there are the tough old uprights, thousands of them, some more than 100 years old. They survive in church basements, schools, YMCA, Legion halls, and recreation rooms everywhere. In fact, a
lot of us have two-piano homes now; the upright is down in the basement and the new, small piano (or maybe a baby grand) is upstairs. There's something especially comforting about a home with pianos. Just seeing it there, filled with new practice books and an ancient copy of Nola, gives you the contented feeling that good things in life go on, no matter what. The sound of a child poking through The Cat and the Fiddle is as satisfying to the adult ear as a roast in the oven.

The piano has always been one of the easiest ways to teach music to children, because all the notes are right there in front of them on the board and there's no need to search about for the notes as you do, say, on a trombone or a violin. Last year 5800 young Canadians tried the examinations of the Royal Conservatory of Music, which institutes the standards for music teaching in Canada, and 80 per cent of the students were pianists.

Schools emphasize music now and give credit for piano grades. This has helped to keep more metronomes than ever ticking every day atop the pianos of music teachers, from the time the child gets out until well on into the evening. Little fingers press the keys while juggling her supper hour for more than 50 years, and she has probably taught her own children to play. She put up her teaching certificate in 1926 and it's still there, right above her desk in the piano in her small bungalow. Lillian Garth, Toronto Junction College of Music and Speech Educator and owner of the sticky fingers, bubble gum, muddy shoes, and devotion to music.

Garth says anyone can learn to play the piano. "At least like this," she says, and she plunks out a few bars of The Polka. "It's the same as all the right notes but flat and lifelike. "Not like this," she says, and she plays it again. Now, she is a pianist who really knows how to play the instrument. William Furlong, the Mason and Rachis manager in Toronto, takes out an instruction model of the piano and sets it on his desk, and tries to explain how it works. Everybody in the house can seem to have the piano in their models, and they all think that much like the sort of antique wooden and wire back that an 18th-century maid might put together to amuse his children.

"I notice the piano key is much longer than the part that is usually visible," Furlong begins. "It's about 40 inches, three octaves if you press down on the key and it raises the key down and that raises the string and makes it jangle against the hammer. At the same time, the back-

check here is swinging in an arc toward the back-stop ... Have I lost you?" he asked. "Lost me! I was still back in the early 60s." Then, with a mischievous glance, he added, "next time you're in the orchestra pit spend thousands shipping his Chickering grand about when he went on tour. Liberace keeps three grand pianos on the move when he's performing. While he uses one, the other two are traveling to his next two concert dates. Fortunately he's the world's highest-paid pianist.

The thousands of pianists in the pop music field have also learned to choose wisely. Count Basie, for instance, the grand old man of swing, has played on numerous occasions in the plush dance halls during almost 50 years as a band leader.

"Ragtime" Bob Darch is 58 years old and still playing his kind of music throughout North America. He says, "When you get to be 58 years old you take what you get." Darch, who was born in Detroit, took it for years but not any more. His father had managed to collect eight old Cornish uprights, and he has them stashed at friends' houses and hotels where they occasionally attract. It takes only a phone call to get the nearest one tuned up and shipped to his next gig. He says, "My pianos are Jews," he says lovingly. "The Cornish Company in Washington had been trying to get them for years, but there aren't many around now." They have five pedal: one for loud, one for soft, and one for mellow effect. He prefers the sanjo sound, and one for wavy tremolo music, a favorite with silent movies. In New England, the small farmers were driving their wayward daughters out into blinding snows.

If ever a style of music seems to be exactly right for the piano, it's got to be ragtime. Beginning with the first years of rag, 1897 to 1917, are the same years that pianos and piano players soared into the public conscience. Ragtime's bouncy syncopated rhythm inspired all the dance rages of the era: the egg, the bull, the tango, the fox trot, the Eagle Rock, the Castle Walk. It also inspired the era of jazz before beginning the age of bebop. The rag "Ragtime never died," Darch insists. "It just changed underground." Thanks to renewed interest in player pianos and the revival of Scott Joplin's music for the movie The Sting, ragtime is back and going strong on a Furlong has been its staying power is easily explained: "It's a very tough music to play."

Pop music fans outnumber classical fans about 20 to 1, so it's safe to bet that Cornish pianos are not all as popular as they might be. "You and I will never play Cornish pianos again, people, they are not thinking about Mozart or Chopin. More likely they're remembering the Maple Leaf Rag or a Duke Ellington song or some hip white covers with black print. Gone are the wistful ladies and moons and palm trees that once romantically all their covers.

You can still find excellent old uprights everywhere, but that too takes a little time and digging. You have to spend quite a few hours poking around the used piano shops. Alex Brickus has one of these small shops in Toronto, servicing and selling pianos, and he loves to get his hands on a good one. On this particular afternoon, he actually rubbing them in glee over an old Hemenz that he has managed to acquire.

"I feel good about working on it," Brickus says, giving it a pat. "Pianos like this are in big demand. I can't get enough of them."

The Heintzman is golden oak, not dark walnut like the piano we used to have in Old Chelsea, but it has all the classic equipment of our old upright: yellow keys, sweeping curves, plenty of carving, great, solid legs.

"Isn't it a beauty?" Brickus asks, as we settle in for the evening. A customer comes into the shop to ask about having her piano tuned and the "It's a beauty. We've all customer." she says. She smiles and stands there for a minute, remembering...
It's dead, Miss Hamtorff! It's dead — W.B. MacInnes, retiring commissioner of the Yukon, in a warning to a schoolteacher bound for Dawson City in 1907.

The ghosts of the Klondike are chuckling again. For more than 70 years, since the world first decided that Dawson City in the Yukon was dead, the ghosts of the Klondike have been grinning at the bogus judgments of humankind. These days, however, are times for them to laugh out loud. For Dawson City, the oldest living ghost town in the country, has just survived its latest demise and is booming along like a Yukon River breakup.

**HISTORIC DAWSON CITY WRECKED**

Whitehorse - The old gold rush town of Dawson City, approximately 500 miles northwest of here, lies battered and broken after floodwaters jumped the dikes along the edge of the Yukon River early Thursday. — Vancouver Express, May 4, 1979. It was another premature obituary.

Dawson this spring was soggy and battered, but not wrecked. Under the dusky half-light of the midnight sun, Dawsonites sandbagged while the Klondike ghosts watched, amused. Sox Troberg, himself a resident of the Dawson old folks' home, figures his father was among the watching spirits. Sox, born just outside town in 1905, is the oldest child of the gold rush still living in Dawson, now a town of about 800 people and thousands of legends. "My dad came in '97," says Sox. "He was 17. He'd been second mate on a sailing vessel out of Finland. Made four trips across the ocean, then jumped ship in New York. He was very determined to get here."

By 1898 North America had gold fever and no newspaper in the world felt it necessary to inform its readers that Dawson City was approximately 800 kilometres northwest of Whitehorse. The continent was in the middle of its worst depression ever, and people were scratching out desperate lives and livings in tenements, sweatshops, and breadlines. Banks foreclosed and people starved to death. The only break in the gloom of the 1890s was in men's dreams, and these dreams were fed daily by sensational newspapers that spun tales of fast bucks and golden trails. In the Hungriest years the glitteriest trail of all was ballyhooed to be the tortuous road to Dawson City.
Says Sox: "My old man came through the Chilkoot Pass, but the mountains stopped him and wouldn’t let him in unless he had about 2 000 pounds of grub and supplies or $500. So the old man made about four trips a day, carryin’ 80 pounds up the Chilkoot Pass, packin’ and packin’ for other folk who had their 3 000 pounds of grub but couldn’t carry it up the mountain. You see, for him it wasn’t tough at all, but it was hard for people like doctors and lawyers that had gold fever. They weren’t used to packin’ and walkin’ and so they paid my old man, and he made his $500 and came here to Dawson."

Before 1897 Dawson City was just a few tents and miners’ shacka on a mud flat at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers. But that summer a ship from Dawson landed at Seattle, disgorging some Klondike miners and a tonne of gold. The newspapers went berserk. The rush was on.

Dawson City, away up there near the Arctic Circle and the Alaska border, farther from Toronto than Panama, Trinidad, and Venezuela, became Canada’s best-known city. By 1898 it was the target of 100,000 sourdoughs and gamblers, bankers and dance-hall girls, dudes and hustlers. About 30,000 of them made it to Dawson, and in a few months they’d built the sassiest, classiest, flashiest frontier city ever seen. About 1,600 kilometres out in nowhere, like a mirage on the permafrost, this honky-tonk mess of bars, saloons, dance halls, and hotels rocked and roistered through the endlessly sunlit northern summer nights.

There were also five churches and an opera house.

In lyrical poetic justice to the character of a gold stamper, the ornate Front Street buildings were every one of them false-fronted. They sported decorative, lavish movie-set front walls that hid the plain, lowly log buildings behind. Dawson was a boom town, a temporary town, and nobody wanted to put money into anything that couldn’t be carried away when the gold ran out.

But Dawson fooled them. It didn’t die when good sense and the commissioner of the Yukon said it should have. In 1899, after only one year as a city, the Nome, Alaska, gold strike called away most of Dawson’s dreamers. But not all. Some gold remained in the Klondike, and a few thousand people stayed. Canada’s remote northern frontier was maintained, and Dawson City lived these 80 years.

Dawson today banks as much on its memories as on its dust and dreams. So haunting are the spirits of ’98 that the federal government is putting $20 million into restoration of the gold-rush buildings and artifacts. Dawson’s sidewalks are still wooden, the roads still mud, the prices still booming, and the flood damage so easily fixed that the ghosts never paused in their murmurs.

Both gold mining and tourism, Dawson City’s two main industries, rose last year. Mining recorder L.A. Bail estimates that about a million-and-a-half grams of gold were mined in the Klondike in the year ending March 31. That makes it a $15-million industry, and miners in Dawson’s bars, sitting around a pint or two late at night, say that some one-man claim holders are earning as much as $200,000 a year. It’s hard to know whether these are tall tales.

Tourism — up here in the middle of nowhere? Last year’s tourists totaled a record-breaking 65,000. The reason? According to Allan Nordling of the Klondike Visitors Association, the reasons are gold and this decade’s heightened awareness of it.

"I don’t care who you are," says Nordling. "Everybody I’ve ever talked to is interested in gold."

But Nordling hasn’t talked to Queen Elizabeth. Sox Troberg has. Sox see you, is so expert at all facets of mining and so clearly a virtuoso with the gold pan that he was chosen in 1967 to represent the entire Yukon at centennial festivities during the Calgary Stampede. Naturally, like the false front on a Dawson opera house, the man from the centennial committee made Sox grow a beard so he would look like a Klondike prospector (which, of course, he had been at that point for most his 62 years). It is a beard that he still has today.

"Well, you see, for 10 days during the Stampede they paid me $50 a day to have a beard and show people how to pan gold and all. So I panned and peddled a lot of bull there. Holy Moses, but I peddled the bull. And then I met the Queen and the Prince."

"I met the Prince first and I showed him how to pan, and he sure looked interested. We talked a bit and he said, ‘I’d like you to meet my wife.’"

"The Queen of England?’ I said. ‘What do I call her?’"

"Your Majesty,” he told me, and then he called her over.

"But she wasn’t interested in pannin’, and I didn’t get to call her ‘Your Majesty.’ She just saw me showin’ some dirt from one pan to another and she asked me if I was wastin’ my time. That’s all she said and then she went somewhere else."
Frank Satterthwaite finished ordering his lunch — green salad, small steak, and a Heineken — at Fentons Garden Restaurant in mid-town Toronto, and then, his face edged over with a slightly quizzical, faintly amused expression, he let fly with a typically out-front opinion.

"All the years I've been coming up here to play in squash tournaments," he said, "I never thought Toronto — I mean Toronto — would turn out to be the real headquarters of the game. But the way things are going during this incredible week, as far as both players and fans are concerned, squash in this city is growing into something almost as big as ... well, hockey!"

When it comes to squash, Satterthwaite knows what he's talking about. A New Yorker, he's been ranked among the best half-dozen North American players for the last 10 years, and he's also the author of an engaging new book called Three Wall Nick & Other Angles: A Squash Autobiography. And the "incredible week" he was referring to, a week in mid-March of this year, saw an amazing sequence of squash events that reflected Toronto's top status in the game. In England that week, Heather McKay, coprofessional at the Toronto Squash Club, was busy beating all the Lady squash players to win the Women's World Open. Back home, meanwhile, 70 of North America's leading male professionals were gathering in Toronto to thrash their way through the first World Pro 70 Plus Championship. The eventual winner? Sharif Khan, an 11-year resident of Toronto. And the crowds for the tournament? The largest ever to watch squash in Canada, a fact that speaks for the game's enormous rush to popularity during the past decade.

In 1970 there were a mere 30 squash courts in Toronto; by 1979 the figure had leaped to more than 400 courts, kept in constant use by some 40,000 players, about one-quarter of them women. Across the country the total number of squash devotees, men and women who play at least a couple of times a week, reaches 135,000, with Vancouver, Montreal, and Calgary pushing hard on the heels of Toronto, the undisputed front-runner in squash enthusiasm.

"Given everything that's going on," Satterthwaite summed up over lunch, "it's as if Herbert Warren Wind's prediction has come true in record time."

Herbert Warren Wind, for his part, is The New Yorker's long-time and well-respected sports authority, and in the magazine's April 10, 1978, issue, in the course of a lengthy and loving profile of Heather McKay, Wind had laid down this prediction: "If I were asked what city might eventually emerge as the squash capital of the world, I believe I would cast my vote for Toronto."

All of which takes the game several thousand kilometres and many light years from its fairly ordinary beginning back in the British Isles. Squash, now the sport of choice for thousands of Canadians, was launched as a sport of necessity for a few dozen boys at Harrow School. This was in the 1870s when the students were casting about for a less expensive alternative to the already established game of croquet, for an activity that called for a more compact space and less sophisticated equipment. They came up with squash, a game as it is still basically played today, which required an enclosed court, 6.4 metres wide by 9.7 metres long by 5.4 metres high. It permitted players to bang a small rubber ball, either on the fly or after one bounce on the floor, off all four walls, as long as it reached the front wall before it hit the floor again. The squash was slightly longer than a badminton racquet, with a rather smaller head. Points were awarded only to the server, and victory went to the first player to reach nine points. The rules were comparatively simple, but squash demanded lots of finesse and fitness, and the boys of Harrow rejoiced in it. So, once word of the game began to spread, did many other Britons. (The name, by the way, is said to have derived from the sound the ball gave off when it hit the walls of the first Harrow court — squash!)"squash" was at first used as a verb, and then as an adjective, to describe the game. It was popular among military officers, and it was the British army that helped spread squash in the early years of the century to various outposts, both likely and unlikely, around the world. Wherever the army dug in for a spell, they built a few courts. Thus, India and Australia, Egypt and South Africa, New Zealand and Zimbabwe Rhodesia continue to this day to produce squash players in both quantity and quality, while other sports-minded countries like Russia, and China, spared or deprived of the British army presence, remain largely ignorant of the game.

One spot crucial to squash's future, where the British established a court 60 years ago, was the village of Peshawar, not far from the Khyber Pass, in what was then India and is now Pakistan. The court was part of the pesh Officers' Club at Peshawar, and every day, while the Englishmen were resting from the noonday sun, a young boy used to take to the court and, all by himself, investigate the squash ball's tricks and spins and quirks. The lad was named Hashim Khan, and as he blossomed into manhood, he matured into the most remarkable master in the game's entire history. Khan's career stretched over such a long period of triumph that, as late as 1966, Herbert Warren Wind was moved to write, "The more I think about it, the more firmly I am convinced that the greatest athlete for his age the world has ever known may well be Hashim Khan."

But it wasn't just Khan's list of championships — including an unprecedented seven British Opens, the last at age 42, also unprecedented — that brought glory to squash. It was also his role as a busy propagator for squash who blessed the game with enduring benefits. He traveled about the world, spreading the good word for squash, and his permanent move to North America in 1960, at age 47, to take up a post as teaching pro at the Detroit Athletic Club helped pitch the game to a new and grander level on this continent.

Squash had initially arrived in North America in the early 1900s. Montreal, specifically the Montreal Racquets Club, got it first, then passed it on, via St. Paul's School of Concord, New Hampshire, to the United States. The Americans immediately set about tinkering at the English game with an eye to speeding things up. They made the court smaller — 76 centimetres narrower and 60 centimetres less in height — the ball harder and therefore more volatile, and they altered the scoring rules (fifteen points constituted a game and points could be scored by both server and receiver). Canada adopted the American modifications and, in no time at all, the world had two versions of squash: the International and the North American. The International game, with its soft ball, allowed for more rallies and plenty of scrampering around the court, while the North American game, with its hard ball and smaller court, was much more slam-bang and was marked by short and lethal exchanges.

"The two games are so different," says Sharif Khan, Hashim's number one son and the leading North American pro, "that switching from one to the other is like going from field hockey to river hockey."

Moreover, the sheer challenge of coping with the speed and intricacies of the North American game had much to do with keeping it a minority sport in the pre-1970s. "The American hard ball is simply too difficult to play with for the ordinary beginner," says Sharif Khan. "Women can't swing at it and hit it well. It's like a rock, and unless you play a lot, it's difficult to handle the game."

By the early 1970s, however, squash people in Canada and the United States were up to speed.
States began to deal with the hard-ball problems. Each country found a different solution. The American response was to modify their ball, introducing the 70 Plus which, while not as soft as the International ball, bounced at a much less hectic pace than the American ball. In Canada, the answer was to discard the American ball altogether and to play with an International ball — commonly referred to as the "yellow-dot ball" — on American courts (all the hundreds of courts in Canada, only a handful are of International dimensions). This change led to a bastardized form of squash — one game's ball on another game's court — but nowadays an ever-growing majority of Canadian players use the yellow-dot ball, and it's been this adjustment that has contributed dramatically to the rapid spread of the game during the past decade.

The other factor that set North American squash in general, and Canadian squash in particular, on its new wave of popularity has been the immigration of foreign professionals who serve as both teachers and inspirations to all squash beginners. Hashim Khan and Sharif Khan, for example, played for the Denver Athletic Club, then the trek to North American courts, and he brought with him a dynasty of squash-playing Khans: six sons, a brother, a couple of cousins, and countless nephews. Indeed, in the 26 years since Hashim first won the North American Open in 1954, a Khan has taken the title 21 times, the last 10 by Sharif. And there appears to be no end in sight to the Khan domination. "My family," says Sharif, "has enough little ones in cold storage to keep the tradition alive for another 30 years.

Sharif, the Muhammad Ali of the courts, a mugging, wiley, supremely colorful, almost unbeatable performer, has been the single most significant figure in building the North American pro circuit into a gate attraction. There are now about 15 major pro tournaments a year worth close to $200 000 in prize money. And those figures are bound to increase. Jim Bell, the executive director of the Canadian Squash Racquets Association in Ottawa, reports that in 1980 such Canadian corporations as Tilden, McGuinness Distillers, Eaton's, and Sun Life will pour about $200 000 into squash's cause in this country, staging tournaments, advertising squash developments, and generally hustling the game.

"These big companies are attracted to squash," Bell says, "because they want to reach people in higher financial brackets, and that's who you find in squash. Canadians who earn well above the median income." 

"All the signs are there for squash," says Sharif Khan, co-owner of two squash clubs in the Toronto area: Victoria Village and the Sheppard Club. "Right now the game is in the same position that tennis was 10 years ago — just at the beginning of the really colossal boom." But what is it in particular that is attracting Canadians to this game at this time? Heather McKay thinks she has the answer. McKay is another of the squash immigrants. She and her husband, Brian, a pair of Australians, have been coprofessionals at the Toronto Squash Club since June 1975, and McKay carries with her credentials as the game's greatest woman player, victorious since 1982 in every single one of the hundreds of tournaments she has entered around the world.

"The thing about squash," McKay says, "is that it suits today's atmosphere of hurry-up-and-get-it. It's a quick game, only 40 minutes for a match. That's better than golf or tennis, because it means a businessman can easily squeeze in a game at noon. Or a housewife can get to the courts while the kids are in school. And both of them, husband or wife, go back to their regular duties feeling nicely relaxed from a good, swift workout." McKay is exactly correct in her assessment of squash's therapeutic value. The Fitness Institute of Toronto carried out a study of various competitive games not long ago and rated squash at the top as a form of tension release. "On the squash court," says Steve Moyer, a talented Canadian pro, "all that's on your mind for 40 minutes is sucking that little black ball. The game doesn't allow any time for your concentration to wander to any troubles outside the court, and that makes it a fantastic release valve." What's more, the nonstop action means that a player in an average game, depending on his or her size, will expend up to 650 calories as compared to 396 for a tennis match or 500 for a three-kilometre jog.

Thus, squash offers such benefits as a trimmer figure and a less angri

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The Toronto Squash Club, McKay's bailiwick, is typical; in operation since 1973, it boasts 16 American-sized courts, one of the International variety, a gallery that seats more than 500 spectators for tournament matches, and at a yearly rate of just under $500 per member, it accommodates about 1 000 male and female squash devo
tees.

"That's the big difference in the Canadian game, those commercial centres," Frank Sattlerwaltz said, polishing off the last of his steak and Heineken. "When I first started coming up here, squash was a real dumbbly thing. I'd go for a match to some exclusive club and there'd be a lot of polite hand-clapping for my good shots. But that's all changed. Now any guy with a credit card can join a commercial place like the Toronto Squash Club. Its members play and get into the swing of things, and they come out to the big squash tournaments. And they make a big difference in the style of the game. I mean, these are youngish, gung-ho men and women with enough bucks to live well, and when they're in the galleries for tourna

ments, they can sense the change. They don't go in for the old polite hand-clapping. They really root and cheer. They have their heroes. It's just like hockey. It's great. It's the healthiest thing I can imagine for my game. For squash."
In the volunteer movement there are no instant answers. But Imperial is helping to take the guesswork out of making decisions.

Like most organizations that are directed in part by volunteers, the Y has a budget that requires participation from a wide range of committees. That takes time, especially when (as was the case this year) the budget was under the pressures of soaring costs.

What do you do when you run up against problems like these, problems for which solutions are both complex and elusive? In the case of Rohn and Mills you turn to your Kepner-Tregoe training.

Kepner-Tregoe is the name of a program that teaches the ins and outs of solving problems and making decisions, and Rohn explains how, in this particular instance, K-T was able to help. "The course," he says, "enabled our organization to approach the problem in a disciplined and systematic way. We knew Dave Crombie, the new minister of health, as a former mayor of Toronto, and we had certain impressions of his views, also based on what he had said during the campaign.

"So we could have started on a certain premise and proceeded down the path assuming a lot of things. But the decision-making training put up a flag and said, okay, that's the impression we have of David Crombie. But we ought also to take a look at the platform of his party in order to get some clues as to how the Progressive Conservatives feel about the issues the Liberals put on the table.

"In other words," Rohn says, "I had a look at some of the things I might have overlooked if I hadn't taken the K-T course."

Mills outlines the YWCA's situation: "As a voluntary agency we have a number of levels of responsibility and involvement. We have some fairly heavy financial decisions requiring consideration by a large group of people in a relatively short time period. So what we were concerned with was developing a process that would allow financial decisions to be made with recommendations from all the people."

Again the solution lay in the ideas of Kepner-Tregoe. "It provided the framework to focus on the problems," Mills explains. "We used K-T's decision analysis to come up with the process we needed."

For Rohn and Mills the training had come at just the right time: they'd been among 20 executives of voluntary agencies from across Canada who'd attended a three-and-a-half-day K-T course sponsored by Imperial Oil. It was a unique experiment designed to

Searching for solutions

by Dick Brown
photos by Don Mutersill

It was just after the last federal election and George Rohn, the executive director of the Canadian Mental Health Association, was facing a delicate problem. He was doing his best to plan the association's annual budget, and the problem — was this: would new government's policies be? How would they affect the association's budget? And, specifically, how could he come up with a budget at all when the new government's policies were still such an unknown quantity?

About the same time Janie Mills, president of the Metro Toronto YWCA, was also wrestling with a problem. Coincidentally it involved the Y's budget, but in this case the issue of the thing concerned a time square.
see if Imperial could help voluntary organizations by contributing to the training of their executives. The participants lived — and studied — at the Woodland Trails Training and Conference Centre, north of Toronto. Their instructor was Christine Crombie, of Imperial’s employee development division. Imperial has been using K-T training for its own employees for 15 years, and Crombie has been trained as an instructor.

K.T. was founded in 1958 by Dr. Charles Kepner and Dr. Benjamin Tregoe, who realized, as they explain in a brochure, “that most organizations desperately needed improvement in the methods their people applied to solving problems, making decisions, and anticipating potential problems. What was needed was a set of practical techniques and processes to help managers manage more systematically. All too often, on a daily basis, managers and governments ‘fix’ what they think is a problem with temporary solutions, only to have their problem recur.”

In other words, decision-making is not an easy, if not the best kind of process. It’s a highly important skill, particularly in the rapidly expanding volume of information available, and decision making and more, efficiency must be as close to its peak as possible. You get the idea of just how big the volunteer movement has become when you consider that many experts estimate that one in every four Canadians is involved in some sort of volunteer work. As one of the executives at the course at Woodland Trails said in 1974, “Volunteer work is an important aspect of our society and, on a sunny weekend during the summer of 1979, we were at Cameron’s cottage talking about a wide range of subjects, including volunteer work. The consultation went on for the K.T. course, and beyond. We wondered, aloud, if it might not be a big help to volunteer executives; perhaps the same way that K.T. could take the course. Better still, perhaps K-T could help a great many volunteers.

“The more we thought about it,” says Cameron, “the more we realized how beneficial a course like the K-T could be. We began wondering if business — which already donate substantial sums of money to various volunteer organizations — might not be interested in providing training as well. Several business representatives, run by well-trained executives, would make maximum use of donations.”

So Willoughby and Cameron got together with five other representatives of volunteer organizations and discussed the possibility of trying to set up a sort of pilot project in which a cross-section of volunteer executives would be involved in a K-T course. They all wound up meeting with Imperial representatives and asked the company, in effect, to sponsor an experiment: give the K-T course to 20 people, two each of 10 volunteer organizations.

Imperial said yes. It would provide the K-T course and also a place to present it. Willoughby and Cameron obtained the facilities of the Boy Scouts’ Woodland Trails camp and negotiated with the people at Kepner-Tregoe, who donated the materials for the program.

There was a certain hint of skepticism from some of the volunteer organizations involved. (Could a course designed to train business executives be applied to volunteer organizations, run with the help of volunteers?) But last spring the 20 arrived at the camp, comfortable in sweaters and jeans and sneakers, ready for work. From most of the 10 organizations there was one volunteer executive and one executive staff. They came from across Canada, from a wide variety of agencies: Dr. Paul Adams of Calgary, the vice-president of the Canadian Mental Health Association; Andrew Cohen of Ottawa, the executive director of the Canadian Council on Children and Youth and Jan Bain of Toronto, the executive director of the Ontario Society for Crippled Children. They represented, in other words, a broad cross-section of the voluntary sector.

They also presented an impressive trend — the astonishing growth of the volunteer movement. Nancy Redner, one of the executives at the conference, probably has as good a perspective on the matter as anyone; she’s an enthusiastic whiz. Of a woman who directs the Volunteer Centre of Metro Toronto, the country’s largest coordinator of volunteers, and she says: “Even 10 years ago there was nothing like the number of volunteers we have today. In 1971, in the Volunteer Centre, we had one full-time staff
person and one very part-time secre-
tary. We now have a paid staff of 22, plus 69 direct-service volunteers, and an additional 70 administrative volunteers. We are helping nearly 600 agencies and organizations that are looking for volunteers.

There are 123 similar volunteer centres across Canada, and it’s almost impossible to gauge their worth. “It’s important,” says Redner, “to point out that volunteers do not replace staff, but they extend and enable, and they humanize. They provide services that just wouldn’t get done. Those phones at the distress centres wouldn’t happen 24 hours a day if it weren’t for their volunteers. The rape crisis centres wouldn’t be staffed. Last year we referred and referred to the community about 6,000 volunteers. And most of them,” she adds, “were interviewed by volunteer interviewers.

She says one can put a dollar value on the time that volunteers contribute—chiefly because the volunteers’ qualifications vary so widely—but, she points to calculations made by Professor Olly Hawrylyshyn of Queen’s University. He estimates that 3.7 million Canadians are involved in volunteer work, putting in an average of 2.5 hours each week. He notes that this totals an impressive 960 million volunteer hours during one year, and Hawrylyshyn does put a value on this; he estimates it at about $3 billion. A couple of years ago poll-takers George Gallup carried out a survey that indicated an even higher proportion of people are taking part in voluntary work; he put the figure at one in four.

There are some interesting changes in the average Canadian volunteer—Redner notes that, at present, more women are involved in direct service (delivering meals-on-wheels, for in-
stance, or working at distress centres) and more men are involved in admin-istrative jobs. But all this is chang-
ing. Larger numbers of women are getting into administrative work and more men—who’ve been in volunteer administrative jobs—are turning to direct service. She tells of one man, the president of a marketing company, who gave up an executive position with a volunteer organization so that he could learn sign language and become a tutor for deaf children.

There’s no doubt, she says, that volunteer agencies today have to take a very professional approach to problems, that their executives must know the ins and outs of a balance sheet. “Personally I think a trend of the future will be for executive directors of volunteer agencies to have degrees in business administration instead of being social workers. It’s become big business to administer our agencies.”

It may sound like a contradiction, but the boom in volunteerism is expensive. “We have to provide volun-
tees with tools,” says Redner, “everything from manuals to cars to training. People who work at the distress centres, for instance, have to commit to at least 10 orientation sessions. They need instruction. That’s expensive.”

Natural businesses and govern-
ments are concerned that the funds they contribute to volunteer agencies are handled efficiently, and the agencies obviously are also well aware of that. So there was a great deal of interest—from all sides—as the course began at Woodland Trails Conference Centre; in the area of problem-solving and decision-
making, the K-T people are unques-
tionably expert. They have clients in 35 countries and 13 languages, and more than half a million people have taken their courses. The instruc-
tors are employees of the companies that use K-T, and they’re trained and licensed by K-T.

Next at Woodland Trails, Imperial’s Christine Crobie is part of this imaginative experiment that couldn’t enable business to play a new role in helping the volunteer move-
ment across Canada and perhaps beyond. At first the participants aren’t at all sure that this approach to decision-making will work for them. Can you apply the techniques of solving an engineering problem to running a YMCA? Do you resolve a question concerning the Canadian Council on Children and Youth with the same tools you use to unravel a marketing tangle?

But the K-T material is encour-
ging; it raises problems in decision-
making that everyone has come across. It talks of “butterfly thinking”; did the discussion flit from point to point without effectively dealing with any?

And “analytical oversight”; was the issue beaten to death? And “falling in love with an alternative”; was all discussion directed toward supporting the virtues of one alternative?

During the three and a half days Christine Crobie provides the planks that permit a decision maker—marketing director or YMCA presi-
dent—to step over these pitfalls and others, too. She splits the partici-
pants into teams and gives them problems to solve. In the end they use K-T techniques to tackle some of their own problems—real ones.

When it’s over the consensus is obvious: the experiment is a success, probably beyond most expectations. “I certainly had some reservations,” says Andrew Cohen of the Canadian Coun-
cil on Children and Youth. “But we used the K-T methods while we were here, working on our own cases.”

Sue Willoughby and Anne Cameron, the two participants who’d come up with the idea in the first place, are delighted with the way it went and both have managed to put K-T ideas to use. “I learned,” says Willoughby, “that in some cases I’d been looking at the effects rather than the cause. This course helped me go after the cause.”

Crombie seems extremely pleased with the session: “The participants were very committed. They worked until 10 o’clock at night. Some nights after the structured part of the course they discussed problems on their own until after midnight. They studied K-T and they also discussed personal problems. They worked very late, very hard, and very enthusiastically.”

And Dr. Paul Adams of the Canadian Mental Health Association offers a suggestion that could take the experiment a step further: why not consider trades between corporations and vol-
unteer agencies? Why, as an example, couldn’t a large company include a couple of people from the Canadian Mental Health Association when it is running regular courses for its own executives? In return, why shouldn’t the Mental Health people provide the expertise to set up programs, for instance, to help control alcoholism within a company?

As the volunteers’ experiment ended, the possibilities for its applica-
tion seemed almost boundless, and so did the enthusiasm. At the K-T offices in Princeton, N.J., Dr. Benjamin Tregoe expressed his own delight. “It’s a great contribution,” he said. “It’s a tremendous thing for a company to do.”

Applying the techniques of solving complicated engineering problems to running YMCAs or volunteer distress centres
In closing

It's been a serious and anxious summer, heavy with worry about the future, and that is why I was glad, early on — on the sixth of June to be exact — to spend an afternoon with Selma Plaut, a lady who lives not far from our office and who, by virtue of example, is apt to make anyone think twice before giving in to a spirit of pessimism.

There are a number of reasons why this is so, but to appreciate them fully it is necessary to give, as they say in the newspapers, a bit of background. Mrs. Plaut is, as she herself puts it, more or less a victim of Hitler. She was born just about 90 years ago in Germany, in the town of Münster, which is only a short distance from the Dutch border. On Sundays, in Münster, she air was filled with the sounds of bells, for while the population was not large, there were 21 Catholic churches.

Her father was a prosperous man, who in the late 1890s, she remembers, had cattle grazing on a dozen meadows. Her mother believed in the value of education and so, while still in her teens, the daughter, Selma, was sent to an academy in France and there took courses that, in time, qualified her in teaching. She came home to Münster, to her father and mother, to her large family of brothers and sisters, and then, in 1912, she married her husband, a young Jewish scholar, who was at the time rector of the local seminary.

Then, in 1918, when World War I was ended, he became head of one of the largest Jewish orphanages in Germany, and Mrs. Plaut served with him as his voluntary assistant, even after Hitler came to power and life for the Jewish people became a time of extreme anxiety. The Plauts lived in daily fear for their lives.

They had two sons, both of whom were able — largely Mrs. Plaut believes through the grace of God — to obtain scholarships to universities in the United States, which enabled them both to begin studies so that in time they became rabbis. (One, in fact, enlisted as an American chaplain, and, in one of the sad ironies of life, visited his parents in December, 1944, in England to which they had finally escaped from Germany — while he was on his way to the German front with the 104th Infantry, in the war against the nation of his birth.) Selma and Jonas Plaut ran a hostel for displaced German youth during the war and, in time — in the winter of 1945 — they were able to leave England for the United States where they hoped to make a new beginning. But even here there was sadness; the sudden death of Jonas in 1948 and then, the death of one of the sons, Walter, still a young man and a rabbi in the New York community of Long Island. The other son, the elder of the two boys, was Gunther, then the rabbi in St. Paul, Minnesota, who in 1961 came to Canada, to Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, where he was to attract a wide congregation as a preacher and writer and become one of the country's most respected religious leaders. When Gunther Plaut came to Toronto, his mother also came. She was "the rabbi's mother."

Not so long ago Selma Plaut — for so many years the resourceful if retiring strength to her husband and their rabbinical sons — began a career of her own. She entered her 90th year and became a student at the University of Toronto in history and French. I heard of this from some friends at Holy Blossom, and — hoping I would not appear to be taking too much advantage of a friendship — I phoned her son and asked him if he had enough influence with his mother to have her grant me an interview. He did.

She is a strong, strong person with eyes that are bright and curious, the kind of woman you can describe as looking 20 years younger than her age and know you are still telling the truth. When we met I was anxious to ask her the obvious question: what led her, in her 90th year, to begin study as a university student? "All my life," she said in a calm and very organized way, "I've liked to learn. But I've gone through stages in my life — as my husband's helpmate, as the rabbi's mother — when, though I did many things that were satisfying, learning had to stay in the background. But then, when my son retired from his pulpit and began a new career (he is doing a scholarly work on the Torah), I thought perhaps I too might begin anew. I did not want a degree, as much as a chance to prove to myself that I was still able to learn. So, one day I went to see the registrar at the university and explained my wish and, in the fall of 1978, I enrolled in advanced French and modern Jewish history. I went to class on a daily basis, and this fall I intend to keep on going." How, I wondered, did Mrs. Plaut having lived so much of modern Jewish history, feel toward her new experience as a student of it? "Well, I can participate in the classes," she says, "from a rather special background." She recalls, for example, the famous Dreyfus affair, which began before the turn of the century in France, in 1894, when an army officer and son of a Jewish manufacturer, Alfred Dreyfus, was tried and found guilty of treason on the basis of evidence that was later seen to be flimsy and false. His conviction resulted in 12 years of violent disorder, in which anti-Semitism was inflamed and then, in the end, passionately repudiated. (Dreyfus was eventually freed from prison, reinstated in his position, and decorated with the Legion of Honor.)

Because she is a modest and self-effacing person, Mrs. Plaut is hesitant — resistant might be the better word — to discuss the fact that in these studies she has achieved an A standing in her essays and earned a credit for her history course. She says it is much more forthcoming talking, not of herself, but of her new colleagues, the students at the university. "I like them; I get along well with them; I am accepted by them," she says. "But why orphan rings?" I asked her, which she later told me was when she was then 76. I think I can do that because all my life I have tried to make myself adjust to new situations — to the boys we worked with in Germany, to life when my husband was part of the 'underground,' to life in America when we came. You know, on the boat coming over here years ago, he said to me, 'Promise me one thing in this new world. Never criticize. Accept.' Some people might not understand it, but it has been helpful to me in accepting new and new people."

I said good-bye to Mrs. Plaut on that day in early summer, grateful to her, not just for her kindness in seeing me, but even more for her rare spirit, which lightens our path and gives us something beautiful and worth remembering.