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IN AN AGE OF CHANGE
A profile of Imperial’s Arden Haynes

MARTIN O’MALLEY ON CHRISTMAS  •  JACK BATTEN ON THE CBC
The Shape of CHANGE

Arden Haynes, Imperial’s man at the helm, intends to see his company through a renewal that will run from the executive suite to every corner of the corporation. It may change a great deal about the company. But some things don’t change: Imperial’s values.

BY KENNETH BAGNELL

On a warm evening in the spring of 1951, a 25-year-old youth with an muscular frame and dark hair sat at his desk in a house on Inglis Street in Winnipeg, not far from the campus of the University of Manitoba, from which he was about to graduate. His name was Arden Haynes, and he was thinking a lot. A few days earlier, following interviews by a recruiter, a senior executive from one of the oil companies had come to the university to offer jobs to two students. Haynes was one. He had said he probably accepted but would like to think over.

In fact, Haynes was vaguely disappointed— the recruiter was not from Imperial Oil. He had not been considering a career in the oil industry, but now that he had an offer from one of the major companies, he seemed turned to Imperial, which, for whatever reason, was not recruiting on his campus in 1951. That night, Haynes pumped up his courage, reached for a sheet of paper and wrote a letter. It was addressed to the only man he knew at Imperial, Ernie Aitkin, a former division manager for Imperial’s Winnipeg branch who had sent him the interview.

"I have been offered a job with another oil company," he wrote, "and it seems to me that people there are interested in me perhaps better than Imperial might be."

It was, just over 35 years after he began his first job with Imperial—in which he used to answer the phone in the company’s Winnipeg sales office—Arden Haynes bears one of the fewest responsibilities in Canadian business; he is chairman, president and chief executive officer of Imperial Oil Limited. It is a job that, given the current climate in the oil industry, has drawn more and more attention to the man himself, as he leads his company through waters that may well be the roughest in its history. "Consolidation means," says the Globe and Mail's business columnist, Howard Anderson, "the most difficult job by far."

On market forces, as going through a series of trouble that makes at least some people feel like a golden age. Haynes, according to those around him, is the man who will recede Imperial for a new age of stability. He reflects the values and traditions of the corporation and will preserve them with an iron will while he helps Imperial through restructuring and reform that may change not just the face of the company, but its very nature, all the way from the executive suite to the highway tanker. "Like changes," he says with a small smile, "like competition. And like it when times are tough." This kind of talk has served to instill a certain nervousness in some middle-management ranks in Imperial from coast to coast. Haynes may present a quiet manner to the outside world, but in the corridors of Imperial’s headquarters, executives respect his leadership and determination.

Obviously, Haynes is not alone in steering Imperial through the tough waters that have followed the drop in crude prices, but to a great degree the major decisions—in investment, direction, organization—rest in his firm grasp. Says Bill MacKendrick, vice-president of Imperial who has been a key advisor to successive chief executives: "This man means to recreate the company. He’s not thinking of keeping everybody comfortable. He’s in a tightening grip, and because of that it’s on productivity, profit and growth. The speed with which he has moved, the force of the current difficulties, to nobody—Imperial says—"The man who has led Imperial over the last 20 years has not come from backgrounds of privilege. They have grown up on ordinary streets in a variety of Canadian circumstances. Influenced by the values of industry and integrity that have been shaped by the Depression."

In the case of Arden Haynes, all of this is particularly true. His father and mother, Philip and Matilda Haynes, to whom he was born in 1927, one of six children, lived during Arden’s early years on the farm of Phi’s father, a bit of a small village in the Backwater Region, 160 kilometres from Regina, the small town of Lorette. The farm had no electricity, no running water, when Haynes was ready to enter grade 9 there was no teacher. He took lessons by correspondence, and in an early mixing of priorities, finished his studies by Christmas.

Arden and the entire family were processed by one of the sources of entertainment. It was a program, carried over the public radio from Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, the Imperial Oil hockey broadcasts. Listening to the voice of Foster Hewitt, he formed an early attachment not just to the Toronto Maple Leafs but to the company that became part of those Saturday nights.

Matilda Haynes, whose story with her husband was deeply religious, hoped Arden would become a doctor, or a lawyer, and in the mid-1940s, when the family had moved to Regina so the children would have a better opportunity for education, Arden decided to become a medicine. He began working hard to pay his way through university in summer he would get up at dawn, there labor in the construction in the afternoon. But after a year in pre-med at Regina College, Haynes began finding business-related personal, and told his father and mother he was changing careers. "Medicine isn’t for me," he explained to one evening in Regina in 1949. "I think I might be better for business."

In the fall of 1949 he enrolled in the commerce program at the University of Manitoba, where he was to spend the next three years. An above-average student who balanced his academic work with campus politics, he was elected treasurer...
A talent for relating to people

direction and give their best effort.

People who have risen in imperial work
growing hours but they are not workholics.

"I don't expect people to work as
through. He is a total, high-intelligence	
men and women who perform their work at a
very high level but not one or two
Gainsay heights that long ago. His	
travelling the country, helping to
to put a new sales system that would provide the
up-to-date information to imperial	

For more than 20 years, Arden and

Beverly Haynes and their children lived
he never met them and knew
managers, spending time in almost
evolved in the early saline,
whereas they knew it best. His senior advisors
would reach him in a matter of minutes in an
self-sustaining, and asked Haynes where
they could pick up The Globe and Main.
ask Haynes what he knew where
they could pick him up. The Globe and Main.
Haynes didn't know and didn't want to know.
He was on vacation and through the
as he worked very hard in his job.
As a result, he had to come up to
in the early 1980s. He was also the
as chief executive of

office. His wife looked at the bottle,

she later joined a car and we
supplied the Bordeaux in a moment and

At the time, Haynes was back in Toronto,

in that year. He was the

in the early 1800s, OFCE's success production
of the total price of crude oil into a steep

of those people who had

those messages that reflected the counsel of a
lot of people," he told someone at

me it was something I had
to do alone," he

in contrast, the fashion of both

and Haynes was to be

the two principles Fundamental:
their free-market system.

"It's going to get

"Maybe. Maybe not.

For Haynes, whom one colleague describes as a
mannerist who always had his head around the
second occasion, the day he retired from imperial
on the day, if ever. He then became the

who had set aside several years earlier with a
promise to open one on two occasions:
the day he retired from imperial
on the day, if ever. He then became the

his credit card, and chief executive

issues affecting the company. In fact, once
I picked up our staff publication, The Reporter,

and a headline with a

"I don't think the price that I realized they
were mine."

One evening in the late spring of 1865,

Haynes arrived on his home on the
northern edge of

and offered him a

of the high prices in the capital cut年内，the question of whether
integrated flow became a matter of immediate concern."

"Imperial's high-cost production is really

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WHEN CHRISTMAS BEGINS

All my Christmases but one were spent at home

BY MARTIN O'MALLEY

If I had to reach back and dust off only one memory that best captures the joy and magic and tingling promise of Christmas it would be a night about 40 years ago, when I was five or six.

I could resort to nostalgia here and try to make a story out of it, but the truth is it was only a moment. It was Christmas Eve, and I knew it was Christmas Eve. I was wearing pajamas with a buttoned-up trapdoor in the seat. I had been awakened, and it was late for me to be up, but being up was exciting.

The house smelled different — as if something outdoors was indoors. I held something furry in my arms, held it tight against my chest, my chin on its head, and I was in the hallway of our house in Winnipeg.

It was an old house, even then. In winter, it creaked and snapped in the cold, but inside it was always warm and comfortable. There were dark oak doors that pulled out from the walls, enclosing the den and the living room and separating the living room from the dining room, giving the old house a mysterious and delightful honeycomb effect. It was only on rare occasions that these huge doors were pulled out and Christmas Eve was one of those occasions. For reasons known only to parents, it was important that no one see what was in the living room.

Maybe I had been crying in my sleep and Mom had awakened me, and because it was Christmas Eve she had allowed me downstairs in my pajamas, carrying whatever furry thing I had taken to bed. I know the house seemed

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alotgether different, as if I were seeing it, experiencing it, for the first time, I hadn’t realized how much the snow was, would have melted at the sight of someone five or six years standing on the ground below my pajamas on Christmas Eve. There was something vaguely conspiratorial going on. The laundry room had been outside chopping wood or in the basement feeding coal into the hopper. I had never realized how much fuel and how much wood and how much she would never have done what Mom did. She nudged open the doors to the attic and looked around. It was decorated, festooned with lights and colored glass balls and streamers and shimmering icicles and at the very top was an angel in a white dress with a blue sash. She was wearing a yellow headband and her golden wings brushed the ceiling.

That’s it. No beginning, no middle, no end. I’m writing this in a notebook that belonged to a storybook or the movies — not in my own house. It was one of those moments that make the ordinariness extraordinary and the extraordinary attainable. It is the moment I am now writing about Christmas. Sometimes I even come close.

**

My father, who was a staunch newspaperman and an even stauncher Roman Catholic, used to get furious when we would refer to Christmas in any season other than December. It was not just that he considered it disrespectful, which he certainly did, but also it was something that was lazy and new and snipped and not a little tame. He regarded "Xmas" a direct attack on the Church, and he was very religious and I’m sure he actually visualized mean-spirited people going around trying to "steal" Christmas from us. The same way pranksters go around spray-painting mustard on billboard faces. I’m not sure, but I think he was actually a bit of a crank. He would say to me, "Xmas is a corruption of the word Jesus, the one who was to be born of the Virgin Mary. It is the only term that I will use."

I read each card carefully, and if she found an "Xmas" she removed that word and carefully wrote out the phrase through the card’s script. It certainly appeared to take hours just to get the lights just so and the candles just so. I was sometimes found standing outside the window, watching from the street, but Mom assured me that Dad was having a wonderful time. When we got home, Dad was in red-faced and kicked his rubber boots into the coats and announced it was the last year we ever going to lights on the porch, where she would smile and explain, "It’s the way of getting into the Christmas spirit."

Dad’s other way of getting into the Christmas spirit was wrestling with the spruce tree in the living room. He seemed to regard the tree as a wild piece of nature that had to be subdued. Every year, it was a richly decorated tree, with a shirt and tie, and on those evenings when he wrestled with the tree he looked exactly like his courting version of Rambo.Mom watched often watched in admiration from the dining room. It was perfectly acceptable to send me notes to people even if it seemed to me that the seasons had come around the only day you can plant trees. But try

humming "Jingle Bells" and sipping eggnog in July, if you are not actually looking at them, you will personally never look at them again.

We had our own way of celebrating Christmas. Mom would give us a card and a small gift. The stockings hung by the fireplace in the den were not made of flannel or cotton, and they were made of wool. Christmas stockings from a department store. They were old nylon stockings, the kind you put on after the nigntime but when loaded with goodies they dangled from the mantelpiece to the floor, and you could almost imagine a mandarin-orange stuffed into the toes.

As children we were encouraged to send notes to Santa Claus. The way to mail them was to go down to the basement and toss them into the furnace. The idea of going down to a dank and spooky basement in the dead of winter was inspired.

Today the thing to do is address your note to:

Santa Claus
North Pole
H0H 0H0

Very clever. Apparently someone gets all these letters from all these little flat or chal-

rized replied. Kids want results these days. It is the modern way, I suppose, but what’s worse is to have a little mystery at Christmas?

Dad’s job was to string up the Christ-

day, I suppose, but what’s worse is to have a little mystery at Christmastime?

Christmas has always possessed cer-

tain Brigadoonish qualities, Brigadoonish in its ability to readjust a place to one’s life ever 100 years for a single day. It is not a bad way to look at Christmas, which is a day utterly foreign to any of the other 364 days of the year. It has its own food, its own drink, its own parties, its own traditions, its own programs and its own music, literature and poetry. People don’t rush around in the summer to spend the evenings and New Year’s Day Labor Day. It is perfectly acceptable to send me notes to people even if it seemed to me that the seasons had come around the only day you can plant trees. But try

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AT noon, my mother used to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and tune into the little white radio in the kitchen. The first sound out of the speaker was of knuckles tapping on wood.

"Who’s there?" a voice asked.

Second voice, full of good cheer: "It’s the Happy Gang!"

First voice, joyfully: "Well, come on in!" Music, applause and glorious pandemonium.

It was the fall of 1937, and The Happy Gang, which had come to the CBC the previous June, was my mother’s favorite program. I ate the sandwiches, drank my milk and listened to the voices: Bert Pearl, the MC with the funny lines; Eddie Allan, crooning ballads and greeting his mother, "Hello, Mom!"; Hugh Bartlett, the smooth announcer; Blain Mathie on the violin; and Kay Stokes — a lovely woman, my mother always thought — playing the organ. It was cozy and unpretentious, and it was my introduction to the CBC.

I grew up and stayed tuned. In the 1940s, as a teenager, I absorbed lessons in my music of choice from Jazz Unlaid for two hours every Saturday afternoon and felt the first pull of drama and comedy in Andrew Allan's magnificence. In 1952, when the CBC entered the television age, I hopped the channel every weekday evening at seven to Watch a program that its creator, Ross McLean, characterized to me many years later as "a sitcom with interviews."

I got a taste of Quebec life when the English-language version of La famille Plouffe turned up later in the decade. This Hour Has Seven Days showed me how gripping public affairs television could be in the 1960s, and in the 1980s I developed the 10 o'clock habit, The National followed by The Journal.

Somebody else in the family acquired a CBC habit. My daughter, Sarah, discovered and admired Peter Gzowski. Between university classes, she tried never to miss his radio program, Morningside. She began to notice that her conversation was often enlivened by discussions of ideas and issues that had originated in an interview on Morningside.

Our experience, three generations of a family finding their listening and viewing loyalties linked to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, is hardly unique. It's a custom — even a commitment — that hundreds of thousands of Canadian families, English and French alike, have shared since the CBC began broadcasting in 1936, because the CBC speaks to us of ourselves, our culture and our country.

When I was looking into the origins of the CBC, I kept coming across one name, Sir John Aird. He was a vigorous man whose face was dominated by an intimidating mustache. His looks and his steadiness in a crisis made him ideal for his job: he was president of the Bank of Commerce in the 1920s and 1930s. It was Aird whom Prime Minister Mackenzie King called on in 1928 to make sense out of the mess that Canadian radio seemed to be in.

At the time, there were 87 privately owned stations in the country, pumming out a motley array of programs. What was more troubling, 600 American stations were swamping Canada with a foreign culture. Aird pitched into the problem with a banker's efficiency, studying broadcasting firsthand in the United States and Europe and holding public sessions in 25 Canadian cities, and in September 1929, he came down with one recommendation that has forever influenced the direction of radio and television in Canada: the country, he said, must have a publicly owned broadcasting system that emphasizes Canadian content and beams its programs from coast to coast.

The government dithered over the Aird report, perhaps understandably since it had a depression on its hands. But two young men kept the pressure on Ottawa: Graham Spry, a Rhodes Scholar from Manitoba, and Alan Plaatman, a Toronto man who had studied at Oxford. They formed the Canadian Radio League, a private citizens' group that lobbied for nationalized radio. "In broadcasting," Spry argued, "it is a choice between the state and the United States." R.B. Bennett, who succeeded Mackenzie King as prime minister in 1930, eventually saw it the league's way, and on May 28, 1932, his Conservative government established the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC), which set out to follow Sir John Aird's precepts for radio in Canada.

The CRBC represented a beginning, but it was a specific instance of live broadcasting that confirmed the value of national radio for most Canadians. That incident took place in April 1936. Three men went below ground on an inspection tour of a mine near Moose River, N.S., that two of them — a Toronto lawyer and the chief surgeon of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children — had recently purchased. A cave-in trapped them in the mine, and along with the rescuers and newspaper reporters who rushed to Moose River was J. Frank Willis of the CRBC network. For the next 11 hours, while men dug at the minehead, Willis broadcast bulletins to the rest of the country for five minutes every half hour. He worked with a single microphone, without a technician, without sleep, and as the hours crept by, hundreds of thousands of Canadians found themselves swept up in the drama of the broadcasts. By the end of the 11 hours, two of the men had been rescued — the lawyer died in the mine — and J. Frank Willis had put the CRBC on the radio map.

Then, on November 2, 1936, Parliament passed the Broadcasting Act, a statute that gave the national network more funds, the power to build new stations and take over others and a chance to have broader coverage and more adventurous programming. The Broadcasting Act also bestowed on the network a name that had the ring of authority and permanence, the Cana-
With Mackenzie King's blessing, the CBC received the financial resources it required; next it needed to find a distinctive voice. That voice, according to Harry Boyle, a former chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and a radio and television executive, began to emerge in English-language radio during the Second World War and the years following it.

"What happened," Boyle says, "is that people came to work for the CBC who had a high degree of social consciousness. They weren't propagandists for any particular political party; they simply believed very deeply in the democratic process, and they wanted every different kind of Canadian to have a say on the country's radio."

Boyle, a sturdy, amiable man who is now in his seventies, combines the worldly air of a philosopher with an earthiness that reflects his roots in rural Ontario. He joined the CBC in 1942 when the activism he describes was beginning to assert itself in radio with such programs as the immensely popular National Farm Radio Forum, in which farmers, labor and business people and consumers engaged in national debates.

"That sort of thing was the country together," Boyle says with conviction. "All of us at the CBC felt we had a great purpose—a Canadian purpose."

In radio drama, an elegant man named Andrew Allan, the son of a Scottish minister, took the lead in carrying that purpose forward. He put together a group of writers and actors that The New York Times critic Jack Gould called "the best repertory group in this hemisphere." Allan's weekly programs offered everything from a spoof of a dramatization of The Pickwick Papers to satire by the Vancouver writer Eric Nicol. But his programs were never elitist; they were intended for — and reached — a broad Canadian audience. Once, Allan met a young woman who lived on a farm north of Edmonton. "We haven't any books to speak of or pictures or anything," the young woman told him. "But I have a little radio in my room, and every Sunday morning I listen to your programs. All week I wait for that time. It's a whole new world for me."

A similar passion for drama surfaced at Radio-Canada, the CBC's French network. French-language broadcasting also had plenty of other strengths. It produced the first of the essential regional farm broadcasts. It also had a successful array of variety shows. Among them were Journeys in Troubadours, which did for Quebec what The Happy Gang did for the rest of Canada, and Nos Futures Étoiles, the French counterpart of Singing Stars of Tomorrow. But it was the radio novellas, which took the works of French-Canadian authors and presented them as radio dramas, that were the real stars. One dramatization, Un Homme et Son Poète, sometimes reached 80 percent of its potential audience. That figure surpassed anything achieved by CBC's English network; it even outstripped the ratings in the United States for the popular Lux Radio Theatre.

While radio drama was flourishing on both the English and French CBC networks, Harry Boyle was opening up the field of factual radio in original ways. "Harry's shows were breakthroughs," says Howard Engel, a short, tidy man who is best known today as the creator of the Benny Cooperman mystery novels but for more than two decades worked as a CBC radio producer. "Harry was the first person to use a tape recorder like a typewriter."

Engel says, "He sent people out of the studio into the street and countryside to get the material we put on air. If you want to find the origins of many radio and television programs, you don't have to go any further than the shows Harry thought up in the 1950s."

"Assignment" was one such program. "It was," Engel says, "the first show of any sort that could be called a newsmagazine." Assignment was broadcast five nights a week, but the sort of news it offered was not the stuff of headlines. "There existed a flood of fascinating little Canadian stories that never made the air," Boyle says. "Life was going on in this country but it wasn't being tapped. That's what we went after on Assignment."

Other programs also took on national issues. Anthology, the program that Robert Weaver guided for more than 20 years, provided a forum for Canada's serious writers to confront their readers under circumstances that took both writer and reader off the printed page. On Radio-Canada, Les Grands Concerts presents 30 concerts each year with Canadian performers starring in each.

And As It Happens, which began in 1968, has taken a simple but brilliant idea — the telephone interview — and made it a vehicle for radio that is immediate and searching.

Voices are the key to the appeal and value of CBC radio, says Alex Frame, the originator and executive producer of This Country, the program of the early 1970s that, with Peter Gzowski as host, put Canadians in touch with one another, "The show," Frame said recently, "had a fierce excitement to it. But, fundamentally, it was the response we got from our listeners that made the program." Over the 15 years of its life, the show has had several names and hosts, now known as Morningside, it is once again hosted by Peter Gzowski and has probably opened itself up to its audience more unabashedly than any other program in radio history.

"Once we asked people to phone in and tell us about the signs of spring they had spotted," Frame recalls. "Well, we were absolutely buried in fascinating calls. A man from the Yukon phoned in great excitement to say he could tell it was spring because out on his trap line he saw that the fur on the back of the lynx was ruffled. What did that mean? It meant that the lynx had been rolling on the ground in the spring sunshine. To me, that was a voice of Canada speaking!"

Television was born in Canada at the CBC's Montreal station on September 6, 1952. The first show, a cartoon, may not have been memorable but the moment was auspicious — television was to change the lives of millions of Canadians.

Ross McLean was one of the CBC's early public-affairs television producers. While at the CBC during the fifties and early sixties, he conceived a landmark group of programs that covered everything from serious-minded journalism (Close-Up) to home service (Living) to entertainment (Quest). McLean was joined in these pioneering television labors by many youthful whizzes. Among them were Norman Jewison, Eric Till, Harvey Hart and Ted Kotcheff, all of whom moved on in due course to make films of Oscar caliber in Hollywood and London; during their apprenticing years at the CBC, they set the standard for a tradition of superior television in drama and variety. Such shows as Festival and Novia in the 1950s, Quentin Doucet's MP and Wajik in the 1960s and 1970s and the one-shot spe...
cial of the 1980s, Charlie Grant's War among them, exemplify that tradition. These programs were notably more understated than their American counterparts and carved out a distinctive style that can fairly be labelled Canadian. They have won recognition inside and outside the country: Norman Campbell's CBC production of the ballets Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, for example, have both won Emmys in the category of best classical music program. But there's one element that Canadian dramatic and musical shows lack: a consistently large viewing audience. Too often, the CBC's big programs lose out in the ratings to the prime-time American shows.

"A big part of the reason for that lies in the historical Canadian reluctance to boost its own heroes," said Paul Fox, a distinguished political scientist at the University of Toronto who regularly lends his blend of charm and conviction to Take 30 and Viewpoint. "The CBC's management has a record of being resolutely antiaesthetic," Fox explained recently. "No heroes, no stars! That's consistent with the Canadian character, but how can you have an entertainment industry without stars? That's a fundamental flaw and it shows in the ratings.

Tim McQueen, CBC's director of network television, takes a different tack in looking at the ratings commodity. "Sure, The Crabby Show gets five million Canadians to tune in for its sets," she said during a conversation in her elegant midtown Toronto office, "but after the show's over, those viewers don't phone in the tears of joy, which is exactly what happened after we ran Anne of Green Gables last year." Her point is that the combination of quality and nationalism is winning larger audiences for CBC's in the 1980s.

Differences of opinion are not uncommon at the CBC. Over the years, the corporation has had its share of internal conflicts, which, according to its critics, divert some of its energy from more constructive things. As one anonymous editor in the CBC's Toronto newsroom was quoted as saying in The Globe and Mail last August, "If people left here because they didn't get along, we'd have no staff." Nevertheless, whatever the level of strife, the CBC rises above it to produce a quality of programming that is often historic.

Radio-Canada, which now includes CBC's French-language television as well as radio network, does not share the rating problem that burdens its English-language counterpart. It has always claimed stars, ratings and a firm sense of place. Télémons—television novels—which first aired in the 1950s, have always attracted large audiences. La famille Plouffe, the program that brought Quebec life to a standstill between 8:30 and 9:30 every Wednesday night in the 1950s, was only the most celebrated of a long line of télémons, which continues today with the popular Le Parc des Braves.

Documentary television came later to Radio-Canada than to the CBC's English network, but when it came, it came with a force. Duplessis, for example, a dramatized version of the former Quebec premier's career that ran in seven parts in 1974, attracted more viewers than anything shown in the history of French television with the exception of the 1972 Canada-Russia hockey series.

La famille Plouffe brought Quebec to a standstill every Wednesday Current-affairs television may well be what the English-language CBC does with its most originality and chutzpah. Curiously, however, for all its recent successes, it is a area that took the longest to make its mark. For a few years in the 1950s and early 1960s, one show, Close-Up, had the field to itself.

"Since there were no arts shows, no science shows or shows covering other special areas," says Close-Up's creator, Ross McLean, "we could span the whole spectrum of information." The program dispatched its hosts, Pierre Bout, Charles Templeton, Elaine Grand, Blair Fraser and others, across the country and to all corners of the world in search of material. McLean thinks that some of the interviews from Close-Up stand today as models of the arts: "Some find Elaine Grand's interview with Bertrand Russell impossible to forget." By the mid-1960s, specialized current-affairs programs had begun to emerge. There was still room on the CBC for such general and mainstream shows as the short-lived but dazzling This Hour has Seven Days and for the durable and probing fifth estate, but CBC-TV also delved in depth into particular subjects: science with David Suzuki's This Nature of Things, for example, and religion with Roy Romsteed's Man Alive. Both programs draw more than one million viewers during prime-time viewing hours.

Current-affairs programs may be able to stake an honest claim to prominence in CBC-TV's dazzling department, but it's the straight news programming that has made history. That's the authoritative view of Knocino Nash, host of The National, and he's in mind the accomplishment of The National's latest companion, The Journal.

The long march toward history began in the 1950s with a show called News magazine. It was, in Nash's words, "the seminal news program in Canadian television." News magazine made its debut on September 12, 1952, with Lorrie Greene as host, and before it ended for good in 1981, it had broadcast more than 1000 shows.

News magazine shaped the reporting of Canadian television news, but The National revolutionized Canadian viewing habits with, as Nash explains, the not-so-simple time change of the program from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Before the change, which occurred on the night of January 11, 1982, The National drew an average of about 1.2 million viewers. Since the move to 10 o'clock, its audience has hovered around 2 million and has sometimes zoomed to more than three million. That increase is remarkable enough, but what is much more revealing in Nash's view is that none of the new audience for The National has been drawn from viewers who were accustomed to watching the news at 11 p.m. on the CTV or Global networks; for both other Canadian networks, the late-night news ratings remained about the same after The National's time switch.

"The implication of that fact," Nash says, "is that we got a million new viewers who had until then been going to bed or doing something else in the evening. It was the first time since television began that a program found a genuinely new audience."

One morning not long ago, Peter Gzowski read on Morningside a funny and instructive little essay he'd written about his experiences in getting a phone installed in an apartment he had just leased. The essay struck a chord in my daughter, who recently endured a similar hassle. Sarah wrote a witty letter to Morningside in response to Gzowski's essay, and a few days later he read the letter on air. Sarah was listening as he read. So was I. And more than ever that morning, both of us felt the intimate tug of the CBC in our lives.
The Good Earth

Celebrating a century of agricultural research

BY EILEEN PETTIGREW

It was June 2, 1886. Canada was nearly two decades old, a nation bustling with the energy of youth. Its population was growing as immigrants trickled in. The land was rich and full of promise. And on that June day the government gave the go-ahead for the establishment of an agricultural research organization that has helped make Canada one of the world's greatest providers of food.

The organization began life with five experimental farms spread across the country; today, 100 years later, it is officially known as the research branch of Agriculture Canada and includes 46 major research centres and employs 3600 people.

The man chosen to head the new enterprise was William Saunders, a self-educated English immigrant who had a deep understanding of many areas of science and, indeed, had worked as a manufacturing chemist in London, Ont., during the 1860s, was a founder of the Ontario College of Pharmacy and the Canadian Society of Entomology and was a noted authority on horticulture. Saunders, the son of a Methodist lay preacher, took his work, as he took life in general, very seriously. Visionary, driven and persuader, he set a rugged pace for agricultural research in Canada. During his first year as head of the new organization, he selected a site on the outskirts of Ottawa for the now famous Central Experimental Farm as well as sites across Canada for the four other experimental farms. His task took him to the Maritimes three times that first year and to the West twice (during one trip he made an 800-kilometre tour of rural Manitoba in a horse-drawn buggy). But his efforts were not in vain; those early choices were so astute that the five original farms — in Nappan, N.S., Indian Head, Sask. (which was then part of the North-West Territories), Ottawa, Brandon, Man., and Agassiz, B.C. — still exist today at the same locations.

Providing help to farmers throughout this vast country was a daunting task, as in those early days, when transportation and communication were difficult and slow. The farmers faced many problems. Chief among them — particularly in the West — was the short growing season. All too often Red Fife wheat, the popular strain of the time and the primary source of many farmers' livelihood, was damaged by early frost before it had ripened, ruining the quality of the crop. Saunders was determined to find a solution to the problem, and it was not to be an easy task.

There was obviously nothing he could do to lengthen the growing season; the answer, he surmised, lay in finding a strain of wheat that would mature more quickly. He looked toward lands with similar climates, and in the late 1880s imported several varieties of wheat seed from czarist Russia. Scientists at the experimental farms began testing the seed, as well. Saunders asked farmers to test it and send him samples of the ripened wheat along with records of its growth. Unfortunately, the results were disappointing. While some of the strains did indeed mature faster than Red Fife — Ludoga, for example, ripened 10 days more quickly — they did not perform well in the vital baking tests.

Unable to find a suitable strain, Saunders turned to his old preoccupation, crossbreeding, and to his third son, Charles, for help.

At the time Charles was 35. He was a scholarly looking man with a grey gooseberry and round wire-rimmed spectacles perched on an aquiline nose. As a boy he had shown a marked aptitude with plants and had graduated in science from the University of Toronto. After completing his studies, however, he had turned away from that field to pursue his true love, the arts. He hadn't wanted to give up the choir he directed or the music column he wrote for the Toronto Globe, but when a telegram dated January 1, 1903, advised him that he had been appointed chief of the experimental farm system's cereal division, Charles, who had once described himself as "a dolce person, always going where I am pushed," accepted the position.

William Saunders' choice may have been wrong for his son, but it was overwhelmingly right for the country. Charles put his whole heart and soul into his work and once politely but firmly told a visiting dignitary that he couldn't spare him much time as he had to be in the fields from five in the morning until eight at night. Those long hours helped him perfect the traditional farmers' test for gluten content in wheat — the more gluten the better the quality of the wheat. Charles could put a sample of one variety of wheat in one side of his mouth, another in the other side, chew them both at once, and, according to the amount of gum in his cheeks, accurately assess the quality of each. In later life he told Canadian Marshall, minister of agriculture for Alberta from 1909 to 1921: "I believe, in carrying on that work, I made more wheat into gum than was made by all the boys in any dozen rural schools of a generation ago."

It was during his first year as chief of the cereal division that Charles found the solution his father was looking for — he developed a strain of wheat that allowed farmers to beat the bitter Prairies winters. It was a cross between Red Fife and Hard Red Calcutta, a strain his father had imported from India. By 1912, the new wheat, named Marquis, was available commercially. A decade later it covered 90 percent of western Canadian wheat fields and five million hectares in the United States; by the end of the First World War, Marquis was adding $100 million to Canadian farm incomes.

Charles Saunders was knighted for his work on behalf of Canadian agriculture, and when he died in 1957, a newspaper writer said of the unwilling scien-
tus. He added more wealth to his country than any other man.

The original experimental farms and the research centres that were later established have played a vital role in the region they served. The superintendents of the farms travelled to their territories to question and counsel, and farmers, hungry for guidance, welcomed their help. The Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa assisted farmers throughout the country in a variety of ways. During its third year in operation, for example, it sent 5700 pounds of seed corn to western farmers free of charge, and more than 5000 replies to their questions.

But work wasn’t entirely serious. In 1903, for instance, 15 Ontario cheesemakers, along with staff members from the experimental dairy in Perth, Ont., used a month’s output of milk from 10,000 cows to make a giant round of cheese nearly two metres high and eight-and-a-half metres in circumference; they entered it in the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The cheese traveled in a specially reinforced railway flatcar and survived the journey intact. Unfortunately, the exhibit area didn’t prove as sturdy as the train and the 12,000-kilogram cheese crushed through the floor. It did, however, survive the tumble and was the centre of attention at the fair where it took top prize. The famous English politician Thomas Lipton, bought it and shipped it to England where four men used it to prepare a fresh cheese for the victorious prize.

The Hudson’s Bay Company operated a roller flour mill in Fort Vermilion that could process 68 tonnes of flour a year and drew farmers from the entire region, making it an ideal location for the farm. In 1907, Saunders hired a farmer from the area to travel to Ottawa to pick up some seeds and trees from the Central Experimental Farm. The farmer returned with them to Fort Vermilion — not an easy assignment in those days. The farmer had to transport his load by rail from Ottawa to Edmonton, by horse and buggy the 650 kilometres to Peace River Crossing and then by raft the 480 kilometres down the Peace River to Fort Vermilion. The journey took 21 days. All the seeds were in the ground six days later and grew well. Unfortunately, an early frost damaged that first crop, but the Fort Vermilion research center had been established. Today it continues to provide northern Alberta farmers with assistance.

When John Saunders retired in 1911, experimental farms had become an integral part of Canadian agricultural policy. The emphasis shifted from mixed farming to greater specialization in one variety of crop or livestock, the expanding research program became a more potent support for farmers through the transfer of much needed technology. In 1945, John Saunders could report that his province was still one of our most important tasks,” says Dr. F. J. LeRoy, the assistant minister who now directs research in the charge of the research branch, “but we are deeply involved in the whole agricul- tural picture."

LeRoy, the fourteenth person to head Agriculture Canada’s research arm, notes that his branch now conducts almost half of Canada’s agricultural research — the remainder is the preserve, for the most part, of a few private companies, a number of provincial governments and many universities, often with financial assistance from the federal government. He stresses the importance of this research. “If Canada hopes to compete as nations in agricultural research,” says LeRoy, “it will lag in the world marketplace where food is a highly important trade commodity. If we lag in research our economy will suffer.” Today, while only four percent of Canadians are actively engaged in farming (in 1931 that figure was 32 percent), nearly 40 percent of this country’s economic activity is directly or indirectly related to the production, processing, handling and retailing of food in 1985 our food exports totaled $10 billion.

The enthusiasm of William Saunders brought to the experimental farm system in Canada in the 1930s led to the establishment of the laboratories of Agriculture Canada’s research branch, where doctors are developing a virus that almost everyone currently uses that touches on agriculture is explored, including soils, water, weather, waste usage, chemistry, entomology, energy, energy, engineering, plants and animals.

At the animal research centre’s facility outside of Ottawa, for example, a team of nutritionists, geneticists and reproductive physiologists embarked on a project in 1980 to breed a boar that would lead to the development of a type of sheep that reproduces more quickly than traditional breeds and would help relieve the pressing demand on Canadian sheep industry. Today, the ewes in the research centre’s barns are being bred to produce a new breed that will change the way sheep are raised.

Credit for the development of the Lacombe hog, which is white skinned and more appealing aesthetically to pork eaters, goes to Dr. Howard Freeden, a scientist working at the Saskatchewan Research Council. He developed a technique to allow the pigs to grow to a market weight of 280 pounds in about 140 days, far shorter than the usual 180 to 200 days it takes to fatten a hog to market weight. The hog is also leaner, with higher HPL, or protein content, than the traditional hog.

The Lacombe hog is white skinned and more appealing aesthetically to pork eaters, and took the American market by storm. It was registered in 1958 and is now exported worldwide, with more than 40 countries around the world.

During the century since William Saunders started the experimental farm network, agricultural research and, in deed, agriculture itself have changed dramatically. Embryo transplant already shows promise for the future crop, and within a decade it will be probably be economically feasible for commercial breeders to use the procedure. Today, scientists are also attempting to transfer genes from le- gumes to cereals in an effort to increase the “self-fertilizing” wheat, which would give it its own nitrogen from the air, reducing the need for the annual application of nitrogen fertilizer. As well, Agriculture Canada scientists are trying to develop disease-resistant crops to eliminate the need for spraying and more winter-hardy crops that can be planted in the fall, lie dormant during the winter and then begin to grow as soon as the spring arrives.

The work of the research branch extends well beyond the borders of Canada. Through a variety of programs, numerous Third World countries are benefiting from Canadian agricultural expertise. For the past 20 years, for example, Agriculture Canada has run, with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency equipment. As a result of the project, crop yields in India have doubled and in some cases tripled. "India Gandhi called the research program life-saving," says Dr. Tom Arcone, one of the program’s coordinators from 1986 to 1989 and the author of Our Harvests, a history of Agriculture Canada’s research branch. "Since the project began, India has moved from being a cereal deficit to being a cereal exporter," he says. "The project can be said to have succeeded because the Indian government no longer needs us to run it. We're winding down our involvement.”

While the research branch will no longer be involved in the All India Dryland Program, it has plenty of projects in Third World countries to keep it busy. A wheat-breeding project in Brazil, a hog-breeding project in China and a wheat production program in Tanzania are just a few of them.

Agricultural research in Canada has advanced a great deal in the 100 years since William Saunders set up what has become Agriculture Canada’s research branch. Questions that used to take scientists years to answer can now be answered in a few weeks. Researchers are helping not just Canadian farmers but people throughout the world. That advancement is a tribute to Saunders; it was his vision that cast the mold for the research branch and helped this country to become a world leader in agricultural research and a vital source of sustenance to the world. A matter of substance indeed.
THE PRICE OF GAS

The prices at the pump vary from city to city, station to station, hour to hour. Up one day. Down the next. Why? Who’s behind it all? Is it a rip-off? Esso Petroleum’s Tim Hearn has heard all the questions. And those 30-second explanations. Now’s the time for a serious answer.

It was not quite an argument, but it came close. Eric is a valued friend. I like and respect him. On this particular evening, however, the after-dinner conversation turned to a subject reasonably close to my heart and very close to the source of my livelihood. That subject was the price of gasoline.

Eric, proclaiming himself spokesman for the “ordinary consumer,” trotted out a panoply of arguments, assumptions and accusations directed at the petroleum industry, all leading to what seemed to him some logical and obvious conclusions: the major petroleum companies “gouge” and “rip off” consumers when it comes to gasoline prices; they “manipulate” the market to limit competition and reap “excessive” profits; there is no “real” competition in the industry.

As a writer for Imperial Oil, I took the opposing view with some vigor. His assumptions, I said, were unfounded, unfair and incorrect; his conclusions, far from reflecting logic or even common sense, instead revealed his mistaken views of a complex industry.

“Yet, at the same time, Eric’s confusion was understandable. Gasoline prices in Canada vary “all over the map.” Prices are higher in some provinces than in others. They also vary from one place to another within the same province and even from one area to another within the same city or town. As well, they vary from self-serve to full-service stations and from major-brand outlets to independent stations.

Then there are the wide fluctuations in gasoline prices even at the same station — swings of as much as six or seven cents a litre within a matter of hours. Also, the prices at different stations all seem to move together, either up or down.

“How can this happen?” Eric asked. “If, as you say, it’s a very competitive business and the market sets the price?”

Then he went on, “But most of all, it seems to me that if an Esso station sells me a litre of gasoline for 35 cents one day and charges me 40 cents or more the very next day, then at the higher price I must be really getting ripped off.”

“The fact is that during a price war consumers can buy gasoline for less than it costs to produce.”

BY RUSSELL FELTON
Gasoline price wars: the cause of so much confusion for the consumer

 commentaire.

"Look," Eric concluded, "that's obvious. The gasoline market is being manipulated all the time. There's no genuine competition, and the consumer is getting ripped off. The price of gas, whatever that price is, is too damn high!

"The market set the price for gasoline," says Tim Hearn, vice-president of Esso Petroleum Canada's consumer relations. "It's difficult for consumers to accept that, because in many places, pump prices fluctuate almost constantly — up one day, down the next. The consumer wants to know what the 'normal' price should be for a litre of gasoline in Canada, which is understandable. But in fact there is no such thing as a 'normal' price.

"The market for gasoline is tremendously fragmented. It's actually thousands of different markets, each with a dynamic of its own. The gasoline market, say, rural British Columbia is very different from the market in the east end of Toronto, which again is different from the market in north Toronto.

"To narrow it down even further: if there are four competing service stations on different corners of the same intersection, they can constitute a 'mini-market' of their own. A station on its own in a shopping mall has a few blocks away might not be part of that market at all, while a station at a major highway rest area operates under a different set of market conditions altogether.

"Probably the only thing all these different markets have in common," Hearn adds, "is that they all have highly competitive.

Another important factor that Hearn mentions have mentioned have mentioned has is that all of these competitiors different types of gasoline outlets. Consumers tend to think that all service stations are virtually the same, but they are not. Some stations are owned and operated by major refining and marketing companies, such as Imperial Oil Limited. But not all Esso stations are owned or operated by Imperial. So, in fact, most — Esso stations are operated by self-employed business people. They buy gasoline from Esso Petroleum, Imperial's refining and marketing division, and sell their own prices, according to the competition in their own local markets.

"Among the other operations, known as the 'independents,' some are chains and some are single owner-managed small businesses. They may have long-term supply contracts with one refiner, they may buy gasoline on so-called 'spot' markets in Canada or the United States, or they may combine both sources.

"A particularly important factor in today's market," Hearn says, "is that since the industry was deregulated in June 1985, gasoline can be freely imported and exported between Canada and the United States. Sometimes, although not always, the price is lower in the United States than in Canada. If a marketer can buy a shipment of cheaper imported gasoline, he gains an immediate, short-term advantage on his competitors who may have longer-term supply contracts — which offer greater supply security but at a slightly higher price — with Canadian refineries.

"All these factors — the number and variety of competing retailers, the frequent changes of operating, long-term versus spot market wholesale purchasing options and the availability of imported gasoline — can come into play in any given market. They can result in fierce competition, leading to gasoline price wars, which add to the cause of so much confusion for the consumer.

"The phenomenon of the so-called gasoline price wars is, it seems apparent, a major cause of public misunderstanding and cynicism toward the petroleum industry. While they do occur in one form or another in all regions of Canada, they are most frequent and most severe in Ontario, especially in the Toronto area, where there is the greatest amount of imported gasoline, the greatest number and variety of competitors and the greatest excess of gasoline refining capacity.

"There are about 6,600 gas stations in Ontario," Hearn says. "Frankly, that's many more than the market can support. The total consumption of gasoline in the province has declined by about 25 percent since 1981, and although some refineries have closed and the number of stations has been reduced, there still exist a substantial excess of supply and retailing capacity. So the competition is fierce, and the major instrument of competition in gasoline refining is price. It's a fact that consumers will switch gas stations to save a fraction of a cent per litre, or as little as 10 cents on an average fill.

"Underlying the gasoline price war phenomenon is the fact that gasoline refining and marketing is a volume and margin business, with very high fixed costs and relatively low 'incremental' costs. This has implications for both the refining and retailing sectors of the industry.

"For the petroleum refiner, it costs a lot of money to build, maintain and operate a petroleum refinery along with a distribution and marketing system and a network of service stations. It is vital to keep these facilities productive, because the more gasoline a refiner produces, the lower the costs per barrel. And this lower the costs per barrel, the greater the chances of realizing a profit margin when each litre is sold.

"At this time, since the overall demand for gasoline is basically stagnant, it's obvious that the only way to produce and sell more gasoline is to gain a greater share of the market.

"At the retail level, each service station owner has certain fixed costs for rent, wages and so forth — and he or she must sell a certain volume of gasoline to cover costs and make a living. But the refiner also knows that the cost of selling an extra litre of gasoline is almost nil — virtually just the cost of pumping it. The profit margin per litre, once the fixed costs are covered, is virtually all profit the operator keeps.

"So the retail operator, like the refiner, will try to increase his or her sales volume by gaining a greater market share, which means attracting customers from the competition. The ensuing war to do that is to reduce the price. So, in a highly competitive market, the price keeps changing as the players jostle for market share.

"Price wars get very sticky when one retailer tries to increase volume by lowering his or her price. All competitors in the same market are then forced either to match this lower price or go even lower in an effort to regain sales volume lost in the first few hours. So prices drop.

"Consumer cynicism over gasoline price wars seems to hinge on two perceptions. One is that the price posted by supposedly competing retailers all seem to go down together when a price war occurs, then rise together when the war ends. This creates the impression that the market is being manipulated.

"The second perception, the one my friend Eric found so damning of this industry, is that if a retailer or a petroleum company can sell gasoline for, say, 38 cents one day, then when the price goes up to, say, 41 cents the next, then these three-cent differential is all unjustifiable profit for the industry.

"This is the position, Tim Hearn, says that the average consumer believes that even at the lowest price posted during a price war, the refiner still makes a profit, and therefore he or she feels that when the price war ends and the price rises, the consumer is being ripped off.

"But the fact is that during price wars, consumers can buy gasoline for less than it costs to produce. I don't think that happens in any other business, especially in very rare circumstances.

"Esso Petroleum's president, Gord Thomason, in making a submission to a Standing Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, noted that on April 17, 1981, regular unleaded gasoline was being sold in Toronto for 389 cents a litre. That price did not include the 23 cents in taxes, royalties and other government levies. A further 15 cents reflected the cost of refining, the 12.5 cents for the product and transport and distribution costs from Edmonton to Esso Petroleum's refinery in Sarnia. So, that Esso dealer's margin was about 3.3 cents.
regulated gasoline markets: little incentive to operate efficiently or provide better products and services

Fact, they don't, and therein lies the problem. All the competitors watch one another like hawks. When one lowers his or her price, the others have to keep pace—and quickly—or lose customers and sales.

Underlying the arguments of price gouging and market manipulation is the assumption that the major petroleum companies make "excessive" profits from gasoline sales. Is this assumption supported by the record?

In 1985, Esso Petroleum Canada declared after-tax earnings of $93 million. Average capital employed by the division was $2.6 billion. The net return on capital employed was therefore 3.45 percent—a figure that would not seem to be "excessive" for any business, in fact it represents a satisfactory level of profitability from the investment of so much capital.

Over the four year period from 1982 to 1985, the division's average return on capital employed was 4.45 percent. This compares with a Canadian manufacturing industry average over the same period of 7.6 percent a year. The division's 1985 earnings reflected an average after-tax profit of less than 65 cents a litre from sales of all fuel products.

It seems ironic that in an industry where competition and market forces are strong, companies hesitate to sell a major product for less than it costs to produce and where prices are considerably lower than generally acceptable levels in other industries, critics should continually allege market manipulation and excessive profit-taking. As Gord Thompson asked in a recent public address, "If we're manipulating gasoline prices and market manipulation is illegal, how come we're not making any money here?"

Another argument frequently put forward by critics of the industry is that gasoline prices should be set and regulated by governments to ensure a "fair deal" for consumers. What might happen, should gasoline prices be controlled in the manner suggested?

If practices followed in other regulated industries were to apply, the petroleum industry would presumably be permitted to make representation to any price setting body for price levels allowing them to realize a satisfactory rate of return on their investment. Bell Canada, for example, is permitted by the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to realize a maximum return of 13.25 percent this year.

If Esso Petroleum had been permitted to realize even a 10 percent return on its investment in 1985, its earnings would have been considerably higher—about $928 million, based on invested capital of $2.6 billion. For the division to achieve this level of profitability, the price of gasoline in many markets would have been considerably higher than it was.

Why then, if regulating gasoline prices would result in higher profits and lower overheads for Imperial oil and other companies, do they not support price regulation? "Price regulation promotes inefficiency," says Gord Thomson. "It is a little incentive to improve operations or provide better products and services to the customer. Regulators would normally set a price allowing the least efficient company to make a satisfactory margin and stay in business. In an unregulated, free-market system, the price tends to seek the level at which the most efficient operators can realize a return which means consumers get a better deal."

"Also," Thomson adds, "the whole process of administering prices creates a major administrative burden for government and oil companies, and the administrative costs would ultimately be borne by the consumers."

Would consumers be better served if gasoline prices were set by government rather than by unpredictable and volatile market conditions? It's interesting that in the province of Nova Scotia, where prices are regulated by government, gasoline prices are normally more stable than in other parts of Canada. Prices were nearly constant and are sometimes lower in the province, which means that Nova Scotia consumers are ahead of the curve by a year or more. This has a "bang" price periodically, says Toronto.

The report released by the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission in June 1986 that this should be considered. "Regulatory regimes...deprive consumers...of lower-cost options available to consumers elsewhere in the country. Such restrictions compromise the ability of the industry to adjust to meet consumer demand and to charge lower prices made possible by lower-cost distributions of gasoline and induced by competitive pressures."

Finally, what of the notion, currently receiving much public attention, that when the price of crude oil goes down sharply, as it did in early 1986, the price of gasoline does not go down to an equivalent extent or as quickly as people think it should?

"This too is really a matter of perception rather than fact," Tim Heams says. "For example, during 1985 the price of crude oil fell, but the price of gasoline at the pump fell, a fact that went largely unnoticed by the industry's critics. Also, when the price of crude oil began falling in late 1985 and early 1986, competition in many markets forced refiners to reduce the price of gasoline before crude oil price reductions had worked their way through the system and to greater amounts than would have been justified merely by matching the reduction in the price of crude oil."

"The fall of 1985, when the price of crude oil fell from 72 dollars to 25 dollars per barrel, gasoline prices went up in southern Ontario. But in fact there was no connection between the two. Gasoline prices had been very depressed and there was a restoration triggered by the marketplace because of increasing demand. The price of crude oil is only one factor in the price of gasoline at the pump. Over time, lower crude prices will lead to generally lower gasoline prices and vice versa. But it's by no means the only factor, and there is no immediate, direct drive relationship between them. Competition, consumer demand and preferences for services, prevailing conditions in the marketplace and the availability of imported gasoline are much the dominant factors than the price of the basic raw material."

Heams analysis appears to have been borne out by the conclusions and recommendations of the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, which states that "Regional price differences and swings in prices over time are due largely to variations in competitive conditions caused in part by the number of refiners, the number and types of marketers, the degree of excess refining capacity and the availability of imports. Tax differences and other government interventions also affect prices on a provincial basis."

These were the arguments I might have used in my dinner-finger discussion with my friend Eric, had I had the data and statistics at hand. Would he be convinced that the Canadian gasoline consumer is well served by a highly competitive petroleum product industry and that, far from being "ripped off", consumers in many markets are getting some remarkable bargains at the gas pump?

Perhaps. But perhaps also. Mistrust and suspicion of the so-called "big oil companies" seem deeply ingrained in the collective psyche of Canadian consumers. In spite of intensive, exhaustive investigations such as the five-year inquiry by the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, which found "no evidence of collusion in any sector of the industry," charges of market manipulation, collusion and price gouging continue to be aired and given credence.

Thinking back on our rear-end argument, I decided to discuss it with one of my colleagues in the public affairs department at Imperial Oil, the public affairs manager for Ontario, Les Cowie. "There's no question," he said, "that gasoline pricing is one of the most complex issues of the day. It's difficult to understand and even more difficult to explain, especially since many people today expect to have issues explained quickly and simply. They get much of their information from radio and television news stories, which try to cover all sides of an issue, even complex issues, in just 60 or 90 seconds. How do you just explain the complexities of gasoline pricing in that amount of time?"

It seems clear, then, that the challenge to the industry, and especially to its professional communicators and spokespersons, is to work harder to clarify the issue and above all to promote greater public understanding of the petroleum industry and of gasoline markets. It is not a hardy a new challenge, and it is certainly a tall order, but on the evidence of our eyes and ears, it's one we have to tackle head on.
SATURDAY MORNING...

the soft light, the fine snow...

BY ROBERT THOMAS ALLEN

Every day of the week, and, I suppose, every time of day, has its mood and special memories, and some have specially strong connections for me. Just a glimpse of a tangle of bare birch branches in a certain light, with a few yellow leaves gleaming against an overcast sky, and I'm filled with a mood of Saturday mornings I've known. Saturday mornings just before winter really arrived, for instance, when downtown Toronto, the first sugary grains of snow clung to the policemen's hats and coats and outlined the grey stones of the university buildings and the windows of the Royal Ontario Museum, and there was the cheerful sound of children's voices everywhere.

Winter or summer, Saturday morning is a great time for kids. I've often stood on my balcony on Saturday morning watching them on their way to some exciting event outside City Hall or the Parliament buildings, their voices min...
but my mother being that familiar with our father, and to me it seemed to be of little importance, but my father didn't seem to mind.

During one early working days, when my daughters were small, it was a special event to stay in bed on Saturday morning and lie there in a warm circle of blankets, coloring books, pink slipper- ers and dolls and listen to the snow falling against the dead leaves outside the bedroom window. And I remember Sat- urday mornings that helped sustain me through some very dull jobs. At one time I used to practise skiing on Satur- day mornings on some gentle slopes in a big prairie-like field near my home (on one direction it dropped off into a wooded valley that was a great place for Saturday-morning bird-watching expeditions) where I could stand on a slight rise and see in the distance the budgling where the puppy and I used to scoop snow. Sometimes I'd slide a jackrabbit in the hilly- lose fields of last year's milkweed and goldenrod, and it would somehow brighten my world to know that when I went to work on Monday morning I would be able to look up from reading memos about sales meetings and data sheets about installing boilers and see from my window the place where the jackrabbit lived.

Oddly, though, among the Saturday mornings I remember most vividly are the ones when I had to work and only had the afternoon off; the holiday feel- ing of knowing we were going to get early was almost as good as being off all day. On hazy, cold Saturday mornings when I'd sip up midmorning coffee and cinnamon buns at Liggert's

druggist; when the mandate cosies were sending up silver phones, could pass women returning to the office, running with their legs clashing out sideways, laughing and bungling themselves against the cold, and decorator girls in their white clubs and fine uniforms seemed to have a smart way of slamming the folding gates and calling out, "lingerie, ladies shoes, bedding, towels—send the door open!" as if they thought working for a living was pretty good job. I worked in an advertis- ing office, and I remember women fre- lance fashion artists, strange exotic creatures in side hats, coming up to the door with drawings and giving a gracious sort of royal scowl as they flounced up the aisle between workers who made a living drawing things like pressure cookers, looking as if they would be on some one's yacht: 2:30 in the afternoon.

I still like going for long walks, but sometimes I'd slip out of the house and with my dog Jack, occasionally a friend who was leaving town, we would go around the block, or take a trip to the woods, or just drive out to a nearby lake. But I never could manage to draw my thoughts together in a coherent way, and the only thing I can say about Saturday mornings is that I don't know what to say about them.
In Closing

It is now just over a quarter century since the autumn day in 1966 when a group of people from rural New Brunswick, not far from the city of Moncton, gathered for the opening of their small country hospital. It was in the village of Albert, one of a number of similar villages sitting along route 114, which runs south from Moncton through marshes as wide as the sky.

The new hospital, which had 16 beds, was a low building on a hill just at the entrance to the village, before you turned left to pass in front of the white-painted church to which I had been sent three years earlier as a newly ordained and newly married minister. My parishioners lived in the villages and countryside stretching down the highway from Hopewell Hill, a hamlet where a few white houses stand on each side of the road and where Canada’s eleventh prime minister, R.B. Bennett, was born in 1870. Most of the people in the villages made their living from the fields and farms and the oceans of forest that began on the horizon of the marshes.

One evening, about a year after I had arrived, a group of us — the Baptist minister, the Catholic priest, the new doctor and a few local people — gathered to make plans to meet a need that was obvious to all, especially the doctor: a community hospital. The doctor, John Steeves, who had just graduated from McGill’s faculty of medicine, was a man of limitless energies who had been born in Albert county and carried in his most prominent name. He was appointed chairman of a board of trustees. I became secretary.

The hospital was built, but, ironically, I was not there to see it opened; I had accepted a job in Toronto and had left a couple of months before it was officially opened in the fall of 1966. In the decades since, I have driven by it once or twice, but feeling I would be either a stranger or intruder, I kept on going. I had never been inside.

Then, one day last summer, a letter arrived at my office. The Albert County Hospital, it said, had reached a milestone: its twentieth year. Being a member of the first board of trustees, the letter read, “we would very much like you to attend if at all possible.” I read it, and while I was grateful to be remembered after a quarter century, I felt I could not go; it was a busy time of the year and there was a fair distance between the city of Toronto and the village of Albert. I sent my regrets. Then, of course, I had the doubts I might have expected, a mixture of curiosity, nostalgia and the feeling that comes over us all when we are past 50 and think of the places we were when we were just past 20. Suddenly, a week or so before the anniversary, I found myself picking up the phone, speaking to the woman who had written to me and explaining that I had had second thoughts. I would be there. She seemed pleased: “I’m going to phone my chairman,” she said, “right away.”

I flew to Moncton and then in late morning drove toward Albert, through the quiet maples of fall, some of which, standing since the byehood of R.B. Bennett, reached out to touch one another in an autumn archway. By early afternoon I had arrived in Albert. I drove down the street, simply looking again at the houses, the churches, the old store of Dewitt Stiles — himself long since gone — leaning in the Saturday silence. I drove to the hospital.

There were perhaps a couple of hundred people there, standing in the small lot in front of the building as it stood there in the entrance and lobby. A woman named June Call — the administrator who had written to me — greeted me and then one of the nurses took me on a tour of the building. As she showed me through, it struck me that I had never been in a hospital anywhere that showed so much wear yet still shone in its grandeur as if it recently had simply the attention of cleaners but the care of those who cherished it as they cherished their homes.

Then, in about an hour, everyone gathered in the lot outside, where a few speeches were delivered, a couple of presentations made and a man named Vernon Hubson, who had sung a solo at the hospital’s opening 25 years ago, sang again, his voice floating on the fall air as clearly as I remembered it from the church choir years before. Then, three of us who had been on the original board — the former bank manager, Angus Jones, Floyd Elliott, who had worked for the government, and myself — said a few words and together unveiled the plaque with the names of the men and women who had served through the years.

It was raining. I kept my words brief. As I spoke, my private recollections were about things we had learned when we helped to build the hospital. The doctor and I had been filled not just with the optimism of youth but the confidence of those who still fresh from the halls of learning.

Once, in late 1960, after construction was well under way on the building as the money ran out, Dr. Steeves and I stood at the site one gloomy November afternoon as the first snow dusted the foundation, but neither of us seemed worried; it was as if we were sustained by some instinctive confidence that things would work out. We went to Saint John to seek a contribution from one of the province’s leading industrialists. He heard us out, twirling a thin pencil between the index finger and thumb of each hand. Then he spoke bluntly: “Boys, I’m going to tell you something. You have nothing but a moral argument. That’s not enough. I can think of a dozen moral arguments on the other side. You need more than morality. Think it through again. Then call me.” We did, pointing out the economic and social benefits that would follow in the hospital’s wake through a healthier community and the value it would have as an employer of local people and a client of local suppliers. His counsel was a valuable exercise. He did contribute, and even more to the point, the province guaranteed a substantial loan. The hammers began to swing once more.

At the banquet held on the evening of the anniversary, I sat across from my next-door neighbor of those Albert County days, the Catholic priest, a courteous, soft-spoken man, Father Leo Hynes, who, even in the era before Vatican II, was a colleague in many a good cause. His rectory was beside the parsonage where I lived, and one evening he came to the door to ask if I might have a wrench he could use on his furnace. I do not recall if I had the wrench, but I am left with vague feelings that as furnace repairmen the priest and the minister were more suited to another calling. He is now the priest of a large parish in Moncton and his recall of some of our conversations of the late fifties, on faith and order, left me grateful not only for the gift of memory but for his ecumenism, which was not always present in our earlier days.

The chairman invited me to say a few words. I thanked the people for the tribute they had paid to the members of the first board. I also said that a few of us, who had been new to our careers and to their communities, received a great deal more from them than we could ever return — in learning how to apply our training and our untired talents in their villages. Our debt to them was enormous. We came to manhood in their midst.

As I spoke, my mind went back to a visit I had made that afternoon. After the unveiling someone had mentioned that one of my parishioners of those early years had been brought in as a patient the night before and that if I had a minute or two I might drop by to say hello. I did. She was, back when I knew her, a pretty woman of middle age. She was now well into her eighties. She was rather frail and, as I was to discover, alone.

We talked, remembering her husband who had run the general store, one of those men every young minister knows and with whom there would be no congregation. Almost always, on Sunday evenings, when the busy round of services was over, I would cross the marshes to her home where the fine silver would be out and tea would be served in the best china. They would ask if everything was all right at the parsonage — the furnace, the roof, the plumbing. Then, when we brought our first child home, we took him there as you do if they needed to be assured that we were up to looking after him. Sometimes, as she spoke her memories to me at her bedside, we smiled. Sometimes we laughed. And sometimes we didn’t look into each other’s eyes. I got up to leave. I promised to write. Then, when I reached the door, she spoke my name and when I turned, she said a few words I shall always treasure. "I knew," she said, "that you would come.”

Florence, I have never really left.