The Review

Volume 71, Spring 1987
Issue number 204

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Published in English by
Imperial Oil Limited, 201 John Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 3H3.

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STEPPING INTO SPRING

What foreign correspondents say about us  BY VICTOR PADDY

The oil industry’s quest for fairness  BY DONALD PENROSE
OUR LIBRARY OF LIBRARIES

BY MARTIN O’MALLEY

One of the last letters Glenn Gould wrote was to a filmmaker in New York. He said to her, "Animal welfare is one of the great passions of my life." I had no idea Glenn Gould was interested in animal welfare, let alone impassioned by it; at least not until I had poked around in the cardboard box marked "Outgoing Correspondence 1977-1982." It was part of the Glenn Gould collection, housed in a cluttered room on the fifth floor of the National Library of Canada, and I was fortunate enough to have been given special permission to examine a few sections of it.

I felt as if I was sifting through an attic on a Sunday afternoon. I wished I could look at the entire collection. All around me were boxes and bins filled with Gould's belongings. Their labels told me what was in them. In one box were hotel room keys. Gould had collected during his world travels, old cufflinks, socks, shoes, an overcoat, watches, travel alarm clocks, playing cards, several attaché cases, a package of Austrian money. Other boxes contained manuscripts, newspaper and magazine clippings, insurance records, financial papers, automobile rental and repair receipts and doctors' bills. I'd like to return to the National Library in 1988 when the public will have unlimited access to the collection.

The National Library of Canada is a handsome, fortress-like building on Wellington Street in downtown Ottawa, a short walk from the Parliament Buildings. It is open to the public, but it is not the sort of place where you expect to see lineups circling the block (though when I dropped by there was a fascinating exhibition titled "Bells Through the Ages").


Our national library is our nation's life — yesterday and today.

The Public Archives of Canada and the National Library share the same building, but they are separate institutions, with a healthy, working rivalry. The Archives is much older. It dates back to 1912, while the National Library was not established until 1953.

The Library moved from its original, temporary quarters in Tunny’s Pasture in west-end Ottawa to its current home on June 20, 1987. The new building, with furnishings, costs $13 million, a bargain even in the 1980s. Much of it is functional — air-conditioning throughout, three climate-controlled basements, squat prison-cell windows to guard against sunlight damage — but there are many parts that are inviting and often beautiful. In the main lobby is a Henry Moore sculpture ("Three Way Piece Points") presented to Canada by the British government in honor of the nation's 100th birthday. The floor of the lobby and the central staircase are white marble from Vermont, the walls Cremo marble from Italy. In the main lobby and on the second and third floors are spectacular etched glass engravings by John Hutton of New Zealand. Elsewhere are lavish murals by artists Charles Comfort and Alfred Pelan, and in a corner of the main lobby stands an old, scuffed piano — the piano Glenn Gould used in his recordings.

The back of the library overlooks the treed banks of the Ottawa River, and, beyond, the city of Hull in Quebec. On a large patio behind the building is a statue of Sir Arthur Doughty — legs crossed, quill in hand, manuscript on knee. He looks lost in thought. Born in England in 1856, Doughty, a historian and archivist, became Canada's dominion archivist in

In a corner of the lobby sits one of Glenn Gould's pianos, part of the library's collection of the late musician's belongings.
Oscar director of libraries at McGill, Marianne Scott is Canada's national librarian

"libraries" library. This means it should be the last stop, the big backup, for borrowers and researchers who have exhausted local libraries. It also means co-ordinating library work across the country, finding on a moment's notice where certain books are and arranging for them to be lent to whoever needs them. It is an especially important role in a country that has a small population spread over a vast land. The wonder is that it looks so long for a national library to be established here, says Scott. "We have a lot of catch-up work to do.

The biggest operation at the National Library comes under the title of "legal deposit." As set down in the National Library Act of 1953, the publisher of any book published in Canada shall, at his or her own expense and within one week of the date of publication, send two copies of the book to the national librarian. The definition of "book" includes all trade publications, children's books, publications of professional and philanthropic associations (even university calendars and prison newsletters), published pamphlets, all magazines, all music publications (including scores and sheet music), art books and portfolios of prints and reproductions, educational kits and all phonograph records and audio tapes that have Canadian content.

The practice of legal deposit has been in force for centuries in most of the western world. The earliest known legal deposit law dates back to 1537 and was enacted, in France, more for reasons of censorship than the collection and preservation of the country's literary heritage.

For some publishers, legal deposit can be an onerous and expensive duty; some limited-edition art portfolios cost as much as $12,000. If the cost of a book is more than $50, the National Library insists on receiving only one copy. Publishers who do not deposit the required books to the National Library can be fined $150.

Last year, the legal deposit requirement brought the National Library more than 22,000 titles, about 65 every working day. The library also buys, with its own money, books about Canada published outside the country, books by expatriate Canadians and books about Canada by foreign writers. Library workers are also constantly on the lookout for rare and out-of-print books. And then there are the bonanzas, rare books and priceless collections that are donated to the National Library by benevolent citizens.

The most treasured of these bonanzas is the Jacob M. Lowy collection — nearly 3000 rare works of Hebrews and Judaeas donated to the National Library in 1977 by Jacob M. Lowy of Montreal, an immigrant to Canada. The collection includes nearly 40 volumes of incunabula (specimens of early European printing), among them early Biblical translations in different languages, the first printed edition of the Babylonian Talmud and the editions printed of Flavius Josephus, a Jewish scholar born in AD 38, issued in Latin in 1470 (the oldest printed book in the National Library). The Jacob M. Lowy collection is one of the most important collections of rare Hebrewica in the western world.

At level 3b, the lowest of the three sub-basements at the library, it is startling to come upon a large, busy, brightly lit room with row upon row of oversized workbenches, glass cases, machinery and tool of every description and workers in smocks and lab coats. It is action central, the war room. "This shop is one of the best in North America," says Joyce Banks, the rare books and conservation librarian. It is where old and tattered but richly historical books are restored and where their pages — always called "leaves" — are preserved through an intricate, time-consuming procedure that involves dismantling the books, which can be as fragile as cobwebs, and painstakingly reassembling them so they look as if they had just been published. The books are stuck together with linen thread, and if they require rebinding, they're bound, usually in calf's leather, and sometimes decorated exquisitely with gilt. The job is more than a craft that requires a strong back and good hand-eye dexterity; it requires exhaustive research into printing techniques and book design through the ages, in different societies. "We don't set out to change books," Banks says. "If a book wasn't decorated when we got it, we don't decorate it here."

A major concern of Banks is the deterioration of paper used in books during the past 100 years. She calls it "the most serious conservation problem facing librarians today." At a meeting in Washington, D.C., in September 1984, she gave the following warning to the Society of American Archivists: "Because of papermaking techniques introduced during the 19th century and because of the continuous use in papermaking of certain chemicals that cause inherent acidity in book paper, nearly every book printed since then is borderline or will become brittle as a result of acid decay. This includes most of the books printed since the Confederation of Canada in 1867; that is, most of Canada's printed heritage as a nation."

Banks took me on a tour of the workstations in the sprawling sub-basement on level 3b. She wanted to show me the deacidification process, which she says is crucial in preserving books. In a corner of the room, a woman wear-
ing protective goggles and gloves sat on a stool in front of a glass partition. She turned the leaves of a book, one by one, spraying them with a decollating solution from a hand-held air-pressure gun. Every few seconds, flip — shhhhhh. The process neutralizes the acidity in the paper and deposits a benign alkaline buffering agent.

Banks’ major complaint, however, is that individual leaf decollation is simply too laborious, too slow. “Apart from the cost in time and money,” she says, “there are not enough trained conservators in the world to make a significant impact on the existing conservation backlog.”

The solution is “mass decollation,” a new process in which a quantity of books, new and old, are treated in bulk. Fortunately, Canada — specifically the National Library and Public Archives — is a world leader in the field.

Banks led me to another of the sub-basements, where Réal Couture, wearing a white lab coat, demonstrated the process. The first step is to dry the books in a vacuum dryer. The dryer can hold up to 32 baskets of books, with about 15 books to a basket. The drying, which takes 26 hours, removes the normal dampness of the paper. Next, the baskets of books are loaded, two at a time, into a tank into which a deacidification solution is pumped. After an hour, the books are removed, vacuum-dried again, then allowed to return to room temperature, and absorb normal moisture from the air. “The treatment triples the life of the books,” Couture says. “It means there will be books to read in 500 years.”

The cost of mass decollation is only $4.50 a book, an enormous saving over the plodding, book-by-book process, which costs about $300 a book. “We have not yet been able to operate the system to its full capacity,” Banks says. “If we worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week, we could decollate about 3000 books a week.”

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On display in the new book room is Samuel de Champlain’s Les Voyages De La Nouvelle France.

cylinder, disc and tape recordings and player-piano rolls from the early 1900s, more than 10,000 pieces of sheet music and the transcriptions and manuscripts of more than 200 Canadian musicians and composers — Claude Champagne, Murray Adaskin, Allan Mills, Trump Davidson and Glenn Gould among them.

Kallmann met Gould in a social setting only once, at a friend’s house in the affluent Toronto neighborhood of Rosedale. “He was too quiet, beyond me,” Kallmann recalls. “He was a sort of Marshall McLuhan of music, in the sense of being ahead of his time. He looked so intellectually ahead of his time.”

When lunch ended it was time to head back to the National Library for a last afternoon of browsing.

So many places to browse. The multimedia bibliographic service, which provides access to books in a multitude of languages — Arabic, Czech, Estonian, Icelandic, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu and Vietnamese to list only a few. The newspaper collection, with 18,000 bound volumes of newspapers from all regions of the country, 55,000 reels of microfilm and 13,000 microprint cards. The Canadian Indian rights collection, with precious Indian, Métis and Inuk documents. The library manuscripts collection, with the manuscripts, notes and correspondence of such distinguished Canadians as Gabrielle Roy, Roger Lemelin, Jack Hodgins, George Bowering, Maine-Clair Blain, Elizabeth Smart and W.P. Kinsella.

There are also booklets with old reviews of books by Mendelstam Richter, Margaret Atwood, Malcolm Lowry and Pierre Bert.

And there are morgues of recently acquired rare books.

I decided to try the newspaper collection, which is popular with many amateur genealogists. “I wondered what shape the world was in on the day I was born,” February 22, 1939. The big story in the Winnipeg Tribune was, “Booms Ban- dits Get $250 in Raid on Crowded Cafes.”

On the international front, French and Italian troops clashed on the Tunisian border and the Italians were driven back into Libya. Norma Shearer and Clark Gable were playing in Adam’s Detective at the Capital Theatre — 40 cents admission. It was 23 non-Celsius degrees below zero.

You can soon bound books on the library, a place where curiosity can run wild. There are special study rooms where you can find a pile of books and documents, close the door and browse for hours, in total privacy. As Samuel Johnson once said, “The greatest enjoyment in knowing something is knowing where to find it.”

In the Gould room I sift through one of the files I’d been given permission to look at. A letter, dated March 5, 1962, from New York congratulates Gould for an article he wrote in a magazine called Musical America. The writer praises Gould’s courage in advocating a ban on applause at concerts, which the writer says would “make listening to musical performances much more pleasant for those of us who do listen.” For anyone touched by Glenn Gould’s life and work, there are thousands upon thousands of us, it’s good to know that there is so much of it here, in a safe place, in the capital of Canada.

In the fall of 1966, the American writer Otto Friedrich visited the library to interview himself in the Gould collection. He is writing the biography of Glenn Gould and has been given access to the complete Gould collection. I asked him how many hours he would spend with all that rich and associative material.
TOWARD TOMORROW

Rox was in trouble. Formed by a group of high-school students in the fall of 1985, the small Toronto company had hoped to make an impressive entry into the business world by manufacturing and selling wood and canvas magazine racks. Then, a week after the company produced its first 16 units, the salespeople taking the items door-to-door ran into a distressing problem: the racks literally fell apart on potential customers’ doorsteps. “For a few days after I’d heard that the racks had collapsed, I thought the company was going into the pit,” says Patrick Duff, an employee of Esso Petroleum Canada who helped found Roxx. “But the students figured out a better way to glue them, and they started selling well.” By last spring, Roxx had sold 100 units and finished its fiscal year in the black.

The Roxx project was one of more than 40 similar companies created across Canada in the 1985/86 academic year under the guidance of Junior Achievement of Canada, an energetic, nonprofit organization devoted specifically to the development of business principles and skills among young people. Since its modest beginnings in Vancouver in 1955, more than 140,000 students have been involved in the program — about 35,000 of them during the 1985/86 academic year alone. “Our main purpose is to teach youngsters things that will benefit them and the country, after they enter the work force,” says Junior Achievement’s national president and chief executive officer, Alfred Pelletier of Toronto. “We can’t, of course, guarantee that all Junior Achievers will succeed because of our role in their lives, but we hope we point them in a helpful direction.”

Junior Achievement does not receive government funding. Instead, it relies on corporate and private donors to contribute the necessary funds for its national budget, which in the 1985/86 academic year was $700,000. As well, individual groups receive contributions from a variety of businesses in their communities.

One of Junior Achievement’s foremost supporters is Imperial Oil Limited, which began providing both financial strength and expertise to the organization shortly after it began operating in Canada in 1955. During the years since, hundreds of Imperial employees at almost every level and in every region of the country have given time and talent to help Junior Achievement members set up their companies and meet the challenges of operating them. In 1996, Imperial donated $43,500 to Junior Achievement programs across the country, more than 45 of its people served as counselors during the 1985-86 academic year, and Imperial’s chairman and chief executive officer, Arden Haynes, is a member of Junior Achievement’s national board of directors. “We support Junior Achievement,” says Haynes, “because we believe it teaches young people the value of initiative and entrepreneurship. It is a tremendous help to both those planning a business career and those simply interested in gaining a better understanding of business. But I believe Junior Achievement has a lot of other benefits for young people. It teaches self-reliance and problem-solving. Those are assets that will serve them in every aspect of their lives.”

Imperial volunteers take part in Junior Achievement’s two primary programs: the Company Program, in which students from grades 9 to 13 set up and run small businesses; and Project Business, in which volunteers from business discuss the free-enterprise system with students in grades 8 and 9. As well, Imperial presents annual Esso Teamwork Awards to a number of Junior Achievement companies in recognition of “success achieved through teamwork and cooperation.”

The small businesses, formed by high-school-student participants in the Company Program, with help from their advisors, are founded in October and liquidated in April. To raise capital, students sell two-dollar company shares at their schools and in their neighborhoods. They elect a management team (the president

BY TED FERGUSON
receives a quarterly salary of at least eight dollars and chooses a product to manufacture and structure. Like other luminaries, Junior Achievement creates to encourage students who also pay a small amount of money to the local Junior Achievement group for the rental of tools. Ten consultants whose pay is about $90 an hour, and the students selling the products door-to-door receive a small share between 60 and 75 percent of all companies realize a profit. "If even a product loses money, it isn't considered a 'commercial failure,'" says Patrick Duell, the Imperial employee who serves as a Junior Achievement district chairman. "They simply gain more practical knowledge from their mistakes and problems than they do if they see everything goes smoothly from start to finish."

Eric Langford was a student at Toronto's Lakeview High School in 1985/86 academic year. "I thought the start-up problem was a real challenge," he says.

"What I learned was that you should always anticipate the things that might go wrong."

Once a week during the fall and winter, Langford and 21 other students gathered at a Junior Achievement business centre above a downtown fast-food outlet in Toronto. This persistent sound of a company called "asian tea". The same tea, and 15 participants show up every week and we could have easily used 25," says Janet Gates, a former employee of Imperial who worked with the group as an advisor. "The firm was turning out cloth picture frames, the construction materials cost two dollars a frame, the finished product fetched eight dollars. "We had between 12 and 15 participants show up every week, and we could have easily used 25," says Janet Gates, a former employee of Imperial who worked with the group as an advisor. "The firm was turning out cloth picture frames, the construction materials cost two dollars a frame, the finished product fetched eight dollars.

Obviously, Junior Achievement's fund of wisdom is that all participants carry their lessons they learn into future careers. It would be too costly for the organization to survey all its past members, but it has heard from hundreds over the years who have reported that the program greatly improved their thinking. Michael Howcroft and Brian Seater are two such people. Howcroft, the sales manager for the abrasive division of 3M Canada Inc., says the program he worked on in the 1980s, which involved making brochures, address plaques, taught him the value of asking customers to refer him to other prospective clients. "I also discovered that the teamwork succeeds best if you keep the communication lines constantly open," he says. More than 20 years after he was a member of Junior Achievement, Seater is still a zealous teacher of the program.

The spring of 1986. Junior Achievement provided her with seven teaching modules. Seater is still a zealous teacher of the program. He now heads Universal Spirit, a company that provides consulting services to businesses. The firm brings lunchroom speakers, such as Mike Wallace and Edward Heath, to Canada. "I feel that, by teaching kids what people put something valuable back to the community," he says. Seater regularly invites his clients to Junior Achievement functions, where students attend the $100-a-plate lunch every year and have been introduced to the speaker's achievements. Junior Achievement's president, Alfred Pelletier, is not a former participant — the son of a former director in Canada, he was young but he stands as a line example to members of what a person can accomplish. Raised in a working-class neighborhood, Pelletier joined the Toronto Transportation Commission as an upstairs worker and, by the time he graduated from Danforth Technical School, thirteen years later he became a shop foreman for Mack Canada Inc., and rising steadily through the ranks, he became, in the 1970s, president and chair-executive officer of the worldwide organization of Mack Trucks Inc. On retirement last year at 64, he joined Junior Achievement. "I believe so strongly in the free enterprise system," he says, "that I want to do whatever I can to help others discover its virtues."

**Project Business**

Junior Achievement's "Project Business" program does not require as much manpower or time to operate as the company program, but, nonetheless, it's extremely valuable. It began in 1972 when the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan, awarded Junior Achievement of Canada a $30,000 grant, spread over five years, enabling it to create the program. The goal of Project Business is to give junior-high-school students a stimulating primer on business fundamentals. In the 1986-87 academic year, volunteers visited over 800 classrooms across Canada once for 12 to 18 week periods, teaching about 24,500 young people about, among other topics, the Canadian economy, money and banking, career exploration and the stock market. Pettomin tips on how to fill out a job-seeking application and how to present oneself at an interview were included too. As with Junior Achievement's "Project Business" program, Imperial volunteers play a vital part in the success of Project Business. Karen Kennedy, an open-book salesperson for Esso Petroleum, began a 14-week stint at Toronto's Woodbine Junior High

*Understanding Business Fundamentals: Montreal students participate in Project Business*
OUR PLACE AT THE TABLE

Canada's cuisine comes of age and the world takes note

We have come a long way from woodchuck with biscuits, boiled porcupine and beaver-tail stew.

There persists, however, an image of Canadian cuisine that is rooted in our pioneer days — in hunting and trapping, in wood stoves and cozy cabins in the bush. In 1907, the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Indian Development glorified those days by publishing Northern Cookbook, written by Eleanor A. Ellis. It offered such early Canadian recipes as roast polar bear, boiled reindeer head, muskrat soup, sweet pickled beaver, squirrel fricasse, stuffed whale roast, steamed muskrat legs and baked skunk. While such delicacies have all but disappeared, Canada is not without its culinary distinctiveness; in fact, more and more, Canadian cuisine is being recognized as among the best in the world.

It is not possible to write about Canadian food without writing about the Canadian people — those who arrived early and those who came much later. Ancestry is one reason for the rich variety of Canadian foods. Many of the settlers in Newfoundland were descendants of English and Irish fishermen who came to the island almost 300 years ago. Cut off from both Canada and their ancestral homes, they developed a unique approach to food and cooking. In the Maritimes, the Scottish, Acadian and German settlers brought their own individual styles to the foods of the region. In Quebec, many of the early dishes — tourtière, ragot de boulettes, poutine — were adaptations of Norman recipes suited to ingredients found in Canada. Early Ontario settlers brought American, Anglo-Celtic and German customs. The strong German influence came, to a great extent, from the Mennonites who arrived in the Kitchener-Waterloo area in the early 1800s. On the

BY LAIRD O'BRIEN
Prairies, the great distances and bleak winters encouraged settlers to find pleasures at home. The kitchen became the focal point of the household. "A cheerful home," Ukrainians, Mennonites, Germans, Scots, Latvians and Scandinavians borrowed from one another's culinary heritages. The settlers of pre-Confederation Canada ate what was handy and ate it as best they could. Lumberjacks sat down to "meals of meat and porcupine. Bear hunting was just as good for the hide and the fur. Black squirrel and passenger pigeon were extra special. Fresh fruits and vegetables were enjoyed where they could be grown, with berries of sawdust and strawberries rowed around food — apple-panning bears, curr-ripping bears, pumpkin-slicing bears, sugaring-off parties, strawberry socials.

Barn-raising bears were culinary lairs. James Rolfe, writing in an initial newspaper, the Bottke Babylon, at the turn of the century, described them: "The food was wonderful — big roasts of pork or venison and sometimes bear, partridge, quail, and fish in season, with turnips and potatoes for vegetables, doves roasted, home-made bread and buns with maple syrup; pies and puddings galore."

We love those who have found Canadian food interesting enough to write about. James Macalister of Kingston compiled our first cookbook in 1864. Some notable works include Christina Bates' Out of Old Ontario Kitchens, Helen Graham's Original Canadian Cookbook, Madame Jehane Benoit's The Canadiana Cookbook, Louise Bonaventure's Le guide de la cuisine canadienne, and Nellie Compaine's The Canadian and Janet Bonnet's Canadian Food Guide and Edwin C. Guithe's Pioneer Inns and Restaurants.

It was in our hotels that Canadian cuisine first flourished. In the years immediately after Confederation, four hotels in Eastern Canada served food in a grand manner. The Queen's Hotel in Toronto (site of today's Royal York) was that city's leading hotel. Others in the same class were the Wolseley, the Chateau Frontenac, the St. Lawrence, the Queen's Hotel in Montreal and the St. Louis Hotel in Quebec City. Breakfast was served buffet style, midnight and morning suppers were available, and there was a memorable length. The menu listed more than 40 dishes. Travellers could sit down to soups (cream of chicken, oysters on the half shell, a plate of ripe and onions, another of pickled pig's feet, a side of fried chicken), vegetables (mashed potatoes, seasoned with sour cream, onions, mustard, oysters and a slice of green salad), and a ragout or green tea. The cost? 8 and two other substantial meals were included in the $2.50-a-day room charge.

The coming of Canada's railways changed not only the country's social life but its dining habits. A food bed that had been long isolated during periods of bad weather.

But the influence of trains on Canada's culinary habits is nothing we are now aware of the realm of transportation. In June 1867, the Great Western Railway of Canada introduced the 'palace sleeper' between Toronto and a kitchen at one end — and for the first time meals were served aboard a train in Canada. The railway became famous for by its quantity and variety: Canadian bacon, B.C. salmon, Alberta sirloin, spring lamb, Winnipeg goose, ox and cheddar cheese with picnic sandwiches. The dishes featured on transcontinental trains — dishes that helped to bring the CRP a worldwide reputation.

We were well pleased by our first square meal on wheels.

Shortly after the CPR was completed, an Englishman named Edward Roe took a trip from Montreal to the west coast (a trip that cost eight dollars) and wrote this description of his dining car: "The bill of fare does not vary greatly, except with the season and locality. For example, here in Ontario, the whitefish (very delicious) and lake trout are in season. In the Maritime Provinces, the cod and herring are the main food. If we go south in the United States, we shall probably find bananas, apricots and peaches."

"We had already adopted the German custom of beginning breakfast with coffee. Most people like coffee and milk, usually spoken of as 'oatmeal', but we English did not seem to care for it. After that came well-chopped fried chicken... beefsteak, veal cutlets, ham, eggs, of course, in every style, various kinds of bread... and buns, with coffee, chocolate, and 'English breakfast tea'. It is evident, therefore, that we had a very different style of eating, and believe that we were well pleased with our first square meal on wheels."

By the turn of the century, the 14-course banquet was in its glory, both in England and on the Canadian frontier. In 1906, Grace Denison, a columnist with Saturday Night magazine, listed all the courses in one such feast: "1. Shell fish — small clams or oyster, half dozen for each person. 2. Fish soup, well seasoned and highly crushed. With these are offered red and black pepper, grated horseradish, small thin slice of buttered brown bread or tiny crisp biscuits and quarters of lemon. 2. Soup. 3. A course of hors d'oeuvre including boudin, celery, olives and salted almonds. 4. Fish, with potatoes and cucumbers, the latter dressed in vinegar and wine. 5. Mushrooms or fish and breaths (dried biscuits, soaked overnight, fried with pork and served with a rich, cold souce and sauce-flipper pie.

Prince Edward Island Maltpey hunters are the finest in the world. Nova Scotia is renowned for its salmon, scallops and sweet shrimp and New Brunswick for its herring, bivalves and snow crab. And all the Atlantic provinces are famous for lobster. Quebec's household names include tournant, rebelle de boulettes (tiny meat balls), yellow pea soup, Gigot salmon, cow's milk, cheddar, Creme Lake duck (a delicacy from the Eastern Townships) and, of course, maple syrup.

"An excellent cheese, born in the town of Ingles in the 1860s. Other Ontario dislikes include fresh milk and red or fine Irish linen; and proceeded through eight-course meals served on Limoges china and ac- "

British Columbia beckons with five kinds of salmon, spring lamb, prawns, oysters and shellfish in the most delicious ways in the world.

Canadian tastes also exalt the unusual and the exotic. The rich cultural diversity has meant that, as a nation, we have long been able to enjoy the cuisine of a variety of ethnic groups — Italian, Greek and German, for example. And during the last two decades the culinary cultures have expanded and the South, we have always been able to enjoy the cuisine of many other cultures. Expo 67 introduced us to a cornucopia of sights from far off corners of the world. Then, in the 1970s, a food boom took many Canadians to the Seattle World's Fair in 1962.

And, perhaps most important, the number of distinct ethnic groups in Canada has increased. The growing sophistication of the national palate in recent years has been the making of more than one Canadian entreprenuer. Michael Vaughan, of Michael Vaughan's in Toronto, has seen his business grow dramatically with the popularity of seafood. He sells oysters and clams from British Columbia, golden caviar from Maritania, Artich from the Northwest Territories. Belon oysters from Nova Scotia and cultured mussels from Prince Edward Island.

Russell Dockendorf, Sr. is president of St. Peter's Bay Cultured Mussel Farms Inc., one of Prince Edward Island's largest mussel producers. "We got started as an off-shore-season producer," explains Dockendorf, "but it grew into a year-round business." Now St. Peter's Bay employs about 15 people and ships more than 11 million kilograms of mussels every week to Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, California and Florida. And the demand continues to grow. "In 1979 I've never seen before of cultured mussels. Dockendorf adds Dockendorf with a chuckle. "Our company has flourished with the popularity of fish and shellfish in Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation of Winnipeg. During the late 1970's it introduced to what has become a great success: golden caviar from the whitefish of Lake Superior and the lobsters of central and northern Canada. That product has been recognized in a number of international culinary competitions.

The growing sophistication of the national palate in recent years has been the making of more than one Canadian entreprenuer. Michael Vaughan, of Michael Vaughan's in Toronto, has seen his business grow dramatically with the popularity of seafood. He sells oysters and clams from British Columbia, golden caviar from Maritania, Artich from the Northwest Territories. Belon oysters from Nova Scotia and cultured mussels from Prince Edward Island. Dockendorf, Sr. is president of St. Peter's Bay Cultured Mussel Farms Inc., one of Canada's largest mussel producers. "We got started as an oyster-seafood producer," explains Dockendorf, but "it grew into a year-round business." Now St. Peter's Bay employs about 15 people and ships more than 11 million kilograms of mussels every week to Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, California and Florida. And the demand continues to grow. "In 1979 I've never seen before of cultured mussels. Dockendorf adds Dockendorf with a chuckle. "Our company has flourished with the popularity of fish and shellfish in Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation of Winnipeg. During the late 1970's it introduced to what has become a great success: golden caviar from the whitefish of Lake Superior and the lobsters of central and northern Canada. That product has been recognized in a number of international culinary competitions.

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Justice and Oil

It is now almost seven years since Imperial and other oil companies were shocked by the claim that they had overcharged consumers by $12 billion. In the end a public inquiry vindicated the companies. A man who went through it all looks back.

On a bright morning in the early spring of 1981, the phone rang in my office at the RPPC. The caller said that he had a story for me. He was an anonymous tipster who had been working for an oil company competing with Imperial Oil. He had heard from other oil companies that Imperial was taking advantage of consumers and he wanted me to look into the matter.

At first I was skeptical. Why would an anonymous tipster want to incriminate his own company? But the caller was persistent and I decided to take a look. I called the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and they said that they were also investigating Imperial.

I decided to take the case seriously and began to investigate. I was aware of the power of the oil companies and the complexity of the issues involved. I knew that it would be a long and difficult process, but I was determined to get to the truth.

I worked with the Antitrust Division and the RPPC to gather evidence and develop a case against Imperial. We collected thousands of documents and interviewed dozens of witnesses. We were able to establish that Imperial had engaged in a conspiracy to fix oil prices.

The case was filed in 1982 and it took almost five years to reach a settlement. The settlement was reached in 1987 and it was one of the largest in Canadian history. Imperial agreed to pay $4.2 billion in damages and to change its business practices.

In the end, the case was settled and the companies involved were vindicated. I was proud to have been a part of the investigation and I felt that it was a important contribution to the public interest.

BY DONALD PENROSE
past 30 years, Trumper was the Royal Commission on Gasoline Price Structure in British Columbia in 1963, the Royal Commission on Petroleum Price Control in 1965, the Royal Commission on Petroleum Products Pricing in Ontario in 1972, the British Columbia Energy Commission in 1976, the National and Provincial Oils and Gasoline Price Study in British Columbia in 1976. And I was the assistant to the Gasoline and Petroleum Sales Price Study in Ontario in 1986. Our industry has been investigated, examined and questioned from every angle.

Among the collection of papers and memorabilia I kept of the inquiry, two items stand out most dramatically in my mind. The first is a full-page advertisement that appeared in the country’s major newspapers on March 12, 1981. There is a photo of Jack Armstrong, then chairman and chief executive officer of Imperial, and above it, in large type, the words: “Flop… ‘Imperial’ in a brief notice below the picture. Armstrong denied the allegation and said it wouldn’t stand up to an impartial inquiry. For 30 years, no such inquiry had been held in public conversation, the statement was bold indeed. It was mild compared with the other Warren that washed through the machinery at every level in those turbulent weeks in the spring of 1981. Armstrong was terribly upset at what he saw as an attack on his ethics and the ethics of 16,000 Imperial people.

But the bit of memorabilia that means the most to him is a news story — four paragraphs in particular — that appeared in The Globe and Mail on June 1, 1981. When, after all the hearings, submissions, testimony and cross-examination (not to mention the 8 million dollars Imperial had to pay to defend itself) the commission released its findings.

Ontario’s Atomic Trade Practices Commission has decisively rejected accusations that spin oil companies overcharged consumers by as much as $2 billion in the 1950s and 1960s.

The commission’s five-year inquiry into the allegations was conducted by a 17-member board in 1981 from the federal commission’s investigations into the dairy, meat and gasoline industries. In 1979, a newspaper story led to a Senate inquiry, which led to the formation of the commission. The investigating board was named as an “impartial body.”

“There was no proof before the commission that the Canadian petroleum com-

begin to draw up the first written submissions that the inquiry commissioners had said that Trumper would begin announcing their conclusions at the end of our hearings: those factfinding reports of the business, stifling competition and thus controlling prices. The facts proved otherwise: during the period of the alleged monopolization — from 1958 to 1973 — new companies and independents entered the market and prices continued to rise. But the companies had not yet come to the conclusion that there was any merit to the allegations. They had been studying the market and had no intention of giving up their profits. In fact, they had already started negotiating with the Canadian government to find a way to resolve the issue. The government had been looking for a solution since the early 1950s, and finally, in the spring of 1981, the government had decided to take action.

For the most part, the hearings themselves took place in three distinctive hearing rooms in Kent Street. It is a large room with chairs and tables for lawyers and witnesses, with a clock on the wall. For one period, however, from the autumn of 1981 to the spring of 1982, the commission held hearings across the

the country — in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax — to hear people from various communities and industries speak in person and give evidence.

In the beginning, we were to the causual but then it became more serious. We came to realize that the implications of the findings were immense. The findings of the report implied that the government should take action to prevent similar problems from arising in the future. The government, however, was not convinced by the evidence presented and the report was eventually rejected. The government continued to investigate the issue and took further action to prevent similar problems from arising in the future.

Still, for all of that, I did come away with the hope that, out of the inquiry came a lesson that will be of some use to us all. As for the inquiries themselves, we are all the richer for them, even if we did not always feel that way during the years of the inquiry. Last fall, I held a dinner in Toronto, and about 30 members of the government were present. We reminisced, heard Gord Thomson, president of Eo Petrochemicals Canada, contribute to the conversation and simply shared the feeling that comes when a stressful job is over and the results are both a relief and a validation.

That night, just before I left the dinner, a friend with a needle in his shoe asked me to write a definition of a hearing that had been held to determine whether the oil industry is really competitive. I thought I knew the answer, but gave him a quick rundown beginning with the 1966 Royal Commission on Gasoline Price Structure in British Columbia.

He shook his head. "I thought," he said after a few moments, "that was an expert opinion. Then, from his notebook, he said: "Perhaps it's a bit out of order, but I think that was a good definition. It was a report from the Banking and Commerce Committee of the House of Commons in Ottawa. The committee had investigated the oil industry and had reported that the industry was not competitive. The report was released in 1966 and was an important step in the development of the Canadian oil industry.

The report was released several months after the completion of the Royal Commission on Gasoline Price Structure in British Columbia. It was a report that was written by a committee of experts, including economists, lawyers, and industry representatives. The report was received with mixed reactions from the public and the oil industry, but it did provide valuable insights into the oil industry and its impact on society.

In the end, the committee concluded that the oil industry was not competitive and recommended that the government take action to address this issue. The government, however, was not convinced by the evidence presented and the report was eventually rejected.

The report was influential in the development of the Canadian oil industry, but it was not the only report that was released during this period. Other reports, such as the Royal Commission on Gasoline Price Structure in British Columbia, were also released at this time and provided valuable insights into the oil industry.
We're finding ourselves in the newspapers of the world.
Here's where and why.

Perhaps others are feeling that way, for while Canada is rarely front-page news, it is, nevertheless, finding its way into international newspapers and magazines with a frequency unmatched since the 1950s. The number of major Canadian stories appearing in the Wall Street Journal, according to Mike Malloy, the Toronto-based managing editor of the Dow Jones news service and supervisor of Canadian correspondents for the Wall Street Journal, has jumped 50 to 75 percent in the last couple of years. And John Best, the Ottawa journalist who has contributed to The Times of London since 1974, says, "The amount of coverage I get has been steadily increasing in recent years, particularly stories on Ottawa's political scene."

The real growth in the last decade, however, has been in the number of foreign correspondents, most of them American, who now call Canada their news beat. The Ministry of External Affairs lists 40 full-time foreign correspondents in Canada: 15 in Ottawa, nine in Montreal, 15 in Toronto and one — for the Frankfurter Allgemeine — in Cranberry Island, N.S. (he commutes to Ottawa twice a month). In the last few years alone, the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, Newsweek and The Associated Press have all opened foreign desks in Toronto, while the People's Daily of China, Time and the Boston-based Christian Science Monitor have set up bureaus in Ottawa. And in addition to these full-time foreign correspondents, more and more stringers (journalists employed part-time or on a freelance basis by foreign news organizations) are report-

Jeffrey Bradley, The Associated Press: in Canada barriers are few

John Burns, the New York Times: Americans sense that life in Canada is intriguing
Bertrand de la Grange, *La Monde*: a real interest among Parisians about what Quebecers wanted

John Best, Ottawa journalist: coverage in the *London Times* has increased steadily in recent years

The overseas press, which has a more modest presence here, also cites Canadian economic and business news as its raison d'être. Ernest Wonglor, the Toronto-based correspondent for *New Zürcher Zeitung* (the *New Zurich Journal*), says his Swiss paper "gives more space to Canada each year than does any other paper outside North America." And Beowulf Göbel, Canadian correspondent for *Nachrichten für Aussenhandel* (the *Foreign Trade Journal*), a daily paper for West Germany's export community, says that everything from the general Canadian economy to the Xin Hua News Agency, China's official news service, speaks of the lure of Canadian business news as well but adds that "veteran reporters who read that China never tires of stories about Canada's "international protestant fighters," Dr. Norman Bethune. Canadian companies, Canadian economics and Canada's Norman Bethune aside, the foreign press in this country leaps at the occasional, honest-to-goodness, international news-breaking story. During the last two years, the Air India disaster, the place crash in Candi, N.I.,

Janet Cawley, *the Chicago Tribune*: a front page story on the "rocky promontory in the Atlantic"

The the country's tax policy is of interest to his readers, who range from chocolate-bar producers to financial managers. The French-owned Agency France Presse (AFP), one of the world's largest news agencies, has two Canadian bureaus, one in Montreal and another in Ottawa. Hubert Laverne, director of AFP in Canada, says that while Canadian business news is routinely carried by his wire service, general Canadian features — on topics ranging from maple-syrup making in Quebec to whale-watching on the St. Lawrence — are also covered. Naxin Chen, an Ottawa-based correspondent and the Tamil refugee incident made headlines around the world. Still, such stories are infrequent, leaving foreign correspondents time to pursue general-interest news and features — everything from dog sledding and the Mounties to Canadia poker and immigration issues. Particularly popular with the U.S. press are features about Canada's north and its most habitation eastern province — Newfoundland. Last August, in a front-page *Chicago Tribune* story, the paper's Canadian correspondent, Janet Cawley, wrote: "From Bled Bokove to Ho Ha Bay, from Come by Chance to Heart's
Delight, this rocky promontory in the Atlantic harbors a life-style and language that are enough to molder the brains of the rest of Canada. Her tone, while playful, typified the ingenious admiration most correspondents display for the cultural distinctiveness and independent spirit of Newfoundlanders. As well, most of the correspondents, taking their lead, perhaps, from Canada's own media, have lavished attention — of sorts — on our prime minister. In a front-page story last February, Volgoneau of the Detroit Free Press posed the question many foreign correspondents have pondered in one fashion or another during the last two years: "He can smile. He can charm. He can belt out "When Irish Eyes are Smiling ... But can Prime Minister Brian Mulroney run the country?"

The West Edmonton Mall has also received considerable attention. Herbert Denton, Canadian correspondent for the Washington Post, tied one of his two features on the mall to plans by the owners to build similar "manhollow shopping malls" in Minnesota and, perhaps, in upstate New York. "It's something Americans can relate to," says Denton. "There's immediate identification with the many restrictions in this country, a foreign correspondent's life in Canada is not without its frustrations — which generally focus on Canadian bureaucracy." Others, says Herbert Denton, "when you want to learn something about Canada, it's easier to call Washington."

"In any other country," says Yoram Hamizrachi, a Winnipeg-based correspondent for the Detroit Free Press, "the government calls foreign correspondents for special briefings and keeps them up-to-date by providing a list of major events. In Canada, the government largely ignores the foreign press yet is surprised when the world ignores Canada." Says Barbara Haitig, the Ottawa-based correspondent for Deutsche Presse-Agentur, the German-owned international news agency: "The external affairs department goes to great lengths to bring foreign journalists to Canada and shuttle them around the country for a week or two, but once you are here, you're basically on your own."

When they're not writing about Canada, members of the foreign press here often reflect on the country, forming and rehearsing impressions of its cities and its people. Some, including the 36-year-old Hideko Koyama, on his first foreign posting for Yomiuri Shimbun, the Japanese news agency that supplies international news for all six of Tokyo's major dailies, were initially, mildly shocked at their new home and its manners: "It was very curious to see that people eat food in your buses and subways," says Koyama. "In Japan, our parents say to us, 'Do not eat outside.'"

Others, like Lamere of the French news agency AFP, were surprised by the language: "The Quebecois accent is so difficult to understand — I still sometimes have to ask Quebecers to repeat themselves." A few foreign correspondents were — and still are — put off by Canadian attitudes: "Canadians tend to see themselves as America's northern conscience," says Business Week's Edith Terry. "There's a self-righteousness about Canadians that can be extremely irritating." In his book The Canadians, the former Toronto bureau chief for the New York Times, Andrew Malcolm, echoes Terry's comment. "Canadians," he writes, "can always agree on who they are not — namely, Americans."

Some correspondents, however, including Jerry Buckley, Toronto bureau chief for Newsweek magazine, feel that Canada has at least one reason to be smug. "You don't discuss guns in Canada and you don't live with this fear that someone might pull a knife on you in the subway," says he. "In the States, certainly live more carefully."

Ultimately, of course, it's not simply an awareness of our absence of fear, our eating habits or even the presence of a little 'northern conscience' that judicious foreign correspondents leave with their readers; rather, it's the underlying message that Canadians, like people all over the world, are human. And that simple, if occasionally forgotten fact, according to Verneque,Sparks, professor of communications at Syracuse University, can only (lead to) 'sympathetic understanding.'"
way north for 130 kilometres, merging with the mighty St. Lawrence at the busy, inland port of Sorel, Que.

In many ways, the 50 or more communities the river passes on its northeasterly journey look much the same today as they have for two centuries: an abundance of sturdy stone cottages, country gardens and splendid silver-domed churches—all partially hidden in summer by majestic sentinels of maple and linden trees.

"Museums and history books will tell you how great the river is to Quebec's history," says Andre Lepine, "but only by traveling will you ever know its beauty."

The tiny village of Calixa-Lavallée (population: 450), named after a blacksmith's son who was born nearby and later won acclaim for composing "O Canada," is typical of many villages in the verdant Richelieu valley. Set amid soft meadows and shining fields of barley, wheat and corn, it is populated by hard-working people—some sell rabbits, farm eggs, freshly baked bread and vegetables from their front lawns; others peddle worms to fishermen and shoe neighborhood homes.

In nearby Saint-Antoine, the widely known painter Meryk Taiie Tanobe always knows spring is about to dawn when her neighbor sets out for his maple-sugar shack in a sleigh drawn by his old black horse. Tanobe is so inspired by the river that in summer she rises at 5 a.m. to sketch among wild flowers at its edge, across the road from her 120-year-old house. "When I see and smell the water," she says, "I feel I am at the very beginning of Quebec. The Richelieu is a special place where you can drift peacefully back over the centuries."

As serene as they now are, though, virtually all the valley communities had turbulent pasts; Andre Lépine and his fellow expedition members also found sawmills, firearms and scores of cannonballs on the riverbed—and reminders of the Richelieu's once-upon-a-time reputation as the "River of Blood."

In 1609, the French explorer Samuel de Champlain paddled upstream from Quebec City and gave his name to the lake. From which the Richelieu rises and where, that year, he battled Iroquois Indians.

Colonists from both France and England later fought many battles on the Richelieu. In 1758 and '60, during the Seven Years' War, General Jeffrey Ambrose of the British army fought its way downstream on its journey to Montreal. Fifteen years later, during the American Revolution, Colonel Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys also fought their way down the river. But the troops did not bring only bloodshed. In 1781, the wife of General Friedrich von Riedesel, who commanded a small contingent of Germans drafts by the British, surrounded the Sorel home by showing them Canada's first illuminated Christmas tree, glittering with ornaments and lighted candles. Five years ago, Canada Post commemorated the event with three 15-cent stamps.

Those early hostilities were also responsible for some of Canada's finest early architecture. Two magnificent forts along the Richelieu, handsomely renovated and maintained by Parks Canada, attract thousands of summer picnickers. More than 30,000 people visit Fort Chambly each year, which looks out across a huge, deep basin in the river said to sport more than 100 different species of fish. Originally built of wood by Captain Jacques de Chambly in 1665 to protect his army against surprise Indian attacks, the fort was later expanded and reinforced with stone. Over the years, the French abandoned it to invaders from both Britain and America; during the War of 1812, its dour guns held dozens of American prisoners.

Upriver, the much larger Fort Lennox, built in 1759 on the tiny Île-aux-Noix (island of Nuts), attracts 50,000 visitors annually. For more than 60 years, until he retired in 1982, Joseph-Albert Gosselin, 81, drove a ferry between the fort and the village of Saint-Paul. "That magnificent river speaks to me like an old friend," Gosselin says, "just as it spoke to my father and his father before him."

On the steep banks of Lake Champlain are the sandy-colored ruins of yet another fortress, appropriately nicknamed "Fort Blunder." Americans began erecting it with ardor in 1816, in memory of General Richard Montgomery. Two years later they hastily abandoned it when a land survey showed they were building on the Canadian side of the border. In 1842, however, another survey put the site back on American soil and the building of the fort was resumed.

By the 1820s, businessmen from Vermont and communities along the Richelieu were urging their governments to consider the river's potential as a trade route. With canals bypassing rapids, they contended, large ships could sail from New York up the Hudson River, through the newly built Champlain Canal into Lake Champlain, then down the Richelieu and along the St. Lawrence to Montreal.

Canals were a good idea, Canada conceded, but making the route easier for shipping would render it vulnerable to
American naval attacks. So river freight, primarily timber and grain, continued flowing to and fro on rafts, as it had for nearly 100 years.

In 1836, Canada's first railway opened between Saint-Jean and La Prairie, just as the river was witnessing yet more fighting. In Napierville, on Sunday, September 24, 1837, more than 1000 men, women and children met to support rebels seeking to keep Quebec entirely French. That November, in the shadow of an impressive double-spired church — which is still standing in the farming village of Saint-Denis — about 300 rebels fled off 500 British soldiers, who had sailed from Sorel up the Richelieu. Their success was short-lived, however; two days later they were defeated by British troops at nearby Saint-Charles.

After the First World War, more and more cargo was moved to Montreal from New York on ocean-going vessels via the Atlantic Ocean and the St. Lawrence. Traffic on the Richelieu began falling off rapidly; to help revitalize the river, the U.S. government deepened and widened the Champlain Canal. Canada responded by enlarging the Saint-Ours and Chambly canals. But it was to no avail, the Richelieu's glory days had come to an end. While no longer a major trading route, the Richelieu is still a well used waterway. Thousands of pleasure boats, many from such far flung places as Maryland and Georgia, cruise the waterway each summer, dozens of sailboats glide gracefully among the 100 or so Sorel islands, some of which support communities, while others are barely large enough to beach a boat on. The area is also a favorite haunt for duck hunters and bird-watchers. "The Richelieu," says André Lépine, "is one of the most spectacular little waterways on God's earth."

Over the years, the federal government has continued to maintain the river, viewing it mainly as a vacationer's paradise. It has enlarged the lock on the Saint-Ours Canal so it can accommodate ships more than 100 meters long and 10 meters wide, lifting them one-at-a-time. The Chambly Canal boasts a staircase of nine, smaller interconnecting locks that together can lower a boat about 25 meters.

"What would happen if you pulled the wrong levers and opened all the gates at the same time?" a National Geographic crew once asked a lock keeper.

"You'd think you were going over Niagara Falls in a barrel," was the reply. "But don't worry, I'm always careful."

On the northern stretch of the river, Saint-Denis (top) is one of many charming Richelieu communities. Each year, more than 30,000 visitors see soldiers in period dress at Fort Chambly pink apple blossoms. About 5000 McIntosh apple trees fill orchards at the local Catholic abbey of Notre-Dame de Nazareth, where visitors buy cider from the monastery's store.

In mid-August, when the river is more than 3000 inhabitants of Rougemont plan their apple festival, life around the river is in full bloom. Thousands of bikers cannot resist pleasant paths winding through maple groves on nearby Mont-Saint-Grégoire, which rises gently above the birthplace of Brother André, a Quebec monk who was blessed by the Pope in 1932.

The Richelieu is bountiful with local legends. One recalls a dandified near the town of Otterburn Park who rode astride a 45-kilogram stump that bumped him a kilometre downstream, unhampered despite having his weight held by a human tooth. And that, insists fisherman Jacques Authier, "is absolutely true!" Another yarn tells of a soldier who went to his death in the river weighed down by a haul of gold he had stolen from Lo-Aux-Noix. His ghost and the ghosts of men who died defending the river, it is said, still return to the valley.

In the second winter, when the Richelieu bears with cross-country skiers, snowmobilers and skaters, Miyuki Tambo is a familiar, diminutive figure bustles tightly against cruel winter winds as she walks briskly through fields along the river with Louis Chan, her Indian-trained pet white wolf. It is not at all unusual for her to spot prairies, rabbits and foxes. "Nature enriching the Richelieu," she says, "is wonderful."

A few years ago, Louis Chan fled his backcountry compound, gobbling up a chicken or two on the way. "It cost me a fortune in honey that year to appease the local farmers," says his housekeeper husband, Maurice Spanjacs. But, he is quick to add, "Richelieu valley people are the kindest, most honest and gentle you'll find anywhere. That, and the tranquility of the river, are why Miyuki and I live here."

"We look, when the sun sets behind the hills," says Miyuki Tambo, "our river becomes a shimmering mass of pure gold."
In Closing

Yesterday afternoon, quite late, while I was standing waiting for a light to change not far from where I live, I watched a man in his eighties, slightly built but spry and straight, leading a man and a woman, who was in a wheelchair, through the intersection and on toward a restaurant on the other side of the street. He was neatly dressed, as the many old people in our neighborhood are. He was wearing a tophat and scarf, grey trousers and comfortable shoes with thick rubber soles. I stood watching him in the early twilight, especially the way he did things, neatly and confidently; when he opened the door for the woman in the wheelchair it seemed as if he had been doing it for years and felt it was just an everyday thing.

There are hundreds of old people in my neighborhood, some very old, and I'm glad they are there. They bring courtesy to the streets and stores and, what may matter more, a sense of civility that even the rudeness they must sometimes endure cannot diminish. I like them and hope, if I live long enough, to discover in old age what so many of them have discovered: a certain confidence in themselves and a joy in life's ordinary moments.

One good thing that, in my view anyway, is just starting to happen in our day is the end of the view of old people as a problem and the beginning of an understanding that they offer us more than they take from us. A few years ago, I wrote a book that made a slight passing mention of a woman, then in her eighties, who had no known relatives in all of Canada. A young couple who read the book and who took family history very seriously were certain she was the wife's aunt, which she was. They found her and brought her into their lives, something that gave them even more joy than it gave her. The aunt would take pleasure in receiving a letter from them, full of honest feeling and pure joy about what discovering her had meant to them and their children.

Old people have brought about this change mostly by themselves. Last week I listened to a talk on the radio by a man who said he knew all the reasons behind this change for the better in their lives and ours: medicine, nutrition, exercise and simply an increase in the number of old people. There is another. Old people have spoken up and spoken well. In the early seventies, when I was an editor and then a columnist with The Globe and Mail, I was visited from time to time by a man, then well on in his seventies, who represented an organization, just formed, called Pensioners Concerned.

He was a bright and courteous person — usually wearing aarks, as if he were heading out for some cross-country skiing — and he not only convinced me of the need for improved pensions but, without realizing it, taught me about the value of old people in life generally: their experience, wisdom and reasonableness. I have no idea where he is now, but this organization, it seems to me, in speaking up for fairer pensions, achieved more than they take from us. It raised older people, and in reminding us of their cause, it reminded us of their value.

One of the good things to come of all of this may be an end of the obsession some people have with youth and their terrible fear of growing old, which they try to resist in so many ways, none of them effective, since youth always comes to an end. We have many lessons to learn about aging, and the best teachers are some of the aged people around us, such as a man I see almost every evening at the YMCA I attend who has a great contentment about him and is pleased to say he is 78, as he heads for the squash court or sits in the members' lounge talking with other members, some his age and some much younger.

I think we are on the way to realizing that old people are not simply a group to be labeled and studied or dismissed as seniors, the elderly or the aged. They are as individual and distinctive as they were at 30, and, in fact, more so. A while ago, a professor being interviewed was going on at length about what he seemed to regard as the notorious conservatism of people in their seventies and eighties. I disagree that older people are particularly conservative. I think, in fact, in the many movements for change, including the women's movement, some of the leaders are older people: writers, politicians, teachers. I have no idea of what the old can bring in all of life. She not only goes to the YMCA and sits in on a university literature class but adds, in ways I cannot account, it is the things to my own life. She is my mother. There must be thousands like her, men and women whose age is like a benediction; when they are near, the light of the day seems to grow brighter.

Karin Boywell

The Review, Spring 1987

more than passing interest in all of this. There is also, in the neighborhood where I live, a woman I see and speak to quite often who is nearing her eightieth birthday with all flags flying and is the best example I know of what the old can bring to all of life. She not only goes to the YMCA and sits in on a university literature class but adds, in ways I cannot account, it is the things to my own life. She is my mother. There must be thousands like her, men and women whose age is like a benediction; when they are near, the light of the day seems to grow brighter.