DEALING WITH OIL SPILLS

THE EMPIRE AT IMPERIAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN ON PREVENTING OIL SPILLS.

BUT IT ALSO HAS IN PLACE A SERIES OF TESTED SPILL-RESPONSE PROCEDURES

BY MARCIA KAYE

The early hours of a grey and windy dawn last December brought the first hint of trouble. The Skeena, a tanker owned by Imperial Oil, had lost power and was adrift off the southwest coast of Vancouver Island. When the Skeena's captain placed an urgent ship-to-shore call to the company's marine operations manager, a fisherman happened to intercept the message and contacted a radio station in the Vancouver Island city of Nanaimo, warning that if the tanker drifted toward the rocks there could very possibly be a major oil spill.

Meanwhile, a completely unrelated incident was unfolding just up the coast. At 5:30 on that rainy, blustery morning, a tugboat barge ran aground, spewing about 1,600 cubic metres of heavy fuel oil and about 320 cubic metres of diesel fuel into nearby Departure Bay. The news flashed across the country. Within an hour everyone from the company's marine operations manager in Vancouver to the top management of Esoo Petroleum Canada, Imperial's refining and marketing division, knew about the spill and had sprung into action. Soon Imperial was besieged by reporters demanding immediate answers. Which vessel had lost the oil—the tanker Skeena or the barge? Had anyone been injured? Who was responsible for the accident? How much damage would the oil inflict? Imperial's emergency-response teams had to deal with not only a major cleanup and the associated liability and responsibility issues but also video crews, radio and press reporters, middle-of-the-night phone calls from members of the overseas media, protests from environmental groups, unfounded rumours, meetings with politicians and a barrage of interview requests that didn't let up for more than 30 solid hours.

Funny thing was, the story of this oil spill never made it to the papers. In fact, if you'd been hanging around Departure Bay on that particular morning you wouldn't have seen any floating booms, skimmers or other cleanup equipment. You wouldn't have seen the grounded barge or even any oil floating on the water. The entire incident—the barge spill, the divisionary tactic involving the Skeena, the call to the radio station, the media conferences and the interviews—had been a simulation.

Over the past several years Imperial has staged many oil-spill simulations, sometimes using pop-corns, plastic discs, pum- moss or biodegradable sunflower oil to simulate the spilled oil, enabling the company to test cleanup equipment and capabilities. The simulation last December was an exercise not only to test its ability to coordinate its spill-response activities but also to test its ability to handle the communication needs associated with a major crisis, a large part of which involves communicating quickly and accurately, in both languages, across several time zones. With experienced journalists contracted to play the role of reporters, phones ringing off the hook and fax machines zapping stories across the country as a wire service would, it was easy to forget the spill wasn't genuine. At one point the reporters barged into the command centre in Nanaimo and demanded access to information—something that hadn't been in the original script. Later, they surprised Bill Irwin, president of Esoo Petroleum, by demanding that a news conference be held immediately, not later that day as scheduled.

"To me, what was most telling was that once the simulation got rolling people were treating it as seriously as if it were the real thing," says Elizabeth MacDonald, Imperial's manager of public affairs for Ontario and one of the plan-

ners of the simulation. "There was the same level of tension and excitement as there would have been had the crisis been real. By the end of the second day of the simulation people had worked themselves to a state of exhaustion."

The simulation proved how vital good communication is to the effective management of an oil spill, not only must those involved in containing and cleaning up the spill communicate effectively among themselves, but it is imperative that communication with the public be skillfully handled. Poor communication can result in a distorted view of an incident, exacerbating the emergency.

The results of Imperial's most recent simulation were far from perfect—in hindsight the company realized there were too many spokes-

persons, some gaps in the information it conveyed to the public and some slow responses—but the event was a Rouxing success in pointing up weaknesses that otherwise wouldn't have been revealed unless there was a real spill. Says Fraser Kelly, a former CBC journalist who served as a media consultant for the simulation: "All the key people were open, honest and accessible, but I was a bit surprised that they did not take more advantage of the media to inform the public about the event as events were unfolding. Also, they should have given as a few more technical briefings, they needed to clarify who their spokespersons were, and they should have told us a few of our demands. They
MYTH

It is a myth that all oil spills can be totally contained and recovered. Of the oil that enters the ocean, only a small percentage is recovered. The rest is dispersed and degraded by natural processes.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM, SARMA: LIKE ITS COUNTERPARTS ACROSS CANADA, IT'S ON 24-HOUR-A-DAY CALL TO RESPOND TO ANY EMERGENCY.

didn't understand the system nearly as well as they do now."

Apartment for effective communication in dealing with an oil spill there is a fundamental requirement for sophisticated equipment and technological expertise. Imperial has access to a wide range of the most up-to-date cleaning equipment. Indeed, for more than a decade a research program has been in place at Eco Resources Canada Limited (Imperial's exploration and production subsidiary) devoted to developing oil-spill response technology — the program involves four Imperial scientists and has an annual budget of about $100,000.

But there are limitations to technology, and as a result, the accord at Imperial has always been on prevention. As far back as 1986, the Dartmouth refinery in Nova Scotia, for example, included a large separator to extract oil from the water it discharged into the harbour. From then on, the company's preventive measures continued to improve.

Since the mid-1980s a screening process has been in place for all foreign-owned tankers, many of which carry crude oil to the Dartmouth refinery or transport it from Vancouver to the company's customers in the Far East. The screening process ensures that the vessels chartered by Imperial are operated by responsible owners, have good safety and pollution-avoidance records and meet a number of criteria regarding such areas as staffing levels, tanker design and navigation equipment. The vessels' arrival in Canada, contracted pollution-prevention inspectors examine them, report on their condition and performance and afterward monitor their performance.

As for the 10 vessels owned by Imperial, their safety and environmental-protection standards exceed those set by the Canadian Coast Guard. Seven tankers are equipped with "hose nozzles" to make navigation safer when docking and undocking, and the three East Coast ships have specially strengthened hulls, which allow them to travel safely in ice. The two largest ves-

rines engineer's certificates. Imperial also provides an educational support system and supplemental training courses on cargo handling.

To ensure the safe passage of crude oil along the B.C. coast, Imperial has developed some recently implemented initiatives jointly with the Canadian Coast Guard, the Port of Van-
couver, the marine piloting company British Columbia Coast Pilots Ltd., and the Pacific Pilotage Authority. These include doubling the number of pilots aboard oil-carrying tankers that engage Vancouver and Victoria, increasing the number of tug escorts used, restricting harbour transit to daylight hours and requiring vessels to be escorted through the lower Gulf Islands by a powerful emergency tug. These initiatives cost the company about $800,000 a year.

In the exploration and production sector, the oil business there are three areas that require particular vigilance: the underwater pipeline gathering systems; the production and storage facilities; and the oil wells themselves. To guard against spills in these areas, Eco Resources takes a number of measures. All drilling wells, for example, are equipped with sophisticated blowout-prevention equipment and procedures are in place first to prevent but then to contain and control any spills. Complex equip-

ment is used to monitor pipeline systems for weaknesses and sophisticated leak-detection systems are installed, which, were there a leak, would sound an alarm back to the control room, where the flow would be shut off immediately. Production and storage facilities receive a rigorous inspection at the time of construction and are then carefully monitored on an ongoing basis. As well, when they are near water, they are surrounded by a dyke designed to contain spilled oil.

In recent years, the petrochemical sector of the company has been upgrading its procedures and training standards and focusing on risk assessment to identify potential problems. But it would be imprudent to rely on prevention alone. Consequently, Eco Chemical Canada's emergency response network, like those in all areas of the company, stands ready at all times.

"We have a policy in place that states that even the smallest spill from a tanker truck must be reported to our central emergency number by the driver," says William MacKay, senior transport safety adviser for Eco Chemical. "After all, the difference between a minor spill and a major one may just be chance, since all spills are caused by the same factors." The cen-

tral emergency number to which MacKay...
MYTH
AN OIL SPILL DESTROYS THE ENVIRONMENT FOREVER.
While pooling can bring back the tragic
and lethal spill as a result of oil spills, the affected area,
our homes, and marine life, oil spills destroy an
environment forever?

PETER COFFIN: IT IS IN EVERYBODY’S BEST INTEREST FOR COMPANIES TO WORK TOGETHER WHEN DEALING WITH AN OIL-SPILL EMERGENCY.

Refers puts the caller in touch with the company’s chemical plant in Sarina, Ont. A call can activate a response to emergencies from most.

Since oil spills result from human error or equipment failure, they should be preventable. But as people make mistakes and it’s possible for equipment to break down, there’s no way to rely on preventive measures alone. As a result, it has in place a coordinated, well-planned strategy to deal with oil spills.

The strategy begins with the local response organizations at the company’s various operating sites, whether the sites are affiliated with Esso Chemical, Esso Petroleum or Esso Resources. The teams respond to the emergency initially and decide whether they can handle the spill or additional resources need to be brought in. All Imperial-owned vessels carry containment and cleanup equipment that can handle small spills. To help cope with larger spills, Imperial has become a full participant in a number of local oil-spill cooperatives across Canada, which own cleanup equipment that is capable of handling major spills and that can be used by whoever is handling the spill. Imperial has also created a database of suppliers and contractors who can be called on in an emergency.

In Redwater, Alta., not far from the site of the spill, and the team immediately ordered that equipment be sent to the spill site, including boats, skimmers, trucks and a helicopter to track the spill. In about 10 hours provincial

MYTH
NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR PREVENTING OR DEALING WITH OIL SPILLS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

Bob Bossin: Public and Environmental Safety are Matters for Which the Government and All Citizens Must Assume Responsibility.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed the first major environmental law in the world, the United Nations Environment

The oil that remains on the seashore of rocks is usually not worth much in terms of what it can be recovered or sold. However, the process can be lengthy and costly, and the potential for long-term effects on the ecosystem is unknown, so we are always on the lookout for any possible long-term effects on the ecosystem.
LA VITA ALL’ITALIANA

When Italian immigrants came to Canada they brought a flair for life that has helped shape Canadian culture

BY KENNETH BAGNELL

In just a few years it will be a full five centuries since that summer day in the late 1490s when the first Italian set foot on our soil. It was a mild morning, June 24, 1497, at a speck of land in Nova Scotia later called Cape North. For years we’ve called the explorer who came ashore and planted two flags, one from England, one from Italy, John Cabot. But his birth name, given in his native Venice, was Giovanni Caboto. In later years Caboto’s arrival was to be followed by that of countless other Italians, bringing not just their flags but their lives and, most of all, a certain style and flair that have added a distinct flavour to the personality of Canada.

There are more than a million people in Canada of Italian origin or descent. While hundreds of thousands of them live either in Ontario or Quebec, there are vibrant Italian communities in most provinces. But it is in southern Ontario that the Italian presence is huge: in the Toronto area there are estimated to be about half a million Italian-Canadians, more than the population of Venice, making it one of the largest settlements of Italians anywhere.

There are two major and somewhat distinct Italian immigration groups in Canada: those who came before the Second World War (or are descended from them) and the vast majority who came afterward, in the fifties and sixties.

Since 1497, when Giovanni Caboto — better known in many as John Cabot — first set foot on Canadian soil, Italians have been leaving their homeland to make a life in the new world.

Italians have had a dramatic influence on the country, not just in such self-evident areas as cuisine but in commerce, through, for example, innumerable construction companies, in politics, through such people as former federal cabinet minister Charles Caccia, and in culture — take, for example, such Italian-Canadian performers as the former conductor of Ottawa’s National Arts Centre Mario Bernardi of northern Ontario, actor Bruno Gerussi of British Columbia and the internationally renowned operatic tenor Enrico Macias of Edmonton. Or Nino Rota of Leningrads, Ont., a new and promising writer whose novel Love of the Sams was hailed by major critics and immediately acquired by a British publisher for international distribution and by an American publisher for distribution in the United States.

Naturally, the sheer number of Italian Canadians has meant they have helped to shape not only our communities but our institutions. The University of Toronto, for example, has the largest department of Italian studies outside Italy. Counting teaching assistants, it has 35 lecturers and a student body of about 2,000. "There is no doubt," says the department’s chairman, Massimo Ciavarella, "that the presence of so many Italians around Toronto has had great influence on the establishment of the department and its growth.

As well, Toronto has its own Italian news-
paper, Comece Canadesi, which, formerly published three times a week, recently began appearing every weekday. You can even see something of the flavour of Italy in the city, for there is a district called Cawa Italia, where women, some elderly in black, some young in designer denim, shop at outdoor stalls while clusters of men linger on corners or in small cafés.

Every summer, on the second Sunday in July, at about noon, almost 3,000 men, women and children stream onto a field at Loreto, a small village in southern Ontario. They come to celebrate, with mix and picnic, the festa—the feast day—of a town they left in Italy. The town is Vallelonga, built atop a mountain centuries ago in the region of Calabria, in southern Italy. Back in Vallelonga on this same Sunday residents also observe the festa. But they are few in number now. In 1990 Vallelonga had a population of about 2,700; today it has only 800 residents. The rest have left, most moving to Toronto. At the festa in Loreto, when the mass is over, a long procession of former Vallelonghi and their families winds past an oak tree, a symbol for all of them of a tree in a park back home in Italy. On the tree they leave envelopes with donations for good causes. Then, the rituals over, the food is spread, the wine opened. The afternoon unfolds—the animated talk of the jovial Italian picnics is punctuated by the clack-clack of the bocce balls. Even with 3,000 people it seems a family event.

The former Vallelonghi have their own building in Toronto, as do many other Italians, a place where people go in the evenings to play cards, to sip a glass of wine, to recall the past, to wonder about the future. One night last winter hundreds of families turned out for an annual banquet and the presentation of academic-achievement awards to young people to encourage them in their education. "In the past our kids were for families who faced hardships," says Bruno Suppa, a community leader. "But our people have done quite well, and they have no real poverty now. We try to help young people not just through awards but through discussions on the value of education, of a drug-free life, of being a good citizen."

In many ways Vallelonga and its people open a window on the Italian immigration experience in Canada. The first Vallelonghi came to this country in the early years of the century. Being, as have hundreds of thousands of Italians since, the poverty of their own country and answering Canada's need for labourers. But by the 1950s the flow of men, then women and children, was no longer a stream but a river, ever stronger, ever swifter. All over Italy boys became men knowing that their destiny was to be elsewhere, perhaps in a city called Torino, where the street names had been spoken so often in the pizza they were part of the landscape of a child's mind.

By 1953 in Vallelonga men could see in groups almost every week bundling into cars, surrounded by tearful wives and mothers, the cars leaving like heroes for port cities and vessels bound for Canada. They would arrive by boat in Halifax or Montreal, then by train in Toronto to be embraced figuratively and physically by relatives. Soon, their wives and children joined them, then brothers, brothers-in-law and cousins, each helping others get started just as they had been helped. It was what immigration historians came to call chain migration, and during some periods of the 1960s it brought more than 10,000 Italians to Canada in a single year.

The women who came, almost always after their husbands were established, were the invisible backbone of Italian immigration history. Usually, like their husbands, they held a job, sometimes another on weekends, while raising and raising children, managing household finances and very often taking in boarders. Historian Francesca Facchini, the child of Italian immigrants, rightly feels the contribution of Italian women has been somewhat overlooked, a fact she is hoping to correct in a forthcoming book. Such Handworking People, which deals in part with the role of Italian women in Canada's immigration history.

The current president of the National Congress of Italian-Canadians, which represents 800 organizations across Canada, is Annamaria Castelli, the first woman to hold that position. Castelli came from Italy to Toronto with her parents in the fifties, when she was nine. She took her doctoral degree in Italian literature from the University of Toronto, then a law degree from York University's Osgoode Hall, also in Toronto. Today, along with her law practice, she is vice-chair of the governing council of the University of Toronto.

Early this year, Castelli, on behalf of the National Congress, urged the federal government to apologize for a little known but deeply injurious act of 1940, the year Benito Mussolini placed Italy on...
the side of Germany in the Second World War. Roughly 700 Italian-Canadians, who were members of various Italian groups, were swept up and interned as threats to national security. The men (and a handful of women) were confined without due process, some for years. While the government’s intentions, given wartime circumstances, were understandable, the internment, carried out amid fear and hysteria, swept up many loyal, respectable people. And since they were leaders of Canada’s Italian-Canadian community, it suffered the repercussions for years to come.

One who was interned was Julius Molinaro, then a student at the University of Toronto, apparently suspect because he’d won a University of Toronto literary scholarship in 1937 that included a trip to Italy. He was behind barbed wire for several months. Once released, he joined the Allied services, became a news editor, and ironically was stationed for much of the war in Italy. Later he completed his doctoral studies, eventually becoming a professor of Italian at the University of Toronto. “It was ironic,” he told a group of Italian-Canadian law students at Osgoode Hall in the spring, “to be wearing the uniform of an Allied officer and reading confidential, classified documents in Italy, when not that long before I’d been interned in Canada as a threat to our security.” In the view of the National Congress the apology is warranted not simply for the sake of the victims but as recognition of an abridgment of civil liberties in Canada and to help prevent the recurrence of such an abridgment.

It can be a daunting task for Italians to maintain an authentic heritage in Canada, with its dominant anglophone and francophone cultures and growing multi-cultural diversity. In some cases, Italian Canadians have simply let it slip, out of lack of concerted or simply the urge to conform. “When I was going to school in the sixties,” says Salvatore Rizzi of Toronto, “I was known as Sam. I didn’t even know who were the leaders in the community.” That changed when, as a young adult, Rizzi took a trip to Italy, discovered the richness of Italian culture and felt it had much to give to his life and to Canada. Thus, in 1984, along with a teaching colleague, Dom Tasselli, Rizzi founded Leonardo Da Vinci Academy, a private school in Toronto dedicated to high academic standards and preserving Italian culture in Canada. It has grown steadily, most of its students are the children of Italian parents. Both Rizzi and Tasselli are also frank enough to say they hope to encourage more Italian-Canadian young people to pursue higher education.

Last spring, the two educators were pleased to pick up a copy of an Italian-Canadian magazine, Vita Lena, in which the publisher, Anthony Carolla, lauded their school as one way of changing a statistic that has been a muted but serious concern. “As the 1981 census revealed,” Carolla wrote, “when it comes to the percentage of various ethnic groups with degrees, certificates, or diplomas, Italian-Canadians rank among the lowest.” But since 1981, this situation has begun to change. According to Massimo Casavella of the University of Toronto, Italian young people are now beginning to appear in large numbers in courses in which they were once almost invisible—dentistry, medicine and law.

Even in small Italian-Canadian communities there are people at work to preserve the Italian identity. In metropolitan Halifax, for example, where there are roughly 1,000 people of Italian origin, the Italian-Canadian Cultural Association has a sparkling centre on Agricola Street, a meeting place for language courses, a choral group, a senior-citizen club, a craft society. As a former president of the association, Luciano Bucchi, puts it: “Our numbers may never be large here, but the interest in preserving culture is very noticeable.”

Across the country, in Trail, B.C., one of the oldest and strongest of all of Canada’s Italian communities has grown greatly since the early 1800s. Today about half of Trail’s population of 8,000 claims Italian heritage. The main club, the Crisolo Colombo Lodge, with more than 1,000 members, is one of the oldest Italian benevolent societies in all North America, providing financial help for families at times of illness or death. It also houses an archive, reportedly the oldest Italian archive in Canada, a spacious room of photos, letters and documents depicting the origin and life of Trail’s Italian community.

It seems natural that early Italian settlers would be drawn to the lush green coast of British Columbia, whose climate is more similar to that of their native Italy. But even as some moved to that gentle climate, others were making homes in parts of Canada where the climate, especially in winter, was distinctly different from the one they had left. Shortly after the turn of the century Italian immigrants settled in Calgary and other areas of Alberta; today Calgary and Edmon-
tors each have flourishing Italian communities of almost 20,000 people. And in Winnipeg the population of Italian Canadians is roughly 14,000.

Indeed, in that city you can sign up for Italian cooking classes in a genuine trattoria. About 1,000 of the city's Italian-Canadians trace their origin to a single town in Calabria, Amaro, believed to be older than Rome itself.

Winnipeg's Casa d'Italia is a roomy building downtown where numerous Italian groups meet and where, upstairs, people gather to cheer the soccer matches televised live from Italy on a large screen.

One day last spring a woman named Angela Caputo of Winnipeg sat at a lunch table at the Casa d'Italia, explaining to a visitor just what it was like when she made the hard decision, in 1967, to tell her parents that she had decided to leave sunny Italy for the province of Manitoba in Canada to join a young man, Emilio Caputo, whom she planned to marry. It was as difficult, she suggested, as it would be for a young woman raised in Canada to tell her parents that she intended to leave home to live in Siberia.

For several years it was very difficult for Angela and Emilio Caputo. Emilio got a job where he arrived but in a few weeks was out of work and in despair. Soon he found another job, but for several years it was a great struggle. Sometimes the Caputos wondered whether emigrating might have been a mistake. Angela worked at just about everything -- sewing in a factory, waiting on tables, washing dishes. The couple saved every dollar possible. That prudence, which is an Italian trait, helped them weather hard times. Now Emilio owns his own tiling company, the Caputos have paid for their home, their daughter is in university, their son is in a private high school, and Angela is a well-dressed, confident woman who teaches Italian to children every Saturday.

Often, of course, difficulties are the precursor of enrichment, something revealed in the history of the 20,000 Italian Canadians in Montreal. They have had to define their identity amid the city's two strong founding groups, the French and the English. As a result of growing up in this milieu, thousands of Montreal's Italian-Canadian young people have been enriched both linguistically and culturally.

Nowhere is this more evident than in a house in the Montreal district of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. It is home to Filippo Salvatore, an Italian-Canadian and professor of Italian literature at Montreal's Concordia University, and his wife, Helene Ruel, a French-Canadian and teacher of French as a second language at the city's McGill University. Since both parents are deeply committed to language they have a policy at home and adhere to it rigorously. Over the dinner table the children speak to their father in Italian and their mother in French. Since they attend a French school but live in an English community they speak French in class and usually English in the neighborhood. Their parents have sent them to summer camps at which English is the only language. They are becoming thoroughly expert, bilingual Canadians. "I believe," says Filippo Salvatore, "that the children will have wider understanding and tolerance through their linguistic ability. Language gives you a clearer perspective on reality, people, and culture. They will be, we believe, better Canadians for it."

To be a good Canadian is to people such as Salvatore not simply a trite slogan. They are committed to the concept. They think of themselves not as Italians first, but as Canadians. Canadians with a special, enriching culture to offer their country. As Bruno Suppa of Canada's Vallegolden community maintains, Canada is no longer the land to which they emigrated but the country to which they belong. Last year Suppa accompanied a group of men and women, mostly senior citizens, on a visit to the mountain towns of Calabria they had left many years ago. They were welcomed back to Italy, where they strolled one more time through the familiar streets and sat once more in the piazzas of younger years. But then, recalls Suppa, as the days wore on a vague restlessness came over them. "Before we left Italy," says Suppa, "I discovered what it was. Several people came to me and said they had enjoyed the visit but that now they were anxious to go home. 'Let's go home, Bruno,' they said. 'Let's go home.'"
For the Benefit of the PUBLIC: There is now open’d at the first House without the South Gate, an Intelligence and Outward POST-OFFICE &c. &c. If any Gentleman, Merchants, or others, wants to send any Letters to any Foreign Port, they may depend on having their Letters carefully deliver’d to the Captain of the first Vessel bound for the Place to which their Letters are directed, by paying One Penny per letter to said Office."

That advertisement in the Halifax Gazette of April 27, 1754, marked the opening of the first Canadian post office. It was an expensive service in the currency of the time, since a letter could consist of only a single sheet of paper, folded once and sealed.

For most of the two-and-a-half centuries since, the postal service has been as vital as a human nervous system to our rapidly expanding society. It kept divided families in touch as half the continent was settled and gave solace to immigrants isolated not only by the vastness of their adopted homeland but, initially, by the language they used. In those days the expense and difficulty of travel usually meant that settlers and emigrés were separated from their families for life. Letters were their only link.

As newly settled families cultivated businesses and farms and sought to reflect their new prosperity in their homes, the mail-order catalogue became the most convenient means of shopping for necessities and luxuries. The postal service was the foundation of mass marketing: a summons to pick up a parcel at the village post office added a new excitement and satisfaction to rural life.

Post offices proliferated and grew busier, more rapidly when
Many of them carried on business other than their postal function, serving as gas stations or general stores as well.
There is still a sufficient exchange of greeting cards, photos of grandchildren and gifts to justify frequent jaunts from the emptied rural nest.

While nowadays the telephone has rendered the art of letter-writing almost obsolete, there is still a sufficient exchange of greeting cards, photos of grandchildren and gifts to justify frequent jaunts from the emptied rural nest to the post office, perhaps to encounter there other proud and lonely parents and to exchange, with a little bountiful inflation, the respective deeds of their distress and demise. Or, if no one else is about, there are always the sympathetic eves of postal staff, usually competent from alert acquaintance with the neighborhood’s pasting mail.

Rural life is dependent on the annual procession of the seasons, but since sudden, unpredictable changes of weather often result in disaster, change in general is something to be distrusted. Farming has changed greatly, but anything connected with the old days, even if they were bad days, is all but sacrosanct. Recently, the closure of branch rail lines and passenger services, even though they were little used, was loudly and vehemently resented. The same is true of post-office closures in villages no longer providing sufficient postal traffic. As we grow older, the loss of such symbols of the past seems to threaten us as much as loss of memories.

Admittedly, nostalgia is an inadequate substitute for progress. While the move to privatize some surviving small post offices may cause resentment among some customers, it will often mean no more than the postal employees who sold gasoline or groceries or sandwiches on the side becoming small businesspeople who sell postage stamps and money orders on the side. They may well profit from the change.

But those of us who for many years have come to regard our local postmaster or postmistress as the friendly face of bureaucracy, a person to whom we have frequently turned for advice on our problems with officialdom, are likely to feel a sense of loss. The advice may be as sound as ever, but it will have lost its official ring and the humanity of government will yet again seem to diminish.

But many such establishments will, it is to be hoped, survive even in these days of stringent cost-cutting. To the country person, the imperatives of urban efficiency seem less compelling, and no amount of electronic ingenuity can replace the human face of the rural post office.
REACHING OUT

Through a little-known organization called MATCH International
Canadian women are helping to better the lives of their Third World sisters

BY TED FERGUSON

In the spring of 1986 a small group of women living in dusty, rural villages in a sizzling hot plain in southern India began taking a few uncertain steps toward changing their traditional home-bound lifestyles. Under the name Land for the Tiller's Freedom (LAFI), the group asked affluent property owners in the area to sell disused land to individual women on an affordable loan basis. The outcome was to have a tremendous impact on the lives of the women, their families and, indeed, their villages.

Within a year 1,000 women in 19 villages had each acquired 0.4 hectare (one acre) of land. By Canadian standards that may seem insignificant but in the densely populated state of Tamil Nadu it is an impressive amount of land for an impoverished person to own. For the women it meant the difference between a life of poverty and servitude with no hope for a better life for their children and a life, if not of wealth, of independence, progress and hope. Working long hours with crude tools the women managed to cultivate the won land to produce income-generating crops. Not only were they taking active steps to shape their destiny for the better but, having gained a strong feeling of self-respect and confidence, they assumed more influential roles in their villages. "Planting their own piece of land turned a new leaf for them," says LAFI's secretary Krishna, a member of the Thamizh Foundation in Thanjavur, India. "We witnessed a new joy and sense of freedom among the women."

This is precisely the kind of response that pleases the staff at MATCH Internaional, an Ottawa-based development aid agency that helped fund the LAFI project. Founded in 1976, MATCH is the only organization of its type that is run by and exclusively for women. In Canada it is practically invisible but in the Third World this quiet, diligent organization has emerged as a widely known and much admired force. A staff member at the office of Canada's external affairs minister, Joe Clark, once told a MATCH officer that Clark receives numerous compliments about the agency and its work when he's overseas. That doesn't surprise Kate McLaren, a deputy manager in the division of program operations for the Ottawa-based development agency CUSC. MATCH has an excellent reputation, says McLaren, "It's small and feisty and is known for taking on projects that mainstream development bodies ignore."

With a slimy annual budget — it was just less than $90,000 for the 1989-90 year — the non-governmental agency has contributed to a varied range of development programs in more than 50 Asian, Latin American, African and Caribbean countries. About 50 percent of MATCH's budget is contributed by Canadian women's groups, private foundations, concerned individuals and various federal and provincial government departments; the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides the remainder.

The one thing MATCH projects have in common is their attempt to fulfill the organization's main goal: to improve the quality of women's lives in developing nations. To accomplish this MATCH endeavours to support projects that empower women to challenge existing systems of domination and exploitation.

Sometimes Canadian women's groups are matched (hence the organization's name) with individual women's groups in developing countries to offer advice on and support for specific projects. MATCH's role is to select the projects, link the women's groups and provide grants. In 1989 the agency funded 14 overseas projects, which dealt with, among other things, illiteracy, battered wives and indigenous craft production. As well, MATCH is involved with what it terms programs — broader projects that involve developing resources and workshops pertaining to specific themes (such as violence against women) that can be used by all women's groups in Canada and the Third World.

MATCH works hard to avoid the traditional donor-recipient system that many agencies embrace, says Rosemary Brown, the former NDP politician and social worker who became executive director of MATCH in 1989. That is to say MATCH doesn't send a representative to evaluate a region so the agency can decide what projects would be most valuable. Instead, people in those regions devise the projects and submit proposals to MATCH. "Our role is to offer financial support and moral encouragement," says Brown. "If we believe a project is worthwhile and we can afford it we will support it."

Under Brown's guidance, MATCH has focused a great deal of attention on the issue of violence against women. Through one of its programs the organization is currently supporting a number of projects aimed at training workers in Third World shelters for abused women to assist the victims of physical and sexual abuse and to design educational programs, such as plays, that will help put an end to family violence. MATCH is placing a great deal of importance on this issue because it believes that as long as women are removed by violence they are kept from fully participating in society and implementing changes that could better their existence and that of their communities. The statistics MATCH has gathered are sobering. In Bangkok, for example, 50 percent of married women are regularly beaten by their husbands; in one Indian state about 1,000 women are burnt alive annually in an illegal punishment meted out to a bride whose family fails to provide the promised dowry. While Canada is fortunately free of such shocking statistics, it has little to be smug about: one in 10 Canadian women is sexually or physically abused by her spouse.

Realizing that such abuse is a problem not confined to the Third World, MATCH sponsored a series of anti-domestic violence workshops in Canada last year. Two organizers from foreign crisis centres, Mikki van Zyl of South Africa and Hilda Navias of the Philippines, joined three Canadian women to present workshops in Ottawa. As a member of the MATCH staff, "It was a real eye opener. Both men and women said they felt the fear the victims would have experienced and reacted angrily to it."

Following the simulation, the audience
and five workshop facilitators—discussed incidents of abuse they had experienced or witnessed, and strategies for overcoming violence in their own communities. "We had nowhere to turn to for help," one of the women said. "It was like we were being watched everywhere."

Over the years MATCH has also provided funding for a literacy drive among Peruvian domestic workers, helped 15 Zimbabwean village boys hand-operated breweries, and provided training for a Prudential Fund for an organization in a project that saw 25 Indonesian women establish their own dairy. While the agency’s staff members say that every project can be singled out as successful, they do have success stories to tell.

One such story is the start-up of the Prudential Fund for a successful coffee venture in Tanzania. The fund provided the farmers with a roasting and bottling plant, which allowed them to raise the quality of their coffee and sell it to a local market.

The agency’s success stories are numerous, and they include stories of women who have started their own businesses and gained financial independence. These stories are shared in the book "Women Entrepreneurs: A Guide for Developmental Agents," which provides a guide for development agents working with women entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, MATCH’s work has been instrumental in improving the lives of women in various countries. Their efforts have helped women to gain access to education, health care, and financial resources, and they have challenged gendered norms and stereotypes. MATCH’s work is an example of how organizations can make a significant impact on the lives of marginalized communities.

Working for Third World women

Romeo Brown sets out a tall, hand-drawn desk at his home in Toronto’s Bloor-Yorkville section. Nerves are up. She’s about to meet the president of MATCH, the multicultural organization that has been instrumental in supporting women in rural areas.

"You’re the right type of person," the president, saying she’s pleased to meet Brown, adds. "We’re particularly interested in women with leadership qualities." Brown smiles and nods as she sits down across from the president, listing the reasons why she wants to work for MATCH.

Brown’s recruitment is another example of MATCH’s efforts to hire women who have the leadership qualities to make a difference. The organization, which was founded in 1972, is dedicated to providing leadership training and development opportunities to women in third world countries.

MATCH’s work is not limited to providing financial support. The organization also provides training and development opportunities to women, which helps them to gain the skills they need to become leaders in their communities.

MATCH’s work is significant in providing leadership opportunities to women in third world countries. By providing training and development opportunities, MATCH is helping women to gain the skills they need to become leaders in their communities, which helps to improve the quality of life for women and their families.
A MAESTRO IN THE MARITIMES

Georg Tintner’s production of The Magic Flute caused quite a stir among London’s music circles when it made its debut in the city in 1970. "In recent weeks a number of acquaintances whose judgment I respect have urged me to go to hear Georg Tintner conduct The Magic Flute at the Coliseum," wrote Peter Heyworth, the much respected music critic for the London Observer. "Last week I did so and was rewarded by a performance full of dramatic pace yet rich in inner life and mystery.... Mr. Tintner clearly has a profound understanding of this miraculous score, knows exactly what he wants and how to get it."

So impressed was the critic that he not only praised the performance but went on to say that "such musicians are rare and would, one might suppose, be welcomed in London with open arms, particularly as we are not rich in conducting talent." Such, however, was not the case, he added. "Are we condemning another outstanding conductor to a lifetime of cruel neglect? If so we, as well as Mr. Tintner, will be the losers."

Ironically, a few days before the review appeared the Austrian-born Tintner had signed a contract with a semi-professional opera company in Perth, Australia—"as Heyworth put it, "with all respect, hardly the centre of the musical universe." After the review appeared Tintner’s friends urged him to change his mind. "'You cannot go now, they told me," says Tintner. "Heyworth is a kingmaker—your success is assured.'"

That go Tintner did. "I had signed a contract," says the 71-year-old conductor today. "I had to go." Such is the integrity of this gentle, intense man.

If Tintner’s departure was Britain’s loss it was to be Canada’s gain. The conductor began what he calls his "love affair" with this country in 1971, when he took a two-month leave from his position in Perth to conduct the National Youth Orchestra, Canada’s preeminent youth orchestra, assembled each summer from the best young musicians in the country.

In all, Tintner has conducted the orchestra for eight seasons—more than any other conductor—and in 1983 led in a recording of Anton Bruckner’s Eighth Symphony, which William Linder, music critic for the Toronto Star, describes as "quite a remarkable performance."

"Under Tintner’s leadership, the orchestra has received excellent reviews and concerts are often sold out—"at a performance of Gustav Mahler’s First Symphony in Montreal last year 250 people were turned away. "When our people learn that he’s coming they get very excited," says Svendana Vlahovic, operations manager of the National Youth Orchestra. "He is a great conductor with a wonderful repertoire, but he has something else—a tremendous ability to work with young people, to get the very best out of musicians." Vlahovic’s sentiments are echoed by many. Says Linder: "He has a sense of integrity, which he communicates to the musicians, who seem genuinely to like him and want to play for him."

The respect is mutual; the National
Symphony Nova Scotia is playing as I've never heard it play before!

Three years conducting and coaching the Saddles Wells Opera (now the English National Opera), which culminated in the performance of The Magic Flute and Peter Heyworth’s glowing review. Asked if he regrets the fact that he didn’t study singing, he said, “I know I would have grown into a great singer. I could grow fruit and vegetables in my garden. And fruit and vegetables are more satisfying to a vegetarian who does not even eat dairy products or honey. "I do not want a creature to suffer for my pleasure,” he says. He doesn’t even wear leather shoes or cloth made out of wool.

In 1970 he moved to Brisbane on Australia’s east coast to lead the newly formed Queensland Symphony Orchestra. It was partly the weather and growing conditions that made him go, but it was also the fact that “in Australia I could grow fruit and vegetables in my garden.” And fruit and vegetables are more satisfying to a vegetarian who does not even eat dairy products or honey. “I do not want a creature to suffer for my pleasure,” he says. He doesn’t even wear leather shoes or cloth made out of wool.

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FEVERTON, music is much more than a means of livelihood — it is a passion.

many of the world's major orchestras and is considered one of the world's leading Bruckner specialists. Among them is the Czechoslovakian-born composer Oskar Morawetz, whose work From the Diary of Anne Frank Tinnett has performed. And like Oskar, he is liked and respected as a person and whose, almost everyone — from the musicians he has worked with to the music critics — seems to agree has a quite remarkable talent for coexisting with the very best from musicians. Indeed, no one appears to have a bad word to say about the man. Certainly there must be people whose preference is for a different style of conducting — music is, after all, among the most subjective of arts. But in talking of Tinnett people seem to rise above the subjective. Even what could be a negative comment is phrased in the kindest terms. When asked to comment on Tinnett's style, for example, William Litton says, "He is very good at interpreting music, expressing the emotion in it. He is less concerned about purely technical matters." And when it comes to the man himself, the comments are even more favourable. "Mr. Tinnett is both a great musician and a great person," says Shiela Connolly, author of Symphony Nova Scotia, echoing the view of many. "He is patient, unpretentious and thoughtful in all he does. People want to play their best for him."

Yet despite this somewhat overwhelming respect Tinnett has spent most of his career in what might be described as the music hinterland. Why, in part, must have to do with circumstance — had Tinnett's career not been so cruelly interrupted by the Nazis perhaps its early promise would have been fulfilled. But Tinnett himself suggests the answer. "Any composer and conductor who conduct the world's greatest orchestras," he says, "but I don't yet the race and I don't like promoting myself. There is too much to do other than that. Perhaps, when it comes right down to it, the glory of being master of one of the world's great orchestras could not satisfy this champion of the undersung as much as coaxing little-known music from obscure places. But that what is significant is not why Tinnett did not achieve the status of superstar but the fact that because he followed the route he did a number of developing orchestras have been gnawed with musical leadership of a standard usually reserved for the world's big-name orchestras.

He stands like a stringless puppet in tails and swallow-tails, his slim body bent, then released and filled with the hands moving through the score delicately, forceful but wistfully — in their interpretation of the music. So vivid are the movements that even those who cannot hear might well have a sense of the music. It is evident that Tinnett music is much more than a means of livelihood; music is a passion and fulfilling. You can tell even by the way he talks about it. Asked what his favorite works are he finds it difficult to make a choice — he loves so many pieces. "Many works of Bruckner and Schubert," he says. "All of Beethoven's symphonies and every note that Mozart wrote. These I suppose are my favorites but I have a very wide taste and the music of Verdi, for instance, and Wagner. There are so many I don't know where to start." But is there a particular favorite? He is reflective and still for a moment, almost as if he is reaching into his soul. "Yes, there is one that I have always had a quite undying fondness for. I'd like to play for me when I am dead," he says in a quiet voice, obviously hearing the music in his mind. But he doesn't say what it is — he has shared so much, perhaps it is fitting that he keep this to himself."

RoBERT THOMAS Allen, whose pieces appeared for so many years in The Review, died recently, leaving all of us sud- denly and without warning. He had been a national award in 1976. Before that he twice won our most distinguished award for humour, the Stephen Leacock Award, for The Grass is Never Greener in 1957 and Children, Wives and Other Wild Life in 1971. When humour in Canada was men- tioned he laughed and remarked in that way of his that "when Canadian hu- mor is awful it just lies there being awful in its own feed way." The publisher of many of his books, Douglas Gibson, spoke prophetically and well, upon his death, he said, "He was always the eager, amused, bemused everydayman, van- dering through the mysterious world and reporting back on it."

Robert Thomas Allen was, in most years of school, a reader may not even think of him — for he was a private man — that he lived as he wrote, simply and mod- erately. The apartment he and his wife, He- len, shared in Toronto before moving to California a few years ago to be close to their children was masculine and unpretentious. His shelves of books, mostly old ones, were chosen as carefully as jewels, his shirts, a set of three volumes. His big, yellow, leather-covered Compendium of Scientists — his hobby was reading philosophy — which, in typical fashion, he bought second-hand years ago for $4.50. He disliked, perhaps hated the hon- est word, orientation, whatever in print or life. So when he and I went to lunch we chose ordinary eateries, not fashion- able and expensive dining rooms in California. He was contemptuous of the notion of how is what called "the power lunch" which would leave him amused but also put off. When it was time for the cheque he would politely ask the waiter (it was usually a restaurant where the waitresses were four ladies of a certain age in dresses with white cuffs) to bring two. Why should someone, even if it was an editor for whom a person wrote, be responsible for somebody else's lunch? He was that kind of writer.

As these words were being written, the phone rang. It was a young journalist, writing an obituary for the Globe and Mail to remember there is more to see and write about than the famous, the powerful and the rich. When I hung up the phone I wished that I had told the young man of the last day I saw Bob Allen before he and his wife moved to California. I had asked if the writer's friend and one of his editors, I might have a thought or two to express. We talked for several minutes. I men- tioned, as here, his working style, his re- tiring modesty and how his writing was a way of going home after a day in the ordinary — the fall of the first snow on a winter evening, the silence that sur- rounds a fisherman on a lake that drifted in spring from his father's workshop. These were not, I tried to say, more mindless of life. They were, as Bob Allen saw and rendered them, valued re- relations in the passage of life, not just his but our own lives as well.

I hope that everywhere in Canada where men and women teach tomor- row's journalists Robert Thomas Allen will always be remembered. I hope those teachers will refer young people to his work, not simply for its style but for its memorable, human quality. If they do, tomorrow's journalists will know that from the mailbag among ordinary readers there is a rare gift, that knew that the common- place was never common, that ordinary things have value. And if there was less cause for pessimism than for hope. He helped us in our own time to see and write about than the famous, the powerful and the rich.