

## CULTURAL YEARS

### CONFEDERATION: ITS SECOND CENTURY CULTURAL OPPORTUNITY SEEN BIG NEED

By **DR. FRANK MACKINNON**, principal Prince of Wales College; chairman P.E.I. Centennial Committee; and president Fathers of Confederation Memorial Citizens Foundation.

Canada at the end of her first century is surely one of the most fortunate nations in the world. Her nineteen million people have half a continent to themselves, abundant resources to enjoy, and friendly neighbours across the border. They have had no civil wars, famines, revolutions or other national calamities. And their constitution is now one of the senior ones in the world.

Our advantages have been hard-won: this has not been an easy country to develop or govern. Canada is so big; her resources and industries are on so large a scale; there are so few people; and relatively her political system is enormous—fourteen governments for nineteen million people.

Therefore with the approach of our national centennial we have both difficulties to assess and blessings to count. There is also a potentially great future ahead, and it will be as great as the extent to which we make use of our blessings and solve, and cease complaining about, our difficulties.

Concerning our present worries about Confederation let us recognize them frankly but not harp on them so that they become obsessions. Every family has its, the best of friends argue. And, politically, not a nation in the history of the world has been without similar or worse worries. I believe that if Macdonald and Cartier were here they would remind us that

the constitution they devised, with all its weaknesses, has outlasted the powerful regimes of their day—that of the Czar of Russia, the Emperors of Germany and Austria, the King of Spain—and numerous other constitutions which have appeared and disappeared in the last century in every part of the world. The Fathers would be proud of this; so should we. As the political history of man only too clearly indicates, our Confederation has served us well. Those who think it perfect are naive; but those who condemn it are either badly informed or very stupid.

#### CULTURE A FEATURE

Canada's first century has featured politics and economics on a large scale and culture on a very small scale. I believe that the next century must feature culture on a much larger scale not only for its own sake but also to maintain political and economic growth. We must recognize that tradition (which is largely cultural) and culture are stronger elements in national greatness and spirit than legislative processes and industrial expansion. Nations are like people: it is not their power and wealth alone that make them happy; it is their spirit.

There is nothing snobbish about culture. Music, art, literature, dancing, craftsmanship, storytelling and the like are powerful elements in man's life. Taken together in all their varieties, they reflect the nature of



DR. FRANK MACKINNON

a people. The Indian legend, the Irish story, the Scottish dance, French cuisine, the English ceremony are all handed down from generation to generation to be enjoyed by those who call them their own and by others as well. A simple Burns poem affected men's hearts in a more powerful way than a Rothschild bank loan did their treasures, and the Scots in every part of the world have never got over it since. No one has a lump in his throat or a tear in his eyes as he looks at a factory or a power dam.

In relations among nations it is culture, not politics or economics, that is easiest understood. We know more of Spanish dancing than of Spain's banking and more of Italian music than of Italy's public utilities. And

the works of Lucy Maud Montgomery and Emily Carr are better known abroad than the achievements of even the most eminent Canadian politicians or businessmen.

"Right here in Canada 'Alouette' has done as much for unity and spirit as the trans-Canada highway; Stratford has done as much to make Ontario interesting as Bay Street; and Stephen Leacock's stories have made us more Canadian than any budget speech in Parliament.

#### PROGRESS SHOWN

We are making progress in this regard; but we are only beginning. Ten years ago one could not make a living performing in Canada; it was difficult to get works published, and there were no major theatres. Today if one wants to get a "feeling" of being Canadian by observing the talents of Canadians there are opportunities. But it is still a long way to go. There is no belief that a distinctive flag or anthem are in themselves sufficiently important to warrant all the fuss made over them. Many countries have disapproved that have had such symbols. Symbols must be symbols of something to be effective—something by way of a great spirit and tradition. If we develop the latter the symbols will soon be found.

Certainly the Union Jack is not distinctively Canadian. But neither is the fleur-de-lis, the denominational symbols or our religious denominations, nor many of the best known symbols used in commerce or industry. So what? The answer does not lie in quarrelling over them, but rather in developing our own enterprise to such an extent that the symbols we have now or that will become accepted will have a strong tradition behind them. It is the tradition that brings honour and acceptance to the symbol.

The same reasoning applies to language. It is simply the vehicle of thought and communication. Bilingualism or multilingualism will flourish to the extent that people have something to say to one another. In this regard literature and music have so far been the most effective teachers.

Now, how is the tradition of Canada to be understood and the spirit of Canada enjoyed? Let us examine our history, not via the dull nice-Nellyism of our school textbooks but through a real appraisal of the men who made it. The leading Fathers of Confederation and the work they did from 1864 to 1867, hitherto almost unknown, are far more interesting than we are inclined to believe. And let us be frank about such subjects. Why worry if there are two schools of thought on Louis Riel and hide him behind vague generalities? It would do us good to examine both sides. The point is

that history is past politics and those who ignore it are doomed to repeat its mistakes. We will understand Canada, Confederation and each other better if we know what went on before we appeared briefly on the nation's stage.

Let us continue to build theatres, museums, galleries and libraries and show our literature and our artistic abilities. Stock our schools with good books and magazines, put good paintings on school walls, and invite artists to sing or dance in their auditoriums. (These things we don't do.) Young Canadians who see and hear the arts will grow up to express themselves and seek expression in others.

We are a large country that spends billions on transportation. Let us transport our arts as well as our power and potatoes. Sending Les Feu Follets to Vancouver or the winners of the Quebec Musical Festival to Halifax or Bonhomme Carnaval to Toronto will do more than any speech on bicentennialism and cost less than bombs in mail boxes. A visiting girls and boys pipe band, an exchange of displays of handicrafts, a tour of young folk dancers are as important to unity and goodwill as convocations of public officials or convocations of commercial groups. Canada is a people, not just a land or a constitution, and it is people and their ideas, abilities and emotions that need to be featured and understood.

#### FRONTIERS MOVED

Canadian history has featured a big base and various frontiers. There still remains the cultural frontier. Pioneers in Canadian art, music and literature have shown exciting results for their hard work, and the public is only recently beginning to appreciate them. But this frontier, like the others, requires special effort and expenditure. Just as railways and roads were needed to open the West and North, so theatres, libraries, galleries and museums are needed to provide centres of activity in the arts. Scholarships are just as essential to young artists as to young scientists. And subsidies are just a logical part of the new art as they are to new industries.

Our second century might well be the century of Canadian culture, wherein we learn to sing, dance, paint, exchange stories, or if we don't do those things, at least enjoy them, wherein we become able to laugh at ourselves and one another, and wherein an intensely loyal spirit develops out of the emotions of our people. Being Canadian could become something beyond a right to vote or to receive a social security cheque. John A. Macdonald and our other great leaders would be recognized and honoured. July 1 could take on something of the spirit of St. Andrew's night to the Scots, Jean Baptiste Day to the French, neither of which are based on business or politics. As we sing our anthem we would pledge ourselves to "stand on guard" for not just a land or a system but also a way of life.

#### CHILDREN DIG

HERNE BAY, England (CP)—School children in this Kent town will be among 80 volunteers to start on important stages in the excavation of a Roman fort used to repel Saxon invaders in the third century. Buildings at the rear of the fort are thought to have been soldiers' barracks.



ST. DUNSTAN'S COLLEGE BUILT IN 1862 AND OLD ST. DUNSTAN'S CATHEDRAL

this is the store that Confidence Built!

Keeping Pace With The Times



With Honest, Sound, Solid Merchandising Policy to the People of Summerside and Area for over a Quarter of a Century.

- We do not dictate styles to our customers... we make a sincere effort to please everyone. The fashion trends of the men's world are always reflected on our shelves and racks.
- We always feature high-quality merchandise that you can trust at prices you can afford.
- When we have a sale it is a real sale of outstanding bargains. Our sales are short, sweet and good or we don't have them.

**Maurice Mill Ltd**  
CLOTHING OF DISTINCTION FOR MEN

Water Street

Summerside

## Times Have Changed



Today's high speed autos depend on tested, reliable tires, found at

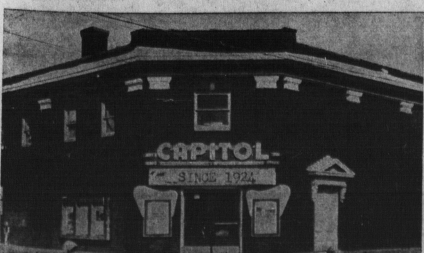
## Harold L. Matthews

Retreading, Vulcanizing

319 WATER ST.

SUMMERSIDE

Charlottetown's Favorite Entertainment Centre Since 1924



**CAPITOL THEATRE**

Opposite Confederation Building

## "GOODWILL" IS GUARANTEED AT HILLSIDE MOTORS LTD.

HILLSIDE MOTORS LIMITED

STEADILY PROGRESSING WITH PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

HILLSIDE MOTORS

Serving the needs of the discriminating car buyer in Prince Edward Island. Come in today for a Demonstration.

The home of Pontiac, Buick, Acadian, and Vauxhall. Also a quality line of Goodwill Used Cars.

**HILLSIDE MOTORS LTD.**

ST. PETERS RD.

DIAL 892-1243

PARKDALE