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The Province of Quebec

MANY ARTISTS AND POETS have tried to picture and describe the Province of Quebec, but it has a charm that is beyond the expression of paint and words.

Quebec is made up of a thousand small things and sentiments. It has been different from other provinces throughout Canada's history, and it will continue to be different because it is only at the beginning of its thrust toward economic maturity whereas some other provinces are already far advanced.

Quebec is today an expectant province, looking forward to satisfaction of its ambitions. The old agrarian society has been broken away from; men and women whose fathers could scarcely bear to travel beyond the sound of their village church bells are now working in the towns and cities. From the insularity of only twoscore years ago the province has opened its doors to the world through inviting all nations to take part in the World Fair in 1967. Urbanization and the rise of a vast industrial complex have set in motion an irreversible process.

This is the largest province in Canada, 594,860 square miles, more than double the size of Texas, equal to the combined area of France, Spain and all Germany. Its last Census population was 5,259,211, which was 29 per cent of Canada's total.

The characteristic vegetation of the greater part of Quebec is forest. Occupied agricultural land totals 22,185 square miles, while forest covers 378,125 square miles. The highest mountain is Mount Jacques Cartier, 4,160 feet. There are four lakes over 400 square miles. Quebec has a long sea frontage on Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait, Ungava Bay and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Because the province extends for more than twelve hundred miles from south to north, the climate is extremely varied. At Fort Chimo, on Ungava Bay, the season between frosts is about 52 days; while at Sherbrooke, in the Eastern Townships, it lasts about 130 days.

Railways and roads are pushing their fingers northward as new sources of minerals are discovered and new areas of forest opened up. People to develop the

resources and to process the products of mines and forests are increasing in number. It is estimated that the population will have grown to 6,380,000 by 1971.

The St. Lawrence River

An explorer of 1663 wrote in his diary that there is no other country in the world so well supplied with water. At Île d'Orléans the earlier explorers had found "the water begins to be fresh" — they were entering the mainstream of the great St. Lawrence River, the main geographical feature of Quebec. Along it and its shores the life of Quebec has been going on for more than four hundred years.

The principal agricultural area of the province lies in the river valley and in the adjacent Eastern Townships, extending from the river to the United States boundary. The south shore is dotted with a string of small towns and villages dating from the days of the first colony. Trading posts for widely spread farms have become cities and towns.

Quebec City, the oldest national capital north of the Rio Grande, was founded in 1608 when Champlain brought the first colonists from France.

Knights of the sword and cross made it their headquarters when they set out to conquer this vast land for king and church. Fur traders centred their business here. Here were fought many battles, notably the one which saw the death of the opposing generals, now commemorated on the heights by one obelisk bearing this inscription: "Valor gave them a common death, history a common fame, and posterity a common monument." Today, the city is an administrative, educational and religious centre.

Some eighty miles upstream is Trois-Rivières, founded in 1634, an important trading centre from which set out the La Vérendryes who were the first explorers to reach the site of Winnipeg and the Black Hills of Wyoming. It is one of the half dozen largest ports in Canada, the chief newsprint-producing centre in the world, with a population of 55,000.

The Island of Montreal, 164 miles above Quebec,

was visited by Jacques Cartier, the Breton sea captain, in 1535. The first settlers disembarked in May 1642, numbering among them two courageous women, Jeanne Mance and Mme. de la Peltrie, the first of whom established a hospital. At the end of the 1660's the population had reached 600.

The geographical situation of Montreal at the junction of the St. Lawrence, Ottawa and Richelieu rivers gave it significance in a time when all traffic was by water. Today it is the main economic centre, with a population of 2,000,000 in the metropolitan area, representing ten per cent of the Canadian population.

But Montreal is noteworthy for more than its economic activity. It is the largest French-speaking city in the world except Paris. It is, of all North American cities, the city of debate in which differently trained minds express themselves without inhibition on all matters of interest socially, politically and economically.

As to the river itself, it loses none of its importance at Montreal, where it has already flowed a thousand miles from the head of the lakes and has a thousand miles to roll along before reaching the Atlantic Ocean.

In this journey the river falls 580 feet. A small canal was built at Lachine in 1700 to eliminate the portage around the rapids, and by 1850 vessels up to 140 feet long and nine feet in draught could make the passage from Montreal to Lake Erie. Today, the St. Lawrence Seaway, opened in the spring of 1959, provides a channel 27 feet in depth from the Atlantic Ocean to Duluth, Minnesota, at the head of the Great Lakes. The upper St. Lawrence and the lakes are open to eighty per cent of the world's salt-water fleets.

The impact of this seaway on Quebec ports has been great. In 1964 there were 21 ports in Canada handling more than two million tons of foreign and coastwise cargo. Of these, eight were in the Province of Quebec, handling 44 per cent of the total tonnage.

Exploration and development

All of this development began when Cartier sailed up the great river in search of the Pacific. He was followed by Champlain, who, whether he fought, explored, or colonized — and he did all three well — did so as a crusader. Champlain was the true father of Canada.

There were periods when both France and Britain doubted the value of this new land. It was argued in the English Parliament that Canada was not worth her upkeep, and Voltaire gave a sumptuous banquet at his home in Paris to celebrate the take-over by Britain of the troublesome dependency.

When Canada was ceded in 1763, France washed its hands of the "few arpents of snow". Most of the military, the aristocracy and the bureaucrats went back to France, leaving the Canadian people to develop a personality of their own. After the French Revolution, Quebec had less and less sympathy with

old France, and turned increasingly to its own resources and development. The people retained their tradition of law and charity, and they did not forget that they were the descendants of one of the most cultured countries the world has ever known, but the clear air and the wide spaces of this land gave them a dynamic force that made them distinctive.

There have been ups and downs politically, first as the debris of war was cleared away and then as the foundations of economic and social life were laid. The colony struggled along under provisional government, popular assemblies, legislative union of Upper and Lower Canada, responsible government, and finally reached a meeting of minds in a conference in Quebec City in 1864 at which final resolutions recommending a federal union were drafted and adopted.

The federal system of government demanded a compromise between two sets of political forces: centralization of power and provincial autonomy. The Canadian plan, in view of its special circumstances, differed from the United States federal plan. Whereas the latter left residual powers to the states, the Canadian plan allotted specific areas of power to the provinces and gave residual powers to the central government. As an outcome, federal power in Canada has decreased, while in the United States it has become very great.

The special minority position of Quebec was recognized by writing into the British North America Act certain irreducible obligations to the French-speaking province. It retained its civil law, its religious liberty, equality of its language in the Parliament of Canada, in the Legislature of Quebec, and in the courts of the Dominion and Quebec province, and jurisdiction over its own education system. This arrangement was not, in the minds of the French Canadians, simply a federal union, but a pact or treaty guaranteeing to each group the right to its own faith, language, laws and customs.

Under the circumstances prevailing since the revolt of the American colonies, continued partnership with English-speaking Canada is the only guarantee a French Canadian has of being able to maintain his cultural identity. "But by the same token," said an article in the *Manchester Guardian*, "English-speaking Canada needs the French, or it, too, outnumbered and undistinguished by a separate language, might be submerged by the Southern giant."

Natural resources

It is part of the Quebec legend that its people displayed from the first spectacular and dominant genius for agricultural pioneering. The farmer who owned a small farm and worked it with the aid of his family, was the incarnation of the simple, honest, independent, healthy, happy human being. The ambition of the Quebec farmer was to see his sons on reaching manhood established with their families on farms clustered about his own.

The time came, however, when the hard working farmer needed cash crops to buy the appliances and

comforts of life which became available with the development of industry. The self-sufficiency forced upon him by lack of transportation and markets became unnecessary in an age of railways and roads.

These also lured his sons to the tinsel and glamour of towns and cities. In 1941 the rural population of Quebec was 36.7 per cent; in 1961 it had fallen to 24.8 per cent. The agricultural labour force was 12.5 per cent in 1956; in 1965 it was only 6 per cent.

To maintain agriculture as a going concern in the social and economic structure of the province, the government is working toward improvement of production and marketing through the provision of farm credit, assistance to farmers in organizing the collective commercialization of their products, the improvement of education, and the encouragement of agricultural research. Subsidies are provided to settlers and farmers in handicapped rural areas for the construction of buildings, the acquiring of stock, land clearing and development, and the transportation of produce to market.

The Gaspé Peninsula is the home of the commercial fishermen of Quebec. The government operates a network of sixty cold storage plants for the freezing and preservation of fish, with a daily freezing capacity of 500 tons and a storage capacity of 25 million pounds. In addition, the government owns and maintains 123 stations in small fishing ports where fish is kept under proper conditions while awaiting transportation, and it operates an artificial drying plant with a capacity of three million pounds of fish annually.

Quebec has extremely valuable timber resources, the biggest in Canada. Forest covers 242 million acres, of which 141 million are productive and 86 million acres are being developed.

Minerals have a high place in the roster of resources, although intensive prospecting did not start until the mid-19th century. As late as 1900 the value of mineral production was only \$1,670,000; in 1965 it was \$705 million, equal to 19 per cent of the Canadian total.

The biggest deposits of asbestos in the world are in Quebec, and output runs at about \$120 million a year. The gold-copper mine at Noranda opened in 1911. Most sensational, however, was the discovery in 1937 of massive deposits of iron and titanium in Northern Quebec. Estimates run all the way from 400 million tons of iron ore to 20,000 million tons. The deposits were brought into production in 1954 following the building of a 360-mile railway from the St. Lawrence River at Sept Îles to Schefferville.

Water power has been important in Quebec since the earliest days. The first plant in North America to use water as a source of power was a mill built in 1691 at Petit Pré, near Quebec, and in 1861 there were 344 mills using water as a source of power. A new era dawned following the discovery of electro-magnetic induction and the development of the dynamo. By

1887 the city of Quebec was being supplied with hydro-electric power, by the end of 1900 the power stations in Quebec province were developing half Canada's total, and since 1926 this province has remained constantly in the lead.

Quebec possesses nearly a third of the hydraulic resources of Canada. Installed turbine capacity is about 47 per cent of the country's total. Today's interest of power engineers is centred upon the huge Manicouagan-Outardes hydro complex now under construction. It will harness two rivers to provide about six million kw. of hydro capacity.

Industry

Quebec was born in the country, but it is moving to the city. Until 1914 agriculture provided 65 per cent of the provincial product, forestry 25 per cent, and manufacturing less than five per cent; in 1965 there were more than 12,000 industries, employing some 475,000 persons, accounting for more than seventy per cent of the gross value of Quebec's total production.

Discovery of enormous mineral wealth and the development of hydro-electric energy contributed to the fact that between 1939 and 1950 the increase in industrial activity in Quebec was ten times greater than in the whole of the previous century.

New capital has been brought in, new industries have been attracted, secondary industry has been expanded. Just before the Second World War total production amounted to only \$1,500 million; in 1965 the total value of production of goods in Quebec amounted to \$14,013 million.

The most important of the processing industries in terms of gross dollar value are pulp and paper, non-ferrous metals, petroleum and meat-packing. The pulp and paper industry is Quebec's major manufacturing industry. Shipments have represented more than eight per cent of total Canadian shipments. Abundance of power has led to the establishment of a great aluminum plant at Arvida, based on bauxite imported by ship up the River Saguenay.

Developing the economy

To attain the desired high level of living requires prompt and vigorous attention to building and sustaining the economy.

A few years ago Quebec passed from the era of manifestos into one of blueprints. An Economic Advisory Council was set up to prepare a six-year plan of regional development to extend from 1965 to 1970, making the most complete use of material and human resources.

In 1966 the government announced its intention to divide the province into ten regions and 25 sub-regions. These new districts will create poles of growth around which regional economic development will be centred.

Man-power in the province has increased from 1,591,000 in 1955 to 2,019,000 in 1965, and average weekly wages have risen from \$58.62 to \$88.71.

It is evident from all this that the fundamental fact about Quebec today is that it is in transition. The Second World War brought the full impact of the industrial revolution to a region which had long escaped that profoundly disturbing social process.

Since then an ardent realism has grown in the minds of young people along the St. Lawrence River. As the Mayor of Montreal told a Canadian Club meeting: "The younger generation wants to prove by new departures and success that being French does not consist only in a collection of moving traditions and touching folklore songs, but that it may be translated into a sequence of undertakings and of rewarding successes, adapted to twentieth century mentality in the field of ideas and that of works."

Culture

The fact that there are two cultural groups in Canada is an element of distinction. The presence of French culture gives Canada individuality. It helps to set Canada apart from the all-pervasive American civilization.

No one should think of French and English as foreign languages, but as Canadian languages. French-Canadian culture is not just the spoken language; it is also the over-all mentality and the behaviour of a whole group. "Culture" — or "intellectual personality" — is made up of many things: religion, politics, education, tradition, memories and aspirations. The French-Canadian culture has expanded sharply so as to recognize and accept industrialization as part of today's civilization. The ecumenical movement has animated the churches with a breath of brotherhood and understanding. Education has broadened the horizon and has made Quebec part of the world.

In common with other under-industrialized countries, Quebec has marked recent years by intensified action in support of the public schools system and in the creation of specialized institutions to meet the constantly changing needs of society. By the mid-1960's Quebec had some 6,000 elementary and secondary schools with about 1,500,000 pupils; six universities; 15 schools of agriculture; 65 technical schools; about forty schools of household education, and a number of schools for the graphic arts, applied arts, textiles, paper making and mechanics.

The universities, always highly regarded, are also on the march. The University of Montreal has one of Canada's largest computer centres and its Institute of Experimental Medicine and Surgery has achieved international repute. McGill University has become one of the leading educational centres of aerospace research, and its Neurological Institute and Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry have established themselves as world leaders in their fields.

Arts and crafts

By the seventeenth century an artistic tradition was firmly planted on Canadian soil, and a remarkable growth and flowering took place during the next two hundred years. It embraced painting, decorative arts, silver-work, architecture, and a brilliant school of wood sculpture. It was not a pale copy of what was being done in Europe, but a uniquely Canadian artistic expression, moulded by climate, the life of the people, and a genuine feeling for beauty.

As early as 1668 Laval, the first bishop of Quebec, established a school of arts and crafts at St. Joachim. Today, the French Canadians are eminent in music, literature, sculpture, drama, painting, and ballet, and they are progressing under guidance of the Department of Cultural Affairs, established in 1961.

A comprehensive résumé of the cultivation of the arts and crafts is given in *The Arts in Canada*, an illustrated book available from the Queen's Printer, Ottawa (120 pages, \$1.50).

Quebec is on the march

Life in Quebec in the sixties has a new roundness, three dimensions, instead of the photographic flatness seen by observers up until a few years ago. Nothing is static, but moving.

Here is a place where three distinct populations, French-Canadian, British, and continental European, mingle in American-type surroundings.

From their farm homes, suburban bungalows and apartment windows they look back over six thousand years of civilization, four hundred of them participated in by Canada, a hundred of them marked by a united Canada.

There have been differences of opinion about this and that, but even our greatest clashes have been ladylike compared with those of many other nations.

Now Quebec is moving into the second century of Confederation with confidence, exulting in the progress she has made in coping with changing world conditions.

Quebec, like all the rest of Canada, will benefit from the renewal of the democratic spirit evident in centres all across the country. It is based on respect for the rights of the human person, on the tolerance necessary for any dialogue between men, and on the concern for the common good which prompted the provinces to get together in 1867.

As the Quebec Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education said in its report: "The responsibility of the democratic State consists in allowing diversity while avoiding chaos, in respecting all rights while preventing abuses, in guaranteeing freedom within the boundaries of the common good."