



# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

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### *Our Atlantic Provinces*

A NEW STIRRING is evident in many parts of Canada on this eve of the Centenary of Confederation. All the provinces and the federal administration are taking new looks at their achievements, needs and plans. They are getting together to explore many phases of life — law, education, welfare, industry, and the conservation and use of natural resources.

This is in keeping with the spirit of the country. The early history of Canada is a story of exploration. The voyages of Cartier, Hudson, Champlain, Radisson, Cabot and a score of other seafaring men gave to the wilderness a geographical importance.

The history of Canada that is now being written is also one of exploration, but it is in the realm of thought and society rather than that of physical things. Its purpose is to build navigable channels of understanding between the ambitions and cultures of ten provinces, and to construct portages around cataracts and rapids too turbulent to sail through.

There is a certain irrelevancy evident in many of our approaches to our problems. Nearly every book about Canada excuses economic and cultural failures on the ground that we have a small population spread thinly over a continental area. Instead of intoning a *miserere* for our transgression in spreading ourselves so thinly it would be more efficient to answer the question: What can we do about it?

This is the new spirit animating the seaboard. Many things are needed in all Canada, but the Atlantic provinces need them all at once, and are moving toward getting them.

It was along this coast that Europeans made their first contact with northern North America. Today, about ten per cent of the people of Canada live beside the Atlantic. Excluding Newfoundland, which has only 3.2 persons per square mile, the Atlantic provinces are densely populated. While Ontario, the most thickly populated of the inland provinces, has only 18 persons per square mile, Prince Edward Island has 48, Nova Scotia has 36, and New Brunswick has 21. Their maritime geography, however, has favoured decen-

tralization of settlement, and their biggest city has only 92,500 residents.

#### *Exploration*

All the seaboard provinces had their ups and downs during the periods of discovery and settlement. France claimed the Maritimes because Cartier had planted the French flag on the Gaspé Peninsula in 1534, and England claimed them because John Cabot, operating under a charter from King Henry VII, raised the royal flag in 1497.

In any event, Canada's recorded history starts with the Cabot voyages, although authorities disagree about whether he discovered Newfoundland or Cape Breton Island first. It is known that four days after his return to England there was entered in the royal accounts this item: "To hym that found the new isle £10." Cabot only drew his pension of £20 a year twice, so his total reward for adding a continent to the English crown was £50.

The early explorers were unanimous about the desolate appearance of the new-found lands. A cold current sweeps along the Labrador coast, so that John Davis, aboard the exploring bark "Sunshine", named this "The Land of Desolation", and Cartier wrote in his diary one June day in 1534 about the north shore of the St. Lawrence: "I did not see a cartload of good earth. To be short, I believe that this was the land that God allotted to Cain."

The first European to leave a record of landing on Prince Edward Island was Jacques Cartier, in 1534.

What is now New Brunswick was neglected except for the visits of casual fishermen until Champlain came in 1604 and discovered the St. John River.

The whole maritime region became known as Acadia, and from it many men with bold spirits set out to found fortunes in the fishery and fur trades and on piratical excursions along the coast. Timber cruisers later made their way inland along the rivers in search of pine groves.

## Settlement

From its discovery in 1497 until the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth Rock in 1620, Newfoundland was the only British possession in North America. Queen Elizabeth I had commissioned a settlement there in 1583, but it was not until 1610 that a permanent colony was established on Conception Bay: In 1615 a shipload of settlers from Wales founded Trepassey, and by 1712 there were nearly 3,000 English settlers along the harbours of the Avalon Peninsula. They followed a hard and lonely life, their diet restricted, their social life primitive.

It was in 1604 that colonization was attempted off the New Brunswick coast, when de Monts and Champlain planted settlers on Île St. Croix. Champlain's map shows dwellings, storehouses, a chapel and several gardens. The winter was severe, and 35 men of the original 79 died of scurvy. In June 1605 the survivors sailed to the north shore of Annapolis Basin and called their new settlement Port Royal. Nearly 200 years later, during a boundary dispute with Maine, New Brunswick was able to point to the relics of this settlement on Île St. Croix (now Dochet's Island) as clear proof that the St. Croix River was the true boundary.

De la Roche landed a number of settlers on Sable Island, Nova Scotia, in 1598; Lescarbot had made fair progress with farming near Port Royal when the place was abandoned by the French in 1607; some seventy Scottish settlers grouped around the site in 1628, but gave up after three years; between 1750 and 1752 more than 2,000 settlers arrived from Germany and took up homesteads around Lunenburg. Mile by mile the coast became studded with settlements.

The capital of Prince Edward Island was founded in 1720. Its great influx of Scottish settlers came in 1803, when about 800 landed. The land was administered until 1873 largely for the benefit of absentee landlords. Today it is almost entirely under cultivation by the descendants of English, Scottish, Irish, Acadian and United Empire Loyalist settlers. The Island is soon to be connected to the mainland by a causeway, tunnel and bridge complex nine miles long, carrying both highway and railway traffic.

War between France and England kept the maritime provinces in an uproar for many years. The war ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763 when the French colonies were ceded to Britain. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, originally a part of Nova Scotia or Acadia, became separate colonies in 1769 and 1784. Cape Breton separated from Nova Scotia in 1784 but was reannexed in 1820. In 1755 more than 2,000 Acadians crossed to Prince Edward Island, and in 1784 others migrated to the northern part of New Brunswick, where they founded the settlement of Madawaska. In 1961, at the time of the Census, there were 17,418 Acadians on the Island, more than 15,000 bearing one of the 23 family names listed in the Census of 1798.

American fire-brands from Maine made determined attempts to convert Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into the fourteenth revolting colony, and went so far as to destroy Fort Frederick on Saint John harbour in 1775. They kept the French and British territories in a ferment, but their revolution had a beneficial effect on the economy of the Atlantic provinces.

Thousands of colonists in the New England States and elsewhere did not see eye to eye with the fathers and mothers of the American Revolution, so they moved over into Canada. In the spring of 1783 a fleet of twenty transports, the first of many, sailed into the St. John River with 3,000 people aboard. Eventually, some 50,000 Loyalists came to Canada, of whom 30,000 settled in the Maritimes.

## Confederation

In 1814 the Duke of Kent proposed a union of the Maritime colonies, but it was not until 1864 that decisive action was taken. A meeting of delegates of the three colonies was held at Charlottetown. Representatives came to it from Upper and Lower Canada, and the result was a much wider union than had been thought of.

None of the Atlantic provinces came into Confederation in a mood of infatuation. In fact, Prince Edward Island hesitated for six years, and Newfoundland remained aloof for 82 years. But the talks of 1864 were vitally important in the survival of Canada.

When Queen Elizabeth II opened the Fathers of Confederation Memorial Building in Charlottetown in 1964 to mark the 100th anniversary of the conference, she said: "The Confederation which had its beginnings here in Charlottetown has been the rock on which the Canadian nation has built its strength and authority. One hundred years of unbroken democratic practices, embracing the Crown, Government, and Parliament, mark Canada as one of the world's older and most stable nations."

Confederation and the building of a railway led to an increase of trade with the rest of Canada, but in spite of compensatory measures the provinces down by the sea have not kept up with the progress being made in western provinces. The decline of wooden shipping, the opening up of supplies of natural products from other lands, the loss of markets to the south, the rise of tariff barriers against exports, the centralization of finance and industry closer to the big population provinces, and the geographical isolation of the seaboard provinces: all these have contributed to underdevelopment.

The result, as was pointed out at a conference in 1965, has been lower income per person, lower goods output per capita, lower average investment in new capital, lower labour force participation, and higher unemployment and underemployment than in the central provinces.

One piece of statistical evidence is to be found in

family incomes. In all Canada, according to the 1961 Census, there were 3,657,000 families, 77 per cent of which had annual incomes of more than \$3,000. The Atlantic Provinces compared in this way: Newfoundland, 86,000 families, 49 per cent; Prince Edward Island, 14,000 families, 55 per cent; Nova Scotia, 147,000 families, 63 per cent; New Brunswick, 111,000 families, 61 per cent. Every other province had 68 per cent or more of its families in the over-\$3,000 income bracket.

### *Growing vitality*

The Atlantic provinces are attacking today's problems in an energetic and aggressive way. Just as they gathered themselves together to repel invaders, so today they are making a united effort to cope with changed market and living conditions. Their economies have gained momentum in the past ten years. There is a growing social vitality. They are not waiting for a new generation and the operation of blind materialistic forces or the slow influence of politics to bring a better turn of the wheel of fortune.

Committees, commissions, groups and associations are drawing a chart of natural resources, possible markets, selling organizations, and the application of technology. They are examining land, forest and water conservation, electric development, new land-use patterns, the use of fertilizers, the development of industry, community planning, improved education and health services. They are determined to use their natural resources plus technology plus planned self-help. They are preparing checklists of action required so as to lend purpose to their plans and inspire public interest.

Since Newfoundland, the most underdeveloped of the provinces, entered Confederation in 1949 its budget has quintupled; it has built more than a thousand new schools and doubled the number of teachers; it has paved hundreds of miles of roads; its personal income has climbed from \$163 million to \$523 million; automobiles have increased from 14,000 to 65,500. People in isolated outports are moving their homes on rafts to central locations where they can have the advantages of schools, electric power, telephones, medical services and modern fish-packing plants. Infant mortality has been reduced from 92 per thousand live births in 1941-45 to 31 in 1964, and maternal mortality from 4.2 to 0.4.

If the technological revolution destroyed the raw material export foundation of the maritime economy, it is technology that now holds out hope of recovery. Every society which seeks to keep its people on the rising tide of the standard of living has to learn this lesson.

The adjustment of an area to new conditions is always difficult. It may involve changes in occupation and location for miners, farmers and fishermen. However, the provinces have planned to educate people for new jobs, to assist them in their removal to

new places, and to develop and enlarge industries to occupy them in year-round employment.

### *Industrial development*

The case for improvement of industry in the Atlantic provinces can be painted on a broader canvas than local betterment: it is necessary to the continued advancement of all Canada.

The need to expand manufacturing is seen in these figures: in 1960 the per capita output of manufacturing in the Atlantic region was \$218, compared with \$589 per capita in Canada as a whole.

As the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council remarked in its outline of strategy in October 1965: "The central purpose of economic development in the Atlantic region for the immediate future is increased employment through the establishment and expansion of economic activities which show good promise of becoming efficient."

Every new industry broadens the base upon which other industries can be established, and the resulting diversification strengthens the economy. This is necessary if the 18,100 new jobs per year postulated as necessary by the Economic Council are to be provided and migration reduced. It is, says the Council, "an awesome target". Courageous effort must be made to discover new sources of exploitable resources, and to ensure the maximum use of known resources consistent with proper conservation practices.

Newfoundland is pressing forward the development of its resources of forests, iron ore, lead, zinc and copper. It is opening up Labrador, which it plans to link to the island by a tunnel so as to make readily available the great resources of iron ore and hydro-electric power.

New Brunswick is also seeking a greater degree of industrialization in order to raise its living standard closer to that of the nation. Its gross value of manufactured products rose from \$264 million in 1950 to \$462 million in 1965. There are signs that a greater emphasis is being placed on a higher degree of processing natural resources. As the director of the industrial branch said two years ago: "In view of the continued capital expenditures in the province, the continued establishment and development of industries of both a primary and secondary nature, and the greater diversification of industry giving year round employment, the economic future looks good."

Nova Scotia's new capital investment reached \$337 million in 1965, an increase of 26.6 per cent over 1964; manufacturing shipments were up 6.5 per cent to \$535 million; employment increased, and the average weekly wage rose to \$73.76, an increase of 4.3 per cent.

### *Atlantic culture*

The Atlantic seaboard is a mosaic of cultural groups, yet friction is negligible. Around 1717 there were

French and English fishermen plying their trade together off Canso under friendly conditions. Those were the years when some confidently predicted that Canso would become the greatest port in America. But the fraternization became offensive to the higher commands, and dissension was sown.

People of many nationalities have settled in the Atlantic provinces since then, and they retain and cherish their folk customs and speech. The visitor finds the Acadian culture still flourishing along the shore of St. Mary Bay, where the Acadian Festival attracts thousands of spectators; the Highland Games at Antigonish and the Gaelic Mod and Highland Gathering at St. Ann's uphold the Scottish tradition; and every group, from the native Micmac Indians to the most advanced modern, finds a show-case at the Nova Scotia Festival of the Arts at Tatamagouche. But, more important, these groups have woven their traditions with those of their neighbours to form a unique culture shared by all.

The Atlantic provinces have contributed far out of proportion to their population to Canadian education and culture. The oldest university in Canada is to be found in Nova Scotia, and other universities from sea to sea have been led by presidents and chancellors whose native land was along the Atlantic coast. The "Antigonish Movement" of education and co-operation had its birth in St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia. Newfoundland education, too, is on the move, with revolutionary changes made during the first 17 years of union with Canada. Memorial University, established as a degree-granting institution in 1949, was the first university in Canada to offer first-year tuition free.

### *Co-operation*

The problems and feuds of earlier days have largely disappeared, and all that remains of them are the crumbling forts and the obsolete guns which are now attractions for tourists. The spirit of co-operativeness is demanded by the age. The lives of all modern nations, if they are going to remain modern, now impenetrate each other in many complex ways.

The Maritimes have had their share of object lessons. As W. S. MacNutt says about the early days in *The Atlantic Provinces*: "The strident cry for equality in the distribution of favour and patronage had the inevitable effect of halting or retarding construction everywhere."

Today, tens of thousands of primary producers have banded together for economic operations, mutual enlightenment and the advancement of farming, fishing and forestry. The provincial governments are working together to plan development of markets, of electricity, and of research. The federal government has been showing constructive interest. The Atlantic Development Board, established in 1962-63, has approved expenditures for hydro-electric installations, trunk highway systems, water supply and sewage systems to

serve fishery products plants, research laboratories and pilot plants.

### *Democratic institutions*

The Atlantic provinces have been in the forefront of democratic advances. When it was sought to impose centralized rule from Halifax, the Nova Scotia outports strongly resisted, and stood up for their local rights. Nova Scotia gained representative government in 1758, when it elected Canada's first General Assembly. New Brunswick achieved self-government in 1784. Prince Edward Island gained responsible government in 1851. Newfoundland, whose people have had aspirations that were democratic and inclinations that were individualistic, suffered many ups and downs. She had no resident governor until 1818, but attained to legislative assembly stature in 1832, and responsible government in 1855. Following the depression of the 1930's, which carried the colony to the verge of bankruptcy, responsible government was suspended in favour of government by a commission. In 1948 Newfoundland people voted, by a small but adequate margin, to join Canada, becoming the tenth province.

### *Looking forward*

It can be said that the people in the Atlantic provinces are looking forward. There have been many periods of optimism in the past, separated by severe suffering in hard times, but in a way particular to themselves the maritime people of Canada cling with fondness to their Atlantic heritage. They have been people who thought it more important to be real individuals than to have security, shelter and worldly possessions under guardianship.

There are always people in every age and environment who view with alarm and thereby raise apprehension, and those who view with gloom and thereby cause depression, but the scene in the Atlantic provinces after a hundred years of confederation shows people who are becoming sure of themselves and their future.

Guy Henson, Director of the Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University, said at a conference on adult education ten years ago: "These provinces can have a future of achievement in material things, of progress in civic affairs, and of creative satisfaction in things of the mind and spirit. I believe that we are richly endowed in natural resources if we open our eyes to see them, in geographical location if we will use it, and, above all, in human resources if we bestir ourselves to realize our possibilities."

These objectives must be worked toward with a sense of urgency so as to reduce as quickly as possible the differential between the standard of living in the seaboard provinces and the rest of Canada. This is an obligation of the people of Canada as a whole as well as of Newfoundlanders and Maritimers themselves.