

### Music of immigrants well preserved in Ottawa

*The alouette is a bird which sings while in flight. No alouette has ever flown or sung in Canada. The bird is European and the song of the same name, which is as tightly identified with French Canada as the bagpipe is with Nova Scotia, came with the first French immigrants to land in Quebec 300 years ago. Today some 1,400 different French songs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which have survived as folk music in Canada are recorded at the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies in Ottawa. Dr. Roxane Carlisle, head of the ethnomusicology section, has compiled the essential facts of Canada's multi-tonal past and archival present for Canada Today/D'Aujourd'hui, published by the Canadian Embassy in Washington. They are reprinted below:*

#### The French connection

Today's six million-plus French Canadians are descended from some 6,700 immigrants who arrived before 1675 when such immigration ceased. Most came from rural parts in the north or west of France and they brought with them thousands of songs and dance tunes, some already centuries old. The 14,000 now on file show that at least two old songs came over for every man, woman and child among the original immigrants. The old songs often refer to places, people or events in France and very often to La Rochelle, the principal port of departure.

The persistence of the songs can be accounted for by not only by the isolation and nostalgia of the settlers but by the way they proved strikingly appropriate to the new environment; the strong rhythms were, for example, easily converted into paddling songs for the early voyageurs. The French immigrants also brought a wide variety of dance tunes built around the fiddle which are still being danced to today.

#### The British inspiration

The early British settlers were very often discharged soldiers and the early British songs very often had a military tune. The bandsmen (and the songs) might be Scottish, English, Irish or Hessian. Ballads from English broadsheets and the gentler strains of nursery lullabies and children's songs were other major sources. Since British immigration continued and increased (while French diminished), the British songs on record at the Centre are from a much broader time span. Military bands from Britain would remain on garrison duty for just a few years and their replacements would bring new tunes from the old sod to play in the

town squares of Kingston or York on summer evenings. By 1800 every village in Upper Canada (Ontario) had its fiddler and many had bagpipers as well. The fiddlers played at indoor dances in warm farm kitchens (there were no barn dances in cold Ontario) and the pipers played for outdoor summer dancing. The Welsh brought penillion singing — a singer entered and improvised a set of variations on a melody first stated by a harp (or today, by a piano, a violin or a guitar).

#### The continental tradition

By the middle of the nineteenth century Canada began receiving immigrants from central and eastern Europe. The Ukrainian Canadians brought a strong tradition of group singing of great variety: kolomyjka couplets, bandura lute music and winter song cycles which combined traditional elements with episodes from the immigrants' travels and the pioneering on the Prairies. The Doukhobor communities in British Columbia and the Prairies gathered together to sing spontaneously in polyphonic style, without instrumental accompaniment. Lithuanians brought sutartines or choral songs, often old and beautiful pre-nuptial and wedding songs. The Bulgars brought old work songs, sung in close harmony that was often a series of parallel seconds. The Poles brought music for the mazanki, a three-string fiddle, and the sierszenki bagpipe.

There are many other strains still audible in Canada: Icelandic, Asiatic, Afro-Canadian. It is remarkable how many have survived today, though there are obvious explanations. Canada was and is a vast land with isolated groups. In the nineteenth century whole villages would move to the New World as a

cohesive group.

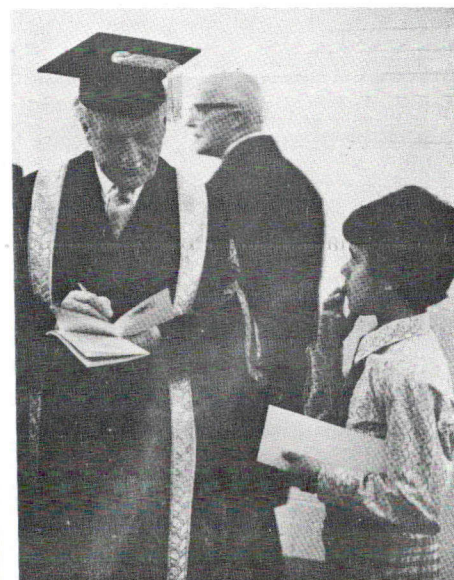
As Dr. Carlisle says: "Do not believe anyone who tells you that folk music is dying out in Canada. On the contrary, Canada's musical heritage is a fugue of many traditions and precisely because Canadians preserve a flourishing and vital multiple tradition, we can witness its continuing development."

Scholars, musicians and others with an interest may get specific information on the collection from the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, Ottawa K1A 0M8, Canada.

### Chancellor Roland Michener donates books to Queen's University

Queen's new chancellor, former Governor-General Roland Michener, has not only given Kingston's university the benefit of a distinguished and varied career, but has also donated a number of volumes to the university library.

The 375-book collection reflects his career, his travels and the many special occasions he attended as Governor General. The collection also



More than 1,000 members and friends of the Queen's community saw Roland Michener installed as the university's ninth chancellor on April 5 and some, with a small amount of back-door manoeuvring, sent an admiring emissary to record the historic day for their scrapbooks.