

In the river, on Ile Ste.-Hélène, is the permanent *Man and His World* exhibition left over from Expo '67, the great centennial world's fair; and off Sherbrooke Street is the gigantic Olympic stadium, an elliptical doughnut supported by thirty-six cantilever beams, large enough to hold St. Paul's cathedral.

Still, the harbour, the buildings and the show-places are not the essence of the city. The essence is the people. Over two-thirds are French speaking (Montreal is the second largest French-speaking city in the world); about twenty per cent speak English, and the remainder, languages from around the world. As part of Quebec, they have all survived a series of quiet revolutions. Premier René Lévesque has promised them a referendum within two years on the subject of Quebec's future. It is an illusive subject, provoking comments as long and sometimes as convoluted as Canada's coastline.

[THE ST. LAWRENCE]

The St. Lawrence River is only some six hundred miles long, from the tip of Lake Ontario to the outer lip of the Gaspé Peninsula, but it is the vital link between the Great Lakes and the gulf, or to put it more grandly, between the continent's

western waters and the eastern sea. Its traffic is more than double that on the Rhine and five times as great as at Suez. Its basin, the third largest in North America, is computed at 365,000 square miles, but that does not include the 95,000-square-mile surface of the Great Lakes, which drain into it and are as much a part of it as the tides, the seaweed and the salty water.

The basin was shaped by the great masses of ice which covered the top of the continent 12,000 or 13,000 years ago when a glacier 2,400 metres thick spread down from Labrador, its unimaginable weight compressing the earth. As the glacier receded, the sea rose. The Atlantic rushed in to form an inland sea of brackish water which covered much of the northeast for 4,000 years. The Great Lakes were lost in it, and New England, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were a single island surrounded by it.

With the great compressing weight lifted, the rocks beneath expanded like sponges until they were higher than the ocean, and the inland sea drained back into the Atlantic. It left the lakes, the rivers and the mighty gulf. The gulf could hold all the Great Lakes, and its length, from Quebec City where the river first widens to the Strait of Belle Isle, is 700 miles, as great as the distance from Montreal to Milwaukee.

*The many faces of Montreal include the Marie-Reine-du-Monde church completed in 1886 (front left, below the CN building); Place Bonaventure (to the right of the CN building); the CP train station and tracks (front right); harbour facilities and Ile Ste.-Hélène with the Man and His World exhibition.*

