

**T**HE SILENCE was relieved by the rattle of cashew nuts cascading onto sideplates from spoons held by nervous hands. The Prime Minister was thinking. The pause between question and answer embarrassed the young people lining the table in the South Block committee room. They were keyed up as it was. The silences that adorn Indian conversations could only enhance the tension for them.

Having thought, Mrs Gandhi began to speak. She was completely at ease. The subject, too, was relaxation in the midst of tension. One of her visitors had ventured to ask how she coped with the strains of office. Her answer had to do with being the eye of a storm.

The 45-minute-long encounter with Mrs Gandhi was the high spot of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute's first summer program in India. Eighteen Canadian students and schoolteachers who had some background in Indian studies were here for an immersion course in a great civilization. They got three weeks of seminars co-sponsored by Delhi University and three weeks of tourism. The Shastri Institute planned an ambitious swing through Agra, Khajuraho, Banaras, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Cochin and Bombay. There would be side-trips, some optional, to Fatehpur Sikri, Mahabalipuram, Pondicherry and Aurangabad. From Delhi there were weekend trips to Jaipur and Chandigarh.

The head of the Shastri Institute, Ed Moulton, herded his picaresque troupe off an Air India Jumbo at Palam one steamy morning in early July (the monsoon was elsewhere). They were tired, tousled and time-shocked. An

individualistic crowd united by an interest in the Indian subcontinent. And, at the moment, sleep.

They were also something of a cross-section of academe, a Canadian scholastic presence with a smattering of Hindi, Urdu, Hinduism, Indian history, Anthropology and what-have-you. But more usefully, brimming with life

# INDIA: COME AND GET IT

and curiosity. Disdainful of the cobwebbed academic but too sophisticated to show it. If this was the first-fruit of the permissive society, more power to it.

They were survivors of the Shastri Summer Program held at the University of British Columbia the previous year. Between beers, they had studied elementary Hindi, Indian Religion and Philosophy, Indian Civilization, Social and Political Change and Geography and Economic Deve-

lopment. Two of the instructors were Indians. The director of the program was John Wood, currently the resident director of the Shastri Institute in Delhi.

The incandescence of the fulltime students in the group was balanced by the relative sobriety of the schoolteacher contingent. There was Laurence Le-Capelain, teacher of Oriental Philosophy and English at Lambton College in Sarnia, Ontario. Large and jocular, Larry owned to having awarded a dim student a pass degree for carpentering a breadboard. He sported an embryonic Afro hairdo which he used as a disguise in swimming.

Almost equally advanced in age and eccentricity, David Evans, a Social Studies teacher from Regina, had been born in England and later went abroad to Wales and India to get an education. Another new Canadian, Tony Jackson, was teaching Geography in Winnipeg and planned to introduce an Eastern Studies course at his school. Mary Winch, also a Londoner by origin, was here to bone up on Hinduism for her history students at the Westmount Secondary School in Hamilton, Ontario. The only francophone in the party, pixie-like Elise Laberge, was in India for a fresh look at life after a long stint teaching in a convent school in Winnipeg. Then there was geographer Mike Glanville, grimly recording land forms for his voracious classes at the New Westminster Secondary School, B.C. On the Delhi-Jaipur road he had the whole bus load steamed up about a hole in the ground.

**B**UT FOR their high average IQ you would have thought the girl students were beauty contest finalists on a world tour. For instance, green