



The heart of rural Quebec: Rivière Trois Pistoles

NFB

Populaires (credit unions), these concerns are rather modest in size. Furthermore, Quebec participates, through its position in the North American continent, in the general commercial, financial and industrial life of which it forms an integral part; but its participation appears to it to be very small; and it is here above all, as we have seen, that the shoe pinches.

In short, the French-speaking Canadians of Quebec who appeared before us belong—and they showed that they knew it—to a society which expresses itself freely in its own language, and which in various important fields is already master of its own activities, which it gives the tone and pace it chooses. But at the same time

most of those with whom we talked were of the opinion that this society had less than complete control of a number of crucial sectors in which it is active. This, then, seemed to us to be the root of the problem: a unique, functioning society does exist, but many of its members consider it to be deficient and want to make it more or less complete. Remove one of the terms of this two-part proposition and the problem disappears: either there would no longer be a society, and hence no longer any real basis for sustaining these demands; or else there would be nothing left to complete and the demands would disappear.

Finally, it should perhaps be emphasized that this society is

not only distinct, but also that its individual members, sometimes to a surprising degree, lead a life quite separate from that of English-speaking Canada. We are speaking here of a separation in fact, created by the barrier of language, and not of a doctrinaire separatism.

The reason for this is that, contrary to the idea of many English-speaking Canadians, three out of four French Canadians in Quebec, that is to say, a body of people numbering more than three million individuals, do not know a word of English. Therefore, for them, and undoubtedly also for a great many more who claim to be "bilingual", daily life (except in large business, above a certain level) is carried on