

It is equally valid to point to the progress evident in race relations and to the gravity of the urban and financial problems of New York. One represents progress towards the historic American ideal of egalitarianism; the other, the extreme difficulty, not limited to America, in contending with the problems of urbanization on an unprecedented scale that has brought all but a small minority from the countryside to increasingly-congested urban clusters. Although the American political process has not yet recovered fully from the strains of Watergate, the political system itself proved strong and healthy enough to force from office a President who had grossly offended the standards of his countrymen and to prosecute successfully henchmen who had turned to illegalities in his support. Watergate and My Lai have characteristics in common. Both were

gravely wrong. Yet America was unique in its ability to expose and deal with a shocking massacre in the midst of a war. For many other countries the question posed by Watergate has always been not "Could it happen here?" but "Could we cope with the exposure of it?"

Other countries must ask if they could have coped with a Watergate

At its two-hundredth anniversary, America has been through one of the deeply-troubled periods that at intervals have marked its history. This one has been far less violent than the terrible discords over slavery that culminated in the Civil War. It has brought incomparably less hardship than the Great Depression. The problems, nonetheless, have been grave and, as with those earlier periods, the solutions will probably demand new political coalitions and alignments that have not yet been worked out.

Canada's neighbour

The complexities of electing a United States President

By Ben Tierney

Canadians who, every four years or so, find themselves feeling ever so slightly guilty because they never quite understand how Americans go about electing their President should forthwith unconditionally pardon themselves. The fact is that Americans don't understand it either.

Certainly, tucked away in political science departments from Boston to Berkeley, from Washington State to Texas A and M, there are professors who are, should someone incautiously ask, capable of suffocating the life out of any dinner party with a complete explanation. But thousands of intelligent, usually well-informed Americans — to say nothing of the great unwashed and apathetic masses — have only the vaguest notion. And even the country's politicians, some of whom become involved in the process, or would like to, are normally far from expert.

The reason is simply that the procedure for electing a President of the United States is very complicated indeed. Committed to paper with precision, an explanation of the process would, by comparison,

make the U.S. Constitution, the British North America Act and the Treaty of Versailles rolled into one seem as straightforward as a five-year-old's bedtime story.

To begin with, the American way of choosing a leader must be longer than that of any other country in the world. Most casual observers of the process, if asked, would tell you that it begins in the spring of every election year (which is every leap year) with the New Hampshire primary. This is wrong — it begins much earlier.

President Ford, for example, announced that he would be a candidate in 1976 back in July 1975 — fully 16 months before voting day (November 2). Ford's challenger for the Republican nomination, Ronald Reagan, the former Grade-B movie star who became Governor of California, announced that he was in the running in November, and months before that a committee had been formed on his behalf to raise funds for his campaign, once it was announced. Jimmy Carter, the former Governor of Georgia who, as this is written, is in the process of establishing himself as

Long process for selection of a leader