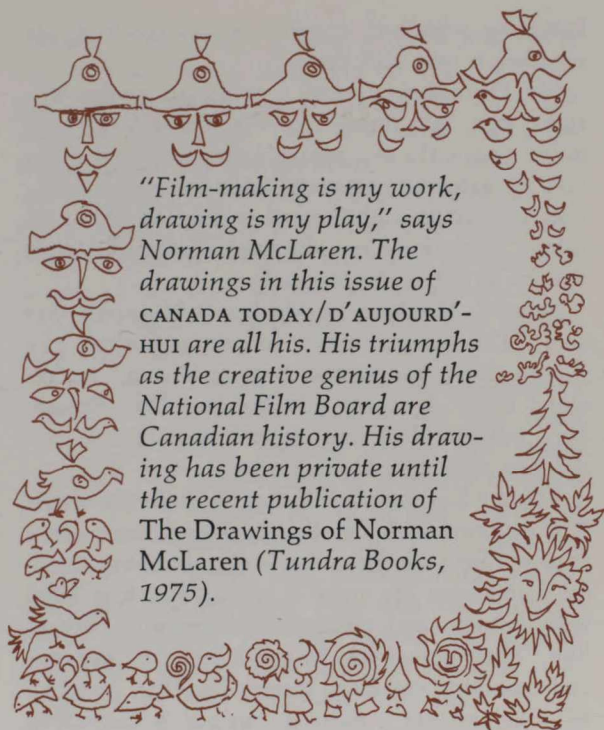


Peter Desbarats's *René* is the shorter and spritelier of the two biographies. Desbarats presents vivid scenes and subjective judgments. He begins by gathering the "Five Wise Men" around Gérard Pelletier's dinner table on the warm and velvety evening of May 16, 1963. The "Quiet Revolution," the postwar burst of Quebec's self-assertion, had become less quiet. Young militants were planting bombs in Westmount mailboxes; but the men at the table were advocates of peaceful reforms—Lévesque, Quebec minister of natural resources; Pierre Trudeau, a law professor at the University of Montreal; Pelletier, editor of *La Presse*; Jean Marchand, the trade union leader who directed the French-language television producers' germinal sixty-three-day strike against the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; and André Laurendeau. They had been meeting since 1961. The meetings were unstructured, informal, sporadic and not notably harmonious. In Trudeau's phrase, "There were no orders of the day, just the disorder of the night."

On that May night fourteen years ago, Laurendeau towered above the others in prestige—he had proposed the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and would be its co-chairman; but Lévesque set the tone, skipping from idea to idea with the enthusiasm of a college boy, though he was forty and looked older. Trudeau spoke seldom; but when he did, he often cut Lévesque's flow with caustic thrusts.

Laurendeau would soon die, but the others would bloom. Trudeau would become Canada's prime minister and champion of confederation and pick Pelletier and Marchand for Cabinet posts. Lévesque would leave the Liberals, form the Parti Québécois and champion separation.



"Film-making is my work, drawing is my play," says Norman McLaren. The drawings in this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI are all his. His triumphs as the creative genius of the National Film Board are Canadian history. His drawing has been private until the recent publication of *The Drawings of Norman McLaren* (Tundra Books, 1975).

This book offers vivid pictures of all. As Hutchison defines Ottawa and the west, Desbarats gives us the ambiance of modern Quebec in episodic and sometimes confusing flashes—the Quebec of Trudeau and the federalists as well as of Lévesque and the separatists.

The reader who lacks full background might first read Jean Provencher's *René Lévesque*. It provides relevant detail about Lévesque's family and childhood and about the politics of Quebec, as well as quotations from Lévesque's writing as boy, youth and man.

ONE CANADA, *Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, The Years of Achievement 1956 to 1962*. Macmillan of Canada, 1976.

Most political autobiographies are paste-ups of old speeches and/or platitudes. A precious few—for example U.S. Grant's *Memoirs*, Winston Churchill's full bookshelf and Lester Pearson's *Mike*—are works of art and insight. Mr. Diefenbaker's *Memoirs*, two volumes out and one to go, is sui generis—forceful, emphatic, partisan, tendentious and impolite.

Volume 2, like volume 1 (which covered the years before he became prime minister), is not without speeches, platitudes and the full texts of unremarkable official papers; but it is also full of splenetic life. It reflects the title, which is also the theme. Mr. Diefenbaker has always seen himself as a citizen of an indivisible country,

which includes Quebec despite his party's traditional weakness there. "No matter where I spoke, I felt that I was speaking to all Canadians. I gave them a picture of the kind of Canada I wanted to achieve, from the north to the south, from the east to the west. . . . I told my Quebec audiences: 'I'm not going to promise you anything except that your rights shall be maintained. In many cases, in too many, you've been denied equality. That will end as far as I'm concerned.' I did not go into Quebec to tell the people, 'You're wonderful.' . . . If I were to say to the people of Vancouver or Calgary or Winnipeg or Toronto or Halifax, 'You're the most wonderful people in the world,' I know what my audience would do.