

small nationalist parties were formed during the 1960s. In 1967, a century after Canadian Confederation, difference within the Liberal Party led to the defection of René Lévesque, a former Lesage minister. He formed a new alliance in 1968, which was named the "Parti Québécois". It became a focal point for those who advocated independence for Quebec. In the election of 1976 the Parti Québécois under Lévesque won a landslide victory. During the campaign the Parti Québécois promised to bring a better and more efficient government to the people of Quebec and to hold a province-wide referendum on Quebec's future within Canadian Confederation. Soon after, Premier Lévesque introduced an ambitious legislative program designed to increase the use of the French language in Quebec. The promised referendum will be held in the spring of 1980, when Federalists and advocates of "Sovereignty Association" will present their respective policies.

Agriculture

In earlier days Quebec's population was chiefly rural, and villages tended to follow old seigneurial patterns. Before World War I, the typical farm in Quebec was relatively small. This pattern began to change after the war: today many farmers have taken over neighbouring farms and thus made their units more productive. Approximately 16 per cent of Quebec's total

land surface is under cultivation. The most significant agricultural regions lie near the St. Lawrence river and in the eastern townships.

Dairying is the most important facet of Quebec agriculture; it has been a staple since the earliest days. It now accounts for 40 per cent of farm receipts from animal production. A typical dairy herd in Quebec consists of 50 to 60 head, of which 30 are milk-producing cows. Swine production is in second place and there are some 12,000 swine producers.

Crops account for 10 per cent of Quebec's total agricultural income. The most abundant are alfalfa and corn. Other important field crops include potatoes, tobacco and sugar beets. Fruit and vegetable production is carried out on Montreal Island and in the southern counties which have a suitable climate and rich organic soil. Carrots and sweet corn make up nearly half the value of the fresh vegetable market. Apples and strawberries are the most important fruits. Much of the apple crop is processed as cider.

Many farmers gain further income from stands of maple trees which are tapped for sugar sap every spring. The maple sugar industry is one of the oldest in North America, adopted by early white settlers from local Indians. The tapping season begins in mid-March and continues well into April. Quebec has 75 per cent of Canada's