

Which way Canada ?

As Canadians we have for too long lacked a national identity. It is time that we, according to our great heritage, should put petty differences aside and with that in mind, realize the great potential that belongs to this country.

Because of our peculiar heritage, being primarily of English and French descent, we stand in a peculiar position in the history of western civilization. Bordered as we are by the United States, we have had the opportunity to learn both from their past failures and successes. We have seen the limitations of

technology and a striving for endless progress of a technological variety. We have seen the failure of a country governed by economics, where, on the one hand, the standard of living has increased, on the other hand, the quality of life has declined.

But we stand at the beginning of a new age of peace where the excesses of modern liberalism and older, more traditional values may be reconciled. We, unlike the United States, are in a position to pass judgement because we have not been so thorough-

ly dominated by the spirit of our own age. And through this we shall be able to set an example for the rest of the world. We, as Canadians, must take pride in our country as citizens and not simply as

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members of a society, who have their own particular contributions to make. We must not allow our own particular interests to become divisive but work for the whole and thereby satisfy our own true

interests. We must act in the true spirit of peace, realizing that our own satisfaction depends on that of the whole.

But how then are we to steer a middle course between radical socialism and

Ought we then to vote according to our own personal preferences? Are there not larger issues at stake than whether the Prime Minister's wife chooses to call herself by her maiden name or married name? Is the break-up of Mr. Trudeau's marriage to be an issue? Does it bespeak bad government or a devotion to a higher calling? We ought not to be so emotional in judging. Rather, our hearts and minds ought to rule in conjunction with one another, our private and public interests thereby reconciled.

It is essential however, that we keep before us what our goal is to be and consequently, what our Canadian identity is. What we are has not been clear. It is surely clear what we are not. We are a superpower neither militarily nor economically. The question then is ought we to be ashamed by our natural circumstances? Is this to be the standard by which we shall judge ourselves? No. Rather, the case is that we have preserved a quality of life yet to be rivaled anywhere else in the world.

personal greed, the weaknesses of which we know? While this indeed has been the endeavour of our political system, in recent times the result has not been totally satisfactory. And perhaps this is so because our goal has not been clearly perceived. In the midst of such chaos Canadians have chosen to turn away from public life and civic duty to seek solace in their private lives in the country, at the lake or in their Winnebagos. And indeed, have not our leaders also turned away from responsibility? Can anyone say that such remarks as these by our Prime Minister, Mr. Clark are clear and to the point?

Joe Clark, asked at a press conference, the day after he was sworn in, when he planned to move the embassy to Jerusalem.

"We certainly intend to do that. Miss MacDonald will be indicating to officials in external affairs that we will be expecting from them recommendations fairly directly as to how it can be accomplished, what other policies will be followed, will be necessary to make that goal realizable. I say that simply to indicate that the position she and other ministers will be taking in relation to matters that have been part of party policy in the election campaign will be to indicate that those questions are now beyond discussion as to their appropriateness and that what we will be seeking from the public service will be indications as to how we can accomplish what we have undertaken to do. I can't give you a time at this stage."

(MacLean's Dec. 31, 1979)

Politicians no longer make decisions but appoint Royal Commissions and consult opinion polls on whom blame can be affixed. But, in fact, it is our leaders who have been given a mandate to lead, who have been provided with the time necessary to investigate these questions more thoroughly than we. A politician ought not simply to rely on opinion polls but reach a rational decision which is truly in our best interests over the long run and not simply what appears popular at the time. If his considered opinion is other than that of his constituents it is up to him to convince them otherwise. Indeed, it is the voter who is ultimately in control, yet he cannot possibly be informed about all the circumstances of a decision nor can he specialize in the art of government himself.

But how are we to preserve our quality of life without becoming a satellite of the United States? This question is directly connected to that of taking possession of our own constitution. This is also a question of our identity, an identity which has long been evolving. Of primary concern to those who would formulate a Canadian Constitution is a Bill of Rights. But while seeking a reconciliation of various interests we must now allow, as is the case in the American system, for individual rights to become elevated over those of the state. Our constitution must retain the flexibility which is the mark of our British tradition. We cannot turn ultimate authority over to a supreme court which would abstractly seek to provide a system of checks and balances and leave us with a divided form of government. A constitution is not capable of providing us with more than the principles upon which we act. It is the spirit and not the letter of the law which we ought to pursue. Therefore we must be careful not to elevate what is merely particular and contingent to the level of a universal, unquestionable principle.

What then is the spirit of the age? Is it not that of peace? President Carter, in his struggle for world peace, has freed many countries from the oppression of dictators formerly supported by the United States. He has pursued both in the Middle East and Iran a path of peace rather than conflict. We must also act in the same spirit of peace and cooperation if we are to solve our own problems and set an example for the rest of the world. We must take this responsibility upon ourselves if we are once again to be proud to be Canadians.

Christopher Flerlage

Dalhousie Winter Carnival



Flake Out 1980 Dalhousie University, Halifax

Munro Day

Friday February 1

Ski Trip to Wentworth Valley
10:00 am to 6:00 pm
Dan Hill Concert in Cohn
8:30 pm to 10:30 pm
Casino Night with Track
9:00 pm to 1:00 pm

Monday February 4

Gym & Swim in Dalplex
7:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Thursday February 7

Polar Bear Regatta Whaler Races
2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Tobogganing Party at Gorsebrook
7:00 pm to 11:00 pm

Saturday February 2

Dan Hill Concert in Cohn
8:30 pm to 10:30 pm

Tuesday February 5

Black and Gold Revue in Grawood
8:30 pm to 1:00 pm

Friday February 8

Ice Sculpture Judging
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Scavenger Hunt
2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Torchlight Parade
7:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Mardi Gras Costume Party
9:00 pm to 1:00 am

Sunday February 3

Skating and Sleigh ride Party
12:30 pm to 3:30 pm
Commerce Society Car Rally
1:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Wednesday February 6

King and Queen Contest in Sub Lobby
11:00 am to 1:00 pm
"Rocky Horror Picture Show"
8:00 pm to 11:00 pm

Saturday February 9

Pub Crawl
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Tug of War
4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
The Last Supper
5:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Super SUB
9:00 pm to 1:00 am