

today, has come a long way from the Canada we knew in the 1950s.

I do not believe it is just retrospect that makes me remember the year of Her Majesty's Coronation as a time when the world was a much simpler place. First, the industrialized world was just beginning to recover from the Second World War's acute polarization of purpose, and the Third World was only on the threshold of its thrust towards independence.

In Canada, change was taking place rapidly in an era of common purpose and optimism about the future. As we headed toward the age of affluence, our standard of living improved steadily and quickly. More and more parents could afford to give their children a university education, science and technology were advancing, everything seemed possible, and there was little time to think about where growth was leading us. We were confident that we were heading toward the most sophisticated and affluent society in the history of mankind. Now, with perhaps some collective humility, we can pause to admit that we ran aground somewhere along the way.

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The whole experience is a stunning one for the individual, particularly in the post-industrial world. McLuhan's "global village" is here and it is too big. The city dweller feels alone in too big a community, and begins organizing "block" and "village" communities; and even the rural dweller, who may have a warmer sense of community, feels cut off from and often ignored by those making decisions affecting his or her life. Smaller social, political and even spiritual universes become more attractive. People begin turning inward. Even students tend to abandon the collective causes of the sixties for more personal and introspective interests. People are reacting against bigness and remoteness. There is a sense of frustration born of circumstances that are beyond the control of individuals. We long for what Martin Luther King called "a sense of 'somebodyness'".

In its demographic manifestation this phenomenon of individualism becomes regionalism: the regionalism that pits our provinces against each other and makes us emphasize differences to justify identity rather than rejoicing that these distinctions are complementary elements of a greater, more stimulating, entity. It is the same regionalism that impels the Basques of Spain, the Bretons of France, the Scots and the Welsh to look for separate independence rather than federal independence in a greater country.

In that context, Canadian regionalism, gnawing at the fabric of our nation, is in many ways a petty reaction to the complexities of a global village that daily show up in our homes in too vivid, too living colour to be ignored with news of one or the other of its troubled regions. The same individualism is a reaction of the multiplication of "causes" that solicit our involvement. As we become more educated, as communications networks grow, and as we become more conscious of the entire world, we feel the pressure for "concern"—concern about Vietnam, the seals, South Africa, the elephants, democracy in India, oil drilling in the Beaufort, the PLO, the Canadian snow goose, Israel, the leopards, drought, Indian

[Senator Frith]

land rights, earthquakes in Guatemala, French schools in Essex County, chemical pollution in Dryden, James Bay and in the world's oceans, French in the air, freedom in Uganda—all with merit and all strident.

Of course, the concern for causes, for one's fellow human being, is the dynamo for all social reform; but the true obligation of a human being is also to himself. Here is Louis Pauwels:

[Translation]

There is something more important and more fundamental than the ideal social order, that is the actual inner order; there is nothing, but nothing, more precious to man than his inner order.

[English]

Where do we find the balance? As our colleague Senator Lamontagne puts it, where do we find the "equilibrium between freedom and consensus"? We have tried to find solutions in confrontation—synthesis in the adversary system, management versus labour, government versus government, native versus white, farmer versus consumer, fisherman versus canner—and it has not worked. After more than two decades of confrontation and protest perhaps we are ready to discover the value and benefits of cooperation, and pass from "we" and "them" to just "we".

Can we, as uninvolved citizens, raging about what they—government, labour, business or whoever—are doing to us or not doing for us, become involved in something useful, something satisfying? Most feel that they cannot participate in the political process, and that they cannot influence the way their lives are being affected by big companies, big unions, big government, but these same frustrations led to one of the greatest, genuine populist movements in North America—the populist movement of the late 1800s in the United States. Lawrence Goodwyn in a recent book, *Democratic Promise—The Populist Moment in America*, describes and analyzes this populist movement and speaks of a need for the people to "see themselves experimenting in democratic forms." The movement was a manifestation of the kind of popular will that is capable of mobilizing energies and forces, capable of evolving solutions that are in unison with the feelings of the people—the vital juices of a community or a nation.

According to polls on the subject, respondents feel that the simple citizen has little or no influence on the future of the country, that the business world exercises a great influence, and that even the Prime Minister has less influence than the tycoons. But must that be true? Plato said that the best unifying agent is an enemy at the gate. Have we seen the enemy? Is it us—parochial and-proud-of-it us?

The challenge is great because we may be on the threshold of a fundamental reassessment of our values—a fundamental reassessment of what Canada means to each one of us and of what kind of Canada we want for ourselves, our children and their children. In particular, how do we want to be governed and how do we want to participate in the decisions that affect us? If our problems are not uniquely Canadian but are simply