

IN HIS RECENT BOOK, *Hollywood's Canada*, Pierre Berton dwells with almost morbid intensity on the strange image of Canada which Hollywood movies have projected to the world. "If tourists arrive at the border on a hot summer's day loaded down with furs and skis — and they have — it is because of what the movies told them about Canada. If Americans keep telling us 'you're the same as we are' — and they have — it is because the movies have convinced them of that fact."

Mr. Berton has a point: between 1907 and 1975 Hollywood made 575 movies which were, loosely speaking, about Canada. Of these, 256 concerned the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the plots, the scenery and the definitions of good and bad guys were both remarkably fictitious and remarkably the same. The "Mountie" was always required to "Get His Man," though members of the RCMP intensely disliked both the name and the slogan. In at least 9 films, the hero was ordered to bring in his sweetheart's brother, in 6 her father and in 5 herself. Hollywood has not limited its distortions to the RCMP (or to Canada) — Saskatchewan has no mountains, Maritimers do not drive horses and buggies, and Randolph Scott did not build the Canadian Pacific while wearing a cowboy hat.

But Hollywood's films were not intended to be documentaries; they were fantasies for a mass audience.

At any rate distortion is of less concern than domination, particularly in the economic field, and American and multinational firms do dominate some vital areas of the Canadian economy. In his recent book, *Storm Signals: New Economic Policies for Canada*, Walter Gordon says the rapid rise of such firms since World War II, which has "placed immense power in the hands of a relatively few senior financiers and businessmen," could mean that "a few hundred individuals will soon become more powerful than are many governments."

Mr. Gordon's alarm is not universal. The power of the super corporations may be fading rather than growing, and some were never interested in the northern half of the North American continent. Al Capone, one of the original multinational corporations, once said, "I don't even know what street Canada is on."

Toronto businessman Alan Heisey believes "a special grace of the Canadian way was how our country had, not for decades or generations, but for centuries, welcomed the wealth, the talents, the ideas, the peoples of the world as had few other nations." In *The Canadian Establishment*, Peter Newman says that while Canada is often considered in terms of its agonies, it is rarely viewed "through the prism of its status as one of

the world's most successful capitalist states." Herschel Hardin, using another prism, sees Canada as essentially "a public enterprise country." He thinks Americans have "a genius for private enterprise; Canadians . . . for public enterprise."

Culture and economics are intertwined (it takes a lot of money to produce a TV show, and large corporations sponsor most of them), but they deserve separate consideration. Industry is organized in blocks — often international blocks — of power. Culture comes from the heads and hands of individuals and is shaped by their experiences. If Shakespeare had been born in twentieth century Alberta, his plays might have been about oilmen and cattlemen, rather than princes and kings. The Canadians' concern about their culture and their economy reflects a basic desire to be seen as North Americans with a difference — liking, but unlike their southern neighbours.

This seems reasonable. Canadians are not only distinguishable from Americans, but are also distinguishable from other Canadians; the threat of homogeneity, either national or continental, is perhaps more fanciful than real. In this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI, we present the viewpoints of a variety of people, picked more or less at random from across the breadth of Canada. Though their voices are distinct, there is something about each that is distinctly Canadian.

Mel Hurtig

"First let me get something out of the way. While the distinction seems terribly difficult for some to make, and while it has had to be repeated in Canada at least a thousand times too often, it nevertheless appears mandatory to repeat again and again: 'It's not necessary to be anti-American to be pro-Canadian.'"

William Kilbourn

"If Canadians (and perhaps others) wish to explore the real freedoms open to them . . . and to escape the blandness and boredom, the sameness and despair . . . they could usefully examine the subtle but profound ways in which Canada differs from the United States. For what emerges clearly to me . . . is that Canada is a different kind of American society, an American alternative to what has happened in the United States. When William Van Horne gave up his American citizenship after completing the CPR, he is said to have remarked, 'Building that railroad would have made a Canadian out of the German Emperor.' The inexorable land, like the Canadian