

MULTI-CULTURALISM IN CANADA



Asiatic new Canadians arrive at the immigration building in Vancouver—this represents a steady stream of many cultures coming into Canada.

Canada's ethnic communities have kept their cultures alive shyly — in their churches, halls and even kitchens.

They kept them and cherished them because they were part of them, part of their long lines and their old country. Perhaps they felt no one else cared. They hardly had time to care themselves in their struggle to establish themselves on new soil.

But now their cultures seem to be valuable, Canada is more prosperous now; there is time for relaxation, the economic struggle is not so hard. They are more at home now — more accepted.

And the world is no more narrow as it was. It's closer and warmer. The things others thought strange are not so now. They may even want to share them.

Canada may be ready for them now — because it's officially multicultural.

Of course, some people had been interested for a long time. They came to the churches and halls as guests. They were invited to special festivals. They shook hands and smiled — perhaps even cheered the performance.

Fortunate Canadians were invited to a Mennonite wedding—or to the Christmas or Easter observances of the Slavic Canadians. They might have been guests at a Bar Mitzvah — or have eaten *roti* with a family from the Caribbean. Others had a chance to see other faces of Canada's culture at folk festivals.

In the Maritimes, the Miramichi Folk Song Festival and the Nova Scotia Festival of the Arts at Tata-

magouche provided platforms for the folk arts. In Quebec, a federation coordinated and presented folk dance festivals. And Ontario had apple butter festival at Cedar Grove, a grape festival in St. Catharines, and oldtime fiddlers' contest at Shelburne. Manitoba's folk arts were displayed at the Red River Exhibition and the Manitoba Mosaic festivals. And Canada's native people held the Green Corn Festival at Oshweken and the Micmac Festival at Restigouche.

Toronto's Community Folk Art Council was formed in 1963 and its first major production was a multicultural extravaganza called Nation-builders. Some 2,000 dancers and singers—in their brilliant national dress — took part each year until 1971.