

established after a period of open hostility — so some progress has been made. Current ambiguities may escape the notice of the general public but will be of concern to close observers of Franco-Canadian relations. Memories of visits to France by members of the present Quebec government, formed by the Parti Québécois, are still fresh. The reader will recall the problem of René Lévesque, the present Premier of Quebec, and his Legion of Honour decoration; from Ottawa's point of view, it was an insult to Canadian sovereignty.

However, a far more striking example of the ambiguities that still hang over Franco-Canadian relations was provided by the spectacle of the successive trips to Paris, in the months following the 1974 French Presidential elections, of Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada and the Quebec Premier of the day, Henri Bourassa. Of course, Mr Trudeau received an official welcome worthy of a friendly country's head of government, and according to French television he was to be seen walking "arm in arm" with Gaullist Jacques Chirac, his French counterpart at the time. Mr Bourassa, however, received an even warmer welcome, highlighted by his attendance at a meeting of the French Council of Ministers, a rare honour intended to evoke what was tantamount to a family relationship between France and Quebec. And why not? Provided that the special relations between France and Quebec do not hinder the development of special relations between France and Canada.

Nevertheless, the example of Mr Trudeau's and Mr Bourassa's visits to France shows that the lack of clarity that is spoiling official Franco-Canadian relations is largely the result of France's ambiguous attitude towards the "two Canadas". This lack of clarity, of course, is partly due to the ambiguous nature of Canada itself and to the uncertainties that, at least since 1867 — and especially since November 1976, when the Parti Québécois came to power —, have affected Canadian political, social and economic life. The dual nature of Canada, and the potential instability inherent in this duality, combined with the manner in which France chooses to react to it, explain the uncertain, even uneasy, state of Canada's relations with France today.

Auriol and de Gaulle

Yet such ambiguities have not always typified France-Canada relations, and this implies, of course, that they are not inevitable. Ample proof is given in a particularly interesting article appearing in

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before of an English-speaking Canadian from would be West such as myself. The English-speaking Canadian, for his part, cannot help but be impressed by the generally excellent quality of relations between English-speaking Canadians and the French. He knows that as a traveller, student or employed person in France the very fact he is Canadian tends to guarantee, on the part of French people who are aware of his nationality, a degree of friendliness, co-operation and even enthusiasm that is often denied the citizens of other countries. It has long been common knowledge that it is in the interest of Canadians visiting Europe to make their nationality known, and there are few European countries in which Canadians are as well treated as they are in France. These excellent relations find expression in Canada too. Many Frenchmen have had occasion to appreciate, in various parts of Canada, a real enthusiasm for almost everything French — an enthusiasm, it must be admitted, that is sometimes observed in the same people who exhibit a disappointing lack of enthusiasm for or even understanding of their French-speaking compatriots. The very understandable anti-French sentiments provoked in many English-speaking Canadians by General de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec libre" in 1967 seem for the most part to have been short-lived. The remarkably successful 1977-1978 activities of the Alliance Française in Toronto bear witness to the pro-French attitudes of a considerable number of English-speaking Canadians, who represent almost three-quarters of the population.

The atmosphere of uncertainty or latent instability is characteristic not of the relations between the two peoples but of the relations between the two governments. This being so, such uncertainties are even more surprising, objectionable and unnecessary. France is evidently uncertain what kind of relations it wishes to have with Canada, especially since Quebec, quite naturally, is trying to develop closer relations with Paris than is Ottawa.

Ambiguities

The attitude towards Canada adopted by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and the French governments formed since the 1974 Presidential elections has been more moderate in tone, and politer, than that of governments under General de Gaulle and Georges Pompidou. It is clear that the equivocal nature of present relations between Canada and France derives primarily from the fact that these apparently normal, or almost normal, relations were