

There are many things that tend to make Canada fly apart and many that keep it together. In this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI we look at some of each.

## Nations Are Not States

Let us begin with a distinction: a nation is not a state, and a state is not a nation. A nation is a cultural and historical entity; a state is a present political fact. The differences are more apparent in French than in English and better understood in Europe than in North America. Scotland, Wales, Brittany and Slovakia may be nations but they are not states. Many Québécois consider Quebec a nation. A nation may wish to be also a state. Ireland was a nation before it became a nation-state in 1921.

*"As each region grows in importance, as the centre of gravity shifts from central Canada both east and west, as the mixture of the population becomes more multicultural and as the emergence of a new and more modern Quebec going back some 15 years gives the people of that province a great sense of controlling their future. . . . Canada . . . is searching for a new identity and trying to adjust to these emerging new power relationships."*

PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU, Vancouver, 6 July 1978

## Balance of Powers

Canada's basic law is the British North America Act (BNA) passed in 1867. It was intended to give the country a strong central authority, so it gave the federal government jurisdiction over the national areas—war, peace, trade, commerce, fisheries, currency and the postal service—and left the provincial governments with those of local

concern—hospitals, social welfare, public lands and education.

Though most of the divisions are precise, the governments permit them to overlap. In the course of a century the provincial areas have become more important, and they are now often the areas of greatest governmental activity.

*The Fathers of Confederation at Charlottetown: John A. Macdonald is seated front and centre; George-Etienne Cartier is in the foreground on Macdonald's right.*

