

1960, was greeted as a great political liberation. The cultural and social progress, which had been remarkable since the Thirties, suddenly appeared as a revolution, and its impact was immediately felt on Quebec's political life.

The end of the political struggle and a rising standard of living brought by rapid industrialization in the Twenties had enabled Quebec to devote more energies to its cultural and social life. But the closing of the cultural gap at the beginning of the Sixties revealed another vacuum: the French Canadians were not really participating in the leadership of their own economic life and, to the small extent that they did, they could not use their own language and their cultural background. Thus, economic emancipation became not a new but a more conscious and a more immediate aspiration.

As you can see, what has been called the "quiet revolution" in Quebec has deep historical roots; it is the result of a long evolution. It can be defined as an urgent need for self-assertion in political, cultural and economic affairs.

### Situation Today

The present situation in Quebec is tense, confused and fluid. French Canadians have never been more conscious than they are now of the basic conflict between the fact of foreign domination and the dream of complete independence. They are in a rather unique position: they exercise very little control on their economic life - and in this respect, they constitute an economic colony - but they enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, and have become used to the so-called American way of life. The conflict between the reality and the dream, between collective self-determination and individual security is reflected by the two solitudes which exist in the French-Canadian society itself.

On the one hand, the vast majority of the so-called élite believes that the situation of the French Canadians outside of Quebec, especially in the Federal Civil Service and inside Quebec in the private sector of the economy, has become intolerable. A majority of this group is still of the view that this situation can be changed fairly rapidly and is convinced that this would be the best solution for Quebec and Canada. An important minority, however, has become separatist, either because it refuses to make any compromise or because it believes that the English-speaking Canadians are not prepared to adjust.

On the other hand, the people are much less affected and frustrated than the élite by the cultural and economic domination. The average French Canadian thinks primarily in terms of material security and improvement for himself and his family. He feels that his rising standard of living is still closely associated with the industrial invasion, and he is certainly not yet prepared to break this association, because, to him, more development means more independence.

These "two solitudes" constitute a dominant feature of French-Canadian society today. If the different groups in the élite were to rally behind the extremist leaders, the dialogue between the "two solitudes" would soon develop and, as the experience of other countries shows, the people would eventually