

penditures and to restructuring priorities. Some programs have been eliminated and others scaled down. The Bank of Canada has intervened now and then to smooth out fluctuations in the value of the dollar, and many experts now believe the Canadian dollar is under-valued and may rise over the next year.

The continuing debate over Canada's political future extends beyond the question of Quebec independence to the relationships of all provinces and regions of the country to the centre in Ottawa. Two years ago the government set up a Task Force on Canadian Unity. In January 1979 the task force released *A Future Together*, which

is one of several analyses of Canada's problems and their possible solutions. It said that "the first and foremost challenge facing the country is to create an environment in which duality might flourish; the second is to provide a fresher and fuller expression of the forces of regionalism in Canada's constitutional system."

Within the past year the Trudeau government introduced constitutional proposals that are intended to provide a new framework for Canada's future. (The task force report and the constitutional questions will be reported in detail in a future issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI.)

## The Parties

**The Liberal Party:** The Liberal party is now in power. Newspaper editor G. V. Ferguson once characterized both it and its historic rival, the Progressive-Conservative party, as "great nationwide, easy going omnibus vehicles whose occupants often have difficulty in recognizing their fellow passengers." Alexander Mackenzie became the first Liberal prime minister in 1873; William Lyon Mackenzie King, who held office for 22 years between 1921 and 1948, was the most persistent. The Liberals have held power with only one 6-year interruption for the last 44 years.

**The Progressive-Conservatives:** To Americans, for whom Henry Wallace was the essential Progressive and Herbert Hoover the basic conservative, the name of the Progressive-Conservative party seems a contradiction; but the words are less rigidly defined in Canada. In 1867 John A. Macdonald, a Conservative, became Canada's first prime minister; Georges Etienne Cartier was his Quebec lieutenant. The party did well in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it had the misfortune of being in office when the Great Depression descended on Canada in the 1930s. Progressive became part of the party name in 1942. The P-Cs last presided over Canada's destiny from 1957 to 1963, when John Diefenbaker, a western populist, won three elections.

**The New Democratic Party** (successor to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation): Some Americans are startled to find that Canada has a healthy social-democratic party. NDP members are more likely to favour government involvement in business enterprises than are their rivals, and they are generally more critical of foreign or multi-national ownership of Canadian resources. They have been strong in the western provinces and Ontario and are supported by organized labour. They have never won a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. They have, however, used their votes there to influence minority government policies, most recently during the Liberal minority government of 1972-74.

**The Social Credit or Cr ditiste Party:** The Social Credit party began in Alberta during the Depression and elected 17 MPs in 1935. Its name came from its Depression proposal to issue scrip to all citizens, who would have to spend it immediately. It now has nine federal seats, all from Quebec. Fabien Roy became interim party leader on March 30, 1979. Mr. Roy has been a member of Quebec's National Assembly since 1970, first as a Cr ditiste and in 1976 as the only successful candidate of the Parti National Populaire. He is a strong advocate of provincial rights.

## The Costs and Logistics of an Election

The 1979 election will cost about \$55 million and create about 450,000 temporary jobs. The ballots for 14.5 million people will cost over \$7 million. Normally northern ridings receive their ballots

by planes with skis or pontoons. But since ice in May is dangerously thin, this year's ballots will arrive by parachute. There will also be, for the first time, special ballots for the blind.