

Université de Montreal, on opposite slopes of Mount Royal, symbolise in an intellectual way the two main cultures. The city is home to some 250 head offices of companies doing business on an interprovincial, national or international scale. French names appear more and more in the towers along Dorchester Boulevard that now represent industrial and financial power. You find varied symbols in the statues of de Maisonneuve, Dante and Robbie Burns and in a memorial to victims of the Irish famine. A starburst of French-Canadian culture is symbolised by the elegant new Place des Arts, embracing a concert hall and three theatres. A simple plaque marks the place where once lived Alexander Mackenzie, who traced the river now bearing his name to the Arctic Ocean.

Contemplation of Montreal's role as host of the 1976 Olympic games is the sort of thing that sends Mayor Drapeau into rhapsodies. But it is by no means a new thing with him. Montreal was enjoying perhaps its finest hour as host to more than 50 million visitors to Expo 67 in Canada's Centennial summer of 1967 when Mr. Drapeau sketched his vision this way:

"History and geography confer upon Montreal — almost force upon her — the challenging mission of being a mirror of Canada; a link between cultures, religions and traditions; a witness of the past and a precursor of a more magnificent future still."

French explorers roamed a continent from the "seed" settlement — first called Ville Marie — planted by de Maisonneuve on the 33-mile island of Montreal, where the Ottawa river plunges into the St. Lawrence, 1,000 miles from the sea. History credits English-speaking Montrealers of a later day with developing much of the industrial and institutional sinews that pulled Canada together, everything from railroads to banks — witness the headquarters of the CNR and the CPR.

Today, though Toronto in Ontario is coming up fast, Montreal remains Canada's biggest city, with an island population of two million, rising to 2.7 million in the metropolitan census area, which includes rapidly growing suburbs on the St. Lawrence south shore and surrounding plains. The building cranes are swinging again after the terrorist troubles of the 1960s and 1970. The Montreal skyline is changing at the same time as a glamorous new subterranean city of shops, cinemas and promenades expands.

What is the present population makeup? The 1971 census counted 1,699,000 citizens of French mother tongue in the metropolitan area, 575,991 of English mother tongue and 324,897 "others" — that is, people who learned as children and still speak a language other than French or English. An historic change in Quebec's population pattern constitutes an unsettling component of life in the pluralistic city, the province's main cockpit of cultural and economic clash. Quebec, in



The trans-Canada highway now slashes through this scene of Place Victoria, but Her Majesty's statue still looks on.

fact, unintentionally attained almost zero growth in the 1961-71 intercensal period, gaining only 175,000 citizens to a total of 6,027,764. A sharply reduced birth rate in the French-language majority reflects urbanisation, industrialisation and altered attitudes to Roman Catholic church authority.

The makeup of the non-French minority, meanwhile, has been strikingly changed by immigration and now embraces a host of ethnic groups besides the traditional English, Irish and Scottish elements. This economically powerful minority, incidentally, exceeds the total population of most Canadian provinces and has concentrated increasingly in the Montreal area though remaining fairly constant as 20 per cent of the Quebec population ever since Confederation in 1867. One expert calculated that most of the Anglophones live within 25 miles of Dorval airport, in west-island Montreal.

While Italians — the most numerous immigrant group — and other newcomers are often culturally akin to the French-Canadians rather than the Anglos, they have opted overwhelmingly for English-language education for their children, having an eye to the dominant language of North America.

"The Italians are French in love but English in business," one Francophone businessman commented wryly.

The trend has caused fears in some circles that Montreal is on the way to becoming a majority English-language

city — as, indeed, it was for a time before Confederation. The picture is confused however, by important shifts in the cultural and economic landscape of the Montreal area and migration to the suburbs. The *Montreal Star* found in an analysis of the census figures that the proportion of citizens of French mother tongue increased fractionally in the whole metropolitan area while that of English mother tongue decreased. Both linguistic sectors decreased in percentage terms in Montreal island.

"The others," in fact — at least in percentage terms — are the most rapidly growing group in the Montreal area, the *Star* study found. The increase was a full percentage point. Many of them trilingual, these citizens have settled in large numbers more or less down the centre of Montreal island, between the traditional French sector in the east and the English in the west.

The Jewish community — the first Montreal synagogue opened in the 1760s — formed the third-ranking group, after the French and the Anglo-Celtic, as late as 1951 until overtaken by the Italians. Many Jews speak four languages.

Perhaps surprisingly, the mid-city multi-racial pattern was pioneered by Chinatown. Italians, Jews, Germans, Poles and Greeks thus followed the example of the Chinese railway builders who founded the first distinctly non-traditional ethnic locality. But of course these distinctions are blurred by French-speaking citizens with names like Flynn and English-speaking blokes named LeBraceur. And the landlord of