

relatively high wages in the new industries. On the whole, the economic invasion meant higher standards of living and the people liked it, even though the intruders were English-speaking and Protestant.

The Position in 1939

On the eve of World War II, the situation in Quebec could be summed up in relatively simple terms. The distrust of the central government had become chronic as a result of the long political struggle. Provincial autonomy was seen as an imperative by the vast majority of the French Canadians. The intellectual élite was composed of a very small minority; it was beginning to be concerned by the economic invasion, but its influence on the community was negligible. Political leaders and the people were "conspiring" to welcome the industrial "invaders".

Quebec had become an economic colony dominated by an industrial élite which remained completely isolated from the cultural and social life of the French Canadians. But the cultural and social lag itself created a vacuum which prevented that situation from becoming a problem. For the time being, the economic invasion was welcome because it meant higher incomes and better standards of living and, in that way, it was preparing the French-Canadian people for its next major step in its overall evolution: the elimination of the cultural gap.

Hidden Cultural Revolution

The years extending between the late Thirties and 1960 can be described as the period of the hidden cultural and social revolution in Quebec. This revolution began in the field of education, mainly at the university level. New faculties or schools of science and engineering, of social sciences and commerce, were established and attracted a greater and greater number of students. A young French Canadian seeking a university education no longer limited his choice to law and medicine. Many of these students sought postgraduate training in the universities outside the province and outside the country. They travelled to Paris, to London and to several centers in the United States to acquire greater and more specialized knowledge.

As a result, an increasing number of French Canadians now have the training which permits them to expect much more from life than was expected in the past. They can now speak the language of the scientist, of the economist, of the engineer and of the businessman. The intellectual barrier to their well-being is more and more a thing of the past.

During that period, social movements, including labour unions, also made tremendous progress. Under new and more dynamic leadership, these groups strengthened their democratic character and put more emphasis on the material interests of their members.

This cultural and social revolution was hidden from English-speaking Canada by a political regime which perhaps still represented the traditional aspirations of the people but certainly did not reflect the new hopes of a rapidly growing élite. The end of this regime, begun in 1959 and completed in