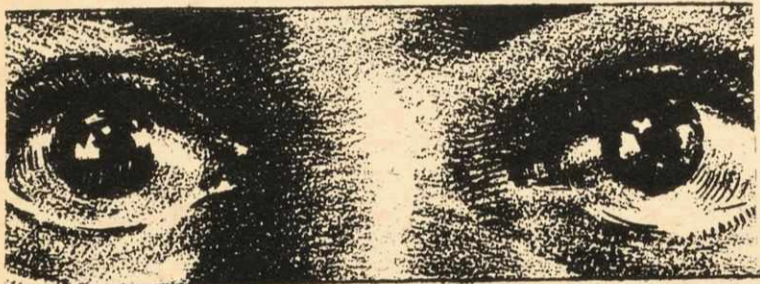


A search for ourselves cont.

continued from page 10

literature. Many universities gave the students the opportunity to study major Russian, British or American writers, but only recently have courses on Canadian writers been offered. One particular school offered more than 60 graduate courses in English literature, but only one in Canadian literature.

The reason for this lack was put to a dominance in some departments of non-Canadian faculty who were not interested in Canadian literature. Also the commission was told that some senior Canadian faculty discouraged younger teachers against emphasizing Canadian literature because this might be detrimental to their advancement. "Until very recently," one correspondent to the commission noted, "Canadian literature has been denigrated—as a swamp into which the serious scholar ventured at his (economic) peril."



Recently the attitudes that Canadian literature is naturally inferior have fallen by the wayside. The commission noted that largely through the input of students interested in Canadian writers many departments have upgraded their programs.

A tremendous neglect of Canadian content was found in the social sciences. Only recently social science departments in universities were developed. From 1937 until 1970 only 30 doctorates in sociology were awarded in Canada, a similar situation existed in anthropology. To handle the dramatic expansion of these departments universities had to rely on faculty from outside the country to develop the programs. The faculty members were familiar with an academic tradition outside Canada: many used foreign textbooks, published in foreign journals and used foreign research. The result, the commission stated, was a lack of focus on problems that are specific to Canada. They note the neglect in academic study of the North, of Canada's Indians and Canada's particular problems with trying to maintain a bilingual and multicultural society.

The training for professions tend towards having a North American attitude to their profession than a Canadian view, the report pointed out, even in law training. One representative at a commission hearing objected to the entrance requirements of Canadian law schools. They require students seeking admission to write a test designed and administered in the United States. "My objections are two," he stated, "first, the qualities for which it tests and second, the content. The test, three and a half hours of multiple choice questions, can only be done at flat-out speed. It favours the clever over the reflective, the glib over the thoughtful, the machine minded and the technical-oriented over the literate and perceptive. In short, it embodies all that is

objectionable in the American corporate ideal."

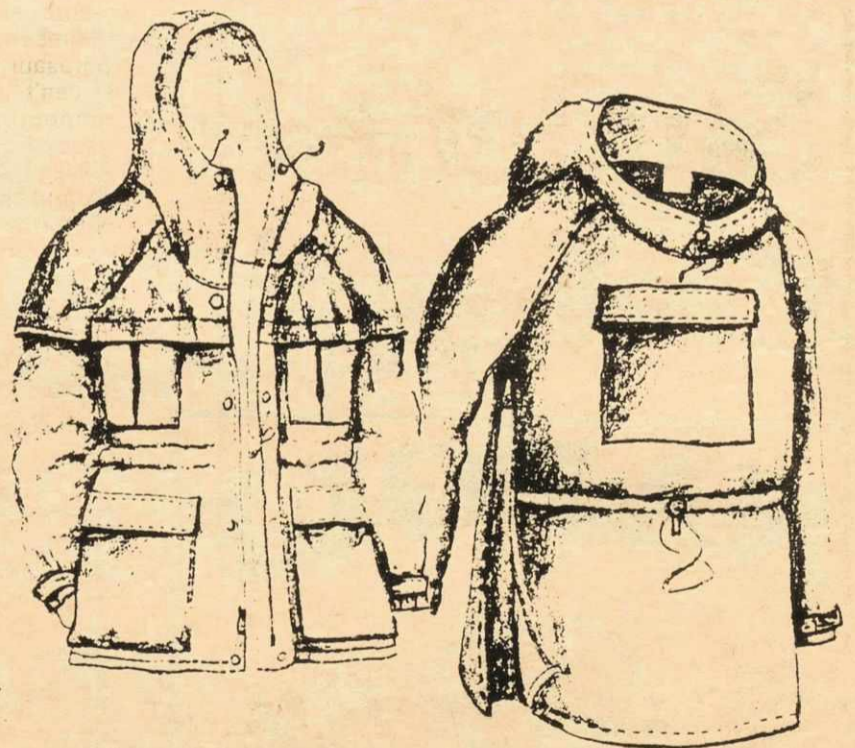
The list of examples the Commission on Canadian Studies found goes on and on but the response to the final report was tremendous. Most universities in Canada have established committees to examine and recommend action on matters of Canadian studies. The National Research Council has established a new program of national interest grants to encourage and assist scientists at Canadian universities to undertake research specifically related to problems of national importance. Centres for Canadian studies have been set up in Britain, France, Germany and Japan; one is currently being established in Italy.

Thomas Symons believes that these developments reflect a change in attitude. The largest problem he cited was a conscious and unconscious neglect of Canadian studies.

"There has been quite a mental shift in the balance of thinking," Symons stated. "I think the report has countered some of the unconscious neglect and made it difficult for people to get away with the conscious neglect."

The Commission on Canadian Studies maintains that it doesn't want to increase Canadian content on patriotic or political grounds. The commission believes that a society, like an individual, needs to know its context in the world. "Canadian studies . . ." the report states, "must be based on nothing less than the urgent need for self knowledge: to know who we are, what we want at this time and in this place, where we have been, where we are going, how we can get from one to the other, what, as a people, we have and what we need, what our responsibilities are to ourselves and to each other."

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