

native people as "the single most enlightened approach to native rights and ownership so far reached."



Indian folk singer Shingoose singing in Toronto's High Park. Shingoose prefers to portray the Indian way of life rather than involve himself in red-white controversy.

The claims now being negotiated are fairly easy to resolve in the case of unoccupied lands. Settlements are proving more complex in some of the 10 Canadian provinces which hold Crown rights. This is because the federal government must have provincial co-operation. A big difficulty is money. Simple arithmetic shows that the compounding of interest from the time the lands were surrendered to the present day would involve what Indian Affairs department officer G. F. Girard calls a "heck of a lot of money." Another complication arises from legal battles fought by Indians and Eskimos against important developments such as the James Bay Hydro-Electric project in northern Quebec. An Indian-Eskimo coalition is trying for a permanent injunction against the \$6,000 million project, located north of Montreal on the shores of James Bay.

Apart from taking action on claims, the government is moving to give Indians greater control of their own affairs. Action last year enabled Indians to take over their own schools as soon as individual bands — of which there are 565 in Canada — feel ready to do so. Indians also administer a yearly spending programme of \$65 million for maintaining and improving the reserves, and there are proposals for an Indian-run trust company to handle funds for Indian economic development.

The government's 1969 White Paper said some of the treaty terms were archaic and had little relation to modern life. But the leader of the Indian Brotherhood in Alberta province, Harold Cardinal, considered the treaties could be adapted to new circumstances. Thus, a treaty stipulation calling for a medicine chest in the home of the Indian superintendent might now be interpreted as equivalent to a system of medical care, according to Mr. Cardinal. But government ministers found this a rather liberal interpretation of the treaty. Some Indians, they said, appeared to see a treaty provision for issuing ammunition and twine as meaning living without working to the end of one's life. ♦

## The Arts

# Death closes the Group of Seven era

By Jenny Pearson

An old artist died in April of this year, ending with his demise a revolutionary era in the history of Canadian art. By the time of his death at the age of 91, A. Y. Jackson, as is the way with old revolutionaries, had become a national institution and a living legend.

He lived in a private apartment in Tapawingo, the spacious home of his old friends Robert and Signe McMichael, whose art galleries house dozens of his paintings within the famous McMichael Canadian Collection. He was often to be seen wandering around the galleries and talking with visiting children. At his own request, he has been buried in the grounds of the galleries, beside three other artists — Frederick Varley, Arthur Lismer and Lauren Harris — with whom he was associated in the Canadian art movement known as the Group of Seven. Their pictures also hang in the galleries close by, treasures of a nation that once reacted with horror at the buffeting it received from their art and their militant creed as artists.

The pattern is familiar enough in history. In a new country like Canada, a revolutionary art movement has the added burden of proving itself against the entrenched standards of Europe and the mother countries — with the result that an independent statement by its artists is bound to have nationalistic overtones. So it was with the artists who formed the Group of Seven. They were consciously bent on breaking away from imitation of European techniques, to find a style of painting particular and native to the landscape of Canada.

Their history goes back some years before the term "Group of Seven" was first used in connection with an exhibition in 1920 at the Art Gallery of Toronto. Then, J. E. H. MacDonald (one of the Seven) described the group as "a friendly alliance for the defence" — for they had a long struggle against adverse criticism from Canadian academicians and the press.

When they first appeared the artistic climate in Canada could hardly have been less promising for any artist wanting to paint the landscape with a fresh eye. Painters of the Canadian Royal Academy were concerned with European traditions, which they applied (with the inevitable time lag) in portraying the gentler countryside around Quebec, avoiding any contact with the rugged contours and fierce colours of the north. Meanwhile the art collectors of Montreal pursued a fashion for Dutch

paintings: Jackson wrote, "The houses bulged with cows, old women peeling potatoes, and windmills. . . . Art in Canada meant a cow or a windmill."

Then Maurice Cullen, a Canadian artist who had studied impressionist techniques during seven years in Europe and had begun to make a name for himself in Paris, decided to come home and work in Montreal. In 1895 he arrived and set about painting the Canadian landscape as he saw it. His bright, fresh palette and his very direct response to what he saw inspired the younger artists in Montreal, as did the work of James Wilson Morrice, another Canadian who lived in Paris but returned to paint Canada on visits.

Years later, William Watson wrote, "At a time when Canadian landscape painting had the sweet timidity of the Victorian pastoral, Cullen rushed out of the carpeted studio, and, with a metaphorical whoop, took us all into the open air with him."

It was a heady time for the young artists of Montreal. They painted feverishly, going out into the Quebec countryside and generating a lot of excitement between them. Among them was Clarence Gagnon, a contemporary of Jackson's, who was at one time with him in Paris. Later, Jackson was to say of the Montreal artists, who were contemporaries of the Toronto-based Group of Seven, "What they do, they do remarkably well. They've got dignity and poise. But they have no great Canadianism. They do what other people do. They go to the Riviera and Paris, but they don't lead expeditions of discovery in their own land."

While all this was happening in Montreal, an obscure group of young artists was working in relative isolation in Toronto, having no contact with new artistic movements beyond what they might happen to see in magazines. They lacked direction. The flame was set to their fire by a painting which came to Toronto in a mixed show by the Ontario Society of Artists: A. Y. Jackson's *The Edge of the Maple Wood*.

Looking at this picture today, it is not easy to understand how it had such impact. It looks almost conventional in the Impressionist genre of the day: a study in browns, purples and ochres of shadows and bare trees and twisted, uneven ground. But it has a feeling for the earthy realities of a specific Canadian scene, which set it apart from the rest of the show and made a profound impact on four artists who saw it