

The regions I am thinking of are scattered across Canada and are very diverse. In British Columbia, for example, there is the Okanagan Valley -- a lake surrounded by apple orchards guarded by sentinel mountains. Here is a valley, an entity where communities are linked together by the pursuit of the same industry -- fruit-growing. To those who live there, the Okanagan is "the valley" and the beauty and prosperity of the area explain their loyalty to it. Of course, there are other parts of Canada which are called "the valley". There is the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia; the Saint John Valley in New Brunswick and a lot of other valleys which are rightly "the valley" to the people who live there.

On the East Coast is another region with communal traditions and characteristics which are also quite unique. Cape Breton was at one time administratively separate from the rest of Nova Scotia and it still feels apart, for there are to be found there a series of towns and districts united with all the force of an unshakeable Scottish tradition and showing clearly, and I hope permanently, all the finest qualities of Scottish life in a Canadian setting. The people of Cape Breton welcome the great Causeway which now links them with the mainland, but they trust that easier communications will not mean the weakening of the special characteristics which always gave their community its strong individuality.

Let me mention another such region, this time in the Province of Quebec -- the country around Lake St. John with prosperous towns like Chicoutimi, Roberval and Jonquiere. Here again, a lake is the central feature of the area. Here again the population has grown apace in the last few years and with the ancient foundations on which all communities in Quebec are built, there is a new, pioneering spirit. The fact that the people around Lake St. John regard themselves as a community, is illustrated by the picturesque name which they have been given - "the Kingdom of the Saguenay" - a tribute to the great river which flows out of Lake St. John.

Last Spring I paid two visits to another part of Quebec - south of the St. Lawrence, the Eastern Townships, a region with its own tradition and character. There one finds a happy marriage of expanding industry and prosperous agriculture. There, too, is to be found close collaboration between people of French and English origin, working together against an historic background of great interest.

There is another Canadian community I cannot help saying something about. It is not small -- it is seven or eight hundred miles deep -- that is, from north to south and over twice as wide, and it is called by the simple phrase "the North". I have been only just inside it, but I saw enough when I was "north of sixty" the winter before last, to realize that although there are only a few thousand people in this immense area, they are all neighbours, living the same life with its combination of hardships and rewards. When you use the phrases "coming in" and "going out", as our northern friends do when they enter or leave that vast region, you know there must be something there which gives it a real unity.

The question is sometimes asked, whether it is a strength or weakness to have regions in a country which are so "different". I would say immediately, that our strength would, of course, be impaired if the various parts of Canada