

Oh, Oh Canada

by Brian Scaman

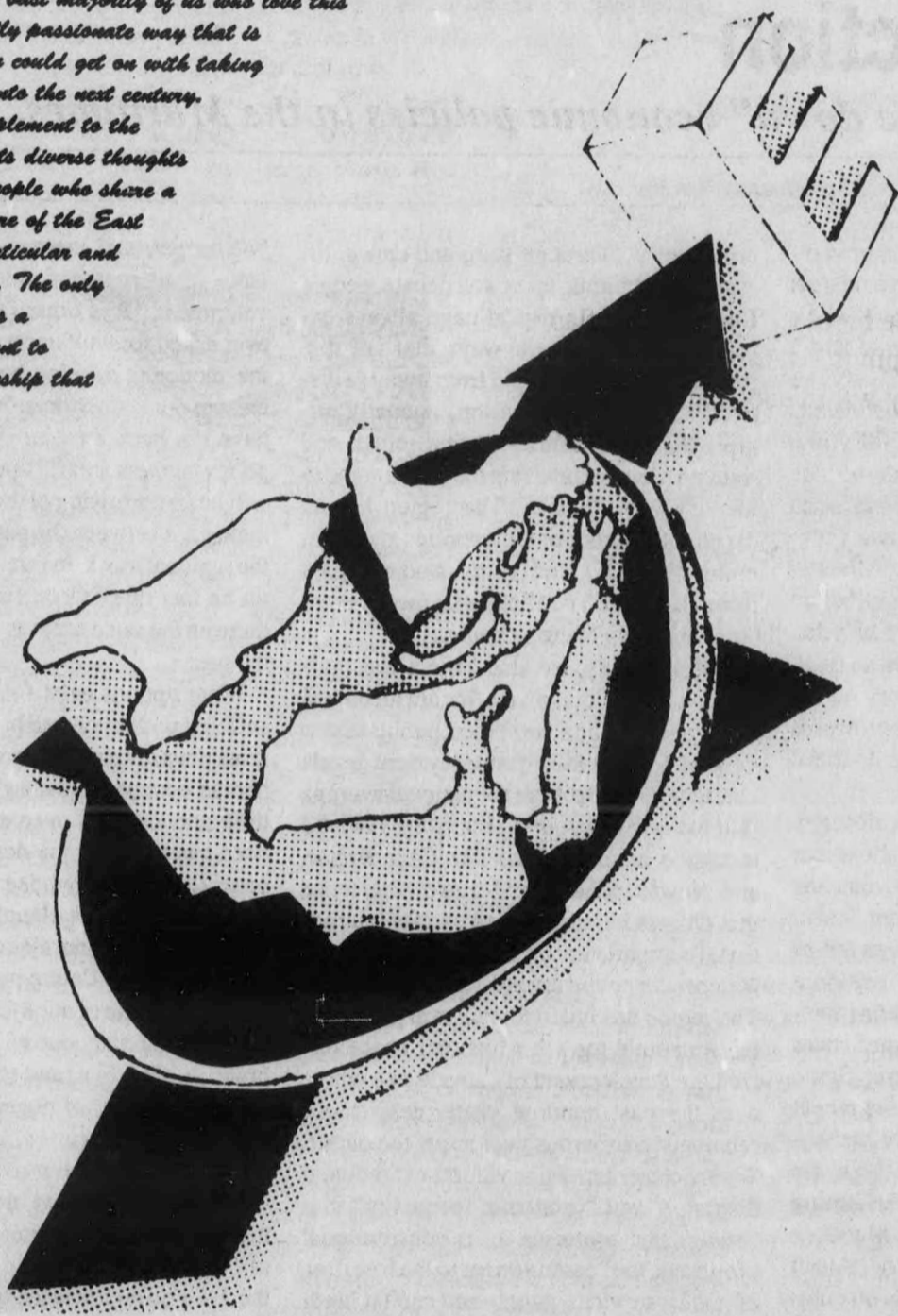
A law professor once said to me that the sole reason Canada exists is to distribute wealth.

If that's true, then this country is in serious trouble, for it means that cynics who know the price of everything and the value of nothing are setting the agenda for the rest of us who feel there is more to this nation than a balance sheet. If distributing money is the only reason for Canadians to stick together, then maybe we'd all be a lot better off as part of the United States. Even those people unfortunate enough to be drawing unemployment insurance or welfare would be better off as part of the great American melting pot. Instead of receiving support from the government, welfare recipients could join countless numbers of enterprising ghetto dwellers south of us who have learned that dealing "crack" is lucrative, if dangerous, way to earn a living.

I am tired of the interminable constitutional debate. The country has been in a state of "constitutional crisis" for the past 20 years, yet it hasn't broken up, blood has not spilled in the streets, and Leafs are still playing losing hockey. Perhaps the anal retentive hitches and fuddled intellectual midgets who try to pass themselves off as leaders should board the next Amtrak train leaving Montreal for

New York. They might wish to invite along their separatist pals too. Then the vast majority of us who love this country in the quietly passionate way that is typically Canadian could get on with taking this great country into the next century.

This special supplement to the Brunswickian reflects diverse thoughts and feeling from people who share a concern for the future of the East Coast region in particular and Canada in general. The only ideology we share is a profound commitment to making the relationship that is Canada work.



THIS IS THE
 20-170

Atlantic Canada Does Not Have A Status Quo Option

Atlantic Canada does not have a "status quo" option. We are vulnerable, facing geographic, economic and political isolation. The pressure for regional cooperation, even union, are mounting. The integration of the global economy, the drive to reduce government expenditures, the deterioration of key natural resources, the weakness of traditional industries, and the need to modernize infrastructure all contribute to a climate of economic and political ferment, perhaps of despair.

On the constitutional front, we must prepare for radical reform, even at a time when Canadians do not have a great deal of faith in our capacity to achieve constitutional change. Expectations for reform have mounted, perhaps unrealistically. Aboriginal peoples expect justice, and a fair measure of autonomy. Quebec wants more space. The West wants "in" especially through the reform of federal institutions. Atlantic Canadians want a more viable economy, more public sector resources, and more effective participation in national politics and institutions.

This may well be Atlantic's "last chance" to make Canada into what we want it to be, we have to act with conviction, and with cohesion. We have to be ready for more effective regional approaches, to the constitution, to the economy, and to all aspects of public life.

If we share a conviction about anything it must be that our best option lies within a strong and united Canada. Those who think we can, or should, go it alone or join up with the United States have too much imagination. And those who do not see the opportunity and the obligation, to turn our energy to a revitalization of Canada, have too little.