

## La Belle Province

QUEBEC is the strikingly different province; different from the rest of Canada and unique in North America. It is the only large area in the Western Hemisphere in which the language, the customs, the music, the drama, the cuisine and the philosophies of life are thoroughly Gallic.

It represents the remarkable survival of a once beleaguered people; there were some 65,000 Canadiens in Québec when the Treaty of Paris ended the North American wars between the British and the French in 1763. The Treaty gave

them control over three enormously important aspects of their lives: their language, their religion and their system of land tenure. With these basic ingredients they built a distinct and enduring way of life — they not only survived but they flourished. Québec is still Québec and today it has more than six million people and 594,860 square miles; it extends from the compact coziness of Sherbrooke in the south to the vast, cold austerity of Ungava and James Bay in the north, where one of the world's largest hydro-electric

power projects is under construction and where tiny bands of Indians and Eskimos live and hunt over vast regions of scrubby bush. Between are the Gaspé Peninsula, Ste. Anne de Beaupré, Trois Rivières, Québec City, Montréal and all manners of men, manufactures and life styles. It is second only to Ontario in industry and its mines have been producing for decades, iron, copper and asbestos — it has dairy farmers and fishermen, miners and poets and bankers, hockey players, radicals and priests.

Québec City is the heart of Québec and of old Canada. In 1842 Charles Dickens wrote, "The impression made upon the visitor by this Gibraltar of America . . . is at once unique and lasting. It is a place not to be forgotten or mixed up in the mind with other places, or altered for a moment

in the crowd of scenes a traveler can recall." Today Québec City flourishes to a degree not matched since Dickens wrote those words. The St. Lawrence harbour, once world-famous for the yards which built wooden ships, is now being enlarged to accommodate the greatest tankers afloat. The construction of buildings, unprecedented in style and extent, is restoring the 17th Century facades within the old city walls and piling up a \$100 million commercial complex — Place Québec, Place Haute-Ville and Place de la Capitale — outside of them. The citizens are as concerned with preserving the past as with enlarging the future. "We are a courteous people, a traditionalist people and a conservative people," Jules Blanchet, of the Citizens Committee for the Restoration and Renovation of Old Québec, has

