

that had we taken anything sharp and just let the air out, she'd have lived.

My father was a very fair, honest man, and I loved him dearly; but I knew his limits. I was not allowed to date until the last year in high school, and never in cars. Whenever anyone asked me out, he had to take the bus all the way from wherever he was, maybe Ottawa, and walk a mile and a half from Hull to our place. I didn't date very much.

My grandfather was the head shipper at Connors Washers in Hull. The factory was not too far from my English-language school. On Fridays I'd walk down to the factory, and he'd take me to this old greasy spoon for lunch. We always had fish and chips and ice cream. All his friends would be there. There I was this little girl and all these nice old men. It was always a treat.

*M. Jacques Cousineau, a Canadian diplomat in Washington, DC, grew up in Montreal during World War II, when tension over the conscription of young men for overseas service was at a peak. (In general, English-speaking Canadians favoured conscription and French-speaking Canadians did not.)*

It was thirty years ago. I grew up in the part of Montreal called the North (it is very central now). There were houses near mine where you could go up to the third floor by outside stairs. In ice and snow it was quite nice for the young children to see people going down faster than they wanted.

There was nobody there who spoke English; there were some Italians, but they spoke French too. When I was younger I had lived in the western part, where there was a majority of English-speaking people, but we didn't talk much to them. They were a great mystery to us and we were a great mystery to them.

My father died when I was nine, and every summer my mother visited her parents in the country. I helped with the haymaking which I enjoyed — a little, not too much, because I was more the bookworm.

I read the prize books my father and mother had won in school. About two-thirds were from France and had no reference to Canada, and one-third were Canadian. They were mostly adventures — where the good guy always won — and that was what I wanted. They had very little to do with the North American urban life I was living, but I enjoyed them very much.

When I was young there were movie houses, but you couldn't go there until you were seventeen. Each year there were four or five films shown for children, mostly American, often

silent. We enjoyed them, but they were rather rare.

I started my secondary school, the classical college [a preparatory school] at twelve. It was about two miles away, and I had to take the streetcar every day for eight years (except summers of course). On Sundays we had mass followed by a class.

I started Latin when I was twelve — a very different language — you had to learn to express yourself in a different form. It was useful. Years later, when I went to Italy, I switched to Italian very quickly. Now when I try to speak Latin I go into Italian.

Today they have more girls than boys at my old college — back then it would have been unthinkable. No girls could approach within a quarter of a mile. Even at the junior schools, there was a building for the boys and a building for the girls. You were not supposed to meet — which was no problem, I presume, for people who had plenty of sisters. But as I was alone I never met girls. I have remained shy ever since.

When I was twelve, English-speaking Canada was another world. To me it was Westmount, perhaps Ottawa. I knew there was such a place as Toronto. The only way we heard of the rest of Canada was by radio or by the press, and these were not very faithful — to use a French word, *fidèle* — reflections of the other world. It was far away, but not too far because of the conscription crisis. It was a major crisis. People were worried and generally dissatisfied.

I was very conformist when I was twelve, which meant I was in favour of what I read in the papers and what my relatives said. It just happened that on conscription they weren't the same thing, so I was very much in favour of winning the war but not in favour of conscription.

French Canada was too weak at the time to threaten the rest of the country — it could have voted against the government, but it could not have mattered too much otherwise. There was certainly no possibility of separation.

The conscription crisis marked each generation very much. The young ones were the rebels; they hated the way their views were ignored in Ottawa — or so they thought. The older ones were just worried and thus glad to get back to quieter times when the war was over.

Montreal is different now. It is a pluralistic world. When I was young everyone in my part of town was Catholic and everyone went to church. There was no question. My children go to church, but they have next to them in the same schoolroom people who don't, so they realize the differences of convictions. Now nothing seems impossible to a child. I remember

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