

Thus, the political struggle had led to the creation of the "Quebec reserve"; but the clergy dominated the "reserve" and wanted to keep it as a predominantly rural society. The scarcity of arable land and the high birth rate, however, made such an attempt completely unrealistic. Quebec was rapidly becoming a vast reserve of unskilled industrial workers and it was far from being prepared to play its full role in an industrial society. Its philosophy of life was not oriented in that direction; it did not have the required capital; its cultural and social institutions were badly lagging.

Slow Industrial Growth

The first industrial revolution, which was based on iron and coal, had an unfavourable impact on Quebec. When it appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century, it left the province with only one really favourable location factor: an abundant and cheap supply of labour. Labour-intensive and light-consumer-goods industries, such as textiles, boots and shoes and tobacco, were attracted to Quebec because they could not afford to pay high wages. However, the development of those industries was too slow to provide sufficient employment opportunities for a rapidly-growing labour force, at a time when older industries and trades, such as shipbuilding, were disappearing. As a result, many French Canadians moved to the West and about 500,000 emigrated to the United States during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

At the beginning of the present century, a new technological revolution appeared; it was based partly on water as a new source of energy, on substitutes for steel and on wood used in the fabrication of paper and plastics. That second industrial revolution had a very favourable impact on Quebec, chiefly because of its water, forest and mining resources.

After 1920, the old manufacturing industries, dependent on Canadian capital, on the Canadian market and cheap labour, developed slowly in Quebec. The most spectacular expansion took place in the sector of resource industries. The capital and the market for those industries were mainly American.

Industrialization as Invasion

Thus, the industrialization of Quebec came as an invasion, first from English-speaking Canada and Great Britain, and later from the United States. Those "foreign" sources provided the capital, the management and the skilled personnel; Quebec supplied the resources and labour. Moreover, the industrial "invaders" made no attempt to adjust themselves to the French-Canadian cultural environment and to learn the French language. Wherever they were located, they created their small community and they remained completely isolated from French-Canadian life. In their own way, they practised a diluted form of apartheid. The "two solitudes" still exist today in most cities of the province.

On the whole, however, the economic invasion was welcome in Quebec. The so-called intellectual élite, still engaged in the political struggle, did not really notice it. The political leaders accepted it as a blessing and offered advantageous arrangements for the exploitation of the natural resources of the province. For the ordinary people, it meant the end of the emigration movement, new job opportunities, an expanding market for farm products and