



Eggshells and paper cut-out decorations



O Tannenbaum is a popular Christmas carol

made by children, along with straw and cut-out eggshell creations. Polish and Czechoslovakian traditions have kept these arts alive in Canada and have made it possible for Canadians to choose from many delicately created *papier mâché* objects for their Christmas trees. Even factories now try to reproduce Christmas decorations so that they look hand-made. In Greek and Italian families the trees are often adorned with things that are good to eat, glazed fruits, and tiny baskets of sweets. By now gingerbread Santa Clauses are international and the Dutch Black Peter is a regular pre-Christmas visitor in many orphanages.

In many homes, schools and in churches, one of the most important and best loved decorations is the *Crèche*, a realistic miniature of the Nativity.

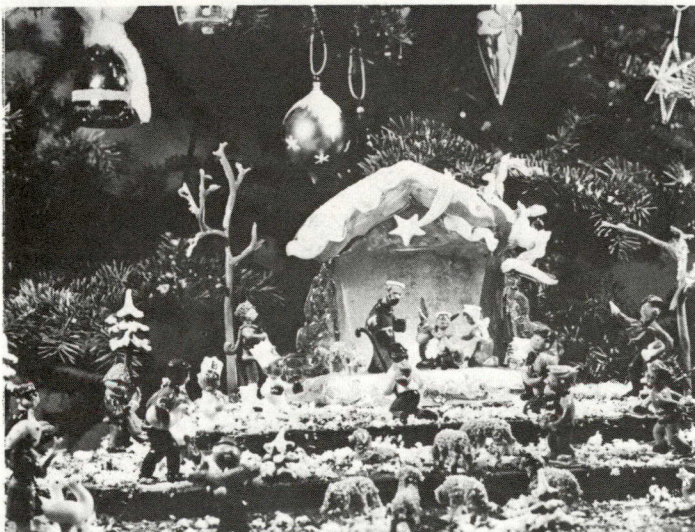
Some people decorate the fireplace, front window and even the outside of their home with objects recalling things of long ago. A partridge in a pear tree from the old English folksong *The Twelve Days of Christmas* is a popular scene. Often it is the reindeers of Santa Claus that decorate the rooftops.

The songs and hymns of Christmas range from the 17th century French folksong *Bring your Torches, Jeanette*

*Isabella* and the popular Czech legend of Good King Wenceslas to the English roundelay *Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly*. Perhaps the songs most heard on the radio are from the United States. Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* and Nat King Cole's *Chestnuts Roasting by an Open Fire* are annual hit parade favourites, but on Christmas Day *Adeste Fidelis* and *Jingle Bells* are heard everywhere.

No matter what customs, traditions and rituals take place during that season, most of them involve candles — a light burning brightly to wish everyone "peace on earth". That's the joy of a child's Christmas in Canada.

The Nativity Scene in the stable



Tourtière à la Québécoise

