

*International
interest
in attempt
to improve
quality of life*

*Large number
of Québécois
everywhere
in the world*

and the expertise of the "French-speaking North Americans" in areas such as health, forestry, agriculture, hydroelectric power, fisheries, co-operatives, education, administration, communications, management, arts, culture, sports and many others.

Moreover, several industrialized countries are following, with much more interest than is generally imagined, the efforts made by Canada and Quebec to build a dynamic society in which the idea of the "quality of life" holds an ever-larger place. It would be a mistake to think that the problems of language duality, American economic domination or union struggles are the only issues that attract attention abroad. The three million immigrants who have settled in Canada since the end of the Second World War are the proof to the contrary.

Ties proliferated

Such a mutual interest, with all the new means of communication and transportation, and the growing number of exchanges, have already brought about a proliferation of international ties such as the Lesage team could hardly have imagined at the beginning of the Sixties. Premier Bourassa's visit to Tehran and the agreements signed with the Government of Iran in 1975 are a striking example. The people of Quebec have truly rounded a corner and acquired a taste for things international.

Until very recently, missionaries were the largest group of French Canadians living abroad. The only others were Québécois who had emigrated to the United States, servicemen and a limited number of diplomats, intellectuals and students. Now, in addition, there are advisers, technical experts, businessmen, artists and professional people of all sorts almost everywhere in the world, especially in the United States, the West Indies, Mexico and French-speaking countries. Québécois from various backgrounds are participating directly in international life and discovering it to be a source of cultural stimulation and professional, material and psychological satisfaction. Contacts abroad are now an established fact. Moreover, these contacts are seen by the vast majority of Québécois as an indispensable element in their individual and collective progress.

Aside from exchanges with the United States, and to some extent with France, international exchanges are a relatively recent phenomenon for Quebec. Very few societies, however, have succeeded in so short a time in participating directly in so many areas of international life, beginning with tourism, which for a great many

people is the starting-point, after television, in gaining an interest in business and a better knowledge of the world.

It is in this propensity to take advantage of foreign sources while continuing to them that we should seek the "content" of Quebec's international activity.

Not detrimental

Of course, this activity, while it serves the Quebec cause, has not, for all that, been detrimental to Canadian foreign policy. That policy was in real need of an infusion of "Frenchness". Quebec's international activity in the Sixties disturbed, and even traumatized many of those in charge of Canada's foreign policy. In fact, it produced a salutary effect. The events of the following years demonstrated both on relations with francophone countries and institutions in the French-speaking community, and — need I emphasize — with France and Belgium.

It is remarkable, though not altogether surprising, that Quebec nationalism has exerted so little influence on Canadian relations with the United States and other areas of the world, particularly North America. Where the United States is concerned, Ontario and British Columbia often shown a more open nationalism. In Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, which wish to obtain American local investments in order to create jobs and reduce unemployment. It is more in relations with France and the French-speaking community that Quebec's feeling of isolation has given rise to much debate.

The efforts by the Liberal government Premier Jean Lesage following the 1960 election in 1960 to put Quebec on an international map were accompanied by a great deal of fanfare, especially the creation of the Department of International Affairs in 1961 (which became the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs in 1967), the opening of the General Secretariat in Paris in 1961, and the conclusion of cultural agreements with France in February and November of 1965. Under the governments of Johnson (1965-68), Bertrand (1968-70) and Bourassa (1970-76), these official activities were directed to new sectors and to other countries as well as to international institutions and conferences. They now influence many social classes in Quebec. The proliferation of exchanges at all levels are witnessing the institutionalization of Quebec's international activities.

There is no doubt that the Québécois government of René Lévesque