

# Canada Weekly

Volume 8, No. 26

June 25, 1980



Ottawa, Canada

Recommendations first step to improving children's lives, 1

Constitutional talks begin, 3

Consulates change status, 3

Telidon chosen for U.S. trial, 3

LRC trains delivered to U.S., 4

Multidisciplinary approach used, 4

Quebec sets up refugee foundation, 4

Sheep and cattle imports, 5

Oil prospects lure businessmen, 5

Commonwealth study conference held in Canada, 5

Specialty sports roadster built, 6

Blind mechanic amazes, 6

Canadians operate orphanage, 6

Symbol of peace travels around the world, 6

News of the arts — tour, TV, film, music, award, arts briefs, 7

News briefs, 8

One-hundred-years ago this week...  
Canada's national song *O Canada* was played for the first time in honour of the official visit to Quebec of the Marquis of Lorne, Governor General of Canada.

## Recommendations first step to improving children's lives

*The International Year of the Child 1979 (IYC) has created a new awareness of the problems facing Canadian children, according to a report by the Canadian Commission for the IYC. The commission said its recommendations from the report called, For Canada's Children: National Agenda for Action, are an important first step towards improving the quality of Canadian children's lives. Excerpts from the report follow:*

...Initially, the commission was created to take action; our mandate included advocacy on behalf of children, promotion, public awareness and celebration....

But as the year progressed and our focus on children sharpened, it became apparent that our broad representation, our special status and the unique characteristics of the International Year of the Child itself had presented us with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to review the situation of children in Canada in a way that no other group has ever been able to do before.... We had a chance to speak out for, and with children and we took it.

### Terms of reference

The United Nations' terms of reference for International Year of the Child defined as "children" all those who, because they have not reached voting age, require

others to speak on their behalf in the political process. In most countries this means everyone under the age of eighteen. Children may not be able to vote but they can speak out for themselves in many other ways. They can be heard and they should be listened to. It is because of the countless conversations we had with reflective and concerned young people that we felt so strongly the need to speak out for them in this report. Our children are so full of promise, and Canada must respond to that promise much better than it does now.

The commission examined the situation of children in [Canada] and assessed it against the ten principles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The results confirmed what many of us had already learned from our personal experiences with children. In a country as affluent and fortunate as Canada, there are far too many children who are being hurt, deprived, ignored, neglected.

At the root of the problem is the social revolution that has taken place in Canada and the Western world in recent decades. Ironically, the changes that have occurred within our society have been ignored by many of our institutions and laws. As they relate to children, our major economic, political and cultural structures continue to reflect a mythical period when families were intact, human resources abounded and childhood was a glorious time. The fact that childhood very often was far from carefree did not seem to matter much then. Now we know that it does. And furthermore, we have the information to make the necessary changes.

During the last 20 years, we have ac-



Birgitte Nielsen

Children try to communicate with us.