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# THE NATIONAL ATLAS OF CANADA



Energy, Mines and  
Resources Canada

Énergie, Mines et  
Ressources Canada



Guy Montpetit, *Love Trip*, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 104" x 248" (triptych), Courtesy Galerie de Montréal. These paintings sponsored by Time Canada Ltd. are currently on tour across Canada.

## On Judging a Country by Its Covers

CANADIANS brood a lot. Their unaggressive country will always be flanked by great powers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

That is not an all-bad prospect; by and large it must be more restful to be Switzerland than China. But the position has problems, and the most persistent one may be the problem of national identity.

It is universally known (at least in Canada) that the economy of the United States dominates the economy of Canada; U.S. based firms control almost all of Canada's petro-chemical production, for example, and they dominate much of the rest of the country's industry.

It may also be perceived that the products of U.S. culture are circulated in Ottawa, Vancouver and Winnipeg to almost the same extent as they are in Milwaukee. Canadians read books about the U.S. by authors from the U.S., they see Robert Redford and Paul Newman flicks, and they watch *All in the Family*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *The Streets of San Francisco*, and *M.A.S.H.* There are a few fortunates in Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver or Calgary who have Pollocks or Nolans or Picassos hanging on their walls. (Picasso was not, of course, an American, but neither was he a Canadian.)

Some persons see in these circumstances the almost certain doom of the Canadian identity; they fear that in time there will be no Canadian economy and no Canadian culture that are dis-

tinct from the economy and the culture of the big land below. Many are more sanguine. Richard Gwyn recently suggested in the *Toronto Star* that the real problem with which Canadians must learn to cope is that "by any standard — economic, social, political — Canada today is one of the healthiest and strongest countries in the world and will remain so except by quite conspicuous incompetence." Northrop Frye, in a recent conversation with CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI editors, expressed his belief that while the economic domination of Canada was a matter of real concern, the cultural threat is not significant; culture is not produced by multinational corporations but by individuals, and Canada's individuals are doing quite well. In Professor Frye's opinion Canada's first-rate writers, for example, earn recognition and decent wages at rates comparable with those in the U.S., and Canada's second-rate writers do better than their counterparts.

If one is looking for the Canadian identity, cultural or otherwise, it is well to look in books, and in this issue we offer our annual Spring Bookshelf, with reviews of fiction and non-fiction dealing in one way or another with the national conundrums.

And in our pages as further evidence of cultural survival, we present some paintings from the exhibition *The Canadian Canvas* which opened in January at Montréal's Musée d'art contemporain.

### A Nation Unaware

The Canadian Economic Culture



Herschel Hardin

SOME identity books are, naturally, more rewarding than others. Herschel Hardin's *A Nation Unaware*, published by J. J. Douglas, Ltd., \$10.95, seeks identity in the market place. Mr. Hardin asks: To what economic principle should a Canadian cling? — and he answers: Public enterprise.

"At the centre of this fragility of identity," he writes, "is our inability to accept one of the most vibrant expressions of the Canadian character, Canadian public enterprise. It's usually taken for granted that Canada is a free enterprise country, and that the public enterprise tradition is therefore a somehow secondary or untrustworthy, even marginal, phenomenon, although it exists on a substantial scale and in most sectors of the economy."

Public enterprise is exemplified by the Crown corporation — the singular Canadian institution which combines public ownership with competitive behaviour. It works in Canada, and Hardin argues that public enterprise is as natural a way of doing business north of the 49th parallel as free enterprise is to the south.

The free enterprise mystique, he says, was based on eighteenth century British economic liberalism, and it flourished only in the United States, where there were no rigidly underprivileged classes and every man, if not a king, was at least a potential entrepreneur. The circumstances were peculiar to the young U.S.A.

"Greed and hard work and ambition are not enough. A great many peoples in history have had those. It was free banking, rough egalitarianism, practical education — and the reckless push to keep up in the 'Lockian' race — that made the exceptional United States go."

Adam Smith's and John Locke's doctrines did not take easy root in Canada, Hardin says, because French Canada was tied to a clerical, feudal past and English-speaking Canada was "an elitist, conservative, defensive colony." To see Canada as a free enterprise nation is, in Hardin's view, an illusion based on another illusion — that "the American capitalist spirit is natural to man, given his freedom, and all that Canadians have to do to make themselves free enterprise equals in North America is to be natural, to stop being so feudal, to stop being the way we are."

Public enterprise in Canada has, he says, been efficient, economical and productive. It is usually explained, however, (or, one might say, excused) as a kind of unfortunate necessity. Since Canadians are scattered in clumps across a broad,

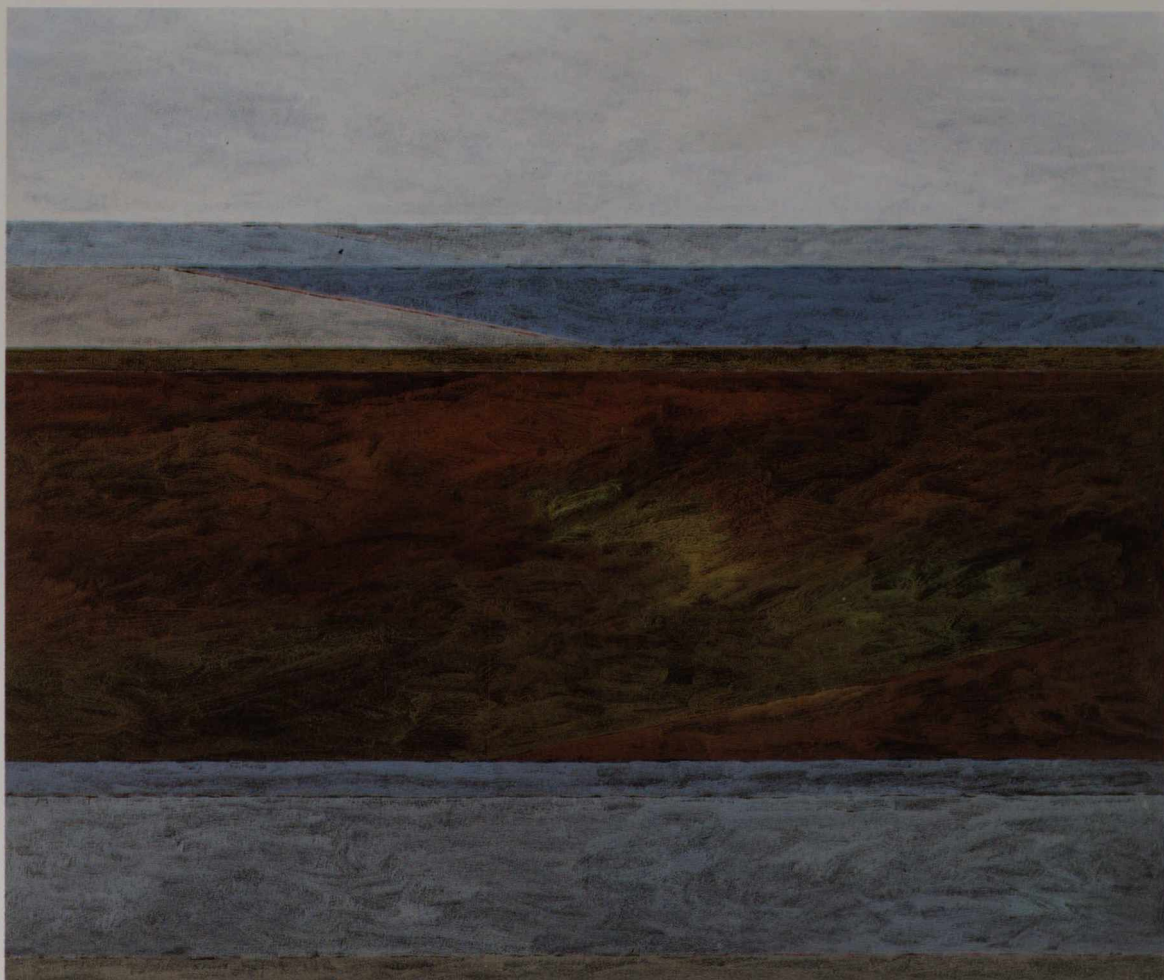
broad land, only the Government can afford to provide the technological necessities of modern life — railways, airlines, power plants and television and radio networks. There is a substantial body of opinion which holds that should a Crown corporation become profitable, it should be promptly turned over to the deserving rich, the privately owned companies in the same field. In Mr. Hardin's view, the Crown corporation is not simply a substitute for the unavailable private proprietor but a prime instrument of proper Canadian economics; it is much, much more than a production or marketing device, and it is a form of enterprise which flows naturally out of the nature of Canadians.

He argues his case well, with striking (if obvious) examples: the Canadian National Railways, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Air Canada, Ontario Hydro and Polymer. Polymer is particularly instructive. It began as a Crown corporation making synthetic rubber in World War II. It produced and sold 40,000 tons of rubber a year. After the war, when natural rubber returned, its prospects seemed poor, since it had a domestic market for only 20,000 tons. The obvious conclusion from a free enterprise point of view was that it best be sold, or if no one were willing to buy, that it be thrown away like a broken rubber band. No one was willing to buy, but instead of throwing it away, its management began an intensive sales campaign in Europe and an intensive research program at home. By 1960 Polymer was exporting 108,000 tons annually and in need of expansion capital.

The government invested \$50 million, building new production units at home and abroad, and by the late sixties, Polymer had a firm hold on 10 per cent of the world market and was moving into plastics. By 1970 it was into industrialized housing (chemically stressed concrete modules) and computer time-sharing, and annual profits had risen from \$6.8 million to \$13.8 million. In 1971 upward costs and competition from Japan had cut profits sharply, but by the end of the year they were climbing again. In 1972 Polymer was sold to the Canada Development Corporation, its name changed to Polysar Limited and its autonomy greatly diminished.



MR. HARDIN'S view of Canadian and North American economics is provocative in one sense, as Richard Rohmer's is in another. Mr. Rohmer's thin novel *Ultimatum* was Canada's best seller in 1973, and his latest, *Exxoneration*, also published by McClelland and Stewart Ltd., \$8.95, is also doing extremely well. It is



Gordon A. Smith, *West Coast #1*, 1974, acrylic on canvas, 60" x 72", Courtesy Marlborough Godard Gallery, Toronto/Montréal.

concerned with economics and Canadian identity, but it is a work of fantasy rather than coherent philosophy. Rohmer first imagines a singularly inept invasion of Canada by U.S. forces, which is almost effortlessly repelled. He then projects the swift, sure take-over of the Exxon Corporation by a government-supported but privately-controlled oil company, secretly backed, it develops, by Arabian oil billions. Mr. Rohmer (who holds a brigadier general's rank in the Reserves) is essentially an apostle of peace, and he accomplishes the swift demolition of straw men with a minimum of bloodshed. Finally Canadians are in control of one splinter of the Exxon empire, the Canada-based Imperial Oil, and Saudia Arabia is in control of the rest. There is, surprisingly, little resentment shown by anyone; Exxon's former stockholders seem delighted, and so indeed does the Western world in general. *Exxoneration* is not a work of art, it is an outline for a novel rather than a novel, and its characters are as two-dimensional as the tiger which once resided in the Exxon tank. Still, it is a significant book; its sale indicates clearly the

Canadian concern with the overwhelming presence of foreign and multi-national firms, such as Exxon, and the enormous control they exercise over the Canadian economy. Indeed the concern itself provides Canadians with a kind of unifying identity — a common desire to control their own skies, fields, streams and resources in a way which will benefit twenty million people.

[AMONG THE FIRST-RATERS]



THE Canadian identity search is not limited to economics, thank God — it is more entertaining to look for it in the works of Mordecai Richler than in the Canada Development Corporation's annual reports. Mr. Richler is a serious, funny man, and since the triumph of his film, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, his work is familiar, at least indirectly, to millions in the U.S. *Duddy Kravitz* is widely available in paper-back, and it is an excellent



Rita Letendre, *Koumtar*, 1974, acrylic on canvas, 66" x 120", Courtesy of the artist.

place to pursue the man behind the movie. His other works, such as *St. Urbain's Horseman*, *Cocksure* and *Son of a Smaller Hero* (all published by McClelland and Stewart Ltd., \$7.95, \$5.95 and \$1.75), are not so easily available, but they can be obtained by popping into any Canadian public library or by writing Books Canada, 33 East Tupper Street, Buffalo, New York 14203.

Margaret Atwood, poet, novelist and literary theoretician, has suggested that Canadian humour consists basically of Canadians laughing, in a mean-spirited way, at the cultural pretensions of other Canadians. Of Richler's *Cocksure* she says that "read as a Canadian fable-of-identity, (it) can be seen as Richler's map of the national inferiority complex." Mortimer (the protagonist, Canadian, white, Anglo-Saxon and Anglican) is an unassertive man, badly used by practically everyone in the book. But Richler's concept is more complex.

The book revolves around Mortimer's mild but persistent resistance to being taken over body and soul by the ultimate Hollywood tycoon, a grotesque known as the Star Maker. (The takeover of the body is intended to be literal; the Star Maker has the needed parts transplanted from his underlings as his own wear out, and he has his eye — or at any rate the eye he is using — on Mortimer's lymph gland system.) Richler is outraged by everyone in his book except Mortimer — by swinging Londoners, by Mortimer's Canadian wife, who is swept by the shallow tides of her own intellectual pretensions, by idiotically permissive schoolmasters and by many members of the British upper class.

Mortimer may, in Miss Atwood's view, be painfully Canadian, but the person he most resembles in fiction is the wronged husband in Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*. Waugh, however, had a narrower target, the amoral British smart set of the twenties and thirties, and a stern warning; England had better return to old virtues before all was lost. In *Cocksure* Richler seems to assume that all is already lost, and as Miss Atwood says, "The laughter is uneasy partly because of a lack of focus. We can see all the things Richler the moralist thinks are wrong, but we aren't sure exactly what alternatives he is offering, what modes of behaviour he would approve."



*ST. URBAIN'S HORSEMAN* is a better book, more ambitious but also more obscure. It concerns a Canadian TV writer working in London, Jacob Hersh, who becomes involved with an unsuccessful semi-crook with a high IQ, named Harry Stein. Harry, for complex reasons, including simple jealousy, involves Jacob in an embarrassing interlude which lands them both in criminal court. Harry is characterized by Jacob's lawyer as "flotsam. The driftwood that floats in the brackish waters of the I'm-All-Right-Jack society. Stroll through the streets of Soho, the back alleys of this once proud city, and within the shadow of Nelson's column you will uncover a plethora of Steins."

Jacob is characterized by Harry's lawyer as "well educated, successful, talented, married,

with three children. He lives in style, mingling with cinema stars in Mayfair's most fashionable restaurants. . . . He is so successful in his chosen field that he earns rather more annually than the prime minister of this country."

Jacob has a wife and father who do not understand him very well; he has a mythical hero based on his long-gone cousin, Joey, the St. Urbain Street horseman of the title, who in the view of other members of the family is more scoundrel than hero. In all of Richler's books the themes are the same: the difficulties of communication between almost all groupings, person and person, man and woman, race and race, culture and culture, generation and generation; the difficulties of finding values in a swiftly changing world; and the varied results of varied ambitions.

Richler writes of the big, bad Western world, of London and Hollywood as well as Montréal, but his protagonists are almost always clearly, and perhaps definitively, Canadian.



ROBERTSON DAVIES is less a moralist than Richler (or at any rate less an absolutist), and his guide to the Canadian identity is richly obscure but not alarming. It may well be the best guide there is — Mr. Davies is not merely a good novelist, he is a great one. He is also an inspiration to the aging, having realized his greatness when he was well into his middle years. He has been producing novels for a long time, and his early ones — such as *A Mixture of Frailties* and *Leaven of Malice* — were merely good. Then he delivered *Fifth Business* and *The Manticore*, both stunning.

Both involve the same socio-economic-political world — the upper class world of Ontario, particularly of Toronto — and the same people — Boy Staunton, Boy's oldest friend Duncan Ramsey, his middle-aged son David Edward, and two of the great enigmatic figures of recent literature, Magnus Eisengrim and Fraulein Doktor Liselotte Naegeli. The books are sequential but with a notable shift of emphasis; Mr. Davies has the ability to see the world and its people from strikingly different, sometimes almost contradictory, points of view. If one is looking for Canada in a book one may well start with *Fifth Business*, move on to *The Manticore*, and then, and only then, read the earlier Davies works for additional odds and ends of information.

*The Manticore* was published in the United States in 1972 by the Viking Press, \$7.95, and deserves to be read by many more men and women below the border. It can be read with

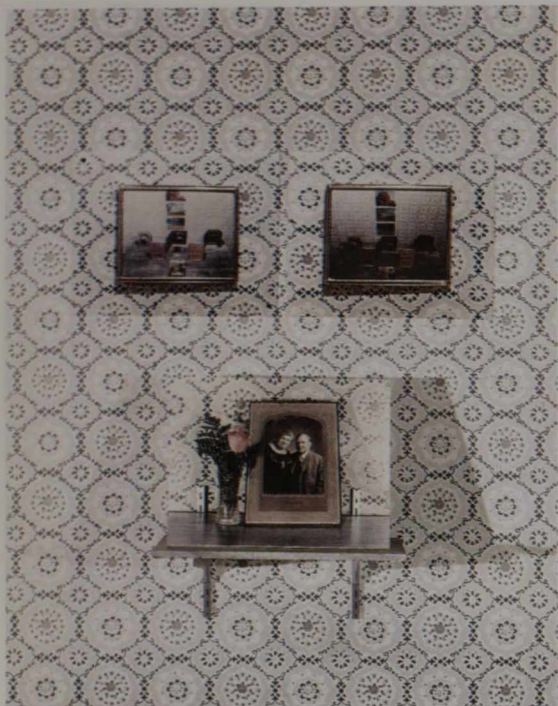


Jack Shadbolt, *Articulated Fetish*, 1972, ink, latex, crayon and acrylic on watercolour board, 60" x 40", Courtesy Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver.

satisfaction on at least three distinct levels: as a superior whodunit (*Who Killed Boy Staunton?*), as a novel of time and place and as a metaphysical consideration of the meaning of success in the twentieth century. Mr. Davies is fascinated by cause and effect, random cause and unanticipated effect, by the flow of good (or evil) into evil (or good), by the emotional poverty which can afflict the rich, by the emotional poverty which can afflict the poor.

*The Manticore* begins in Zurich with Dr. Johanna von Haller, a Jungian psychiatrist, asking David Edward Staunton, a middle-aged, alcoholic, successful trial lawyer (and a virgin once-removed), why he is there. He replies that he decided he needed her kind of help when he found himself standing up during a stage magician's performance at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto, shouting, "Who killed Boy Staunton?". Boy had been pulled dead from the lake, sitting in his expensive automobile, hands frozen by death to his steering wheel, with a pink granite rock the size of an egg in his mouth.

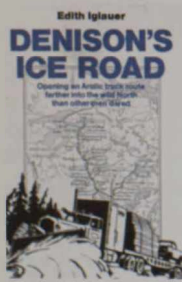
Staunton, the son, and Dr. von Haller painfully unravel the rich, complex, misunderstood past: the son's past, the father's past, Canada's past — the interplay of people, conceit, crimes, prejudices, ambitions, illusions and occasional



Bill Jones, *Picture Shelf #2*, 1974, photo-assemblage on plywood, 50" x 50", Courtesy of the artist.

charitable acts. The mystery of *The Manticore* is not who murdered Boy (if indeed he was murdered), but how Boy and his son and his wife and his second wife and his longtime friend and Edward, Prince of Wales, managed, unintentionally, to maim and in some cases to murder each other.

[HOW TO GET FROM HERE TO THERE]



Inc., \$8.95.

Ms. Iglauer, a regular contributor to *The New Yorker*, traveled with John Denison and his crew as they built their annual three hundred mile ice road from the outskirts of Yellowknife to Great Bear Lake and the Arctic Circle. The road, which is scraped and packed into existence each winter and which melts each spring, is across the thick ice of endless lakes (linked by portages of packed snow), and it makes it possible for freight, even whole pre-fabricated buildings, to be shipped north to the silver mine at Fort Radium. The book is the detailed account of

MR. DAVIES deals in complexities; Edith Iglauer deals with matter-of-fact realities, as she travels a road which leads straight across the great Canadian north — the frozen ground and water of the Northwest Territories. The book is named after the road, *Denison's Ice Road*, and it is published by E. P. Dutton & Co.,

Ms. Iglauer's day-after-day adventures; it is totally believable and therefore overwhelming. Its peculiarly Canadian theme is the eternal struggle against the elements, which can never be defeated. (This is, according to Margaret Atwood, the basic theme of Canadian fiction, the struggle not to conquer but to survive.) There is something oddly comforting in the implicit acknowledgement that a great chunk of the North American continent is beyond the powers of man; there is no one ingenious enough to convert Ellesmere Island into a skating rink or the barrens into a suburban subdivision.

It is possible to get a convincing look at much of Canada's austere topography through *The National Atlas of Canada*, the fourth revised edition, recently published by the Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd., \$67.50, in association with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and Information Canada. The maps, some 250 pages of them, are both graphic and intellectual joys. On the inside cover and its facing page are colour satellite maps of the Mackenzie River delta (Ms. Iglauer's area of interest) and the area around Montréal. On the inside back cover is a satellite map of the Lethbridge area in Alberta and the Vancouver area. These are remarkable for the clarity with which they show the sweeping face of nature and the occasional work of man — they are what the astronaut sees as he leaves home behind. Between these photographs from outer space are more sophisticated renditions of the terrain, which show in bright contrasting colours the endless details of an almost endless land: fresh water areas, lakes, rivers and glaciers, permafrost, ice, drainage basins,

In our January issue on Toronto we suggested that those wishing more information on that arresting city should write to the Community Information Centre of Metropolitan Toronto. We erred. The Centre is a coordinating agency and does not supply basic materials such as brochures. Those who wish to try again should contact:

for information on Metro Toronto government:

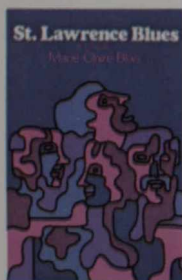
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river profiles, tectonics, surface materials, wetlands, soil climates, vegetation, precipitation, growing seasons, frost, temperature ranges, explorations, northern settlements, population distributions, personal incomes, mother tongues, horses and sheep, forest products, fossils, fuels and pipelines and many, many, many more items of information. Some of the large maps (Glacial Geology, for example, on pages 33 and 34) could be prints of first-class abstract paintings. Others are extraordinary nutshells of staggering amounts of information (Posts of the Canadian Fur Trade on pages 79 and 80).

[A SUPREME INTERPRETER]



FRENCH CANADA is a distinct place. It is difficult for outsiders to see the intellectual and philosophical difference — the English-speaking tourist is prepared to be charmed and he is; he eats good meals in good restaurants, is impressed by the twenty-first century *élan* of Montréal and amused, perhaps, to find that waitresses and Métro change-makers address him in French. He is ready to say, "Vive le difference" (though not perhaps to pronounce it correctly) and go back to Cincinnati or Vancouver flushed with the realization that he, as a proper understanding of the Québécois.

Well, he hasn't, not exactly, and Marie-Claire Blais is here to assist the tourist of the mind. Her most recent novel, *St. Lawrence Blues*, translated into English by Ralph Manheim and published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., \$7.95, is dedicated to the late Edmund Wilson, who once said she was the supreme interpreter of the French Canadian world. She may well be.

The style is picaresque and in the end almost surrealist; the prose crisp, and the essence (to the English speaker) both familiar and exotic. Here is the opening passage:

"When I was a kid at the orphanage they called me Ti-Pit, when it wasn't Ti-Père, Ti-Cul, or Ti-Noir, and you know what that means in French? It means 'little nothing' or 'big hole in the ground.' I'm not like other people, no education at all, not a speck, but I catch words like the measles, I have these high falutin confabs with myself, that's my secret, words seem to pick you up when you haven't anybody else."

[PLAY TIME]

CANADIAN PLAYWRIGHTS have become increasingly visible as Canadian regional theatres have bloomed. Handsomely illustrated in three volumes, *A Collection of Canadian Plays* presents the logical result. There are fifteen authors and twenty-one plays, five authors to a volume. The publisher is Simon & Pierre, P.O. Box 280, Adelaide St. Station, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J0.

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# CANADA

Today/D' Aujourd'hui

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