

# Editorial

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## A country's identity is not defined by the bottom line

A new Canada is about to rise over the horizon but as yet no one is sure what form it is going to take. It seems certain however that a new relationship will be forged between the provinces and Ottawa as well as between the provinces themselves.

Those of us living in Ontario must be prepared to take part in the creation of these new relationships if we are going to be able to live with them in the future.

Through the years Ontario has been able to count on the fact that most national policies bring them as many benefits as they could produce by themselves.

Ontario does have many qualities that make it distinct from other parts of the country. It is more culturally and racially diverse than any other part of the country. Its population has been growing more rapidly than the national average and it has attracted more new citizens than any other part of Canada. One in four Ontarians have come to live here from another country.

Ontario currently consumes over half of the goods and services it produces and exports the rest. International exports rose from 57 per cent of its total exports in 1979 to 68 per cent in 1989. Exports to the United States rose from 46 per cent of its total international exports in 1979 to 58 per cent in 1989.

Over the same ten year period, Ontario exports to the other nine provinces decline from 43 per cent to 32 per cent of its total exports. Ontario is less and less dependent on trade with other Canadian provinces and relies less than any other province on that national market.

It has also, until recently, experienced both the benefits and strains of a much higher rate of economic growth than other provinces.

If one looks at these figures it seems that Ontario could stand alone. But these are only figures and figures do not reflect how the people of Ontario see themselves or how they view their relationship with the rest of Canada. There is more to a country than the bottom line and the people of Ontario and Canada have to make this known to the current Conservative government in Ottawa. Its penchant for doing everything with an eye to figures and the bottom line is what has brought this latest national identity crisis upon us.

Robert A. Cotton

## Volunteers: the vital link

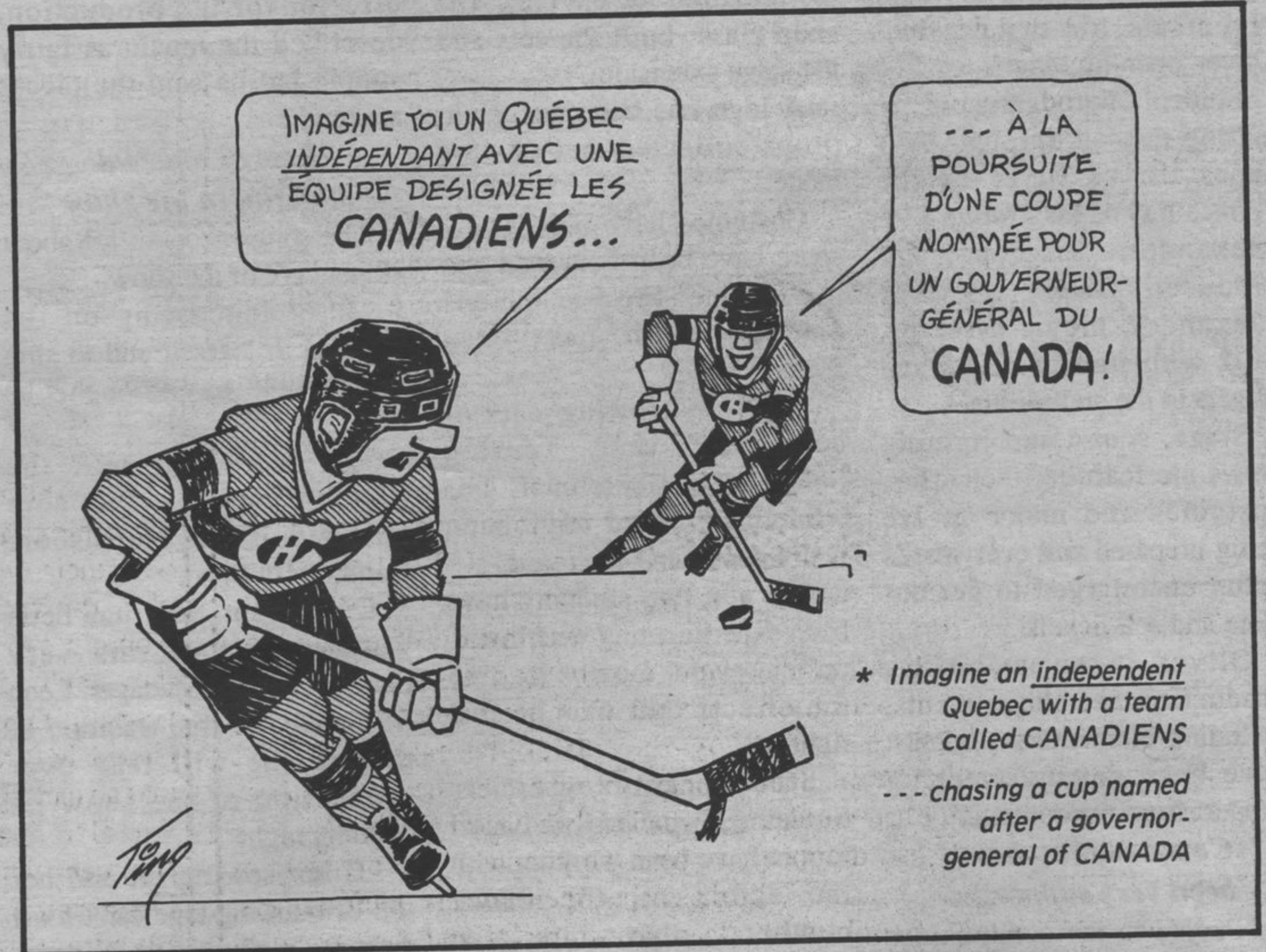
During National Volunteer Week, April 21 -27, communities across Canada are paying tribute to their volunteers and celebrating the spirit of caring and concern that volunteering exemplifies.

About 13 million Canadians - men and women of all ages, from all walks of life and from all ethnocultural backgrounds - devote their time to helping individuals, communities and causes. Working on their own or through organized groups, these volunteers are the vital links that hold our communities together.

Volunteers teach literacy skills, work for food banks and advocate on behalf of the environment. They provide support to victims of abuse, serve as leaders of youth groups, coach children's sports and run fire departments.

Volunteers work in hospitals, emergency shelters, soup kitchens, schools, churches, and museums. They raise money for charity, organize cultural events for the community and they sit on the boards of countless organizations. Without volunteers many important programs and activities would cease to exist.

Although their efforts often go unnoticed by society, volunteers make an enormous economic contribution to our communities. Recent studies show that time volunteered to organizations over a year is the equivalent of 6127,000 full-time jobs or about \$13.2 billion. Makes you think twice about the value of volunteers. If you have a chance this week thank one of



## A changing image

*You never hear anything bad about Canada, that's one thing I know...As a matter of fact, that's the only thing I know about Canada.*

U.S. college student

*I don't even know what street Canada is on.*

Al Capone

Ah yes. Remember the good old days when we were all citizens of the Invisible Giant? When the rest of the world -- if they thought of us at all -- took it for granted that all Canadians spoke French, shackled up in igloos, paddled to work and whacked down jack pines for a living?

The world stage belonged to the U.S., Russia and a handful of European and Oriental headliners. Those prima donnas strutted and primped in front of the footlights. Canada got a walk-on part in the third act, playing the butler.

That was the country I grew up in. Canadian nationalists did a lot of tooth-gnashing and spleen-venting about Canada's Dagwood Bumstead persona, but I loved it, because I travelled a lot. And when you travel a lot, you spend a good deal of time justifying yourself to flinty-eyed foreign border guards.

And there was never a better time to be a Canadian than when you were crossing a foreign border.

I had a Canadian flag sewn on my backpack and tiny maple leaves plastered on everything I owned. I always got through customs with a minimum of hassle. I figured it was because being Canadian is sort of like being beige. We hadn't done anything to anyone. Everybody knows about ugly Americans, imperial Brits, arrogant Germans and decadent Frenchmen, but Canucks? Uh, sure...go right on through...

Alas, it may not be that way much longer. A couple of stories in the news recently indicate that Canada's non-image on the international scene is being replaced by something that may make future border crossings a little trickier. In Britain, the newspapers are portraying Canadians as indigent bullies and public nuisances.

about that high-flying chap who converses in honks. The Canada Goose.

There are tens of thousands of them waddling the hills and dales of Merry Olde Englande right now, and a fine time they're having. "They've got quite an easy life in this country, with no natural predators" says Derek Neiman of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. "They're sort of like Canadian lager louts: lazy and hanging around." The Brits don't cotton to the Canada

Goose's habit of taking over golf courses, grain fields, parks and ponds -- nor the carpet bomb aftermath the geese leave behind.

Canadian fowl are not much more welcome in Florida these days -- although in the Sunshine State, it's not the Canada Goose they hate -- it's the Canadian snowbird.

"Snowbird" is the slang term Floridians have for the flocks of winter-weary Canadian tourists that flutter south each winter. It used to be a term of endearment, but

that's changed. Nowadays, it's usually preceded by one or two descriptive adjectives, such as #@\*&, ~(+# or %\*!@.

As in "Damn! Here comes another carload of \$%^&^%#@#ing snowbirds!"

It all has to do with our habit of leaving gratuities, you see. We don't. At least not enough. We are, in the eyes of Florida, a nation of skinflints and cheapskates, collectively tighter than Roseanne Barr's pantyhose.

Or, as a Florida bartender puts it: What's the difference between a Canadian and a canoe?

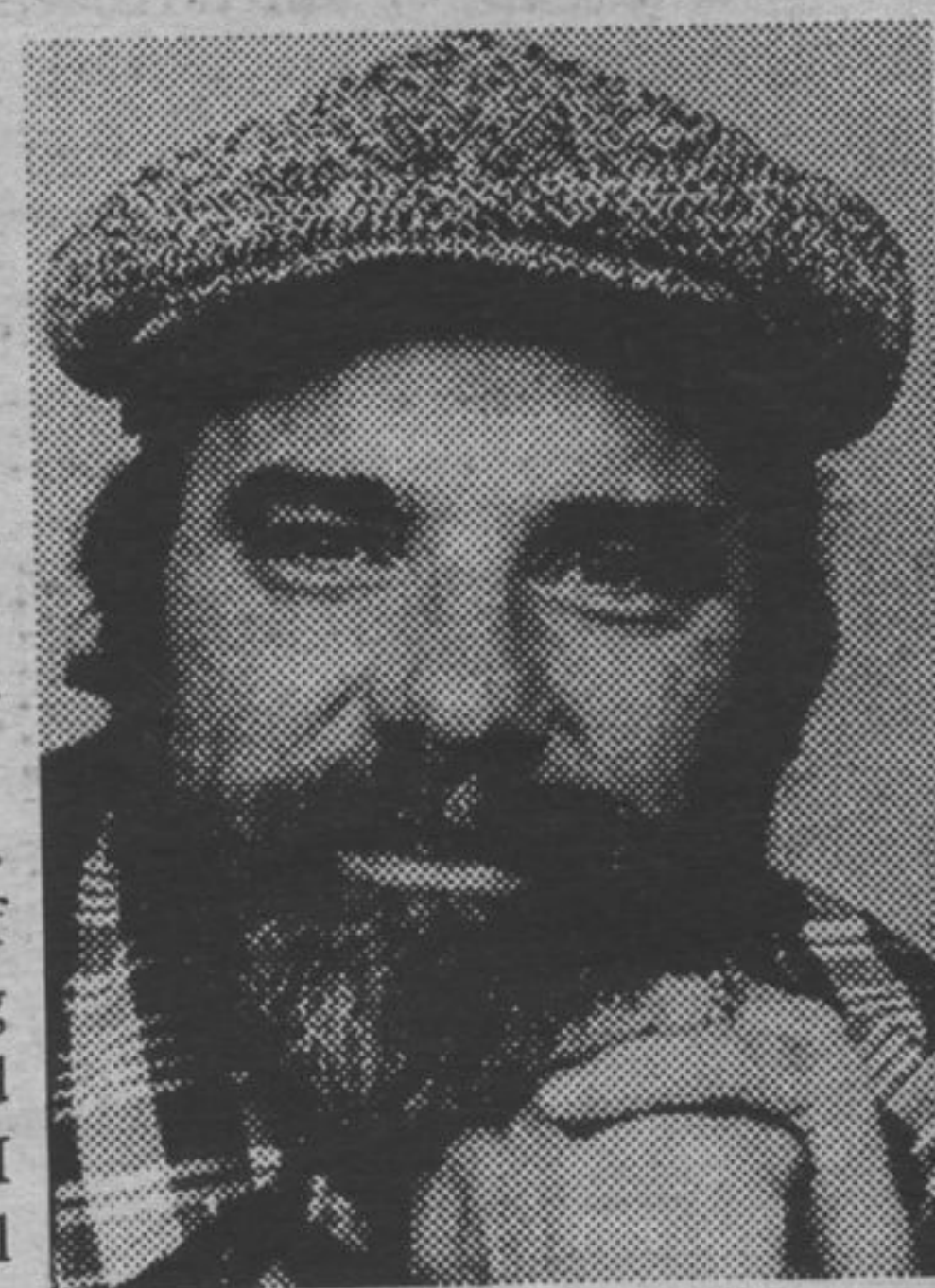
A canoe tips.

They better watch their lip in the sunshine state.

Those snowbirds could take offense and flock off somewhere else. England, say.

We could send a few planeloads of Canada Geese to Miami instead.

They don't tip either -- but they sure do leave



Arthur Black