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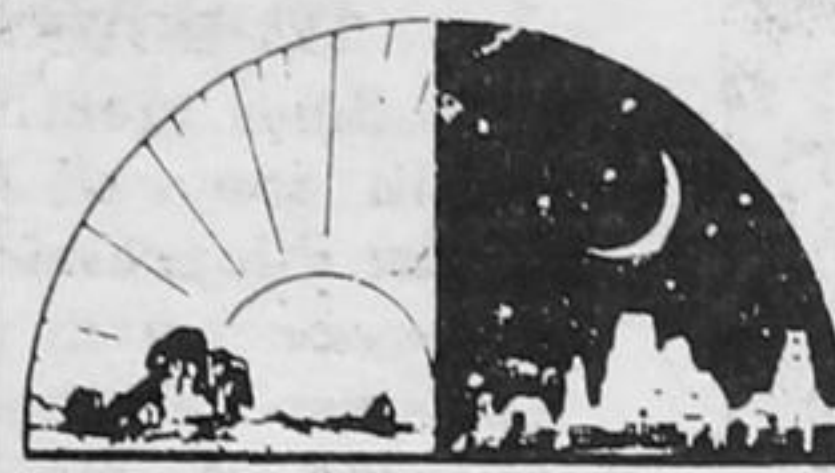
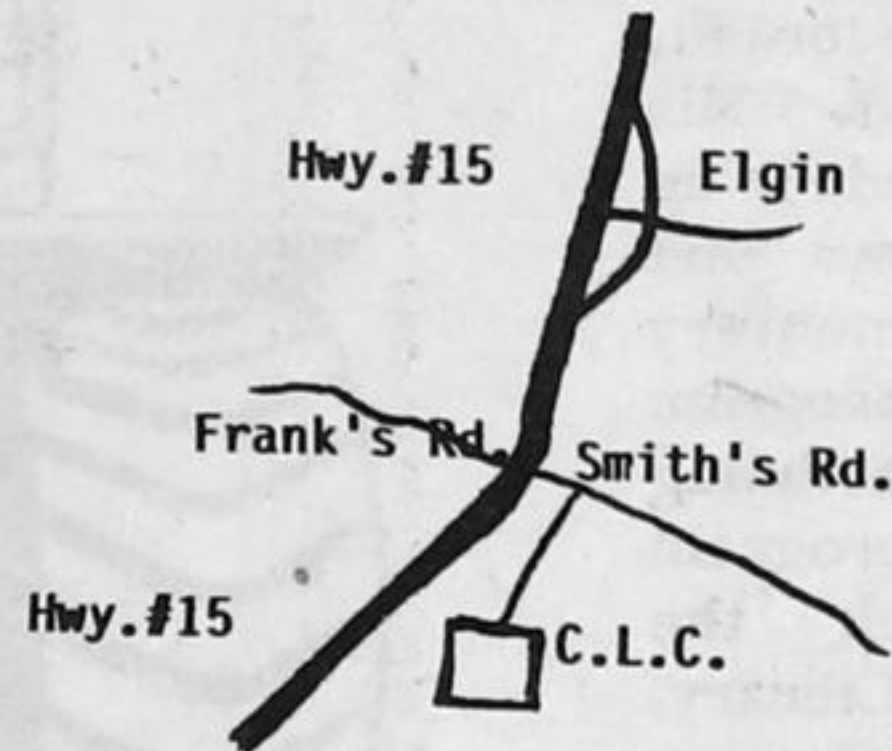
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DIFFERENT
AS NIGHT FROM DAY

This summer I have had the opportunity, (normal weather conditions would have made me say "the misfortune") of spending much time in Toronto and Montreal. The frequency of my visits has led to some comparisons, not only on the driving habits but on the attitudes of the residents of these two cities.

Differences in highway management are obvious and while a long-time Ontario resident (even a Torontonian for some time) I found the city road operation in Montreal (and the drivers) more sensible than that of Toronto. On any of the major city autoroutes, from the Decarie to the Metropolitan, the fact that the 3 lanes are designated makes driving a breeze. The inner lane naturally is for slower moving traffic or those vehicles wishing to exit. The middle lane allows one to travel at or near the speed limit with the ease of passing slower moving traffic on either the right or left and permitting easy access to your exit lane. The inner two lanes (those already mentioned) are the only 2 in which trucks and transports may travel. The outer lane is for those who wish to make fast time, passing, and also exiting from that lane. Never will a transport enter the outside lane unless exiting.

Toronto, on the other hand, on the Gardiner & Don Valley express routes, has every lane open to everyone. Traffic hops from lane to lane, in and around trucks, buses etc. creating great difficulty for the car driver attempting to see which exit is coming up. One can also get stuck in the inside lane with the "Must Exit" sign looming up in front!

Many Ontario drivers have an obsession regarding Quebec drivers. Believe me, after several trips to each city, Montreal drivers are the more understandable and less vociferous, both with car horn and voice! One has to undergo a slight change of mental attitude when driving in Quebec. You make a decision (to change lanes) and then you go for it! Hesitation will create a problem but once you have made your move, the Quebec driver will let you in....Not so in Toronto. Here the drivers all seem to have a personal obligation to keep you out! If you do "squeeze" in, horns honk and various

words of questionable encouragement assail your ears. Many people insist that the Quebec driver uses his horn like the

brake...Not so. In many days and weeks of driving, I only heard a horn honk twice...in Toronto, the horn leaner is now part of the general downtown sound.

Even pedestrians differ...In Montreal, the pedestrian taking a chance and crossing at random away from a cross walk, knows he/she's taking a chance! In Toronto, pedestrians, squirming between cars waiting for a light to change become quite vindictive to drivers...even those well-dressed upper-crust matrons can mouth some very sarcastic comments if you attempt to move when the traffic ahead pulls away!..And they even have those convenient "stop-on-a-dime" (drivers) "X" Walks!

Attitudes towards people in general are very different. Toronto is best described as Toronto New York. Hustle, bustle and don't take my time! Store assistants don't seem to care if you buy or not. Browsing is about all you can do as you will be lucky to locate an assistant who can help you let alone take payment for an item you wish to purchase. In one day, I walked out of 3 stores for this reason. Montreal, on the other hand, must give all their service industry workers a pep talk on keeping the customer happy! Even the self serve gas bars will not only offer advice but will assist you with just anything....without being asked!

Overall, I would say Ontario, perhaps more specifically Toronto, has a lot to learn about tourism. It really doesn't matter what fantastic places you have to offer the tourist...the return visit should always be encouraged. In Toronto, many will see it once, but I wonder how many would return. While these are my impressions, I met many who offered similar comments and generally it seemed that Toronto was seen as a "cold" city. Too bad, Toronto...while you get bigger and bigger...people seem to mean less and less. In closing, having visited both cities frequently over a period of 27 years, Toronto has grown at a faster rate than Montreal... & supposedly become more important....but at what cost!



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