

The Politics of Participation: A Study of Canada's Centennial Celebration

By

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
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**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
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ABSTRACT

In 1967 government officials planned an ambitious program of events to mark the historic occasion of Canada's one hundredth anniversary of Confederation. Existing accounts of Centennial, however, primarily personal reflections, are largely anecdotal in tone, and, to date, there has been no comprehensive scholarly consideration of the 1967 celebration. In contrast, this study, a critical analysis of Centennial, explores how organizers designed events and programs that advanced the official objectives of the Centennial to bolster national pride and reinforce political unity.

Adopting a cultural studies approach, the thesis examines "non-traditional" texts such as official reports, speeches, minutes, pamphlets, commemorative programs and public events. Also, employing a comparative model of analysis, the thesis considers contemporary films and documentaries, exploring how officials advanced the Centennial message in an attempt to generate public interest, and persuade Canadians to participate.

From an organizational perspective at least, Centennial was a remarkable achievement, with public participation far exceeding official expectations. Key to this success was the fact that Canadians, encouraged to celebrate in their own personal way, were not forced to express one vision of Canada or Canadian identity. In the end, Centennial functioned as a catalyst that engendered in many Canadians a new belief in themselves and the nation, launching them into what they believed was a bright future, full of promise.

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INTRODUCTION

“...the primary and most general function of the festival is to renounce and then to announce culture, to renew periodically the life stream of a community by creating new energy, and to give sanction to its institutions.”

Alessandro Falassi [Ed.] *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, 1987.

In 1967 Canadians joined together to mark Canada's one hundredth anniversary of Confederation, and with uncharacteristic enthusiasm and genuine national pride, they took part in extraordinary numbers. Thousands of people participated in the many officially organized national events and even more Canadians took part in local, grass roots activities. Encouraged by government organizers to celebrate Centennial in their own particular fashion, Canadians expressed their national pride in astonishing ways. They created Centennial hair-dos, participated in neighbourhood beautification projects, sewed Centennial toques, planned dances, arranged contests, sponsored sports tournaments, hosted youth exchange programs, presented historical pageants and organized parades. Everyone was invited to the celebration and, as if to emphasize the point, the residents of one northern Alberta community constructed a UFO landing pad, just in case. Given that officials had had little time to plan and prepare for an event of such magnitude, the success of Centennial was a remarkable accomplishment.¹ While solid official support of the national event was an important factor, in the final analysis, it

¹While non-governmental organizations started planning for centennial year as early as 1959, the government was slow to formalize a plan of action. *An Act Respecting the Observance of the Centennial of Confederation in Canada* received Royal Assent on September 29, 1961, but the Commission did not begin its work in earnest until early 1963, when Commissioner John Fisher undertook to staff senior positions.

was Canadians themselves who, by participating in exceptional numbers, ensured Centennial was a positive and memorable event.

Marvelling at the extraordinary level of public involvement, one participant remarked that “something intangible happened. All sorts of barriers between people - social, religious, and so on - seemed to break down when people started working on . . . Centennial projects.”² Reflecting on the spectacle, Canadian historian Jack Granatstein maintained “the hundredth birthday celebrations combined with Expo . . . [gave] Canadians a sense of national pride . . . and the feeling quickly spread that the good, grey outlook that had long been said to characterize Canadians was gone forever.”³ A feeling of optimism and confidence in the future typified the Centennial year, an attitude that was reflected in coverage by the international press. Remarking on the success of the Montreal exposition, one British journalist wrote

Expo 67 isn't just a world fair, it has glitter, sex appeal, and it's given impact and meaning to a word that had neither: Canadian.⁴

Over thirty years later, Centennial continues to figure prominently in the minds of many Canadians.

Writing on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Expo '67 and Centennial, journalist Alanna Mitchell observed,

It seems a long ago time now, but there was a moment, a shining moment.

²*Macleans*, December 1967, pp. 89-90.

³Jack L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), p. 304.

⁴*London Observer*, quoted in Robert Fulford, *Remember Expo. A Pictorial Record* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1968), p. 25.

when Canada felt good about itself.⁵

Similarly, in their recent handbook on Canadian popular culture, writers Pevere and Dymond suggest “it was probably the most fun the country ever had doing something it was told to do.”⁶ With each successive anniversary, journalists mark the event with nostalgic articles about a time when, in our “memory, the sun is always bright, the St. Lawrence River sparkling blue, and the breeze gentle.”

Pierre Berton’s recent book chronicling Canada’s Centennial year is no exception. With the title *1967: The Last Good Year*, Berton implies Centennial signalled the zenith of Canadian optimism, success, and patriotic feeling, with everything thereafter having been something of a let down. Conceding there were tensions between Canadians, Berton nevertheless characterizes 1967 as “a special year - a vintage year . . . a turning-point year.”⁷ Many Canadians, it would seem, agree. Whether remembering Bobby Gimby’s hit song, *CA-NA-DA*, their tour through the Confederation Train or Caravan exhibits, a family vacation to EXPO 67, or taking part in a local Centennial activity, the celebration continues to evoke pleasant memories for the many Canadians who participated in the year-long national anniversary.

That these memories endure in the collective consciousness of the Canadian public is clear; why this should be the case is less evident. What is increasingly apparent to scholars of large-scale celebrations and public spectacle, however, is that these mega-

⁵Alanna Mitchell, *Globe & Mail*, quoted in G. Pevere and G. Dymond, *Mondo Canuck: A Canadian Pop Culture Odyssey* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 50.

⁶Ibid, 50.

⁷Pierre Berton, *1967: The Last Good Year*, (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1997), p. 15.

events “meet deeply seated needs for regularity within the flow of time,”⁸ and presuppose a historical continuity that, in turn, suggests cultural cohesion and political stability. On a more personal level, commemorations, like Centennial, are necessary for people to impose structure and “bring order into the amorphous flow of time,” thereby helping to “define an individual’s location in the temporary continuity.”⁹ More importantly, however, commemoration gives licence for citizens to come together, collectively, and redefine membership with the larger group.¹⁰ On a national level the cult of anniversaries and resulting model of historical tradition helps “governments and businesses . . . cultivate [a sense of] national identity.”¹¹ Given this, it is hardly surprising that scholar William Johnston advises governments to capitalize on the effectiveness of national anniversaries and celebrations to define and foster national identity; because, in his view, they are simply the best tool available to governments wanting to promote national sovereignty.¹²

Staged national events like the Centennial of Confederation play a vital role in imparting a sense of a shared national identity, “reminding [participants] of their connection, mythical or otherwise, to past traditions,”¹³ thereby authenticating what is

⁸William M. Johnston, *Celebrations: The Cult of Anniversaries in Europe and the United States Today* (NB [USA], London: Transaction Publishers, 1991), p. xi.

⁹Nico H. Frijda, “Commemorating,” in *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*, eds. James W. Pennebaker et al., (Mahway, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., 1997), p. 108.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Johnston, *Celebrations*, p. 39. (Johnston defines national identity as a “...shared sense of distinctiveness, as it has unfolded in a nation-states’s history.”)

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹³Robert Rutherford, “Canada’s August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and Social

largely an invented idea of a unified nation. Invented because, according to Benedict Anderson, the theory of one, unifying national identity is illusory at best, given that “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”¹⁴ Nonetheless, national celebrations help facilitate feelings of unity, no matter how deceptive, because in the imagined community, “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”¹⁵ The resulting equalizing effect emphasizes common, shared experiences.

Writing about the Canadian August Festival in *The Canadian Historical Review*, Robert Rutherford, observed that

[m]oments of collective rejoicing . . . liberate participants from the constraints of individual identities so that they might celebrate . . . a wider communion or consensus . . . They temporarily abandon established frameworks of social interaction . . . [and] . . . [p]rior differences of class, ethnicity, gender, or other social constraints are momentarily displaced.¹⁶

For example, in response to the impending First World War, Canadians, gripped by “war madness,” “sang, shouted, and paraded together on the streets of Montreal and Quebec City,” and elsewhere across the country.¹⁷ Rutherford’s article considers the phenomenon

Memory.” *The Canadian Historical Review* 77 (June 1996): 226.

¹⁴Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1991), p. 6.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 7. Anderson remarks that “ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible . . . for so many millions of people, no so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”

¹⁶Rutherford, “Canada’s August Festival,” p. 239. Rutherford summarises Victor Turner’s theory of *communitas* first explored in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 225.

of the crowd from a Canadian perspective. Using the patriotic, public festival as an example of “collective behaviour,” he evaluates “how mass demonstrations of support took shape, how they conveyed symbolic representations, and how they conformed to a repertoire of conventions associated with patriotic display.”¹⁸ Observing that “national unity was expounded as the imperative of the hour, . . . dissent seemed all but drowned out.”¹⁹ According to a report in the *Manitoba Free Press*, the

patriotism was so contagious it inspired everybody on the streets whether or not they were British subjects. Americans, Swedes, Norwegians, Chinese, marched with the rest and joined their voices in the cheering. Even the ladies were represented.²⁰

The Great War “revived . . . the connection to Britain,”²¹ and Canadians, charged with the responsibility of upholding and protecting treasured and revered traditions, rallied to support the Empire. Singing *Rule Britannia*, crowds paraded through urban centres, unified by their collective commitment to defend the country and the motherland.

While different from more formal, institutionalized events, the August Festival demonstrates, nonetheless, how public events function to promote a vision of a unified nation where citizens have a common vision and adhere to a set of shared values. In his research on the American experience during the Bicentennial year, sociologist M. Kenneth Brody observed that the national celebration was an excellent example of

¹⁸Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 225.

²⁰*Manitoba Free Press*, 5 Aug. 1914, p. 3. as quoted in Rutherford, “Canada’s August Festival,” pp. 239-40.

²¹Ibid., p. 230.

Durkheim's concept of "collective representations."²² Projecting a *carnavalesque*-like atmosphere, large-scale celebrations function as a sort of social "safety valve."

As described by Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, in his seminal study *Rabelais and his World*,

carnival "celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions."²³

Bakhtin characterized carnival as "both a populist utopian vision of the world seen from below and a festive critique, through the inversion of hierarchy, of the 'high' culture."²⁴ Not limited to the official festival period, however, carnival, according to Bakhtin, saturated every aspect of medieval culture and society. Moreover, he maintained that the medieval world of *carnival* was an inherently subversive, political act that challenged the official order. Subsequent scholars, however, have disputed this element of Bakhtin's theory. While on the surface, *carnival* – "a festive explosion of opposition to the everyday rules,"²⁵ and a ritual of reversal – appears to challenge accepted social norms,

²²With this term, first explored in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim attempted to clarify the concept of "social facts." Rather than represent the "sum total of given elements in all the individual consciousness in a society," it exemplifies "the engendering, through associative activities within the constraints of specific collective conditions, of new elements of human experience, knowledge, value, will and behaviour." The result is a set of values that are articulated through the use of cultural symbols that reinforce ideas of a national tradition and social and cultural heritage. [Alan Bullock & Oliver Stallybrass, *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), p. 140]

²³M.M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968), p. 109.

²⁴P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 7.

²⁵Marianne Mesnil, "Place and Time in the Carnavalesque Festival," in *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, ed. A. Falassi (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), p. 186.

many scholars argue it serves, in fact, to revitalize the existing social and political order.

According to culturalist Terry Eagleton,

carnival, after all, is a *licensed* affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off as disturbing and relatively ineffectual as a revolutionary work of art.²⁶

Given this interpretation, carnival is a socially sanctioned “form of social control of the low by the high.”²⁷ This study adopts the latter, more Durkheimian, understanding of the role of public ritual and celebration. While contemporary mega-celebrations like Centennial do not manifest all aspects of the carnivalesque, they do operate in a similar fashion. Through the vehicle of public ritual and display, participants validate existing belief systems and advance the status quo,²⁸ thereby “affirming sameness rather than proclaiming breakthroughs.”²⁹ Given this, the carnivalesque model functions as a powerful analytical tool to study “ideological repertoires and cultural practices.”³⁰

Typically, scholars of the symbolic activity of public celebration adopt an interpretive framework that demands categorizing and classifying events as either ritual or festival, according to a defined set of practices identified with each genre. For example, ritual ceremonial events are often associated with sacralized spaces, and suggest a serious purpose and a formalized structure. Festivals, on the other hand, evoke a “spirit

²⁶Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin: Toward a Revolutionary Criticism*, (London: Verso, 1981), as quoted in P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 13.

²⁷P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 13.

²⁸M. Kenneth Brody, “Yankee and the Bicentennial: Warner’s Study of Symbolic Activity in a Contemporary Setting,” *Sociological Inquiry* 52 (Fall 1982): 259-273.

²⁹Johnston, *Celebrations*, p. 111.

³⁰P. Stallybrass and A. White. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 26.

of fun, of play and games,” drawing more on the “languages and techniques of play to intensify them.”³¹ Furthermore, according to John MacAloon, festivals “are less bound externally to calendars and internally to fixed programs of ‘special observances.’”³² The two forms of celebration are not, however, mutually exclusive, as one type of public expression may include elements of the other. According to Roger Abrahams, for example, festivities often accompany more ceremonial rites of passage “connected with our civic lives.”³³ In Abrahams’ view

both rite and festivity involve stylized, imitative, repeatable acts, carried out in highly charged times and places. Both invoke learned and rehearsed speaking and acting “routines,” and gather their power to focus attention on the contrast between ordinary times and the extraordinary occasion. Both tend to transform the world and the individuals within it.³⁴

Transformations realized during festivals are usually time specific and transitory, whereas transformations achieved as a result of ritual “are carried into the everyday” and, therefore, assert “an intensification (or perhaps a reauthorization) of an everyday role.”³⁵

Writing about festivals, Alesandro Falassi observes that “several constituent parts seem to be quantitatively ever-recurrent and qualitatively important.”³⁶ While not all

³¹Roger D. Abrahams, “An American Vocabulary of Celebrations,” in *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, ed. Alesandro Falassi (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), p. 178.

³²John M. MacAloon, “Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle,” in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals toward a theory of cultural performance*, ed. John MacAloon (Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), p. 246.

³³Roger Abrahams. “An American Vocabulary of Celebrations,” p. 178.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 179.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶Alesandro Falassi, “Festival: Definition and Morphology,” in *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, p. 3.

festivals capture all the elements, according to Falassi, some of the “building blocks” are usually evident and can be considered ritual acts or rites.³⁷ There are rites of passage, marking the “transition from one life stage to the next,” which may be accompanied by an initiation ceremony or public celebration. In the case of Centennial, the milestone was marked with a nationally broadcast ceremony from Parliament Hill where Prime Minister Pearson ushered in the historic year by lighting the Centennial Flame, a symbol of a proud past and a bright future.³⁸ Along with also rites of reversal when, as during carnival, normal relationship roles are inverted, there are also rites of conspicuous display (pageants, procession, parades, flags, lights), conspicuous consumption (feasts, banquets, parties) and of exchange (public acts of reciprocity and gift giving), all of which were evident during the national celebration of Confederation. Centennial also included another important feature of festival culture, rites of competition. Whether it was athletic games organized for school children, the voyageur canoe race across the country or simply the friendly, competitive spirit engendered between communities trying to organize the best selection of events, Canadians competed with one another in an effort to

³⁷In 1909 French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep published his seminal text *The Rites of Passage* (translated into English in 1960), and is credited with coining the phrase that is now part of the vernacular. After studying pivotal individual and collective transition periods such as birth, adolescence, marriage, and death, van Gennep observed startling similarities between cultural rites. While ceremonial details differed, the significance of the event was universal from culture to culture. Central to all cultures and societies was the desire to mark the transition with some formal rite of passage. Large-scale mega-events, too function as rites of passage. In the case of Centennial, it was the passage from the past into a future full of possibilities.

³⁸In the best tradition of Canadian compromise, organizers decided that given the number of school age children participating in the ceremony, it was best to hold the ceremony earlier in the evening, rather than at the stroke of midnight. [P. Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion: Canada's Centennial Celebrations, A Model Mega-Anniversary*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992), p. xii.]

demonstrate their national pride. As a national rite of passage, Centennial communicated many facets of ritual and festival culture. Centennial gave expression to another feature of public celebration: spectacle.

Contrasting the festival genre with spectacle, MacAloon contends that the word festival is not interchangeable with spectacle. According to MacAloon, spectacles “tend to be irregular, occasional, open-ended, even spontaneous,” and adhere to the maxim “more is better.”³⁹ As a result, the public is often suspicious of this form of public expression, associating it with an excessive display of wealth or tastelessness.⁴⁰ On occasion, however, the genres of festival, ritual and spectacle conflate, expressing elements of all three forms of public celebration. Perhaps one of the best example of this is the modern Olympic games.

Established and promoted by a French aristocrat, Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), the modern Olympics were inaugurated in Athens in 1896. Designed to promote “peaceful combat,” the Olympic movement was predicated on the belief that the games, with their “controlled frame of ritual and festivity,” would serve as a model example of lasting peace that would “lead to a peaceful coexistence based on mutual respect among individuals and nations.”⁴¹ Organized around a series of rites and festivities, the games function as a sort of secular religion that celebrates human ability and fosters a sense of compassion and understanding for all of humanity. Staged in a

³⁹MacAloon, “Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle,” p. 246.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Moyra Byrne, “Nazi Festival: The 1936 Berlin Olympics,” in *Time out of Time*, p. 110.

different country every four years, the Olympics represent one of the few occasions when “the majority of the world’s nations meet on a regular basis to engage in self-consciously common activity.”⁴² The “site symbolically and temporarily becomes the international festive space of the ‘New Olympia,’” thus emphasizing a spirit of solidarity between nations.⁴³ Over time, however, Coubertin’s vision of the games as a “festival of humanity” evolved, with host countries constantly testing the fundamental principles of the original movement. This was particularly evident at the 1936 Berlin Olympic games.

Under the guidance of Joseph Goebbels, the games functioned as a massive propaganda tool for the Nazi government. With its emphasis on youth and athletic ability, coupled with the important role of ceremony and ritual, the Olympic event proved to be an excellent vehicle for organizers to promote their own nationalistic agenda. Writing about the event, one scholar observed that, “organizers . . . were concerned with fashioning a persuasive image of Nazi Germany and projecting it as much as possible in concurrence with the internationally sanctioned image of the Olympic festival.”⁴⁴ Eager to capitalize on the prestige of the games, planners exploited the symbols, rituals and ceremony of the event, but shrewdly refashioned them into something that was uniquely German. They succeeded in grafting a “a Nazi festival . . . onto the international event . . . exploiting a wide repertoire of intense artistic communication, from the colour of the . . . walls of flags and banners. . . . to the special exhibits, to elaborate pageantry and

⁴²MacAloon, “Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle,” p. 267.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Moyra Byrne, “Nazi Festival,” p. 117.

parties.”⁴⁵ The highly stylized event, complete with the orchestrated symbolism of the opening and closing ceremonies, afforded the Germans an occasion to showcase a new, self-confident nation, certain that the world would be watching. In the process, however Coubertin’s vision of the games as a vehicle to celebrate *communitas* and forge common bonds was co-opted to advance the political objectives of one nation. At subsequent Olympic events governments competed aggressively for the opportunity to play host, realizing that, in addition to the enormous economic benefits, grand official ceremonies like the Olympics also helped to revitalize the established power and rekindle national pride. National anniversaries like Centennial function in a similar fashion. Exploiting the powerful tools of symbol and spectacle, these large-scale events focus public attention, generate enthusiasm and bring people together to celebrate collectively.

While there is a growing body of literature on the subject of national celebrations, public ritual and spectacle and the role they play in shaping and defining national identity, the topic is a relatively new area of study within the discipline of history. Nicholas Rogers and Adrian Schubert suggest that historians’ reluctance to address the subject of commemoration, public spectacle and the issue of tradition might be due in part to the shift in the sixties and seventies away from exploring the history of the ruling classes in favour of doing history from the “bottom up.”⁴⁶ Intended to validate and reclaim the lived experience of individuals largely marginalised or completely omitted from earlier historical studies, the “new social history,” as it was known, focussed on chronicling the

⁴⁵Ibid, p. 112.

⁴⁶Nicholas Rogers & Adrian Schubert, “Introduction: Spectacle, Monument, and Memory,” *Histoire Sociale, Social History*, 29, (November, 1996): 266.

stories of the working class and the disenfranchised. Consequently, within the framework of this new methodological approach, “tradition,” according to Rogers and Schubert, “appeared to be a conservative ruse designed to keep the masses in thrall, [and] commemorative politics bespoke of elitism, self-serving notions of nationhood, and a ‘top-down’ approach to history”⁴⁷ Driven to write “an authentic poor man’s . . . history,” historians often neglected to consider what Schubert and Rogers term “the dramaturgies of power.”⁴⁸ A notable exception, however, was found in the work of historians studying the often highly symbolic culture and society of the late medieval and Renaissance periods,⁴⁹ like, for example, Johan Huizinga’s influential study, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*.

First published in 1919, Huizinga’s study remains “standard reading for graduate students and a starting point for scholars seeking to build on or break down the Dutch historian’s image of . . . medieval society.”⁵⁰ Practising a unique sort of ‘total history,’ Huizinga explored the “social, political, spiritual, cultural and artistic elements of life in

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 266.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Historian Natalie Zemon Davis often focuses on the themes of spectacle and social control. See, N.Z. Davis, “Women on Top,” *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 124-51; “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present*, 59 (May 1973), pp. 51-91. In Britain, historians E.P. Thompson in *Customs in Common*, (London: Merlin Press, 1997), and Raphael Samuel in the massive work *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1989) also consider issues surrounding the politics and power of public ritual, symbolism and spectacle. Robert Darnton’s influential work, *The Great Cat Massacre*, (New York: Basic Books, c1984) too offers insight into the importance of this increasingly popular and important field.

⁵⁰Christopher M. Bellitto, review of *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, by Johan Huizinga, in *History: Review of New Books*, 25 (Spring 1997), p. 1.

the 14th and 15th centuries in northern France and the Netherlands.”⁵¹ The study considers how “the characteristic forms of the medieval period - the knightly jousts, the poetry and romances of courtly love, the ostentatious display of the princely circles - had lost their relevance for the age and their ability to inspire.”⁵² By penetrating the actions of the medieval social elite and uncovering “their psychological motivations,”⁵³ his work provides insight into the period, painting a “cultural portrait of an elite society by identifying its heroes, villains, ideals, and failures.”⁵⁴ The work is innovative for its time, predating a methodological approach later championed by the *Annales* school.

Founded in 1929, by Marc Bloch and fellow historian Lucien Febvre, the *Annales* school emphasized analysis over conventional narrative and promoted the study of *la longue durée*. Integrating economic, social, cultural and political issues advocates of the method aspired to produce a more complete, ‘total history,’ adopting a comparative style that forged links between history and the social sciences.⁵⁵ Considered revolutionary at the time, the *Annales* school eventually gained currency among historians of French history. Bloch’s own pioneering study on the role of royal ceremony in maintaining royal privilege and position exemplifies the principals of the movement, as does the imaginative work of Fernand Braudel and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. Other historians

⁵¹Melissa, Bennetts, review of *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, by Johan Huizinga, in *Christian Science Monitor*, 88 (April 25, 1996), 1.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Bellitto, 1.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁵Zolberg; R. Aristide, and Agnes Callmard, “The Ecole Libre at the New School, 1941-1946,” *Social Research*, 65 (Winter 1998): 31.

too, like American Natalie Zemon Davis, also considered the dynamics of power in their work, but, until quite recently, this consideration tended to be the exception. While some historians may have hesitated to explore the relationship between power and public spectacle in the modern period, however, such was not the case in the increasingly popular and influential fields of anthropology and sociology.

American sociologist Lloyd Warner, for example, examined the dynamics of power in his work, maintaining that symbolic events “ritualized. . . the past,” thus making the past “present and perfect.”⁵⁶ Recognizing the many subtle layers of meaning inherent in public display, he concluded that national spectacles constituted a type of teaching device which functioned to orient and reassure. This view continues to find currency in the field today, with many scholars concluding that “through the unavoidably selective exposition of symbols [and of]. . . history, the past is reified,”⁵⁷ and citizens are joined together by a common purpose. Illustrating this view, scholar John J. MacAloon, writing about the Olympic spectacle, observed that

cultural performances are more than entertainment, more than didactic or persuasive formulations, and more than cathartic indulgences. They are occasions in which, as a culture or society, we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others.⁵⁸

Increasingly, as historians study relationships of power in greater detail, they realize that

⁵⁶L.L. Warner, *The Living & the Dead*, 1959, quoted in M. Kenneth Brody, “Yankee and the Bicentennial: Warner’s Study of Symbolic Activity in a Contemporary Setting,” *Sociological Inquiry*, 52 (Fall 1982): 260.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸John M. MacAloon, *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle*, p. 1.

public space is “a critical site of popular containment and contention.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, “combining insights gained through doing history ‘from below’ with a keen appreciation of the symbolic imperatives of the ruling classes to shape the world in their own image,” historians recognize more and more that the ‘symbolics of power’ find expression in a variety of ways.⁶⁰

While British scholar Raymond Williams did not consider himself an historian, his work is informed by an historical understanding. Of particular interest to Williams was the process of cultural production and the theme of connection. In his view, history was more than the accumulation of evidence and the construction of narratives; it was about forging connections and achieving inclusion. He emphasized that history was not simply about the past, believing instead that it played a crucial role in shaping the present. Arguing that it was senseless to favour one “structure” over another, he asserted that “a good deal of history [had] in fact been written on the assumption that the bases of the society, its political, economic, and social arrangements form the central core of facts, after which the art and theory can be adduced, for marginal illustration or correlation.”⁶¹ He rejected the commonly held view that society could be split into component parts, maintaining that emphasizing one particular social structure would not fashion a complete picture. For Williams, art, both visual and literary, did not exist divorced from the whole; it was an integral feature of life. According to Williams,

⁵⁹Rogers & Schubert, *Histoire Social: Social History*, p. 267.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), p. 46.

we cannot say that we know a particular form or period of society, and that we will see how its art and theory relate to it, for until we know these, we cannot really claim to know the society.⁶²

Spurning what British historian Collingwood characterized as the “cut and paste” approach to history, Williams advocated a type of ‘total history’ that emphasized context. He recognized, however, that the lived experience of the past is complex and often impenetrable, and conceded that “certain elements . . . will always be irrecoverable” and “even those that can be recovered are recovered in abstraction.”⁶³ Given his belief that “the lived culture of a particular time and place [is] only fully accessible to those living in that time and place,”⁶⁴ we may well ask how Williams thought historians could “access” and understand the past.

In response to the challenge, he chose to examine patterns of organization and relationships in an effort to understand the past. Described as ‘structures of feeling,’ Williams believed the theoretical framework helped to communicate the culture and context of a given period. By establishing patterns characteristic of a particular period and exploring their relationship to each other, he believed historians could make connections that revealed something about the construction of culture and society. “The essential point of reference for the notion of structure of feeling is, [however,] not so much a class, or a society, as a generation.”⁶⁵ According to *American Cultural Studies*

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., p. 47.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 49.

⁶⁵Raymond Williams, *Politics & Letters: Interviews with New Left Review*, (London: Verso, 1979), p. 157.

scholar Patrick Brantlinger, Williams's theory of a "structure of feeling" offered "an interesting contrast . . . [to] . . . some other terms that later became central to culturalist work, particularly ideology and hegemony," because, while it "was a kind of structuralist category, it was less rigid or mechanistic."⁶⁶ The concept considered the "area of interaction between the official consciousness of an epoch - codified in its doctrines and legislation - and the whole process of actually living its consequences."⁶⁷ Williams's theory of tensions between established and the newly emerging "structures of feeling" is useful to historians and of particular interest in this study.

During the nineteen-sixties, western society experienced something of a paradigm shift, with the emerging youth counter-culture challenging the conservative, compliant culture of the post-war period. Characterized by rapid technological and social change, the sixties witnessed a change in the "structures of feeling." Centennial year, as much about celebrating the future and recognizing the successes of the younger generation as it was about commemorating the past, gave Canadians licence to reaffirm their national pride during a period of increasing social instability. With the birth of the women's liberation movement, the increasing politicization of Canada's Aboriginal community, the rise of Quebec Nationalism, and the developing youth culture, the collective identity of Canadian mainstream society was, according to one contemporary observer, increasingly under attack.⁶⁸ The year-long birthday bash, however, served to distract

⁶⁶Patrick Brantlinger, *Crusoes's Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America*, (New York, London: Routledge, 1990), p. 57.

⁶⁷Williams, *Politics & Letters*, p. 159.

⁶⁸ Peter Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion: Canada's Centennial Celebrations*, A

many Canadians from their worries, focussing their attention on the accomplishments of the past and the promise of a bright future. Designed to promote a comforting vision of society in which existing traditions were valued and the status quo reigned, organizers hoped Centennial would help unify the country and strengthen national pride, as Canadians joined together to celebrate a significant, milestone event. By exploring extant and emerging fissures in relation to Centennial, this study, following the Williams model of 'social totality,' aims to develop a better appreciation of Canada in the late 1960s, as embodied in the Centennial celebrations.

Some scholars have suggested that the increased interest in commemorative politics and practices is due, in part, to the emergence of the right and its unabashed use of the highly-charged vocabulary of patriotism and nationalism.⁶⁹ Thatcher's Britain and the manipulation of nationalist imagery and rhetoric to promote a Thatcherite vision of British progress and success is the most notable example in recent years. Current interest in the field, however, may be stimulated, in part, by the imminent millennium which, according to one scholar, "will unleash preoccupation with crisis and renewal."⁷⁰ Feelings of apprehension and uncertainty will be compounded by escalating external cultural and economic encroachment, challenging accepted notions of the nation and national identity in an emerging, borderless "cyber" world. Increasingly, governments recognize the importance of promoting a strong, sovereign national image; consequently,

Model Mega-Anniversary, (Toronto & Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1993), p. 40.

⁶⁹Rogers and Schubert, *Histoire Social: Social History*, p. 267.

⁷⁰Johnston, *Celebrations*, p. x.

officials are keen to embrace programs that will further a nationalist agenda, and instill confidence and unity

In his work *On History*, historian Eric Hobsbawm writes that “myth and invention are essential to the politics of identity by which a group of people today, defining themselves by ethnicity, religion or the past or present borders of states, try to find some certainty in an uncertain and shrinking world.”⁷¹ Given growing anxiety during the late twentieth century over the perceived crisis of national identity, it is, perhaps, not surprising that national celebrations play an increasingly crucial role in advancing nationalist agendas. Some scholars, however, express concern that, in their haste to present a unified, strong national presence, governments will manipulate or “reinterpret” the historical past to meet their own objectives. Hobsbawm points to contemporary events in the Balkans as an example of the dangers inherent in “constructing” a national identity. Increasingly, newly emerging nation-states resort to invoking national myths, not historical fact, to validate their claim to power and sovereignty. As a result, the official interpretation of the past may bear little, if any, resemblance to the historical reality. According to Hobsbawm, “reading the desires of the present into the past . . . is the most common and convenient technique of creating history,” and it is usually employed when trying to meet nationalist objectives.⁷² Writing about the British historical profession, he maintains that while British historians “are as committed to . . . liberty as anyone,” their personal loyalties do not preclude them “from criticizing its

⁷¹Eric Hobsbawm. *On History*, (New York: The New Press, 1997), p. 7.

⁷²Ibid., p. 273.

mythology.”⁷³ Counselling historians to function as “myth slayers,” Hobsbawm encourages his peers to expose historical invention parading as historical fact.

With their influential work, *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger had themselves already challenged the accepted view that all symbolic, social practices are deeply rooted in tradition. In the introduction to the volume of essays, Hobsbawm explained that ‘invented tradition’ is “taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”⁷⁴ Illustrating his point, he observes that the government chose to rebuild the British parliament in the nineteenth-century in the Gothic style in order to instill a sense of political stability and emphasize ties to the past. In some instances however, there is no past record to turn to legitimate the claim to power or authority. In this situation “even historic continuity had to be invented . . . by creating an ancient past beyond effective historical continuity, either by semi-fiction or by forgery.”⁷⁵ In either case, however, it is key that the invented tradition impart a feeling of invariance and formality. As a fixed social practice, tradition functions to instill confidence and reassurance. Therefore, according to Hobsbawm, invented tradition is likely “to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Tradition,” *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 1.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 7.

destroys the social patterns for which the 'old' traditions had been designed."⁷⁶ An essay in the collection by historian David Cannadine on the British monarchy demonstrates this point.

Noting that "between the late 1870s and 1914 . . . there was a fundamental change in the public image of the British monarchy," Cannadine explains that monarchical ritual "hitherto inept, private and of limited appeal, became splendid, public and popular."⁷⁷ The shift paralleled the transformation of the monarch's role as Head of State to more of a figure head, who was no longer actively involved in the business of the government. According to Cannadine, "as the real power of the monarchy waned, the way was open for it to become the centre of grand ceremonial once more."⁷⁸ Hastening the change was the development of the popular press. With hundreds of thousands of subscribers, the national dailies reported regularly on the royal family and covered all the royal ceremonies for their interested readers. Later, radio too captured the pomp and circumstance of royal life.

Cannadine observes that from 1914 to 1953, Britain experienced massive social and cultural changes, at the same time that the "great royal rituals," like the Armistice Day ceremonial, and the royal Christmas broadcasts, helped to conflate the royal family with "individual families and the national family."⁷⁹ "Emerging as the embodiment of

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁷David Cannadine, "The British Monarchy, c. 1820-1977," *The Invention of Tradition*, p. 120.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 120-21.

⁷⁹Ibid., 140.

consensus, stability and community,"⁸⁰ the monarchy instilled a sense of security, continuity and the preservation of tradition, during a period when the status quo was under attack. While largely an 'invented tradition,' it is, nonetheless, powerful, serving to sustain a feeling prestige and national pride, with British citizens deriving comfort in the knowledge that even if everything changes around them, they still have the monarchy.⁸¹

Cannadine's essay demonstrates, convincingly, that constructed traditions warrant 'de-construction,' and investigation, as they often reveal an organized effort to manage change and achieve political stability. According to Hobsbawm, the field is "highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the 'nation,' with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest."⁸² It is in this context of the 'invented tradition' that this study will explore the Centennial, considering the intentions versus the actual results achieved by organizers of the national event.

The 1967 Centennial celebrations were, according to Director of Public Relations Peter Aykroyd, designed with little thought as to why Canadians were celebrating.⁸³ In fact considerable thought was given as to why Canadians should celebrate Centennial.

⁸⁰Ibid., 140.

⁸¹In recent years, however, the credibility of the monarchy has been severely tested and the 'crown' tarnished. Ironically, the public's insatiable interest in the royal family, resulted in aggressive press coverage of the seamier, private side royal family life. Reporting on royal divorce, separation and infidelity, the fairytale image of the monarchy was seriously compromised, with the royals emerging as just one more dysfunctional late twentieth century family.

⁸²Hobsbawm, "Introduction," p. 13.

⁸³ Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 2.

Conventional wisdom and time-honoured tradition demanded that Canadians mark the occasion with an extraordinary national event. But, in addition, both government and representatives from the volunteer sector recognized that Centennial provided a unique opportunity for Canadians to collectively rededicate themselves to their country and strengthen national unity. Always more than just a birthday party, Centennial was a political statement about what it meant to be Canadian. In an effort to understand the success of Centennial, this study will explore why Canadians celebrated during 1967 and examine what the anniversary meant to people across the country. Adopting a cultural studies approach, the study will consider what British culturalist Raymond Williams called "our common life together," applying an interdisciplinary methodology that has been described as "actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary."⁸⁴

While the field of cultural studies defies easy and precise definition, it does not imply an "anything goes" approach. As if to reassure conventional scholars, Stuart Hall, former director of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, confirmed that "cultural studies cannot be just anything."⁸⁵ Designed to overcome "the alienation of the disciplines from each other,"⁸⁶ cultural studies was conceived with the hope that scholars would see merit in embracing more inclusive, flexible methods. While traditionally it has been about the examination of cultural practices and how they exemplify relationships of power, cultural studies does not favour one distinct

⁸⁴L. Grossberg et al., *Cultural Studies*, (New York: 1992), p. 2.

⁸⁵Mark Fortier, "From Cultural Studies to Cultural Studies in Canada: A Review Essay," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 64 (Fall 1995): 557.

⁸⁶Brantlinger, *Crusoes's Footprints*, p. 62.

methodological approach; rather, scholars draw “from whatever fields are necessary to produce the knowledge required for a particular project.”⁸⁷ Always contextual, the ‘method’ encourages scholars to adopt a variety of theoretical approaches when considering their particular subject. This ‘frees’ researchers to employ a theoretical framework that best suits the material: Marxism, Feminism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, and deconstruction.⁸⁸ Described by Lynn Hunt as the “new cultural history,” researchers draw heavily from the fields of anthropology, sociology and linguistic theory, adopting a technique commonly characterized as *bricolage*.⁸⁹ In final analysis, however, cultural studies is “never merely a theoretical practice, . . . [as it] offers a bridge between theory and material culture.”⁹⁰

While it can trace its institutional roots to Britain and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, the movement soon gained popularity, eventually spreading to other countries. Given its contextual nature, however, many scholars argue that the socio-economic and cultural circumstances of a particular nation contributes to

⁸⁷Grossberg, *Cultural Studies*, p. 2.

⁸⁸In the early phase a great deal of emphasis was placed on literary criticism. This was largely due to influence of British literary critic F.R. Leavis. As the founder and editor of the journal *Scrutiny* and the author of a number of influential works, Leavis inspired many Cambridge students to consider the worth of close textual analysis. This new approach was championed by supporters of cultural studies, but, unlike the Leavisites, they did not restrict themselves to studying only the “classics”. People like British culturalist Raymond Williams recognized that scholars could profit from applying the method of close textual analysis to “popular” texts as it was felt this would result in substantial insight into daily life. Thus, the theory was incorporated into the newly emerging field. While popular in the early period, this literary connection is now no longer the central focus of the cultural studies movement.

⁸⁹Grossberg, *Cultural Studies*, p. 2. *Bricolage* describes a “choice of practice . . . that is pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflective.”

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 6.

the type of work produced. Recognizing that the “term cultural studies has assumed various distinctive national forms,”⁹¹ scholars acknowledge that “cultural studies in Canada cannot be the same as cultural studies in Britain or the U.S.; nor would it be a good thing if it were.”⁹² Writing that “cultural studies in the narrow sense has a pre-history of cultural studies in a larger sense: localized (political) critiques of a culture from within,”⁹³ one Canadian scholar observed, however, that, within the Canadian context, the movement can be traced back to the influential work of Harold Innis, C.B. McPherson, Marshall McLuhan, and Northrop Frye,⁹⁴ and the emerging field of communications.

While in a 1995 review essay Mark Fortier lamented that “a substantial body of cultural studies collections specifically related to Canadian concerns has yet to materialize,”⁹⁵ the Canadian cultural studies ‘movement’ has found expression in a myriad of forums. With the “pioneering undergraduate program at Trent University,” the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and the Centre for Research on Culture and Society at Carleton University, the field continues to gain popularity in English Canada.⁹⁶ In Quebec there is a “well-developed tradition of cultural sociology - one with a strong critical and nationalist orientation,” and the province “boasts a large research institute.”⁹⁷

⁹¹Morrow, “Introduction,” 154.

⁹²Fortier, “From Cultural Studies . . .,” p. 558.

⁹³Ibid, 559.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Fortier, 561.

⁹⁶Morrow, 164.

⁹⁷Raymond A. Morrow, “Introduction: the challenge of cultural studies to Canadian sociology and anthropology,” *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 28 (1991): 155.

In addition to formal programs offered by institutions, however, the Canadian cultural studies movement is evident in “numerous feminist journals,” and other publications in the humanities and literary field.⁹⁸ People, it seems, are ‘doing’ cultural studies in Canada, particularly in the fields of anthropology, sociology and literary theory, and, increasingly, history. This is not to suggest, however, that there is one, unifying Canadian school, as

[e]ven when cultural studies is identified with a specific national tradition like British cultural studies, it remains a diverse and often contentious enterprise, encompassing different positions and trajectories in specific contexts, addressing many questions.⁹⁹

Accordingly, Raymond A. Morrow maintains that “Canadian scholars are in a unique position to appropriate the best of theory and research from a wide variety of national disciplinary traditions.”¹⁰⁰ One such example is the work of Canadian scholar Mariana Valverde.

In her work *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*,¹⁰¹ Valverde examines the social purity movement and how it shaped contemporary visions of class, gender and race, and, by employing analytical tools employed in the field of cultural sociology, she challenges the traditional role of historian as a gatherer of facts. Suggesting that “what one should

⁹⁸Ibid., 165. *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* and *Borderlines*, are two English Canada publications that play a role in promoting cultural studies. In French Canada *Sociologie et Sociétés* and *Culture*, published by the Institut québécoise de recherche sur la culture, are important vehicles for the field of cultural studies.

⁹⁹Grossberg, *Cultural Studies*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 165. Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture

¹⁰¹Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991).

study. . . is the way various discourses - legal, political, familial - are put together,"¹⁰² she encourages historians to apply a wide variety of techniques when "doing" history. In addition to conventional documents, she recommends scholars should examine non-traditional historical "texts," such as visual images. She maintains "one of [her] aims is to demonstrate that discourse analysis and some tools from literary theory (for instance, the study of rhetorical tropes) can indeed be used to shed light on historical processes"¹⁰³

Crucial to her promotion of "unconventional" method, is her belief that historians can not rely on texts for "the truth." In her opinion, language is not an autonomous realm; rather, it is part of a particular social, political and cultural milieu. Therefore, "while words do not make social relations, they are more than simply mirrors of reality and discourses must be granted a measure of instrumentality in those relations."¹⁰⁴ To this end, Valverde adopts an approach best exemplified in the work of French scholar Michel Foucault, modifying the method, however, to suit her own objectives.

In her investigation into the role of discourse in shaping relations at the turn of the century, Valverde draws heavily on semiology, examining the discourse of purity as exemplified in advertisements placed in the popular press by reform organizations. This study of the Centennial will employ a similar approach, with an emphasis on the discourse of national unity and national identity, as featured in promotional and education

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰⁴Cynthia R. Comacchio, "Review: The Provincial Welfare State: Social Policy in Ontario." *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 22 (Spring 1992): 153.

material, and expressed in official events and projects.¹⁰⁵ Like Valverde's work, however, the study aims to utilize elements of semiotic theory in moderation, thereby not losing sight of the primary objective to communicate how Centennial promoted themes of national identity and unity. Principal to the study is the cultural studies conviction that theory should not displace historical materialism, but, rather, supplement it. In an effort to account for her distinctive methodological style, Valverde observes that "the mix of methods and languages is the outcome of my intent to find adequate tools for understanding and explaining texts read in archives."¹⁰⁶ Remarking that "a more elegant and consistent book possibly could have been produced if [she had] confined [herself] to one or two theoretical tool kits and had written a text that fit more neatly into an already established category of academic work,"¹⁰⁷ Valverde chose instead to recognize the "messiness" of doing history. By adopting an imaginative approach to her material, Valverde produces an exciting and thought-provoking study, a synthesis of existing theoretical models. This thesis will also employ a variety of methodological approaches and apply a flexible model of historical analysis to the topic of the Canadian Centennial.

In addition to using to non-traditional "texts," this thesis will also exercise a

¹⁰⁵This semiotic approach owes much to the work of French semiotician Roland Barthes, who maintained that bourgeois ideology functioned to "normalize" social relations. This 'naturalization' implies that society is ahistorical and, therefore, can not be studied. Promoting the view that social relations are not constructed, Barthes argued that bourgeois ideology rejects historical specificity. With his controversial work *Mythologies*, he sought to debunk the bourgeois myth of a "natural state." Writing a series of eclectic commentaries on society, his work demystifies notions of universality that deny individual differences and demonstrate how culture and society is 'constructed.'

¹⁰⁶Valverde, p. 13.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

comparative model of analysis, as this method can lead to a better appreciation of the “symbolic repertoires of meanings and values,” unique to each nation.¹⁰⁸ This approach is best exemplified in a recently published comparative study of American and Australian national anniversaries written by American sociologist Lyn Spillman.

In her comprehensive study of Australian and American centennials and bicentennials, Spillman explores how “two similar sets of people with many similar experiences formed and reformed their different nationalities.”¹⁰⁹ She compares how each nation forged a sense of national identity through planning and implementing these large national rituals and considers a series of questions about why people were celebrating, how they chose to mark the historic events and what the celebrations revealed about people’s understanding of national identity. Like Valverde, Spillman examines a wide range of historical “texts” in an attempt to uncover the layers of meaning concealed within and develop a fuller understanding of the historical process.

Observing that while the “shared experience of language, ethnicity, land, religion, or history sometimes seems to make a self-evident symbolic grounding for national communities,” she remarks that, in reality, “themes expressing national identities are volatile and various.”¹¹⁰ and nationality, like gender, can be expressed in many ways and interpreted to mean a variety of things. Like historian Eric Hobsbawm, Spillman

¹⁰⁸Lyn Spillman, *Nation & Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 6.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 3.

recognizes “national identification . . . can change and shift in time ,”¹¹¹ and, because it is culturally mediated, nationality tends to articulate the vision and ethos of the dominant social group of any particular period in history. For example, according to Spillman, during the nineteenth century “at the same time as nationalist consciousness became a basis for political opposition, public festivals organized by state elites became more and more common as tools to mobilize and constitute national identity as a ground for legitimate state authority.”¹¹² In the case of the 1876 American centennial, “organizers . . . were not on secure ground in trying to express an established national tradition in the United States . . . [because] while they were celebrating a century of formal sovereignty, this only served to emphasize that there was no simple association between political sovereignty and national identity.”¹¹³ Ironically, like the Canadian example in 1967, the celebration seemed to emphasize existing regional loyalties and “long-lasting historical ambiguities.”¹¹⁴ In the case of the United States, the concept of national unity and the vision of one national identity, was severely tested by the reality of a nation culturally and politically divided between north and south.¹¹⁵ In Canada organizers of the 1967 event

¹¹¹E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth & Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 10. Hobsbawm applied a definition of nationalism explored by Ernest Gellener in *Nations and Nationalism*. Believing that “political and national unity should be congruent,” Hobsbawm “did not regard the “nation” as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity,” arguing that nationality belonged “exclusively to a particular, and historically recent, period, . . . [emphasizing] the element of artefact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making of nations.”

¹¹²Spillman, *Nation & Commemoration*, p. 21.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

confronted similar challenges, but in respect to the difficulty of reconciling outstanding “disputes” between French and English Canada. Further complicating the Canadian situation, however, was the difficulty organizers face trying to promote the vision of a shared national identity given that an emerging youth culture, womens’ movement and increasing aboriginal politicization seriously challenged the status quo.

According to David Kertzer, “it is the very ambiguity of the symbols employed in ritual action that makes ritual useful in fostering solidarity without consensus.”¹¹⁶ The success of national celebrations, then, rests largely on the ability of organizers to fashion events that can stand up to a broad range of interpretations. This was certainly the case in the example of Centennial. While the event highlighted the official themes of national identity and unity, participants were encouraged to express their own unique view of Canada in a highly personal way. Organizers walked a fine line, as they tried to manage the event in an effort to realize the official mandate, while, at the same time, trying not to impose a particular vision or objective on Canadians. Spillman recognizes this tension in the U.S. and Australian celebrations as well and concludes that to “understand the production of national identity in these large, diffuse and transient events . . . [it is necessary to view them] as productions by self-constituted ‘cultural centres. . .,’ cultural-centres which invited the participation and affirmation of their peripheries.”¹¹⁷ It is an invitation, however, that demands a certain conformity of purpose as, according to Edward Shils, “[these] cultural centres . . . are characterized by their attachment to and

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 34.

promotion of a central value system.”¹¹⁸ Designed to “ground” people during what are often periods of social flux or transition, organizers try to avoid overt reference to anything potentially controversial or provocative, as they are preoccupied with instilling a sense of shared values and emphasizing common bonds. Centennial did not deviate from this paradigm, as organizers worked to preserve the existing social order and promote a vision of a unified, strong nation.

In her cultural analysis of the national celebrations in the U.S. and Australia, Spillman, like Valverde, adopts a flexible approach to her material, a “style” resembling the *bricolage* treatment favoured by cultural studies. Utilizing Geertz’s theory of the “thick description,” she explores the symbolic repertoire of spectacle and the commemorative process, but, in an effort to better understand the process of cultural production, she is careful to contextualize the events. Arguing that if her work is to communicate how and why the events were successful, it is important to “understand the broader discursive field within which the symbols were organized and became meaningful.”¹¹⁹ Spillman considers several questions that are applicable to the example of the Canadian Centennial. For example, by exploring who produced these national events and for whom and what was emphasized versus what was omitted, she renders a comprehensive picture of each country’s distinct expression of national identity over a period of two hundred years. Within the context of the Centennial, this study will employ a similar approach, considering the intentions of the organizers who designed and

¹¹⁸Edward Shils, as quoted in Spillman, p. 35.

¹¹⁹Spillman, *Nation & Commemoration*, p. 7.

promoted events and examine how and if they realized their objectives.

Interest in the phenomenon of national celebrations as examples of public ritual and spectacle increases and historians continue to explore the role it plays in helping to shape and better define national identity. The topic is, however, far from exhausted and warrants further attention and study. The Canadian Centennial, in particular, is long overdue for serious consideration, as, with few exceptions, existing accounts of the occasion take the form of personal reflections, anecdotal in nature, written by official participants. In his book, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, Peter Aykroyd remembers his years as Director of Public Relations and Information with the Centennial Commission. While the work provides important background information about the Commission and is a fine overview of the Centennial celebrations, it does not attempt to analyse Centennial. In his introductory chapter, however, Aykroyd does acknowledge the need for such a study. Pierre Berton's recent publication, while entertaining and informative, is rather uncritical and fails to explore in any great detail why and how Centennial was successful. Documenting accomplishments of the Government and Canadians in the years leading up to Centennial, this descriptive narrative promotes the view that the anniversary was a benchmark year, but fails to consider, critically, why this might have been the case. To date, there has been no comprehensive scholarly analysis of the Centennial celebrations of 1967. There has, however, been some preliminary work on how the Canadian government attempted to promote national unity during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1927.

In a recent edition of *Canadian Issues*, historian Robert Cupido explores how,

during the inter-war period, the Canadian government used the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation to

stimulate a new, pan-Canadian sense of national community and promote social and political cohesion by exploiting the power of public spectacle and appealing to a mythologised common history.¹²⁰

While not as comprehensive and logistically involved an event as Centennial, the Diamond Jubilee did strive to involve Canadians across the country, through an impressive “program of pageants, parades, concerts, athletic competitions, religious services, picnics, and essay contests.”¹²¹ Under the guidance of the Liberals, nationalist organizations, like the Canadian Club, searched for ways to respond to a transforming Canadian society that would promote a strong sense of Canadian identity and “foster social and political unity,” as well as “inculcate notions of civic loyalty and obligation . . . through the use of public commemorative rituals.”¹²² Part of a larger study for his doctoral dissertation, Cupido’s article considers how the government, “in alliance with services clubs, universities, literary and historical societies and other incubators of middle class patriotism,” planned and implemented the ambitious national event.¹²³ The article, while brief, examines the reasons behind the event, and provides an overview of government planning, with a condensed review of some of the programs and events

¹²⁰Robert Cupido, “‘Sixty Years of Canadian Progress’: The Diamond Jubilee and the Politics of Commemoration,” *Canadian Issues: Canadian Identity, Region Country, Nation*, eds. C. Andrews, W. Straw, J. Yvon Thériault, (Association of Canadian Studies: Montréal, 1998), p. 19.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid., 21.

¹²³Ibid.

organized.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King and the Liberals, “resorted to invention and elaboration of collective rituals in their efforts to mend the breach between Quebec and English Canada caused,” by the furor over conscription.¹²⁴ Similarly troubling for the government was the question of how to assimilate Canada’s growing immigrant population into “the mainstream of national life,” and also “exorcize the bogeys of labour and agrarian radicalism.”¹²⁵ The Diamond Jubilee of Confederation provided an opportunity for the government to promote a nationalist agenda and, through the “use of public commemorative rituals,” attempt to strengthen social and political unity.¹²⁶ Forty years later, organizers confronted many similar challenges and again chose to exploit the vehicle of a national celebration to inspire national pride.

As an inquiry into how celebrations promote national unity and identity, the research in this thesis demonstrates how Centennial organizers worked to promote the theme of unity over division in an effort to shape a distinct, but uniform, Canadian national identity. By exploring the national anniversary as a sociopolitical process that functioned to instill a sense of shared history and cultural pride, the study considers how organizers aspired to articulate a particular vision of “Canadianness” that advanced the existing social order during a period when long held traditions and established norms were increasingly challenged. The thesis examines how officials designed events that

¹²⁴Ibid., 21.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

generated a mood of excitement and prompted mass participation while also bolstering national pride and reinforcing political unity. While the objectives were not mutually exclusive, it was an ongoing challenge for organizers who were faced with the demanding task of developing programs and events that would appeal to a broad range of Canadian society. This work examines both traditional primary historical documents and non-traditional "texts." Sources consulted range from official reports, speeches, minutes, pamphlets, commemorative programs and promotional material, to films, documentaries, and public events like parades and pageants and festivals, and will include personal accounts. In addition to drawing on a substantial amount of archival material, the thesis also employs secondary sources that address the topics of nationalism, identity and public spectacle.

Chapter one traces the evolution of the Centennial "idea," following its evolution from the early stages as a modest concept initially proposed by members of the Canadian Association for Adult Education and supported by the Canadian Citizenship Council, to the creation of the Canadian Centenary Council, a volunteer group organized to lobby government to prepare for 1967. Finally, with the institution of the Centennial Commission in the early 1960s, the Government got involved officially and, by 1963, planning began in earnest. This first chapter also explores the mandate of the Commission and follows the development of Centennial, chronicling the ups and downs encountered by officials as they worked to organize an extraordinary national event. Serving as an overview of the Commission and the anniversary, it provides necessary background and historical context. The thesis then shifts to a cultural studies analysis of

Centennial and illustrates how the event, following the mega-celebration model, advanced a national unity agenda.

Subsequent chapters examine a variety of topics, ranging from the EXPO 67 phenomenon to an analysis of working drafts and final, revised versions of official promotional material and speeches. In an effort to understand how the Centennial Commission attempted to “frame” the national event, the thesis also reviews official projects, for example the Confederation Train and Caravan program, considering how Canadian history was “packaged” and presented, ready for public consumption. In addition to exploring how promotional material and official programs realized the government objective of improving national unity and identity, the thesis also considers how the Commission manipulated the medium of film in an effort to publicize the year-long event throughout the country, thereby stimulating interest and convincing Canadians to participate.

Centennial Fever, a film about the Centennial activities planned for the community of St. Paul, in northern Alberta, served both as a promotional tool, designed to generate excitement for the upcoming event, and a teaching aid, to help Canadians plan and prepare for Centennial. While not enormously successful at the box-office, the documentary nevertheless provides an opportunity to consider official strategy and goals, as articulated in the film. By tracing the progression of the project through several drafts of the proposed script and by studying the ongoing correspondence between Commissioner John Fisher, the NFB production staff and Commission staff, the thesis demonstrates how official organizers tried to shape the final product and communicate a

strong message of national unity. The chapter, adopting a comparative method, also considers the example of *Helicopter Canada*, another promotional film commissioned by the government. Nominated for an American Academy Award, it was designed to appeal to both Canadians and non-Canadians. Offering a bird's eye view of Canada, the film celebrated the physical beauty of the country and, through emphasizing both the urban and rural landscape, expressed a vision of Canadian national identity that many people believed had been fashioned, in large part, by the land. While expressing two different perspectives of the Canadian experience, both films explored a common theme - the exploration of national identity and Canadian unity - and are, therefore, valuable to the study.

Described by some participants as a period of national solidarity when Canadians joined together to celebrate the anniversary of Confederation, popular opinion held that Centennial signalled a new beginning for the country. This study explores this accepted view, considering if there was in fact a general consensus as to what Canadians were celebrating in 1967 and whether the event did cultivate a sense of national identity and reinforce national unity. Moreover, as mega-celebrations like Centennial tend to express and promote the ideals of mainstream society, the study will consider whether there was room for unofficial expressions of Canadian identity. For example, were Canadians at the local, grass roots level, able to articulate a more personal, informal vision of Canada and citizenship. Also, given the propensity for mega-events to champion ideals and values that promote the concept of a unified nation where citizens share a common vision and share values, the study will consider how officials involved Canadians who did not

adhere to this view and who were largely ambivalent about the planned national anniversary. In particular, the study explores how organizers worked to generate enthusiasm in Quebec and in the Canadian aboriginal community for an event that, for the most part, was received with indifference. Subsequent chapters will continue with this line of inquiry, exploring the gap between the intent of the planners and eventual execution of programs and projects, considering whether organizers succeeded in realizing their objectives. Finally, the thesis explores the legacy of the Centennial year, its impact on Canadian society and the ramifications for the future.

According to scholar Frank Manning, celebrations “are an important, often crucial means through which people proclaim their identity and fashion their sense of purpose.”¹²⁷ Popular opinion suggests that, for many participants, Centennial functioned in this way. Characterized as an extraordinary success, Centennial and its crowning glory, EXPO 67, operated as a catalyst, unifying Canadians and launching them into what promised to be an exciting and prosperous future.

¹²⁷Frank E. Manning, *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performances*, (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Press, 1987), p. x.

CHAPTER ONE

Planning the Party of the Century

“ . . . the celebration of the Centennial of Confederation will be the most monumental, super-colossal, star-spangled, gold-plated, blue ribbon event ever conceived by the mind of man.”

C. Clyde Batten, Senior Public Relations Officer

Centennial was on the minds of Canadians as early as 1956.¹ In a memo to the President of the Canadian Citizenship Council, the Executive Director, John P. Kidd, proposed the Council advance a five thousand dollar grant toward “exploratory planning of adequate national and local celebrations of centennial year 1967,” noting that “ten years in advance is not too soon.”² Later, in the spring of 1957, at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), Dr. Freda Waldon, Chief Librarian of the Hamilton Public Library and former President of the Canadian Library Association, reminded members that the hundredth anniversary of Confederation was only ten short years away.³ Furthermore, remarking there was little time left, she

¹When the Bill to establish the National Centennial Administration was introduced in Parliament in 1961, Mr. Herridge, NDP member for Kootney West, remarked that the “first time it was brought to the attention of any large group was at the Ontario provincial convention of the C.C.F. in 1950.” Mr. Herridge noted that Stanley Knowles, the honourable member for Winnipeg North, “placed on the order paper a resolution dealing with [the] subject, . . .” and the item was reintroduced several times. Mr. Herridge then read the lengthy resolution to the House, for the record. *Hansard*, 18 Sept. 1961, p. 8470.

²National Archives of Canada [NA], Records of the Canadian Citizenship Council, MG 28 I 85, Vol. 14, File: Kidd, John P. - Memos to President of CCC - 1956-1959, “Memo to the President, 11 September, 1956.”

³NA, H.M. Wallis Papers, MG 31 D21, Vol. 9, “Letter from H.M. Wallis to Norman Mackenzie, Sept. 24, 1965.”

observed it would pose a challenge to plan and organize a national event of such considerable magnitude and recommended the issue be given immediate consideration. Recognizing action was required, Directors of the CAAE agreed to enter into discussions with representatives from other organizations.

Subsequently, the Canadian Citizenship Council, joining forces with the Canadian Association for Adult Education, hosted a conference in Toronto to consider how to proceed with planning for the upcoming anniversary. The one-day conference, attended by thirty-five delegates representing thirty-two primarily non-governmental organizations, functioned largely as a “brain-storming session,” with participants “urged . . . to let their imagination run riot.”⁴ Following a series of “idea sessions,” participants announced Centennial offered Canadians a unique opportunity to “correct . . . social deficits and shortcomings” and, “with the utmost sincerity and humility . . . determine where Canada is going as a nation and a people.”⁵ They recommended eliminating discriminatory immigration restrictions, developing a “Bill of Rights” as part of the Constitution, and implementing legislation “to do away with delegated arbitrary powers of Ministers, civil servants, special boards and commissions.”⁶ Finally, delegates recommended that the Citizenship Council and the Association for Adult Education “undertake an inventory of what organizations” were doing in preparation for Centennial, and present the results at a

⁴NA. MG 28 I 85, Vol. 29, File: Canadian Centenary Council (1958-1960) - “Planning Ahead for Canada’s Centenary: Report of one day Conference of May 6th, 1959,” p. 1.

⁵Ibid., pp. 3 - 4.

⁶Ibid. Interestingly, the agenda developed by the CAAE and Canadian Citizenship Council was not ultimately adopted by the Centennial Commission. Instead, the government chose to downplay overtly political messages.

conference arranged for early in 1960.⁷

At the second conference delegates were invited to “[move] a few steps forward from where [they] had left off at Toronto,” and try to develop more specific Centennial plans.⁸ Organizers reported that 16 percent of the groups polled “indicated they had already made some progress in planning” and that “[a]n additional twenty-eight percent reported that the matter would be placed before their Board or Annual Convention at their next meeting.”⁹ This information was, no doubt, reassuring to organizers who had, by this time, invested considerable time and effort in promoting the Centennial message. At this second meeting, delegates also considered, in some detail, a range of issues surrounding why and what Canadians would celebrate during the Centennial year. Participants claimed plans should be “both large . . . and small scale,” and that spontaneity should not be discouraged.¹⁰ Success of Centennial, according to some delegates, required “people at the grass roots be involved, not only as spectators and participants in events, but as far as possible, in the planning and execution also.”¹¹ Other people suggested plans “should involve children, to help them develop a sense of patriotism,”¹² and that “the Centenary should provide opportunities for new Canadians, as

⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁸NA, MG 31 D 21, Vol. 1, File: Canadian Centenary Council 1959 - 1960, “Planning Ahead for Canada’s Centenary: Feb. 11-12, 1960,” p. 14.

⁹Ibid. It is noteworthy, however, that at the time of the conference only 67 surveys out of 275 had been returned.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 14

¹¹Ibid., p. 15.

¹²Ibid., p. 14.

well as native born, to learn about Canada's history."¹³ Finally, attendees declared "[c]entenary should provide opportunities of great variety to extend and strengthen good relationships between French-speaking and English-speaking Canada."¹⁴

At the close of the 1960 conference, organizers agreed that a national non-governmental body should be created to help stimulate ideas and provide information and assistance for groups preparing for the national anniversary. An Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by H.M. Wallis, President of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, was struck to "prepare . . . a draft constitution or structure of a national non-governmental centennial body . . . [and] . . . to call a third conference . . . for the purpose of establishing such a national body."¹⁵ In May of 1960, the Canadian Centenary Council was formally constituted and an Executive was elected. According to their Constitution, the Council was directed to "stimulate interest in appropriate observances and celebrations of the anniversary of Confederation, . . . act as a national clearing house and information centre and . . . provide planning facilities and services."¹⁶ The organization was also instructed to "cooperate with Government and other bodies."¹⁷ This last directive, however, proved to be more of a challenge, as the government was, in the early stages, slow to get on side.

In November 1959 Prime Minister Diefenbaker had reassured Canadians that

¹³Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁶NA, MG 31 D21, Vol. 10, File: CCC Papers - January-May, 1966 - Notes for discussion of the role and functions of the CCC - Draft: 2/11/66, "The Development of Goals & Functions."

¹⁷Ibid.

planning for Centennial would “start without delay,” and would highlight “achievements of the past and . . . an even greater future.”¹⁸ Four months later, Solicitor General Leon Balcer attended the Centenary Council’s February 1960 meeting, but while his remarks were long on praise for the Council, they were short on specifics about how the government itself was preparing for 1967. Council members were encouraged to learn that, according to the Solicitor-General, Mr. Diefenbaker was “deeply interested” in Centennial, and felt that the Council was “starting on the right foot.”¹⁹ Delegates were also pleased to hear that, prior to the Council meeting, representatives of the federal and provincial governments had met to discuss planning for Centennial.²⁰ However, when questioned as to whether the federal-provincial committee was permanent, Balcer was evasive, responding that “future needs and events might make for some changes in the present structure.”²¹ He reassured Council members, however, that the joint federal-provincial committee welcomed ideas and suggestions from organizations like the Council, and congratulated delegates on their initiative. Soon after, the Conservatives provided twenty-five thousand dollars in financial assistance to the newly formed Centenary Council. It appeared to be a promising beginning, but it was not until fall of the following year that the Conservatives finally introduced legislation respecting the observance of the Centennial of Confederation.

¹⁸*Ottawa Citizen*, 24 November 1959.

¹⁹NA, MG 31 D 21, Vol. 1, File: Canadian Centenary Council 1959 - 1960, “Planning Ahead for Canada’s Centenary: Feb. 11-12, 1960,” p. 13.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*

Speaking in the House in September 1961, Prime Minister Diefenbaker moved that the House consider a resolution to “provide for the constitution of a corporation to be called the national centennial administration.”²² The resolution also made provision “for the establishment of a national conference on Canada’s centennial,” as well as any “financial provisions as may be necessary.”²³ Describing the resolution as a “prelude to a bill to establish the machinery” that would enable the government to plan for Canada’s centennial, Diefenbaker remarked that the bill would have “two principal divisions.”²⁴ In addition to the Centennial Administration, which would “assume responsibility for the planning and execution of programs,” Diefenbaker reported the legislation would also make provision for a National Conference on the Centennial.²⁵ Unlike the administrative body, the National Conference would function as a “forum where the centennial [could] be viewed and discussed as a whole by government and non-governmental representatives.”²⁶ Following considerable discussion, at which time every party in the House supported the proposed resolution, Diefenbaker “moved for leave to introduce Bill no. C-127 respecting the observance of the centennial of confederation in Canada.”²⁷ The motion was accepted and the bill was read a first time; on September 29th, 1961, the bill received Royal Assent and was proclaimed law.

The National Conference on the Centennial of Confederation, “a virtual clone of

²²*Hansard*, 18 September 1961, p. 8465.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 8467.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 8482.

the Canadian Centenary Council,” was formally convened in 1962.²⁸ As a non-administrative body made up of four provincial representatives from every province,²⁹ the organization was designed to provide “a means of consultation between the federal government and the governments of the provinces in matters relating to the centennial.”³⁰ The committee did not wield any real authority to implement recommendations and, as an advisory body, was described by one observer as reactive rather than proactive.³¹ Without clearly defined objectives and the power to make decisions, the group was not a particularly effective organizational tool.³² It was a source of frustration to Centenary Council appointees who, eager to work cooperatively with the government, were troubled by what they perceived to be government inaction.

At the 1962 annual convention of the Canadian Tourist Association, Robbins Elliott, a Centenary Council Director and Chairman of the Program Research Committee, remarked that he was “not encouraged about the outlook, with only 50 months remaining to develop a program.”³³ Local media echoed Elliott’s concerns, criticising the government for not having appointed a commissioner or deputy. Noting that “planning

²⁸Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 45. Many Centenary Council members were appointed to the Conference.

²⁹Provincial members included a Minister, a Deputy Minister and two additional representatives, with remaining members chosen from across Canada.

³⁰*Hansard*, 18 September 1961, p. 8467.

³¹Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 64.

³²Conference members met only twice a year, and, as Centennial approached, their role was limited largely to endorsing Centennial plans that were already underway across the country. In this way, it served more as a means to make sure everybody was “on side,” and actively organizing for the national celebration.

³³NA, MG 28 I 70 Vol. 4, File: 31, Canadian Centenary Annual Mtg., 1963, “Editorial, Centenary Action Necessary Now.”

[seemed] to be at a standstill,” the editorial suggested that “because of the absence of guidance, leadership and stimulus from Ottawa, only two provincial governments [had] enacted enabling legislation.”³⁴ The journalist urged the federal government to “appoint the required officials and establish a co-ordinated overall plan with which and in which all communities from the Atlantic to the Pacific [could] participate,”³⁵ a course of action favoured by the Centenary Council.

Subsequently, Elliott wrote a personal, confidential letter to Lester Pearson, then leader of the Official Opposition, alerting him to the consequences of government inaction. Elliott wrote that when, in the fall of 1961, Prime Minister Diefenbaker had introduced the resolution in the House calling for the establishment of a national centennial administration and a centennial conference, the Council had been optimistic that planning would begin in earnest, as all parties had declared their support.³⁶ Disappointed, he noted that “the high hopes which were expressed during the debate leading up to the approval of the Canadian Centennial Act in 1961 have not been realized because of the Federal Government’s inability to establish a National Centennial Administration capable of providing leadership to the Provincial Governments and to the municipalities.”³⁷ In his view, the time had come for “specific protest on the part of Her Majesty’s Royal Opposition,” and Elliott offered “any help in providing information or

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶NA, MG 28 I 70, Vol. 4, File: 31, Canadian Centenary Annual General Meeting, 1963, Letter to L.B. Pearson from R. Elliott, Nov. 15, 1962.

³⁷Ibid.

clarification regarding centenary planning."³⁸

The Council held the view that government should develop and initiate projects, and the Centenary Council, as an umbrella group designed to play an advisory role, would coordinate Centennial efforts of members of the business and volunteer sectors. This position was expressed publicly by the President of the Association for Adult Education, Senator Donald Cameron, in a speech to the Senate in 1960. Calling on the government to establish a Commission to oversee the planning and implementation of the Centennial, Senator Cameron maintained that "the Centennial [would] not reach its full potential unless some central agency, representative of the entire nation, [could] encourage every citizen and every community to mobilize its resources of imagination, talent and funds to make the Centennial a living memorial for everyone in the community."³⁹

The 1961 *Centennial Act* provided for the appointment of a Centennial Administration that was instructed to "promote interest in, and to plan and implement programmes and projects relating to the Centennial of Confederation in Canada."⁴⁰ This was just the sort of governmental body that the Centenary Council supported. Unfortunately, in the beginning little substantial action was taken to prepare for the historic milestone and, much to the chagrin of Council members, planning in the early stages "evolved at a snail's pace."⁴¹ The Act "remained a dead letter for over a year."

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹*Hansard*, 30 March 1960, p. 458.

⁴⁰*An Act Respecting the Observance of the Centennial of Confederation in Canada*.

⁴¹Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 41.

with Diefenbaker undecided as to whom he should appoint Commissioner.⁴² Eventually, however, Diefenbaker approached John Fisher in late 1961, asking him whether he would consider serving as Centennial Commissioner. Later, in January of 1963, John Fisher was finally officially appointed to the position of Centennial Commissioner.⁴³

Most Canadians were already familiar with Fisher and heartily endorsed the appointment. Born in Nova Scotia in 1912, John Wiggins Fisher had a proven family pedigree. In addition to having descended from United Empire Loyalists, Fisher's great Uncle Charles was reputed to have "helped chart Canada's future at the 1864 Charlottetown Conference."⁴⁴ Fisher's family owned & operated the Enterprise Foundry in Sackville, New Brunswick, where they manufactured Enterprise kitchen stoves, a central feature of many Canadian homes. In 1931, during the depression Fisher, unlike many young Canadian men, was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to pursue his education at Mount Allison University. Later, he enrolled in the Law program at Dalhousie. Rather than practice law, however, Fisher began writing and broadcasting for a local radio program, and by 1936, with the inauguration of the CBC, Fisher was hired as a freelance broadcaster. He enjoyed increasing popularity and, after World War II, was transferred from Halifax to CBC Toronto. By the early 1940s, Fisher was broadcasting

⁴²Ibid., p. 48.

⁴³Fisher was named a special assistant to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, and given the task of writing speeches for the Prime Minister. It was an interim position, as Fisher was waiting for the Order-in-Council to pass appointing him Chairman of the newly established Centennial Commission. [Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p.49.]

⁴⁴Bill McNeil, *John Fisher*, (Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1983), p. 8.

the “John Fisher Reports” three times a week.⁴⁵ The program featured Fisher’s “Pride Builders,” brief vignettes of Canadian history that instilled national pride.⁴⁶

Given his media background and demonstrated national loyalty, Fisher seemed a natural choice for the position. However, according to Peter Aykroyd, Commission Director of Public Relations, while Fisher was without doubt a superb “front-man,” he was not an effective administrator or manager.⁴⁷ In her autobiography, written shortly after the Centennial year, Judy LaMarsh described Fisher as

[a]n untidy-looking man, [who] is warm, friendly, and outgoing; [but who] suffers from a lifetime of over patted ego and fear of the future.⁴⁸

By the summer of 1965, Fisher and Secretary of State, Maurice Lamontagne, were reported to be “hardly on speaking terms,” with Fisher reputedly staying in the position only out of a sense of loyalty.⁴⁹ At issue was Fisher’s belief that Lamontagne and Commission staff were undermining his authority. Senior staff, on the other hand, were increasingly frustrated by Fisher’s reluctance to delegate responsibility for projects. According to Judy LaMarsh, Lamontagne’s successor, Fisher “insisted on knowing everything and involving himself in details which he simply did not have time to

⁴⁵ Fisher received more than a 1000 requests annually to speak to local groups and service clubs. According to an article in *Macleans* magazine, Fisher was reputed to be the highest priced speaker in Canada at the time, commanding fees of up \$300.00 on the “Canadian banquet circuit.” *Macleans*, 18 May 1963, 1.

⁴⁶His reports were exceedingly popular with Canadians and it was not unusual for the CBC to receive 1500 letters per week addressed “Mr. Canada.”

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴⁸Judy LaMarsh, *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Ltd., 1968), p. 180.

⁴⁹“Pennell may get centennial job,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 24 July 1965, 53.

handle.”⁵⁰ Nevertheless, LaMarsh conceded that Fisher “did a superb job in the public aspect,” acknowledging that the Government was “lucky to have [him], and lucky that his whole life’s career had prepared him for Canada’s Centennial.”⁵¹

As envisioned by supporters and government officials, Centennial, would be one of the most ambitious celebrations ever organized by the government and, therefore, demanded considerable organization. This, of course, took time, something supporters felt was in short supply. By the close of 1962 no Commission positions had been staffed and official government planning was far from comprehensive.⁵² As Centennial year approached, there was growing concern that not enough was being done to ensure it would be a success. Delegates to the 1963 Centenary Council conference again expressed concern about the apparent lack of planning. An article in the *Montreal Gazette* quoted Tom Paterson, founder of the Stratford Festival and a Centenary Council delegate, as saying that “the planning for Canada’s 100th birthday was not a case of too little too late, [but] a case of nothing too late.”⁵³ Moreover, Paterson warned Canadians that “unless we stop talking and start doing something, Canada will be the laughing stock of the world in 1967.”⁵⁴ Vancouver-Burrard M.P. Ron Bassford accused Commissioner Fisher, as well as provincial and municipal governments of “passing the buck,” saying that “unless they stop it and get down to business there will not be any Centennial celebrations.”⁵⁵

⁵⁰LaMarsh, *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage*, p.176.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 180-1.

⁵²Fisher was officially appointed Commissioner in January 1963.

⁵³James Ferrabee, “Lack of Panning,” *Montreal Gazette*, 20 April 1963, p. 1.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵*Vancouver Sun*, 17 September 1963.

Also alarmed was a journalist from a small town Alberta paper who observed that “another year is just about finished and still there is little or nothing in the way of definite, concrete projects to mark Canada’s 100th birthday in 1967 - just three years in the future.”⁵⁶

While, according to the Council, the situation was desperate, the government was in fact slowly gearing up for the event. In February of 1963, Commissioner Fisher, with the help of Privy Council officers, began to staff the senior positions of the Centennial Commission. While he “was given . . . latitude in selecting his eight directors, . . . [he had] . . . no latitude in the appointment of a deputy commissioner.”⁵⁷ The Diefenbaker Cabinet, actively involved in the appointment, insisted that a Francophone Québécois be assigned to the position.⁵⁸ Initially, Québécois poet and scholar Robert Choquette was appointed First Deputy Commissioner. However, due to his lack of managerial and administrative experience, he was not prepared to meet the demands of the position and he left the Commission in 1964, taking a post as Consul-General of Canada in Bordeaux, France. His successor, Georges Gauthier, having worked previously as the Head of the Pay Research Bureau, a branch of the Treasury Board, brought with him the professional skills and expertise necessary to run a successful organization. Fisher and Gauthier, however, “heartily disliked one another . . . [and] . . . never operat[ed] as a team.”⁵⁹ Further complicating the situation was Fisher’s suspicion of French-Canadian interests.

⁵⁶ *Ponoka Herald*, 17 Dec. 1963.

⁵⁷ Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 52.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ LaMarsh, *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage*, p. 178.

Following Gauthier's appointment in 1964, the position title was changed from First Deputy Commissioner to Associate Commissioner, in an effort to reflect a more complimentary, egalitarian relationship between the two senior officers and emphasize a spirit of cooperation. This change annoyed Fisher, however, who, throughout his term, expressed his dissatisfaction with the process, often complaining that "he was not consulted or kept informed."⁶⁰ In March of 1963, Claude Gauthier, Correspondence Secretary in the Prime Minister's office, was appointed Commission Secretary. Shortly thereafter all the senior positions were filled and slowly, as planning progressed and more skilled people were needed, the Commission increased its staffing levels until by late 1966 there was a staff complement of 230. Nonetheless, some Centennial supporters still maintained planning for the national anniversary was not progressing fast enough.

It is perhaps not surprising that Centennial was considered a low priority by the Conservative government, as 1967 seemed far off and, with the exception of the enthusiasm demonstrated by the Centenary Council, ambivalence seemed to typify the mood of the public.⁶¹ Having introduced the bill respecting the observance of Centennial and appointed a Commissioner, it is likely the Conservatives considered that they had taken the first, necessary steps and demonstrated their commitment to the project. Reflecting on the matter later, one Centennial official suggested that "the federal

⁶⁰J.M. Bumsted, "The Birthday Party," p. 11.

⁶¹Speaking at a public lecture at the Vancouver Public Library (December 1998) on the topic of the upcoming Millennium, retired Director of Centennial Public Relations, Peter Aykroyd, remarked that, in the early years leading up to 1967, Canadians demonstrated little real interest in the national anniversary. According to Aykroyd, it was not until the Centennial year was imminent and official celebrations started that Centennial fever increased, with people actively planning their own personal events.

administration at the time . . . had no strong motivation to set up a structure for a celebration that would take place when they might no longer be in office.”⁶² In any case, the Conservative government was preoccupied with more immediate political concerns.

Historian Jack Granatstein characterized the 1960s as a decade of optimism when “post-war boom and expansion erased memories of the depressed 1930s,”⁶³ and Canada, an increasingly prosperous country, was considered a notable player on the “world stage.” International status was not realized, however, without paying a “price.” In the case of the government, the “cost” was the continued erosion of Canadian autonomy, with US based interests increasing economic control, and Washington demanding greater Canadian support of its cold-war policies. For the Canadian public, this meant adjusting to a rapidly transforming socio-political landscape. Anti-American feeling was on the rise and with it an increasingly defiant and proud nationalist sentiment. According to one Canadian historian, during this period, “[t]he country, instead of slipping quietly into the respectable stability befitting a centenarian, was having another identity crisis.”⁶⁴

Under the leadership of Diefenbaker, the Conservatives had capitalized on growing public dissatisfaction with the St. Laurent government, translating it into a political victory in the 1957 general election.⁶⁵ Promoting a policy of “One Canada, One

⁶²Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 42.

⁶³J.L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty & Innovation*, (The Canadian Centenary Series, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), p. 2.

⁶⁴Ramsay Cook, “Federalism, Nationalism and the Canadian Nation-State.” *The Maple Leaf Forever: Essays on Nationalism and Politics in Canada*, (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1977), p. 23.

⁶⁵As if to emphasize the public demand for change, Diefenbaker took the remarkable step of appointing Ellen Louks Fairclough of Hamilton to the position of Secretary of State, thereby

Nation,” and equal opportunity for everyone, the Tory message appealed to many Canadians who were looking for an alternative to years of Liberal administration. The Liberal defeat marked the first change in government since 1935, but while Diefenbaker had secured massive support in Ontario and the West, he had, nevertheless, to settle for a minority government. The Conservatives strengthened their political position in the 1958 general election, winning a solid majority with an unheard of two hundred and eight seats. The Liberals, by contrast, secured only forty-nine seats, the CCF eight, and the Social Credit none. While the “Chief” took power during a period of recession and embarked on a course of fiscal restraint, the party enjoyed the support of an increasing number of Canadians, and initiated an impressive legislative program.⁶⁶ Times seemed good and the future bright; by the early 1960s, however, the social and political tenor of the country had changed and “in spite of his achievements, Diefenbaker was losing popular support,” and the “‘vision’ on which he had campaigned . . . remained an apparition.”⁶⁷

The general election of 1962, as a gauge of public dissatisfaction, illustrated the government was not above reproach. While the Conservatives managed to maintain power, they did so with some difficulty, seeing their previously impressive numbers decline, while the Liberal party, under the guidance of Lester Pearson, St. Laurent’s successor, increased its presence in Parliament by fifty-one seats over the previous election. The Conservatives, it seemed, were vulnerable to changing public attitudes and

distinguishing her as the first woman to be appointed to the Cabinet in Canada.

⁶⁶J. Arthur Lower, *Canada: An Outline History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1991), p. 194.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 196.

expectations. One of the most difficult challenges encountered by Diefenbaker was the change taking place in Quebec, where the Quiet Revolution was radically transforming society.

Quebec nationalism was on the rise and the separatist cause was, for the first time, publicly proclaimed and promoted.⁶⁸ The early sixties, characterized as a period of civic terrorism, witnessed the nationalist movement turn from a protective to an aggressive stance.⁶⁹ Further complicating the situation was the fact that, in the view of one historian, Diefenbaker “was unable to understand Quebec.”⁷⁰ While the Prime Minister had appointed Leon Balcer as Solicitor General following the 1957 election, Balcer was the sole appointment from French Canada, and the position was considered a junior post. Even more problematic, however, was that Diefenbaker, who “believed as fervently in one leader as in one Canada,” had no Quebec lieutenant.⁷¹ As early as 1960 the displeasure of the Québécois M.P.s was apparent, with Minister Balcer remarking that he felt his role in the government had been reduced to asking “What about Quebec?” whenever major issues were before the Cabinet.⁷² At 18 per cent of the Tory Cabinet,

⁶⁸Blair Fraser, *The Search for Identity: Canada, 1945-1967*, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. 201.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 203. The most public and outspoken champion of Québec nationalism, the Front de Libération de Québec (FLQ), was founded in 1963. The situation escalated, and throughout 1963 a series of FLQ bombs exploded in mailboxes in Montreal in the predominantly English speaking neighbourhood of Westmount, sending a strong message to the Anglophone community, that they were the focus of separatist attention.

⁷⁰Lower, *Canada*, p. 196.

⁷¹John English, “The French Lieutenant in Federal Politics,” unpublished CHA/CPSA paper 1983, p. 3 as quoted in Granatstein, *Canada: 1957 - 1967*, p. 28.

⁷²Granatstein, *Canada 1957-67: The Years of Uncertainty & Innovation*, p. 39.

representation from Quebec had been reduced from the 25 per cent in the St. Laurent administration.⁷³ Advising Diefenbaker of the ramifications of his disregard for Quebec, the ministers from French Canada were “warning him of impending collapse” as early as 1960, remarking that “chief organizers are depressed and indifferent.”⁷⁴

In addition to the “Quebec problem,” the Conservative government found it increasingly difficult to make good on their promise of a Canadian economic boom, as they battled a recession and a growing rate of unemployment. According to Pearson, however, “the crucial blow to the Diefenbaker government was Douglas Harkness’s resignation as Minister of National Defence.”⁷⁵ This very public display of frustration, was proof for many observers that the government was seriously divided over defence policies and the use of nuclear weapons. Capitalizing on the opportunity, Pearson moved “that the government, because of lack of leadership, the breakdown of unity in Cabinet, and confusion and indecision in dealing with national and international problems, does not have the confidence of the Canadian people.”⁷⁶

On February 5, 1963 the government was defeated in the House of Commons in a non-confidence motion, and in the ensuing April election the Liberals regained power, albeit as a minority government. In an attempt to thwart the Separatist agenda, strengthen

⁷³Paul Tennant, “French Canadian Representation in the Canadian Cabinet: An Overview,” Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1970, p. 107 as quoted in Granatstein, *Canada*, p. 317.

⁷⁴Granatstein, *Canada 1957-67: The Years of Uncertainty & Innovation*, p. 39.

⁷⁵Pearson, L.B., *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*, Vol. 3 1857-1968, (Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 74.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 75.

public support and bolster national unity, the Grits focussed their attention on realizing their campaign promise of “cooperative federalism,” a policy that would, according to Pearson, quell the stormy provincial/federal waters and convey a spirit of good will and collaboration. Centennial proved to be a convenient tool, providing the new government the perfect vehicle to promote the Liberal message of unity and national identity.

In July of 1963, the newly elected Liberal Cabinet received a confidential memorandum from then President of the Privy Council, Maurice Lamontagne, which summarized federal goals and objectives for the centenary celebration first expressed at the National Committee on the Centennial of Confederation held in April, 1961.⁷⁷ Lamontagne proposed that Centennial should be a “time of national stocktaking and rededication for the future . . . [and] . . . should have a strong all-Canadian flavour, but should also have important provincial and local aspects.”⁷⁸ Supporting the National Committee objectives Commission officials recommend that every citizen should be involved. They also agreed that, while the historical significance of Centennial was important, “the celebrations should not reflect merely Confederation itself, or its period, but the entire range of Canada’s history,” thereby providing an opportunity to focus on the contributions made by people from “several races and many nationalities.”⁷⁹ This theme was not new.

⁷⁷NA, Records of the Canadian Centennial Commission, RG 69, Vol. 373, File: 4-3, Cabinet Papers, “Memo to Cabinet, July 23, 1963, Re: National Centennial Administration (Confidential).”

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

At the 1959 one-day conference hosted by the Canadian Citizenship Council and the Canadian Association for Adult Education, John Kidd had stated that “1967 was for all Canadians,” and that “the celebrations should reflect the kind and variety of people we are and have been.”⁸⁰ In addition he advised Canadians to “act and be ourselves,” cautioning against “[trying] to ape and be things we aren’t.”⁸¹ From the beginning, officials were sensitive to the demands placed on them to “be mindful of the diversity of cultures represented in Canada,”⁸² while also making “very special efforts to develop greater understanding and appreciation between the descendants of the two major founding races.”⁸³

Demonstrating their commitment to strengthen national unity by recognizing the “French fact,” the Liberals championed the principles of bilingualism and biculturalism.⁸⁴ Pearson and the Liberals were also willing “to make substantial concessions to Quebec in the interests of national unity.”⁸⁵ In the case of the up-coming Centennial celebrations, this policy of appeasement resulted in changing the name of the organizing body. The Centennial Act of 1961 had called for the organization of the National Centennial Administration. This, however, was problematic, as Quebec objected to the term “National,” arguing Confederation was a political, rather than a national event. In an

⁸⁰NA, MG 28 I 85, Vol. 29, File: Canadian Centenary Council, 1958-1960, “Planning Ahead for Canada’s Centenary: Report of one day Conference of May 6th, 1959,” p. 2.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 240.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 239.

effort to circumvent public criticism, then Secretary of State, Maurice Lamontagne, suggested the alternative of Centennial Commission and in 1963 the original act was amended to read the *Centennial of Canadian Confederation Act*. The incident hinted at difficulties that lay ahead for the Commission, as staff endeavoured to keep Quebec “on side.”

Convinced that national unity was “the major question facing Canada,”⁸⁶ the newly elected government pledged to protect the confederation and, in an effort to articulate a strong vision of Canadian identity and reinforce national unity, the Liberals aspired to provide Canadians with powerful national symbols that reflected a new nationalism.⁸⁷ While at the “close of the second World war nationalism was generally judged a conservative, even reactionary phenomenon, . . . [b]y the 1960s . . . the wheel had turned full circle, with nationalism once again viewed as it had been by 19th century liberals - as a force for progress and reform.”⁸⁸ The first national emblem to come under serious scrutiny was the flag.

The flag debate began in the House of Commons in June of 1964 and continued to September 11, 1964 when finally it was decided that a committee would be struck to review the matter and report back in six weeks. The objective was to have a new flag by Christmas of 1964. The Committee, composed of seven Liberals, five Conservatives, 1 NDP, 1 Cr ditistes and 1 member of the Social Credit, met on September 17, 1964. The

⁸⁶Pearson, *Mike*, p. 239.

⁸⁷ Granatstein, *Canada 1957-67: The Years of Uncertainty & Innovation*, pp. 200 - 202.

⁸⁸Ramsay Cook, “Nationalist Ideologies in Canada.” *Canada, Quebec and the Uses of Nationalism*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), p. 211.

subject was extremely controversial with MPs, but debate was not limited to the House, as people across the country held meetings to discuss the proposed change. Opponents were fearful that replacing the *Ensign* with a new flag would undermine national spirit. Some adversaries, taking issue with the proposed design, suggested it was “insipid,” and, “instead of promoting unity, [would] produce only an indifferent response.”⁸⁹ The most common “charge against the . . . [government] . . . flag project was that it repudiated Canada’s history and destroyed symbols of Canadian nationhood.”⁹⁰

The issue was highly polarized between people who maintained Canada’s symbols should be British and those who asserted they should reflect a uniquely Canadian identity.⁹¹ The latter, responding to changing immigration patterns, argued New Canadians were increasingly of non-British heritage and were, therefore, unlikely to hold any great loyalty to the British Crown.⁹² Consequently, they believed it was crucial to have national symbols that appealed the broadest range of the Canadian public. Pearson, in particular, “was convinced that Canada had to have national symbols of its own and that gestures had to be offered to French-speaking Québécois and to those new Canadians who had come from central and southern Europe and from Asia.”⁹³ Recognizing that symbols play an important role in uniting people to support a common cause, Pearson shrewdly exploited the national symbol, and, in his memoirs, recalls how, for him, “the

⁸⁹Fraser, *The Search for Identity*, p. 234.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 234.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 235.

⁹²J.M. Bumsted, “The Birthday Party,” *The Beaver*, April-May, 1996, p. 6.

⁹³Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: the Years of Uncertainty & Innovation*, p. 201.

flag was part of a deliberate design to strengthen national unity.”⁹⁴ Speaking to the National Convention of the Royal Canadian Legion, he explained that, in his view, it was time “for Canadian to unfurl a flag that is truly distinctive and truly national in character, . . . a flag of the future which honours also the past.”⁹⁵ Opponents, however, were not convinced, arguing that by removing the Union Jack from the flag, Canadians were opting to sever colonial ties with Great Britain, an intolerable proposition for Diefenbaker and the Conservatives.

By the close of the year, however, the debate was over, with Pearson having imposed closure. The Maple Leaf was adopted 163 to 78 with one Liberal, one NDP and three Socreds joining Diefenbaker’s party in opposition. By the end “[t]here had been 308 speeches in all,” but to no avail, as, on February 2, 1965, the Maple Leaf flew for the first time on Parliament Hill, clearly signalling a new era of Canadian sovereignty.⁹⁶

During this period, Centennial officials too were actively designing a new national symbol. Realizing the power of symbols to unite people, planners were eager to capitalize on the opportunity to develop a symbol that was uniquely Canadian and associated with the Centennial celebrations. According to Director of Public Relations, Peter Aykroyd, there was “very little to publicize in 1963 and 1964,” and Fisher, travelling the country in an effort to generate some excitement and enthusiasm for the national event, was “suffering from a paucity of things to talk about.”⁹⁷ Fisher struck on

⁹⁴Pearson, *Mike*, p. 270.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁹⁶Granatstein, *Canada 1957-67: The Years of Uncertainty & Innovation*, p. 205.

⁹⁷Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, 91.

the idea of sponsoring a competition to design the Centennial symbol, and invited anyone twelve or under to submit a design for consideration by January 1, 1964. The winner would receive an all expenses tour of Canada. Worried that the publicity stunt might backfire, Peter Aykroyd convinced Fisher to open the competition to Canadian graphic designers living at home and abroad, as well as students specializing in graphic design and Canadian commercial firms in the field.⁹⁸ The competition closed on April 10, 1964, with three hundred and twenty-five artists having submitted four hundred and ninety-six designs. Adjudicating the entries "on the basis of their suitability as symbols of the Centennial of Confederation, competence of design and execution, and originality of concept, in that order,"⁹⁹ the jury succeeded in making a short-list of thirty, and then selected three prize winners.¹⁰⁰ In their report, the jury wrote that "the one selected for first prize was most likely to be understood and accepted by Canadians of all ages and backgrounds."¹⁰¹ Fisher was not convinced, however, and decided to have the clerical staff at the Commission review all of the 496 entries. The exercise proved futile as the final choice, featuring a Mountie astride a horse in front of the Peace Tower with a beaver holding a maple leaf inscribed with the dates 1867-1967, was politically imprudent, given French-English tensions.¹⁰²

⁹⁸Ibid., 92-3.

⁹⁹NA, RG 69 Vol. 373, File 4-3, (Cabinet Papers) Memo: Official Symbol to Represent the Centennial of Confederation." June 29, 1964.

¹⁰⁰Peter Aykroyd remarks that after having decided on the three finalists, the jury opened the envelopes detailing information on the designers to learn that all three were from Quebec.

¹⁰¹NA, RG 69 Vol. 373, File: 4-3.

¹⁰²Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 94.

After considerable discussion, the Commission Board of Directors decided that they would register all three finalists as trade marks under the Trade Marks Act and that “the three prizes be paid on the basis of the jury’s decision.”¹⁰³ Instead of approving the jury’s first choice, however, the Board selected the second place winner, a design of the three “Cs” of the Centennial Commission with a Maple Leaf in the centre. Cabinet, however, still embroiled in the flag fiasco, rejected the symbol. Armed with a budget of \$5000.00, Peter Aykroyd was charged with the duty of developing a symbol. First he approached Alan Fleming who had designed the CN logo, but his price far exceeded the Commission budget. Persevering, Aykroyd then went to the advertising firm of Cooper and Beatty in the fall, who advised him that a “pleasing and [decorative] symbol is more likely to give pleasure than a serious or formal solution, [as it is] less likely to meet with public disapproval . . . or cause offense or be misunderstood.”¹⁰⁴

The project was made more difficult by the fact that the symbol had to satisfy several requirements. From a technical point of view, it had to be suitable for reproduction in all sizes and mediums, as well as in colour and black and white. As a symbolic device, the logo could “not suggest Centennial of Canada, as distinct from Centennial of Confederation,” and it had to be bilingual.¹⁰⁵ When considering potential elements of the symbol, the firm recommended that, in light of the continuing debate over the proposed new flag, it would be prudent to avoid symbols closely connected with the

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴NA, RG 69, Vol. 353, File 130-2, (vol.2) “A statement of objectives and parameters relating to the design of a symbol for the Centenary of Confederation.” 27, October, 1962.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

flag. In particular, they suggested that unless officially adopted as the national symbol, the maple leaf, still the centre of some controversy, should be avoided. At a subsequent meeting with representatives from the advertising agency, the Secretary of State, Maurice Lamontagne, Commissioner John Fisher, and Peter Aykroyd, agreed the Maple Leaf could be used to symbolize Canada.

Eventually, a young twenty-four year old designer named Stuart Ash produced two designs. One was a stylized maple leaf, the other a flower motif with petals. In November the Commission Executive Committee endorsed the stylized maple leaf and the symbol was ratified by the National Conference later that month, and Cabinet subsequently approved the design. The Centennial Symbol, a stylized maple leaf made up of eleven equilateral triangles representing the ten provinces and the Canadian north, was designed “as an aid in promotion of the Centennial” and the Commission encouraged “the widest possible use of the Symbol in all its various forms.”¹⁰⁶ A press conference was held January 19, 1965 to introduce the logo to the Canadian public, only twenty-seven days before the Canadian flag became official. While the Commission now had an official symbol, they had yet to agree on a specific theme.

While the Commission had adopted a list of Centennial events that had, in large part, been developed as a result of the early Centenary Council “idea sessions,” organizers had not developed a central theme. In September of 1964, Commission Secretary, Claude Gauthier, wrote to John Fisher recommending the Commission clarify its mission.

¹⁰⁶*Centennial Symbol, Graphics Manual: Manuel de l'Emblème du Centenaire*, (Ottawa: Centennial Commission, Queen's Printer, 1965), p. 1.

Satisfied that the Commission was promoting interest in Centennial planning among government and private organizations while continuing to work on a program of projects, Gauthier expressed concern that staff had “not yet developed one single major project which [had] captivated the imagination of the Canadian population and through which [the Commission] could be adequately identified.”¹⁰⁷ Gauthier, speculating how best to achieve greater recognition, suggested several approaches. He argued that the Commission could undertake greater publicity of existing programs or they could develop a new approach or project which would lead to greater integration of members from ethnic groups into the larger Canadian community. Alternatively, they could focus on the Liberal vision of national unity as expressed through their policy of cooperative federalism.¹⁰⁸ Gauthier favoured a fourth choice, improving communication between Canadians through a program of interprovincial travel by all Canadians that he described as a “Knowledge Exchange.”

The Commission Secretary was not the only staff person disturbed by the Commission’s lack of direction. Jean-Pierre Houle, Peter Aykroyd’s predecessor at the P.R. and Information Branch, addressed the issue in a report titled “In Search of a Theme,” written in the fall of 1964. Asking why and what Canadians should celebrate, Houle recommended the Commission promote Canadian history in general and the work of the Fathers of Confederation in particular.¹⁰⁹ He argued the promotion, aimed at “Mr.

¹⁰⁷NA, RG, Vol 408, File: Centennial Theme, “Memo to J. Fisher from M. Claude Gauthier, Sept. 25, 1964.”

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹NA, Vol 408, File: Centennial Theme, “In Search of a Theme” by J.P. Houle, Director,

Everybody,” would deliver what Canadians were in greatest need of, “a feeling of belonging to a historical past.”¹¹⁰ He advised the Commission “retain the services of historians of demonstrated ability and skilled writers . . . to prepare texts and scripts.”¹¹¹ to be used on radio, television and in the print media. Senior officials, however, were not convinced that it was in the national interest to emphasize the historical past, uncertain they could appeal to a collective national memory. There was some concern that, in fact, historical commemoration would only serve to amplify regional differences and strengthen local loyalties, thereby weakening the social and political fabric of the country.

Writing about the Canadian Diamond Jubilee of 1927, Robert Cupido observed that “local and regional celebrations . . . did not always conform to the aims and perspectives of nationalist elites.”¹¹² The Jubilee was conceived by the government and middle-class supporters as a way to instill national pride and incorporate “Canada’s growing immigrant population into the mainstream,” and also help improve relations between Quebec and English Canada.¹¹³ The celebration was tremendously popular. However, according to Cupido, “national sentiment . . . had to be mediated by other, more concrete ties, based on affinities of class, language, religion, ethnicity.”¹¹⁴

In Montréal organizers elected to celebrate the Jubilee on June 24, St. Jean Baptiste day, rather than July 1, Dominion Day. In Winnipeg, the city’s immigrant

P.R. & Information Branch, 12/10/64.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Robert Cupido, “Sixty Years of Canadian Progress,” p. 19.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 31.

communities, largely invisible to mainstream citizens, participated in the Jubilee pageantry, “with eighteen different nationalities represented in the “patriotic section” of the parade.”¹¹⁵ No longer content to endure systemic discrimination in silence, Cupido argues their public participation revealed “a new assertiveness on the part of many immigrant groups, . . . and an implicit determination to raise their status and preserve their cultural identities in the face of assimilationist pressures.”¹¹⁶ Labour too saw the Jubilee as an occasion to examine what Confederation meant for the ordinary working Canadian, deciding that it demanded a re-dedication to fighting for the common man and strengthening the labour movement, not something that ruling elites had had in mind. According to Cupido,

the Jubilee of Confederation unintentionally provided civil time and space for certain groups, with very different conceptions of the Nation, to assert their particular identities and memories and traditions - and ultimately to frustrate the aspirations of pan-Canadian nationalists.¹¹⁷

Over thirty years later, organizers were still struggling with issues surrounding national unity and were eager to avoid creating an environment that served to promote discord.

Organizers were also unsure whether it was wise to use Confederation as the central focus of the celebration, fearing it would only serve to amplify local and regional disparities and revive long standing constitutional disputes. A Montreal journalist, for example, writing an article which questioned what Canadians were celebrating, argued that by celebrating Confederation Canadians were celebrating a fraud, as the political

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 31.

process was not working.¹¹⁸ Dissatisfaction with the constitution was not, however, restricted to Quebec. By the early 1960s, provinces across the country came to share the view that the British North America Act and Confederation was overdue for reform. It is perhaps not surprising then that organizers decided that Centennial “should not reflect merely Confederation itself, or its period,”¹¹⁹ but instead should describe a range of Canadian history, a view supported in principle in a Centenary Council discussion paper for a workshop on Centennial and its social aspects. The author and convenor, Bernard Ostry, advised that, above all, organizers should not “emphasize celebrations of past achievements or talk too much of re-dedication to the idea of Confederation.”¹²⁰ According to Ostry, the aim “should be to continue to build a community with diverse interests for this, [in his view, was] the distinctive and real quality of Canada.”¹²¹

The Commission expanded this objective to include a celebration of national continuity and a commitment to making the country work. To this end, speaking at a public engagement, one official urged Canadians not to consider that “the birth of [the] country was in any way a finished fact.”¹²² To illustrate his point, he declared that, “just as the birth of a child is the beginning of a long, and arduous struggle to maturity, so the birth of [Canada] was the first step in a difficult and labourious march [toward] . . .

¹¹⁸Jean Duceppe, “Il s’agit de fêter quoi?” *Metro-Express*, Montreal 2 August, 1967.

¹¹⁹NA, RG 69 Vol. 373, File 4-3 (Cabinet Papers), Memo to Cabinet, National Centennial Administration, July 23, 1963.

¹²⁰NA, MG 28 I 70, Vol. 3, File 27, (Third AGM - Working Papers) “Memo to Dr. Geoffrey C. Andrew, from B. Ostry, April 10, 1963.

¹²¹*Ibid.*

¹²²NA, RG 69 Vol. 540, File Mr. Batten - Speaking Engagements.

maturity in the family of nations.”¹²³ Maintaining that, while during this period of growth and transition, Canadians were “prepared to consider any accommodations, any compromise, any rearrangement inside the House of Canada,” they were “determined that the house itself must stand firm and inviolate.”¹²⁴ Centennial, he claimed, offered Canadians an opportunity to look back at the past, but “not from any base desire to glory in our past accomplishments,” but rather to turn to history as a “measuring rod” for the future.¹²⁵ History, frequently contentious and often the source of disagreement, turned out to be too problematic. The Commission, elected, instead, to emphasize the promise of a bright and prosperous future. With this approach, organizers believed they could appeal to the broadest section of Canadian society, and thereby achieve their goal of maximum participation.

By May of 1964 the Federal Government had committed to spend approximately one hundred million dollars on Centennial.¹²⁶ Thirty-five million dollars was earmarked for the National Capital Construction Program in Ottawa, going toward the construction of a National Library and Archives, the Canadian Museum of History and a National Centre for the Performing Arts. Twenty-five million was allocated to the Centennial Grants Program, which committed one dollar for every man, woman and child in Canada to the cost of a Centennial project of lasting significance, provided the funds were

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶See Appendix A: *Statement of Expenses, fiscal year 1967-1968.*

matched by one dollar from the province and one from the municipality.¹²⁷ The Commission was also responsible for administering funds for the Federal/Provincial Centennial Grants Program, which involved approximately “20 million dollars for the acquisition, construction or restoration of buildings or other capital works of historical or architectural merit.”¹²⁸ The government agreed to pay two and a half million dollars or fifty percent of the cost of construction, whichever was less, toward the cost of a Confederation memorial project to be constructed preferably in the provincial capital.¹²⁹ A final twenty million dollars was designated for “programs of national significance not geographically fixed . . . designed to bring the Centennial to the people.”¹³⁰ These programs did not include capital construction or those shared with the provincial governments. This final category of programs had to meet particular criteria, however. Projects had to contribute to national unity and serve the public interest, and not be restricted in area nor conflict with other approved projects. Moreover, they could not provide a source of commercial revenue and the applicant, being “capable and competent,” had to be willing to contribute substantially in time and money.¹³¹

By the close of 1966, 87 % of the funds allocated for the Centennial Grants

¹²⁷See Appendix C: *Grants to Provinces for Projects of a Lasting Nature, Centennial Projects Program*. In the Northwest Territories the ratio was slightly different, with the Federal Government committed to paying to a maximum of 2/3 of the proposed project.

¹²⁸NA, RG 69, Vol. 406, File: Centennial Commission Aims and Organization, “An Inquiry into Programme Planning & Control.” (May 21, 1964).

¹²⁹See Appendix C: *Grants to Provinces For Projects of a Lasting Nature, Confederation Memorial Program*.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*

¹³¹*Ibid.*

program had been committed to projects, and by 1967 “more than two thousand projects had been completed.”¹³² During Centennial year, hundreds of communities across the country proudly unveiled new recreation facilities, theatres and libraries, as they celebrated one hundred years of Canadian Confederation.¹³³ Under the Federal/Provincial, Confederation Memorial Program, many new buildings were constructed like the provincial archives in Victoria, B.C., the Manitoba Cultural Centre in Winnipeg, and a centre for science and technology in Toronto. In addition to managing these large scale programs, officials were busy planning an extensive program of events for Canadians.

In the early planning stages there was continuing discussion as to what types of events were appropriate for a national anniversary. In his opening statements at the second national conference of representatives and organizations planning for Centennial, Dr. J. Roby Kidd told participants that they needed to “decide if . . . Centenary is for every person.”¹³⁴ He informed delegates that, if this was the case, “some forms of celebrating are not likely to please all of us, [and] they will not equally satisfy our feelings about what is good taste” but, he argued, “is this a Centenary for Canada’s citizens, or just those who have good taste?”¹³⁵ Both the Council and the Commission

¹³²Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 81.

¹³³The legacy of the impressive building program is evident today. Most communities across Canada have at least one identifiable “Centennial” building, complete with the Centennial symbol.

¹³⁴NA, MG 31 D21, Vol. 1, Book 6 Wallis Papers - Canadian Centenary Council, 1959 - 60, “Planning Ahead for Canada’s Centenary: Report of the Second Conference, Feb., 11-12th, 1960.”

¹³⁵*Ibid.*

concluded it was a celebration for all Canadians, with particular attention given to involving youth.

The decade of the sixties was, above all, a decade of the young. In 1956, 46.8 percent of the population was under 21. By 1961 this number was 48.4 percent and, on the eve of Canada's Centennial year, the number had risen to 49.4 percent. This statistic emphasised the fact that Canada was indeed a young country. Nevertheless, according to everyone involved in planning the event, one hundred years of Confederation was worthy of celebration. As plans for the national event unfolded, organizers agreed the success of the event demanded that Canadian youth be actively involved in Centennial.

Consequently, many programs and events were designed with a view to attracting Canadian young people. The youth travel exchange program, designed for students fifteen years or older, was a Commission success story, with over twelve thousand Centennial travellers taking advantage of the program. Travel units, composed of twelve students accompanied by a male and female adult escort, visited a province or territory other than their own during July and August 1967, fully funded by the Commission. Through a similar but less formal program, qualifying organizations could apply for a grant of up to fifteen thousand dollars to help defray the cost of travel, accommodation and meals.¹³⁶ In addition to the travel exchange program, the Commission collaborated with several recreational and health organizations to develop an athletic awards program that was administered in cooperation with provincial education authorities. The most

¹³⁶Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 144.

successful component of the program was the section designed for school children.¹³⁷ Comprised of three compulsory and three optional events, students could win a gold, silver or bronze crests or red shields in recognition of their physical ability; by the close of Centennial year, “gold, silver and bronze crests and Red Shields were awarded to the 5 ½ million students aged six to eight who participated.”¹³⁸ By the following summer, however, one little girl, a grade four student at Caulfeild Elementary in West Vancouver, B.C., had not received her badge. Indignant, she wrote to “Mr. Trudeau” to lodge a complaint against the government of Canada, writing that she had “met certain standards” and that she “would appreciate it . . . if he would do . . . something about it.”¹³⁹ It is uncertain whether the Commission had anticipated this level of youth participation.

Perhaps the most popular “youth event” organized by officials, however, was the Confederation Train and Caravan program, a project that was first considered by John P. Kidd, Executive Director of the Canadian Citizenship Council. In a 1956 memo to the President, the “freedom caravan” was one of several ideas Kidd suggested as possible Centennial events. The Centenary Council later promoted the idea and eventually the Commission adopted it as part of their official Centennial program. While it was the single most expensive project undertaken by the Commission,¹⁴⁰ it was also their most successful, with attendance numbers far exceeding Commission estimates. Two and a

¹³⁷In addition to the school program, there were events designed for mentally handicapped children, a University athletic program, special Centennial events, as well international events.

¹³⁸Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 129.

¹³⁹NA, RG 69 Vol. 353, File: 130-2.

¹⁴⁰Combined, the Confederation Train & Caravan program cost \$47,903,784.

half million Canadians visited the Train in sixty-three communities and six and a half million people in six hundred and fifty-five communities saw the Caravan exhibit. For thousands of school children, unable to travel to Montreal for Expo '67, or too young to take part in the youth exchange program, this would be their most lasting impression of Centennial year.

Along with the big budget provincial/federal grant programs, Confederation Train and Caravan and youth exchange, the Commission supported several other significant projects.¹⁴¹ Festival Canada, a national event, operated semi-independently of the Commission, with senior staff sitting on the Program Development Committee.¹⁴² In addition to the cross country tours by national and international companies, the program also promoted local performances, supported a special program designed specifically for the National Capital Region, and financed, through grants, the creation of new work. It was the second largest budget item on the Commission balance sheet. While popular with many Canadians it was, nonetheless, criticized for being "too high brow." The Commission, eager to appeal to a broad range of Canadian society, had anticipated such complaints, and designed a varied program that was reputed to have something for everyone. As articulated by one journalist, Centennial was "supposed to be a something-for-everybody birthday party."¹⁴³

For those people that enjoyed the pomp and circumstance of military style

¹⁴¹See Appendix B: Programs and Projects of National Significance.

¹⁴²Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 136.

¹⁴³Hal Tennant, "1967: Are we going to be late for our own birthday party?" *Maclean's*, 16 Nov. 1964, p. 24.

productions, there was the RCMP Musical Ride or the Department of Defence Military Tattoo. For Canadians who preferred arts and culture, the National Gallery hosted a visual arts program. Numerous folk festivals were also held across the nation. The Commission organized spectacular events too, like the *Son et Lumiere* show in the national capital. Based on a European example of historical pageants using historical buildings as backdrops, the audience viewed the spectacle from an eighty seat amphitheatre at Nepean Point Park.

For the historically minded, there was the *Voyageur* Canoe Pageant. Leaving on May 24th from Rocky Mountain House in Alberta, “nine provinces and the Yukon Territory fielded crews.”¹⁴⁴ The crews stopped at ninety communities and, after paddling 3,283 miles, arrived at Expo ‘67 in Montreal on September 4th, with the Manitoba team winning the prize purse. Other historical events included re-enactments of the history of Western Canada and a Centennial Pageant play. In addition to these events, the Commission authorised several National Film Board films and television productions. They also administered a publications program which saw some 23,000 books, worth approximately \$130,000, donated to 451 libraries across the country.¹⁴⁵ Librarians chose books from a list drawn up by a selection committee. Reflecting the bilingual character of the country, 50 percent of the funds were allocated to works that had a Canadian subject, with “20 percent of the budget . . . spent on books printed in French.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, 120.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

The publication program also invited submissions from Canadian authors for the Commission's consideration. Out of the 850 requests for assistance, 103 were recommended and 95 grants were made to authors and associations in the amount of \$262,400, with an average grant amount of \$2,550. No grant exceeded the \$5,000 limit.¹⁴⁷ The Commission also sponsored an Interfaith Conference which hosted three large interfaith gatherings throughout the year. Finally, if none of the official events appealed to Canadians it was certain they would find something to look forward to at the provincial or local level, as hundreds of associations, societies and non-profit groups organized a wealth of events to commemorate Centennial year. In Nanaimo, B.C., city officials inaugurated the Great Centennial Bathtub Race, now a summer tradition. Across the country people developed neighbourhood beautification programs, organized parades and pageants, and planned parties to celebrate the Canada's 100th anniversary. Like other festivals and spectacular celebrations, Centennial featured many elements associated with festival culture. There were pageants, processions, and parades, as well as official and unofficial parties, and public and private acts of gift giving. The Centennial also introduced another important element of public celebration to the Canadian public: spectacle. With large-scale initiatives like the Confederation Train and Caravan program, extensive visual and performing arts programs, as well as Expo, the government, through the Centennial Commission, organized a spectacular event that functioned as an excellent tool for officials to promote a nationalistic agenda.

From the beginning, organizers recognized that if Centennial was going to be a

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 133.

success they had to get the Canadian public interested and pay attention, a view emphasised by Prime Minister Pearson when he addressed delegates at the National Centennial Administration Conference held in Ottawa, October 5, 1963. He encouraged participants to “plan not for Ottawa, not for the province, but for every town, village and home in Canada,” as it was only by “getting to the grass roots . . . that . . . 1967 [would] make its fullest possible contribution to the better understanding and warmer co-operation of all the diverse elements in . . . [the] nation.”¹⁴⁸ Similarly, speaking at the Canadian Club in Montreal in late 1966, Commissioner Fisher remarked “you can’t just force people to celebrate, you have to give them a motivation, an incentive to participate directly . . . to share both in the task and in the fun of Centennial Year.”¹⁴⁹ Fisher told the audience that Centennial events and programs served several purposes. First, they were designed to “remind Canadians of their past” and second, they would “prepare [Canadians] for the future by building permanent works of cultural, social and recreational value, in order to put a new face on Canada in 1967 and for the years to come.”¹⁵⁰ Appreciating the complexity of the task at hand, organizers followed the directive of the government and the Commissioner, doing their best to ensure that Canadians had a wide assortment of choices and a multiple opportunities to take part and express their commitment to Canada. In the end, however, it was largely up to individual Canadians to make a personal commitment to get involved.

¹⁴⁸NA, MG 31, D21 Vol. 5, File CCC Papers, October 1963.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., January-May, 1966.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

Canadians Catch Centennial Fever: Promoting Canadian Unity

“I am not naive. I know something is wrong somewhere. One of our prime jobs during the Centennial will be to promote Canadian unity. The Centennial should be a kind of catalyst.”

John Fisher: *Maclean's* 18 May 1963.

The Centennial Act stipulated that organizers were to promote interest in the historic milestone. This proved more difficult than the Commission had anticipated as, initially, Canadians were largely indifferent to the idea of celebrating the centennial of Confederation. Confronted with the public's ambivalence, planners had to consider how to publicize the event.¹ Organizers were directed to plan a celebration that both communicated the feeling of a fun, unpretentious party, and also emphasized the historic significance of the national event; they were also expected to secure massive public participation. In order to achieve the latter objective, they had to get the word out about Centennial quickly and inspire Canadians to get involved. Given that Commission staff employed a range of promotional tools, including television, print advertising, brochures, pamphlets and posters, as well as a public speaking bureau, it was only natural they should chose to exploit the medium of film in an effort to publicize the Centennial message.

¹Numerous articles in the popular and business press tried to generate excitement about centennial. J.B. McGeachy, “Let's promote excitement about Canada's 100th,” *Financial Post*, 18 May 1963, p. 7; “What are you doing in 1967?” *Industrial Canada*, 64 (August 1963); “Call to Action,” *Community Planning Review*, 16 (Spring, 1966): 3-5; “Talk, talk, about Centennial, but this group wants action,” *Financial Post*, 31 Dec. 1966, p. 2.

Joining forces with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and commercial film companies, the Commission produced several documentaries and short films to promote Centennial. By highlighting events and programs, as well as chronicling Canadian history, each film carried a message designed to reinforce Canadian identity and national unity. Equally important, the material also helped encourage Canadians to get involved in the celebration. While the majority of films were short promotional clips intended to air on television to advertise Centennial, there were also lengthier productions such as *Centennial Fever* and *Helicopter Canada*. These two films, cooperative ventures between the Commission and the NFB, were targeted to a wide viewing audience and intended to advance Centennial themes. An account of a small Alberta town preparing for the national anniversary, *Centennial Fever* focused primarily on the local experience and championed the principal Commission theme of national unity. *Helicopter Canada*, on the other hand, emphasizing the grandeur and diversity of the natural and constructed Canadian landscape, considered a more general subject that, according to staff, appealed to both a Canadian and international audience.

While each production explored different subject material, they were produced for the same purpose: to generate interest in and enthusiasm for Centennial and to strengthen national unity and reinforce national identity. The films provide an opportunity to examine how organizers endeavoured to realize the Centennial mandate through the medium of film. Of particular interest is how, given the inherent challenges of using film as a promotional tool, the documentaries were designed to advance national unity and communicate a vision of Canadian identity in the face of enduring regional, cultural and

social plurality.

Described as “the great unresolved equation between art and industry,”² film was “the first . . . of the industrialized art forms . . . [to dominate] the cultural life of the twentieth century.”³ First introduced in the 1890s, within twenty years the technology had developed to the point where it could support a growing entertainment industry throughout North America and Europe. In Canada, the earliest commercial showing took place on June 27, 1896 in Montréal. Demonstrations of the French Cinématographe received glowing reviews in *La Presse*, with people flocking to see several very short films showing a train arriving at a station, a small boat at sea, and the proprietors, the Lumière brothers, playing cards.⁴ Later that summer, two Ottawa businessmen, brothers Andrew M. and George C. Holland, charged twenty-five cents per person for admission to a public screening in Ottawa and, on opening night, 1,200 Ottawans showed up to see the open air spectacle at the West End Park.⁵ Audiences, reaching “1,600 . . . in the first week.”⁶ flocked to the magic *Vitascope* show to witness the miracle firsthand. As word of the new technology spread, the medium of film increased in popularity and developed a loyal following.

In the formative years, due to the lack of professional facilities, screenings usually

²Paul Rotha cited by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, ed., *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. xix.

³Ibid., p. xix.

⁴David Clandfield, *Canadian Film* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 1.

⁵Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1895-1939*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press), p. 1.

⁶Ibid., p. 2.

took place in impromptu, temporary settings, such an empty storefront or the local community hall. By 1908, however, in response to increasing public demand, permanent cinemas began to spring up across the country. Designed to appeal to various tastes and pocket-books, these early theatres ranged in style and tone “from Léo-Ernest Ouimet’s luxurious 1000-seat Ouimetoscope in Montréal to John Griffin’s cut-price Theatorium in Toronto, the first of the Canadian Nickelodeons.”⁷ Audiences for these early films were likely to see “one-minute snapshots, mute testimony to the realism of the photographic image and the illusions of continuous movement.”⁸ Eventually, however, audience expectations grew. No longer dazzled by a sequence of moving postcard images, people soon demanded storylines and character development.

In the early years, films were usually a collection of individual shots. Film makers who filmed action shots tended to position the camera far enough away in order to catch all the action, while the camera would remain stationary and the action recorded in one continuous, unedited shot. The style did not lend itself well to “constructing a continuous linear narrative,” as film makers, preoccupied with the individual shots, did not link frames together to create the impression of a progression from one image to another.⁹ Realizing their potential to generate profit rested largely in their ability to give the audience “what they want,” producers began to make ‘feature-length’ films that conformed to a “consolidated set of ‘classical’ narrative conventions.”¹⁰ Wanting to

⁷Clandfield, *Canadian Film*, p. 1.

⁸Ibid., p. 2.

⁹Roberta Pearson, “Early Cinema,” in *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 17.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 13.

broaden their appeal and draw on the as yet largely untapped middle and 'high' culture audience, film makers produced stories with a range of characters, plots and genres. By the 1920s Hollywood had emerged as the film capital of the western world, and feature-length films had become the norm. Sensitive to the tastes of their viewing audience, producers constructed films that fulfilled consumer demand and, in the process, film makers and producers came to appreciate that the medium, easily manipulated, could be used as an effective tool to sway public opinion.

As early as World War I, film makers had produced films that promoted a particular political agenda and served as propaganda tools to bolster national pride. Early vignettes, usually comedic farce, ridiculed enemy leaders and national symbols. In England, for example, audiences, comforted by animated shorts of a bumbling Kaiser, were reassured of their country's military prowess. Later, more sophisticated feature presentations emphasized enemy brutality and barbarism and the indignation and outrage of the defending nation in an effort to win support for the cause.¹¹ An equally important "weapon" in the propagandist's arsenal was the news-reel. Characterized as an objective portrayal of "the facts", newsreel footage was first used during World War I, and evolved into a particularly popular and effective "informational" tool during World War II. Used extensively by both "sides," news reels played an important role in rallying support and boosting morale. Perhaps the most notorious example of using film to realize political objectives, however, was undertaken by Joseph Goebbels during the early 1930s and into

¹¹Leif Furhammer and Folke Isaksson, *Politics and Film*, trans. K. French (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 7.

the 1940s. As Hitler's Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, he embarked on a massive nationalist propaganda campaign, exploiting the medium to its fullest. Along with Chief Architect Albert Speer, Goebbels organized highly orchestrated rallies in which "every detail of production [was] considered and weighed in relation to the whole,"¹² in an effort to maximize the power of the message. Perhaps the most infamous production was Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, filmed in 1934.

Riefenstahl, an actress and fiction film director, began her career as a documentary film producer when Hitler approached her to film the 1933 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg, *Victory of Faith*.¹³ Following this success, she returned to Nuremberg a year later to film *Triumph of the Will*. According to film historian Charles Musser,

like many Anglo-American documentaries of this period, *Triumph of the Will* endows the state with a powerful expertise seemingly beyond politics, which the people should unquestioningly accept.¹⁴

With the Führer as the film's central character, the documentary, "using editing techniques and structures such as the shot/reverse-shot, . . . constructs a cult of personality around Hitler."¹⁵ Cast in the role of the Creator of a new, rejuvenated nation, Hitler emerged triumphant, armed with the solid support of the German people. Unlike other documentaries of the period that advocated strengthening national pride through assimilation and "homogenization of the melting-pot," the Riefenstahl film communicated

¹²Ibid.

¹³Charles Musser, "Engaging with Reality: Documentary," *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, p. 326.

¹⁴Ibid

¹⁵Ibid.

a darker message that promoted racial purification and obedience.¹⁶ According to Walter Benjamin, the documentary was “the aesthetization of politics, not the politicization of art.”¹⁷

Throughout the war period the documentary continued play a crucial role as an important propaganda tool, with all parties producing material designed to unite people to support the cause. Following the war, the United States War Department produced films documenting the atrocities perpetrated in the concentration camps, and also filmed the Nuremberg trials. Shortly thereafter, however, the genre lost favour in Europe and did not gain popularity again until the late 1950s.

Canada was the exception, in North America, with the federal government establishing the National Film Board in 1939 “to interpret Canada to Canadians and the rest of the world.”¹⁸ The government appointed British filmmaker, John Grierson, as the Board’s first Film Commissioner. Grierson’s work in Britain during the 1930s had “established both him and the emerging documentary form as a new force in world cinema.”¹⁹ Described as a “political man, and a moralist,”²⁰ he championed a style of filmmaking that captured ordinary people going about everyday life, but in a “highly creative and exciting way,” in an effort to “help people communicate with each other.”²¹

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Jill McGreal, “Canadian Cinema/Cinéma Canadien,” *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, p. 731.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰D.B. Jones, *Movies & Memoranda: An Interpretative History of the National Film Board*, (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1981), p. 8.

²¹Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows*, p. 233.

For Grierson, “education of the citizen became the dominating preoccupation . . . from the 1940s on.”²² According to Grierson, however, education did not mean teaching “the facts.” Instead, he believed “education should inspire . . . people to loyalty and to self-sacrifice for the larger interests of the state.”²³ Documentaries, as educational, ‘social tools,’ should, in his view, “mobilize the will and galvanize people into action.”²⁴

According British film scholar, H. Forsyth Hardy, “when Grierson moved to Canada in 1939, the restrictions that had hampered his ambitions for the social use of film fell away.”²⁵ “Here was a new country, a clean slate. Here above all . . . was the commitment of a government, coming from the top.”²⁶

Realizing that documentary film is expensive, Grierson recognized early on in his career that federal support was crucial to the continued well-being of the organization, and in the formative years, the Board, as a government creation, enjoyed considerable financial and political support from the government. No doubt, the Grierson vision of film as an educational tool appealed to many government officials keen to communicate key, government messages. Moreover, senior government politicians and bureaucrats were likely comforted by the fact that Grierson “believed there should be a close link between the needs of government and the needs of the filmmaker;” throughout the

²²The John Grierson Project, *John Grierson and the NFB*, (Toronto: ECW Press, 1984), p. 97.

²³R. Bruce Elder, *Image and Identity: Reflections on Canadian Film and Culture*, (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1989), p. 102.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵H. Forsyth Hardy, “Democracy as a Fighting Faith,” in *John Grierson and the NFB*, p. 105.

²⁶*Ibid.*

thirties, Grierson “maintained this link.”²⁷ Producing films that were usually highly didactic and message driven, in the tradition of earlier, British documentary styles, the Grierson vision dominated filmmaking in Canada well into the late 1950s. By recruiting, and training talented young film makers to work at the new Film Board, Grierson revitalized the waning Canadian film industry and transformed Canadian cinema in the process.

Cinematic styles changed significantly in the years following World War II, however, with documentary film makers eventually abandoning the highly dogmatic, ideological productions of earlier times in favour of a more subtle, complex approach. By the late 1950s “a new kind of political cinema” emerged.²⁸ During the post-war move toward decolonization, guerilla groups turned increasingly to the medium of film to communicate their message of political independence. Using simple equipment, they made documentaries that looked at “political realities with a degree of unbiased frankness,” producing films that “were more subjective - and more ambivalent.”²⁹ The films of the sixties were not as dogmatic as earlier productions, with directors preferring to adopt a news-reel style of shooting that suggested unadulterated *reportage*. Labelled *cinéma direct* or *cinéma-vérité*, the technique developed out of “a journalistic impulse.”³⁰ Invoking a greater sense of realism, the movement “attempted to incorporate aspects of the real into the work of art and so shared common aspirations with other movements in

²⁷D.B. Jones, *Movies and Memoranda*, p. 14.

²⁸L. Furhammer and F. Isaksson, *Politics and Film*, p. 6.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Charles Musser, “*Cinéma vérité* and the new Documentary,” p. 527.

art.”³¹ Of course, this did not mean that these films did not promote a particular point of view. While the style was more sophisticated and a little less obvious, they, like their predecessors, still had a message to convey to audiences and in many instances any footage considered unsuitable or counter-productive was cut during the editing process. How didactic the message was depended largely on the director’s own personal style and the goals of the production team.

While the new cinema of the late 1950s, early 1960s, was, in tone and content, a far cry from the material being produced for a mainstream audiences, there is little doubt that there was a trickle down effect, with directors of both commercial features and documentaries adopting many of the new film techniques. “Canadians, funded by the National Film Board of Canada, provided significant contributions to the *cinéma vérité oeuvre*.”³² While “it is considered to be of secondary importance and derivative of either the American or the French version, or some combination of those versions,” one scholar suggests that, in fact, “the roots of the Canadian style can be traced back to at least 1952.”³³ Called the Candid-Eye movement, filmmakers were encouraged to

experiment with candid portraits by seeking a naturally interesting character or group of characters, caught up in circumstances that involved the whole person in some kind of universally significant and fascinating situation.³⁴

While the Candid-Eye series ended in 1959, NFB filmmakers affiliated with “Unit B

³¹R. Bruce Elder, *Image and Identity*, p. 103.

³²Ibid., p. 532.

³³R. Bruce Elder, *Image and Identity*, p. 104.

³⁴Garry Evans, *In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 72.

continued to experiment with the direct-cinema technique,³⁵ and produced films that highlighted “quotidian events rather than momentous occasions.”³⁶ Allowing “the formal structure of their films to evolve organically out of the events they depicted,” the Canadian filmmakers “stressed the importance of the camera’s access to real (unstaged) events - its access to human beings in their ordinary social existence.”³⁷

By the mid 1960s, however, the NFB had introduced the Challenge for Change/Société nouvelle program, which “was billed as a program to ‘improve communications, create greater understanding, promote new ideas and provoke social change.’”³⁸ Run by an “interdepartmental committee comprised of seven federal government departments,” the program was designed so that “the government departments involved would initiate projects.”³⁹ Perhaps the most memorable and influential film produced during the Challenge for Change period was Colin Low’s Fogo Island series. Lowe shot twenty hours of film, and made several short films about individual community members. Low screened the films throughout the community, with the intention that they would function “as catalysts to discussion of mutual problems, allowing people who may have been reluctant to speak in public to let their films speak for them.”⁴⁰ In this way, the filmmaker used the film “as an instrument of inter- or intra-

³⁵Ibid., p. 81.

³⁶R. Bruce Elder, *Image and Identity*, p. 113.

³⁷Ibid., p. 113-114.

³⁸Marie Kurchak, “What Challenge? What Change?,” in *Canadian Film Reader*, eds. Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1977), p. 120.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 122.

community awareness in order to help people find their strengths as a community, not to reinforce their isolation.”⁴¹ Like the *cinéma direct/cinéma-vérité* movement before it, the Challenge for Change program, also influenced mainstream, commercial filmmaking.

Centennial Fever and *Helicopter Canada*, employed elements of both the Candid-Eye genre and aspired to many of the principles articulated in Challenge for Change movement. In each case, however, the final film was driven in large part by the Commission’s desire to achieve what may be considered competing objectives. Along with communicating the key themes of national unity and identity, the films were designed to entertain audiences, and leave people with a feeling of optimism and excitement. Most importantly, however, they were developed to promote Centennial. The Commission adopted a more subtle, indirect approach, opted to use film as a means to educate the public about Centennial and persuade them to get involved, choosing not to promote a blatantly nationalist agenda. In this way, both films harken back to the Grierson vision of film as persuasive tool to communicate information and educate.

Situated one hundred and thirty miles north east of Edmonton, St. Paul, Alberta was incorporated as a village in 1909, and by the early 1960s had grown to three thousand five hundred residents. As the town had significant Francophone, aboriginal, and ethnic communities, centennial officials were confident St. Paul held promise as the subject of a short documentary. They maintained it provided a unique occasion to demonstrate how cultural and regional differences, when reconciled, could function to enhance and strengthen the local community. By recording how a diverse group of individuals joined

⁴¹Ibid., p. 121.

forces to plan successful centennial events, the film was designed to foster feelings of fellowship and cultural harmony. Aykroyd's Public Relations and Information department considered the film an excellent promotional tool for television⁴² and live theatre viewing, reasoning it would inspire Canadians to get involved in Centennial. Moreover, they believed the commendable community spirit profiled in the film would serve as an incentive, motivating Canadians to duplicate the St. Paul example elsewhere in country.

On January 10, 1966, therefore, Peter Aykroyd, the Director of Public Relations and Information, recommended the Commission approach the Treasury Board for a sum not to exceed thirty thousand dollars for both a French and English version of a black and white film, approximately fifteen minutes in length, that would chronicle Centennial preparations in St. Paul, Alberta.⁴³ According to organizers, the thirty distribution prints, fifteen in English and fifteen in French, would function as a sort of training aid and prepare other Canadian communities to plan for 1967. Officials also believed the film offered the Commission a much needed opportunity to publicize the event and, thereby, generate public interest in the year-long national anniversary.

Driven in large part by the local Chamber of Commerce, the St. Paul operation was certainly ambitious. According to the *St. Paul Centennial Progress Report*, thirty-seven projects were underway by March of 1966 and several more were in the planning

⁴²In a letter to a senior P.R. official, the film director, Josef Reeve, suggested that the documentary could be aired on the popular television program, *Seven Days*. NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: St. Paul Alberta Film, "Letter to Clyde Batten from J. Reeve, April 9, 1966."

⁴³NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File 4-13: Centennial Commission Executive Committee Minutes, January 10, 1966.

stages.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most outlandish and well remembered stunt was the construction of a U.F.O. landing pad just outside the city. According to a St. Paul resident involved in the project it was “conceived over innumerable beers by three employees of a local construction company.”⁴⁵ The forty by sixty foot concrete oval stood on eight foot pillars and was fitted with a “sophisticated electronic beeper system and blinking landing light.”⁴⁶ There was also a thirty by eight foot map of Canada at the site with St. Paul pinpointed by a light and the words “you are here.” The fourteen thousand dollar project was designed by Edmonton engineer Alex Mair and while it is uncertain whether they were successful in enticing visitors from “outer space,” members of the Centennial National Conference did stop by for a brief visit. Arriving in an Armed Forces *Chinook* helicopter, they held a meeting at the site.⁴⁷

In addition to highlighting the many unique events planned for 1967, the *Report* publishers took a moment to reflect on the importance of the Centennial program. Deciding that “centennial preparation and activity can be fun and exciting for all ages,” the editor remarked that residents of St. Paul “[were] taking a good look at [themselves] and finding out that the guy next door is really a fine fellow.”⁴⁸ More importantly, he observed “how well [they] actually [did] get on together.”⁴⁹ Writing that Centennial

⁴⁴*St. Paul Centennial Progress Report*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 18, 1966), p. 1.

⁴⁵“The Town that Believed in Flying Saucers,” *Maclean's*, March 1967, p. 4.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 65. Some thirty years later and the town of St. Paul retains its reputation for hosting unusual events. In July of 1998, the town hosted an international U.F.O. conference, with the U.F.O. pad figuring prominently in the event.

⁴⁸*St. Paul Centennial Progress Report*, p. 2.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

preparations “must be used as a tool for removing the many inhibitions some [Canadians] have,” and emphasizing that “the ultimate success of a project is secondary to the good which [could] be accomplished in trying,”⁵⁰ the publisher of the *Report* unwittingly championed the important Centennial theme of citizen involvement. Since the town embraced the Centennial philosophy so completely and with such unabashed enthusiasm, it is little wonder the Commission chose to make St. Paul the focus of a documentary film.⁵¹

The project had first been considered early in 1965, when an employee in the Commission Public Relations department secured three quotes from commercial film companies.⁵² By mid-September of 1965, however, the National Film Board, having heard rumours of the project, “made rather vigorous protests to the Commission and insisted . . . they be given the contract.”⁵³ The Board lobbying proved effective and they secured the contract. They then commissioned Josef Reeve to write and direct the film. Two thousand dollars was allocated for researching and developing a storyline and in early 1966. Reeve submitted a draft script which was approved by the senior commission staff.

Although they asked to preview rushes of the film early in the shooting schedule, it was not until April of 1966 that Commission P.R. staff finally reviewed a cutting copy.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹St. Paul garnered considerable press coverage about their Centennial preparations, with an article appearing in *Time*. “Canada: The Road to ‘67,” *Time* (86), 2 July 1965.

⁵²Senior P.R. Officer, C. Clyde Batten, observed the “. . . highest quotation was \$11,000 for this production and the lowest was approximately \$8,500 to \$9,000 . . .” NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: St. Paul, Alberta Film, “Memo to File: June 17, 1966.”

⁵³Ibid.

They decided the film was “entirely out of keeping with the spirit and tone of the original shooting script.”⁵⁴ While not completely satisfied with the visuals, it was the accompanying commentary in particular that displeased senior public relations officer, C. Clyde Batten. Batten expressed concern the script did not impart the “light touch”⁵⁵ the Commission desired. Moreover, in the early rushes the script, according to Batten, did not always connect well with the visual material. In addition, hoping to maximize the appeal of the film, Batten suggested there be more footage showing the young people in St. Paul involved in centennial activities that were, “not square.” Officials were eager to produce an entertaining, exciting film and, after viewing the initial footage, they worried that some of the “animation, the joie de vivre, the sense of whimsy [had] been ironed out of the product.”⁵⁶

Reeve incorporated several of Batten’s suggestions into subsequent cuts, but revisions were continuing, with senior commission staff proposing style and content alternatives to the very end. At its completion, the film had cost three times the estimates provided by commercial companies and some Commission staff were of the opinion that the NFB had taken appreciably longer to complete the project than a commercial company would have done. In addition, the NFB had yet to produce the promised French language version. The exercise had, from the beginning, been fraught with difficulties and cost overruns and Commission satisfaction with the final product was mixed. One

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., “Letter [Private & Confidential]: To Mr. J. Reeve, From: C.C. Batten, April 13, 1966.”

⁵⁶Ibid., “Letter: To Miss E. Horne (NFB), From: C.C. Batten, (CCC), April 7, 1966”

official, observing that the “excessive costs might have been justified had the film been of outstanding merit,” nevertheless took heart that the documentary was a “good competent piece of workmanship.”⁵⁷

It is difficult to account for the continuing production problems, as, from the beginning, the Commission had expressed clearly their goals and objectives to the NFB. According to one senior official, it may have been due to the fact that footage for the film had been shot some time before the Commission had even granted final approval for the project.⁵⁸ As a consequence, the project is thought to have consisted, in large part, of editing the existing footage to meet Commission objectives.

In a memo dated November 12, 1965 the Commission Public Relations Director wrote to the Liaison Officer at the NFB requesting that “the film . . . reflect the beginnings and growth of the St. Paul Centennial experience, and be so designed that it will have general interest beyond 1967 as an example of extraordinary community development work sparked by the Centennial Committee.”⁵⁹ The Director of Public Relations suggested the movie should “motivate other communities toward the kind of concerted action taken by the Chamber of Commerce in the city of St. Paul in cooperation with all citizens toward a vast array of imaginative and worthwhile projects in the context of the upcoming Centennial of Confederation.”⁶⁰ In addition, the NFB were also instructed to produce a film that imparted a “sense of whimsy and light-heartedness” and

⁵⁷Ibid., “Memo to File: June 17, 1966.”

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., “Memo: November 12, 1965.”

⁶⁰Ibid.

“transmitt[ed] the excitement and enthusiasm of the St. Paul experiment.”⁶¹ According to the Director of Public Relations, Peter Aykroyd, the film offered “the occasion of poking a little fun at ourselves,”⁶² and should, therefore, “avoid the feeling of . . . pomposity or excessive gravity.”⁶³ Commissioner John Fisher concurred, and in a note scribbled to the Director of P.R., asked him to “please make sure [the film not be] . . . too arty.”⁶⁴ Fisher also requested the film not be shot “too late in winter.”⁶⁵ Reeve was unable to accommodate Fisher's final directive, as the footage was complete; the film had been shot during a typical northern Alberta winter. Doubtless, the very fact that it was a joint project between the NFB and the Commission likely served to complicate matters. Given, however, that expectations for the film were so high, it is not surprising the twelve minute production did not realize everyone's aims.

In the opening scene, the isolated town of St. Paul, Alberta, appears abandoned, as a dog howls in the background and a lone resident walks down the deserted main street. The narrator, confirming this is a very quiet place, remarks earnestly, “in the beginning there was St. Paul. A farm town wedged in the north-east corner of Alberta. Population 3500. Nationalities? All kinds.”⁶⁶ Initially, even the opening sequence was the source of some discussion. Alternate introductory commentary referred to the community “brew”

⁶¹Ibid., “Letter: April 7 1966.”

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., “Note: January 6, 1967.”

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶*Centennial Fever or the Hundred-Year Itch*, 16 mm Black & White, (screening time: 12 mins 50 secs.) Produced by the National Film Board of Canada for the Centennial Commission of Canada, 1967. All subsequent film references are from the *Centennial Fever* documentary.

of nationalities and suggested the town centennial fever was due to the “gentle competition” of the “mixed nationalities.”⁶⁷ This material was eventually rejected, likely because officials wanted to avoid anything that suggested disunity. Planners opted not to specify the national mix of the town and chose to downplay regionalism, preferring instead to keep the content general, thereby ensuring any Canadian town could be substituted for St. Paul. Having set the scene, the creationist allusions of the introduction are soon abandoned, and the narrator's solemn tone is quickly replaced with cheerful, lighthearted banjo and harmonica music, reminiscent of something heard at a country festival. Contrary to the first impression, St. Paul, it seems, is not bleak and uninteresting, but a vibrant community, impatient to celebrate the centennial of Confederation.

Immediately, the audience is introduced to 76 year old T.C. Ashworth, respected town pioneer and former Reeve. Ashworth, looking crusty and wise, recounts how, having navigated the Saskatchewan river on a barge, his family arrived in 1904 when he was fourteen. Filmed trudging through a snowy landscape he remembers the St. Paul of his youth, which, some twenty-five miles away from his family's home, comprised just two stores and a church. He marvels that, while in the early days “there wasn't a fence between [St. Paul] and Edmonton,” many people have settled the area in the subsequent sixty years. Ashworth reminisces about St. Paul's commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee in 1927, recalling a float carrying “nine local belles - all of them French”

⁶⁷NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: St. Paul, Albert Film, “Centennial Fever: Revised Commentary,” p. 1.

representing a province.⁶⁸ In an early cut of the film, he remarks that “we felt proud of Confederation and we wanted to celebrate it.”⁶⁹ Comparing the outpouring of national pride for the sixtieth anniversary of Confederation to a married couple celebrating their gold or silver anniversary, he suggests Confederation, like a marriage contract, is an agreement between all Canadians that must be honoured, “for better or worse.”

By employing the marriage metaphor and introducing the image of the Francophone girls, the film makers imply the importance of the Franco-Anglo relationship and invite Canadians to renew their “vows” and re-commit themselves to Canada. Ashworth’s observations function to orient the audience and his remarks provide a sense of historical continuity and political security, as his “dimension of years allows a longer look at the course of Centennialism.”⁷⁰ The former Reeve, presented as an outstanding Canadian role model, emerges sincere and sanguine, ready and eager to celebrate another important milestone in Canada's history.

Continuing with the themes of national pride and loyalty, the film cuts to a scene in which the present Mayor of St. Paul, Jules Van Brabant, addresses a crowd gathered in front of the new recreation centre for the dedication of another Centennial project. Residents purchased a mission bell and installed it at the community centre, but in order to ring it people had to contribute money, with the proceeds going to build the St. Paul Retarded Children's Centre. As the camera pans the cheerful scene, it lingers on a bilingual sign at the recreation centre and then switches to a shot of the new Canadian

⁶⁸Ibid., “Shooting script for *Centennial Fever*” Jan. 1966, p. 9.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 8.

flag flying briskly in the breeze next to the official centennial symbol. In highlighting the flag and centennial symbol, the film producers impart a feeling of credibility to both as signifiers of Canadian autonomy, pride and national unity. No doubt they hoped other communities would follow St. Paul's example and display official emblems prominently. The bilingual sign was likely intended to demonstrate the success of the new government policy of bilingualism; with film makers illustrating that even in the backwaters of Northern Alberta, Canadians would find Francophones living harmoniously within the larger community. A man, perhaps a member of the local Centennial Council, notes, not too subtly, that "the idea of the bell came from the island of Iona . . . where it was used . . . to call the people in case of danger," suggesting that, in his view, it is in the best interest of all Canadians to heed the signs warning of the potential for national discord and unrest. The bell, installed and financed by the St. Paul Foundry, which was reputed to be over two hundred years old, had previously rung from various local steeples, school missions and, for the final one hundred years from the Le Goff Indian Mission. Given its age and significance to the local community, the bell was a symbolic reminder of the role of missionaries in shaping the history of the region.

At the January 1965 dedication ceremony, the town named the bell Iona "in commemoration of the spirit and fortitude of those brave people who faced unknown dangers to find a way of peace and freedom from persecution."⁷¹ Jack Golding, the attending Centennial Commission representative, observed that

in the year 463 a group of people desiring to find a refuge from

⁷¹*St. Paul Centennial Progress Report*, p. 16.

persecution wherein they could worship according to their dictates, eventually found Iona, an island lying off the coast of Scotland.⁷²

In naming the bell Iona, town organizers promoted the long held view that Canada, like Iona, was a sanctuary, open to all people fleeing persecution. Like Iona, Canada was considered a tolerant, inclusive nation and this, in the view of the residents of St. Paul, was worth celebrating. Leading by example, St. Paul's residents encouraged fellow Canadians to demonstrate their patriotism and plan Centennial events that exhibited their national pride.

The Centennial Commission considered St. Paul an ideal subject for the film not only because it was host to some 37 Centennial events, but also because it was an eclectic community where, in addition to French and English, residents spoke Ukrainian, Cree and, in the case of Rocco, the local photographer, Italian. The residents' efforts were applauded in promotional literature, with producers pointing out that "the projects to commemorate Canada's hundredth birthday are almost as diverse as the town's 3,500 people."⁷³ And, as an example of a model Canadian town, it epitomised the increasingly popular theory of unity through diversity, a principle best illustrated in a film scene shot in the local Co-op grocery store.

Moving informally through the grocery store, the camera-man approaches eight people, asking if they have any plans to celebrate centennial. A gentleman in his seventies says that he is "helping along", while a young man claims that he "thinks it will

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: St. Paul, Alberta Film, "National Film Board Flyer for *Centennial Fever*."

be a nice program for Canada.” A young woman of eighteen or nineteen, perhaps symbolic of a then indifferent Canadian public, says that she “thinks it’s interesting,” but when asked what she is going to do about it pauses a second, as if confused, before replying, “nothing, I guess.” An elderly Francophone man responds in French that he will do his part, and a young boy, likely of Asian descent or a new Canadian, answers enthusiastically that he “think[s] it’s great.” Finally, when asked whether he has any plans, a man bundled up in winter gear responds, “yes, I might become a Canadian.”

The scene presents a cross-section of contemporary Canadian society, with individuals representing a variety of constituencies: Canadian youth, immigrants, Francophones, and seniors. As evidenced by the brief encounters, however, the Commission faced a considerable challenge, as even in a town like St. Paul, reputed to have organized the most events of any town in Canada, interest in Centennial ranged from enthusiasm to ambivalence and outright bewilderment. Confronted with the difficult task of generating excitement and support for an event that had yet to capture the public imagination, the film producers presented a series of suggestions for possible Centennial projects, hoping it would encourage Canadians who had not yet developed a Centennial plan to get started. If organizers were to realize their goal of securing the broadest possible level of citizen participation, they had to illustrate how everyone could make a contribution and get involved.

Reassuring Canadians that “it only takes one person to start a Centennial project,” the narrator points to the example of local St. Paul high school teacher Sister Claire Adèle. Shown standing next to a wall display that announces that “to live creatively

equals happiness,” Sister Adèle serves as a wonderful example of a motivated, enthusiastic individual, eager to participate in the national anniversary of Confederation. Dressed in her traditional habit, she remarks that “women should [not] be afraid at all of entering into the Centennial.” In fact, she reassures women that “this is exactly their place.” As for her Centennial project, she wanted her students “to think about books.” According to the *St. Paul Centennial Progress Report*, her project was, in fact, more ambitious than she suggests in the film. Sister Adèle, eager for her grade eleven students to learn more Canadian history, had each student prepare a report on the Canadian province they felt was the best. Students then presented their views at the weekly Chamber of Commerce Luncheon Meetings and cash prizes were issued for the best report.

Projects like this emphasized the importance of individual involvement and, perhaps more importantly, reassured Canadians that their Centennial project could be original and reflect their own particular interests and passions. Organizers hoped that, with the example of Sister Adèle, they could attract other Canadians who, like her, might chose to express their national pride in a more personal, whimsical fashion. Participation was key to the success of the project, and material promoting the film suggested the “best way to enjoy Centennial year is to pick a project and get on with it.”⁷⁴

Keen to reinforce the theme of citizen involvement and eager to demonstrate Centennial enjoyed support from all segments of St. Paul's diverse community, the

⁷⁴NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: St. Paul, Alberta Film, “National Film Board Flyer for *Centennial Fever*.”

producers interviewed a Cree man attending a local livestock auction. Asking what he thinks of the program, he responds, "Centennial, well it's a good project." Probing a little further the cameraman asks why he thinks so, and the Cree man replies, "well, it involves Indians in it too . . . it's good for me and it's good for my people too." To emphasize the point, the film shifts from the auction to the kitchen of Dr. and Mrs. Louis Manden who hold weekly art classes for a group of young Crees. Noting the students are "gifted with photographic memories and a style of their own," the narrator observes that "one of the lads has already won a Centennial art contest." The prize was a personal visit with the Prime Minister and a trip to Paris, France. In a scene that does not appear in the final cut, Dr. Manden explains that Oscar Wiskeyjack, an 18 year old Cree, won the prize for an allegorical image of an Indian brave and the new Canadian flag, remarking that Oscar couldn't understand his victory, as he felt he had "plenty of drawings better than that." Apparently no one had informed Oscar of the plan to employ national and allegorical symbols in an effort to strengthen national unity and Canadian identity. In recounting his experience, the young man, Oscar, confides to the camera man that the young men on the reservation told him "they would have traded places with [him] for anything." In an earlier version, Oscar speaks to the students at Glen Avon High School, recounting his visit to Paris, France. Prior to his speech, several students recall highlights of their exchange trip to Hull the previous year, with one student remarking "how the trip opened Canada up for us." In startling contrast to this unabashed excitement, Oscar, upon taking the podium, reveals a wry sense of humour, noting how he had experienced an "entire

loss of suicidal tendencies while looking down the Eiffel tower.”⁷⁵ Both scenes were eventually cut from the final version; no doubt Oscar’s revelation was deemed to not reflect the light-hearted tone desired by the Commission.

Along with images of a compliant, congenial and involved aboriginal community, producers presented a romanticized vision of the French Canadian community in St. Paul. Filmed sitting around a kitchen table residents, St. Paul matrons chat and gossip happily in French as they work co-operatively under the direction of the local Priest. They are busy sewing toques to sell in an effort to raise funds to send the local pee-wee hockey team to a tournament in Quebec City in 1967. The film then cuts to a shot of young boys playing hockey on the local outdoor rink, coached by the local Priest, dressed in his cassock. Earlier versions of the documentary suggested a more complex relationship between the Anglophone and Francophone communities. Initially the director suggested concentrating on a “rink where two Priests: Morin & Beaupré [put] peewee and juvenile players through a strenuous workout,”⁷⁶ and recommended inserting “some ‘mellow’ comment on the evolution of [the] rinks from a tightly controlled French cleric monopoly into their present, and far happier, inter-ethnic state.”⁷⁷ In an earlier version of the script, one father spoke of the teams’ Canadianization, observing their highest scorer now is a Protestant.⁷⁸ Organizers eventually cut the material, perhaps deciding the footage did not advance the theme of unity. Instead, the Commission, adopting a rather neutral tone,

⁷⁵NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: St. Paul Alberta Film, “Shooting Script & Commentary: *Centennial Fever*,” p. 14.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 6.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

chose to emphasize the residents' spirit of cooperation, preferring to downplay any existing cultural conflict. While the film portrayed an idealized vision of Franco Canadian life in St. Paul, Commission officials hoped, nonetheless, that it would serve as a model Canadians would reproduce across the country.

Continuing to provide Canadians with centennial project ideas, the film director introduces the audience to a group of residents who have turned a local bonspiel into a Centennial fundraiser. Reluctantly, participants hand over their one dollar "donation" at the request of the official who assures them it is for a good cause that is "only once a hundred years." One young man, wearing one of the locally made toques, reaches into his pocket and remarks, "I hope there's a Centennial fund for us." He then complains jokingly that "you can always tell a good citizen; he's broke." And in a yet another scene capitalizing on the theme of the responsible citizen, we see that even the local farming community is participating in St. Paul's Centennial blitz. At the St. Paul Auction Mart the Auctioneer manages to sell the same pair of goats at least nine times and, in the process, raise one hundred and sixty dollars for the retarded children's school. The record, however, went to a stray dog that was auctioned nineteen times, a story that garnered press coverage in the *Globe & Mail* and several other Canadian newspapers.

As the film draws to a close, the narrator observes "centennial fever works in many ways," and that in "St. Paul everybody's caught a bit of it." Remarking that "the old look behind and the young look ahead at a country they're just discovering," the narrator's parting words suggest a pleasant balance of historical continuity and hope for a bright future. Emphasizing this view, the closing shot, in contrast to the opening scene, shows

the main street of St. Paul full of people and traffic, giving the impression of growth and vitality, testimony to the determination and drive of the residents.

Centennial Fever articulates a view of Canadian identity that champions a philosophy of cultural harmony and tolerance. As a promotional tool for Centennial, the film imparted a strong vision of a Canadian identity while giving “full recognition of the contributions to the growth and development of the country by peoples of several races and many nationalities.” The film does refer to the distinct cultural heritage and regional characteristics of the northern Alberta town; but, the producers focused primarily on the more general theme of citizenship, as they considered this a common bond that united Canadians. The prevailing message stressed that differences of race, language, history and geography did not need to be divisive forces and, perhaps more importantly, that unity need not be synonymous with uniformity. Articulating a strong vision of Canadian unity, the film expressed the view of then Secretary of State, Judy LaMarsh, that “people can be Canadians and still retain . . . their heritage of culture and region.”⁷⁹ Highlighting what united Canadians, rather than what divided them, producers presented the Albertan community as a model of Canadian nationalism, and encouraged others to follow the St. Paul example.

At completion, the film had cost appreciably more than anticipated and taken considerably more time than proposed. Furthermore, the NFB had yet to produce a French language version. In a letter to the Director of public relations, an official at the

⁷⁹Robert Hartje, *Bicentennial USA: Pathways to Celebration*, (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1973), p. 59.

NFB wrote that it was with “regret [that she had] to report that the Director of the French Language Version . . . expressed the opinion that, with the best will in the world, it would be impossible to make a French version of [the] film, either by recording a French voice track or by using sub-titles.”⁸⁰ Noting that “in the beginning it was suggested that the film director should shoot sync sound in French as much as possible, so that the English sync sequences could be replaced by original French shooting,” she remarked, however, that “this was not done, [primarily] . . . because the Director found that the “French” spoken by the inhabitants of St. Paul [was] very bad French indeed, . . . that would have required subtitles in French to make it intelligible.”⁸¹ The NFB recommended, therefore, that the film be distributed only in English.

In true Canadian fashion, a compromise was reached. The NFB added a running commentary from start to finish. Acknowledging that while “this is not the best in film making, particularly in a commentary running over interviews,” it was felt that, “short of re-shooting the interviews, it was the only way to cover the predominant English sound.”⁸² Feeling that “the text [was] a straight-forward one,” NFB officials could not see any underlying innuendos that would offend Quebec or the Commission.⁸³ In a memo to staff, however, Commissioner Fisher remarked he was “not very pleased with the French version,” noting, “it is a sloppy job . . . giving . . . [the] . . . impression . . .

⁸⁰NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: St. Paul’s Alberta Film, “Memo: June 6, 1966.”

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

that no one speaks French in St. Paul.”⁸⁴ Fortunately, this was not a problem in the *Helicopter Canada* project, as there were no interviews and very little close-up footage of Canadians. The country was the central character in this documentary, but even this seemed to pose problems for the Commission.

The Executive Committee of the Centennial Commission had first considered the *Helicopter Canada* project in March of 1964. At a special meeting of the Executive, the Commission was asked to sponsor a one-hour “television” film on Canada to be shown before and during the Centennial year. Peter Aykroyd, then Director of Special Projects, outlined in a letter why the Commission should support the project. He suggested that, unlike some projects they sponsored, this project “could have an impact in every corner of Canada . . . [and while many] Centennial projects [were] historical (retrospective) in character . . . this . . . [was] modern and forward thinking.”⁸⁵ Of particular importance, however, was the fact that, according to Aykroyd, the film could promote the Centennial theme of national unity, as it would introduce Canada to Canadians in a new and exciting way.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Executive, deciding the project had merit, proposed approaching the NFB with the offer of splitting the significant costs, estimated at three hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. The Commission agreed to shoulder two thirds of the costs, with the NFB responsible for the remaining one third. There was a proviso that should the Treasury Board require that the Commission bear the total cost

⁸⁴Ibid., Memo: August 4, 1966.

⁸⁵NA, RG 69, Vol. 190, File: 4-8-10 (vol.2), National Project, *Helicopter Canada*, “Letter, March 16, 1964.”

it would raise its contribution to a maximum of three hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. In December of 1964 the Director of Special Projects tabled a document entitled "Helicopter Canada - Draft Submission of Script Summary." The Executive did not support the project in its initial form, as they felt it did not enunciate "a set of principles"⁸⁶ that reflected Commission goals and objectives. It, therefore, requested that the storyline be revised and that the Associate Commissioner not release funds to the NFB until the Executive had an opportunity to review and approve the new script. Two weeks later the Executive met and discussed the matter further, with some members expressing reservations about the project. Of particular concern was the fear that the film would turn into "just another travelogue." They were also worried that, in its present form, it contained "too much that is stereotyped," and made inadequate reference to aboriginals and other ethnic groups.

Particularly troubling to the Executive, however, was the fact that, in their opinion, "the script fail[ed] to show the unity of this country growing from the presence therein of a great diversity of people."⁸⁷ Eventually, the Executive did agree to authorize the Associate Commissioner to fulfil the National Film Board request for \$100,000 as working capital to begin the production. Their approval, however, was conditional upon the NFB meeting the following criteria: "that an analytical rather than a geographical approach be taken . . . [and] . . . that the film attempt to show the dynamics of Canada and

⁸⁶NA., RG 69, Vol.414, File: National Film Board, "CCC Executive Committee Minutes, Dec. 14, 1964. - Item #8. "New Business."

⁸⁷Ibid. Item #5 "Helicopter Canada Film."

of Canadians on a regional basis.”⁸⁸ They also directed Aykroyd to inform the NFB “that the material submitted heretofore [fell] short of the expectations of the Executive Committee.”⁸⁹ Aykroyd advised the NFB of the Commission concerns and, in January of 1965, notified the Associate Commissioner the NFB had “accepted the recommendations,” and were going to submit a revised version of the script in the subsequent weeks.⁹⁰

Promoted as the “first full length moving picture feature to be made entirely from a helicopter-in-flight anywhere in the world,” *Helicopter Canada* was a coast-to-coast bird’s eye view of Canada.⁹¹ The French-made Alouette aircraft was mounted with a unique camera apparatus that enabled the cameraman, Eugene Boyko, to film free of the usual vibration produced by the craft. Boyko, a cameraman with 14 years’ experience at the Film Board, had previously made several “classroom films on the geography of Canada and films about the RCAF,”⁹² with his most celebrated work being *Fields of Sacrifice*, a film commemorating the Canadians who died in the two World Wars. With the assistance of the pilot Claude Fourcade, project manager Bob Baylis, engineer Jean Mondion, truck driver Silvio Carpini, and producer Peter Jones, Boyko began filming in September of 1965 and finished production in January 1966, in time for pre-centennial promotional release in Europe and the United States.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰NA, RG 69, Vol. 190, File: 4-8-10 (vol.2), National Project, Helicopter Film, “Memo: Jan. 26, 1965.”

⁹¹Ibid., *Helicopter Canada*, “Information Report.”

⁹²“How To See Canada The Sky Way: Don’t look now, but that man pointing the camera at you from 10 feet up is Jeep Boyko,” *The Star Weekly, Toronto*, 14 August 1965.

Initially the Film Board considered several stylistic approaches for the project. They discussed using well-known personalities, such as Wayne and Schuster, or historical figures to deliver the commentary. One novel suggestion had “a party from outer space discovering Canada as a strange terrestrial area.”⁹³ The NFB rejected these ideas, arguing “story lines or fantasy devices would inhibit . . . mobility and . . . tend to . . . to make the film “dated” before it had achieved maximum distribution.”⁹⁴ Instead they decided the audience’s guide should be “an unidentified passenger in the helicopter . . . [who would] . . . represent [their] curiosity and interest but . . . [would] also act as a witty and informal guide.”⁹⁵ The producer chose to have a minimum of narration, preferring to have the powerful visual images “speak” to the audience. The film, however, was not intended to be a geography lesson and would not, therefore, be a “definitive picture of Canada . . . [that] . . . attempted to give each province equal time.”⁹⁶ Similarly, according to the NFB proposal, the film would not simply be a series of picture postcard shots promoting the physical beauty of the country. Rather, *Helicopter Canada* was designed to illustrate “the human fabric of Canada . . . , Canadians at play, at work . . . the industry, wilderness, [and] isolation . . . , whenever possible the scenes [were to] be framed by a human perspective.”⁹⁷

Comprised of a series of shots documenting the Canadian experience, the choice

⁹³NA, RG 69, Vol. 414, File: National Film Board, “Helicopter Canada: Proposal to CCC Executive Committee.” p. 1.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 3.

⁹⁷Ibid.

of material for the final film was eclectic and random. Following no particular order, the film opened with a shot of the gun drill at Fort Henry in Ontario and then moved to the Quebec city, followed by Cariboo in Newfoundland running over the terrain, to clouds on a Maritime farm, picturesque scenes of the Prairies, Montreal and a Rocky Mountain sunset. The audiences also saw men trapping lobster in the maritimes, miners in Sydney, Nova Scotia, images of Oak Island, wildlife, crowds at the CNE, trappers on skidoos and dog teams in Ottawa, as well as skaters, a horse-drawn sleigh on Mont Royal, the Golden Boy atop the Manitoba Legislature, visitors at the Calgary stampede and totem poles in Stanley Park. But this is only a small selection of the film images, as the final cutting copy listed well over 300 shots.

On Friday, May 13, 1966, officials from the Commission⁹⁸ and the National Film Board viewed a cutting copy of *Helicopter Canada*, mixed with the proposed commentary and soundtrack. Later, a group met to discuss the film in greater detail and produced a report suggesting possible revisions.⁹⁹ In their effort to realize the goal of appealing to both a national and international audience, the group recommended the commentary be revised to provide the appropriate context and background. They also suggested some sections be rewritten as, in their present form, they only reinforced clichés about the Canadian climate. For example, in an early draft of the commentary the narrator remarked that the country “began to warm up about 50,000 years ago,” and now

⁹⁸Commissioner, John Fisher; Associate Commissioner, G. Gauthier; Secretary, C. Gauthier; Director of Research; a representative of the Planning Branch; Director of Special Projects, and the Director of Public Relations and Information.

⁹⁹NA, RG 69, Vol. 190, File: 4-8-10 (vol.2), National Project: Helicopter Film, “Inter-Office Memorandum, May 18, 1966.”

it was “warm enough to swim, in parts of Canada, part of the time.”¹⁰⁰ The Commission recommended the script be “toned down so as not to underline the implication of the cold in Canada, but rather make the point that in many parts of Canada its warm enough to swim much of the time.”¹⁰¹ Perhaps in an attempt to attract visitors to Canada during Centennial, organizers tried to challenge the popular vision of Canada as a frozen wasteland. Unfortunately, and again much to the chagrin of Commissioner Fisher, the film makers had shot a considerable amount of footage in the dead of winter. In particular, the Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa sequences were winter scenes.

Commission staff were also troubled by the sound track and commentary accompanying the Ottawa sequence. An early version shows a dog team racing around a city street corner in Ottawa and then cuts to a long shot of the Parliament Buildings. Initially, the commentary read that “this is the capital city of Canada . . . where . . . during the winter, Members of Parliament come from the four corners of the nation to keep warm with heavy debate.”¹⁰² And, referring to the dog racing, the narrator facetiously observes that “these are not actually Members of Parliament.”¹⁰³ Commission staff advised the film producer that “the dogs barking over the dog race [would] have to be amended on the sound track, so as not to be related to the Houses of Parliament, and the implication must not be present, to put it bluntly, that the M.P.s are barking.”¹⁰⁴ In

¹⁰⁰Ibid. “Helicopter View: Commentary, Second draft,” p. 1.

¹⁰¹Ibid. “Memo to File: May 18, 1966,” p. 2.

¹⁰²Ibid. “Helicopter View: Commentary (Second Draft),” p. 6.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid. “Memo to File: May 18, 1966,” p. 3.

addition, the commentary was revised in order to delete a remark suggesting that in 1860 the future site of the Houses of Parliament was considered a possible site for a lunatic asylum. In his report, Aykroyd wrote that reference be deleted “and replaced by something else equally as useful,” as it was considered in poor taste to imply a connection between the “occupants of the House of Commons and the word lunatic.”¹⁰⁵ Eventually, the whole Ottawa sequence was re-worked in an effort to incorporate these Commission “suggestions.”

A similarly “delicate” matter was Quebec. Sensitive to the tenuousness of provincial support, Centennial organizers were careful not to offend government officials. Accordingly, Peter Aykroyd brought problems with the commentary to the attention to the NFB. The central concern was that in the opening commentary there was reference to Canada’s birthday celebrations, a point that Quebec disputed vehemently. In a letter to the NFB, Aykroyd recommended closer examination of the commentary to make sure there was no reference to Canada’s birthday celebrations, as it was “a cardinal principal that the Centennial Commission avoid this phrase.”¹⁰⁶ Writing that the country existed prior to 1867, Aykroyd explained that “to many Canadians it [was] offensive to signify that 1867 marked the birthday of Canada . . . it was the period of Confederation of Canada . . . and these true facts must be borne in mind.”¹⁰⁷

Perhaps one of the oddest revisions, however, was that of the closing commentary. The narrator observes that Canada has been called “the oldest underdeveloped country in

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., “Letter from P.H. Aykroyd to T. Daly, July 4, 1966.”

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

the world . . . [with] the cultural development of Luxembourg, the economic structure of the Congo, and the climate of Siberia.”¹⁰⁸ Organizers advised that, “for diplomatic reasons . . . , this reference . . . must be changed to some more obscure country.”¹⁰⁹ The final choice was Afghanistan. Equally curious is the narrator’s final statement in which he observes that “the people who say these nasty things are Canadians,” noting that “the rest of the world seems to like her.”¹¹⁰ The problem, it seemed, was not with how others view Canada, but how Canadians viewed themselves. The film, of course, was designed to counter the culture of self-deprecation and instill national pride in Canadians.

Commission reaction to the success of final product was mixed. N. Goldschmidt, Chief of the Performing Arts Division, wrote to Peter Aykroyd saying he felt the film was “entertainment of the highest quality” that “should make every Canadian proud to identify himself with a country so beautifully and imaginatively displayed on the screen.”¹¹¹ Moreover, he thought the “film [would] make everyone aware what this country is all about” and “will awaken in . . . people not only interest, but also the desire to know their country better.”¹¹² Commissioner Fisher, on the other hand, was not as convinced the film was as effective a tool as had been promised. He was particularly concerned that the film makers did not illustrate the geographic diversity of Canada and, more importantly,

¹⁰⁸Ibid., “Helicopter View: Commentary (Second Draft),” p. 9.

¹⁰⁹Ibid. “Memo to File: May 18, 1966,” p. 4.

¹¹⁰Ibid. “Highball: Commentary (Final Draft),” p. 13.

¹¹¹Ibid. “Memo to P.H. Aykroyd from N. Goldschmidt, April 15, 1966.”

¹¹²Ibid.

emphasize the Centennial connection sufficiently.¹¹³ Fisher was also angry that the NFB had changed the title from the agreed upon *Helicopter Canada* to *Highball* or *Take it From the Top*, and he refused to accept the test print until the title was changed, “as requested”¹¹⁴ Other senior officials expressed concern the film was only a partial portrayal of Canada, arguing that the overall impression was one “not likely to appeal to tourist bureaus because the honest look at Canada . . . shows a great deal of wide open spaces, considerable snow, and a country still under construction.”¹¹⁵

In contrast to these reservations expressed by the officials, reviews in the popular press proclaimed the film an unequivocal success. Clyde Gilmour of the *Toronto Telegram* wrote that it was “stunningly beautiful” and that he took “pleasure in recommending it,” as it had “plenty of refreshing humour [and] excellent wide-screen colour.”¹¹⁶ A review in the *Globe & Mail* declared it was a “marvellous film [that] achieved the almost impossible in making scenes of Canadian life and grandeur of [the] landscape seem fresh, new and awe-inspiring all over again,” and noted that “every Canadian should see it.”¹¹⁷ Arthur Zeldin of the *Toronto Daily Star* claimed it presented “a wide, deep and moving look at the special pains and glories woven into the fabric of

¹¹³Ibid. “Memo: May 19, 1966” - Hand written note addressed to Peter at the end of a memo sent by P.H. Aykroyd to the Commissioner & Associate Commissioner.

¹¹⁴Ibid., “Letter from John Fisher to Grant MacLean, Acting Government Film Commissioner, August 23, 1966.”

¹¹⁵Ibid. “Letter to Mr. Clyde Batten from P.H. Aykroyd, June 21, 1966.”

¹¹⁶NA, RG 69, Vol. 190, File: 4-8-10 [vol. 3] *Helicopter Canada*, *Helicopter Canada* Reviews: “Clyde Gilmour, *Toronto Telegram*, 1967”

¹¹⁷Ibid., “Joan Fox, *Globe & Mail*, 1967”

[the] country” and urged Canadians to go and see it.¹¹⁸ Clearly, the joint project was a critical success, and, according to film historian Garry Evans, the film “became one of the all time top-ten favourites at home and abroad.”¹¹⁹ One reviewer even went as far to suggested *Helicopter Canada* should be nominated for an Academy Award which, as it turned out, it was. Given the unexpected endorsement by the Canadian press and American film industry, the Commission were eventually pressed to conceded that, unlike the St. Paul experiment, the joint project was a commercial success. In May of 1967 the Executive authorized a further expenditure of seventy-four thousand, seven hundred and eighty dollars to be “used to make 16mm and 35mm prints of the documentary . . . in eight foreign languages,”¹²⁰ the only condition being that, the advice of “External Affairs be sought to make sure that the best possible choice [was] made.”¹²¹ The films were to be used by Canadian Embassies and missions abroad in order to promote Canada’s Centennial message overseas.

While it is difficult to assess how effective a tool the films were as vehicles designed to reinforce Canadian identity and strengthen national identity, it is clear they did succeed in promoting Centennial and generating enthusiasm for the event. In 1967 Canadians caught *Centennial Fever* and like the residents of St. Paul, Alberta, who seem to have been among the first to be contract the “fever,” people joined together and

¹¹⁸Ibid., “Arthur Zeldin, *Toronto Daily Star*, 1967.”

¹¹⁹Garry Evans, *In the National Interest*, p. 122.

¹²⁰The eight languages chosen were: German, Hindu, Japanese, Arabic, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese.

¹²¹NA, RG 69, Vol. 190, File: 4-8-10 (Vol.4), Films & T.V. Series, “Excerpts of Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting Held May 29, 1967.”

organized eclectic, imaginative Centennial events and projects. They participated in record numbers, and the ensuing “epidemic” of Canadian patriotism wildly exceeded the Commission’s expectations.

Functioning more as educational and promotional tools for Centennial rather than as a vehicle to directly advance nationalist objective, both films, particularly the commercially successful *Helicopter Canada*, inspired Canadians to get involved and celebrate Canada’s one hundredth anniversary. In each case, however, film production highlighted internal tensions, that hindered Commission officials realizing broad policy objectives. For example, initially organizers were delighted that St. Paul, Alberta was a bilingual community, as this demonstrated that Francophone culture was not restricted to Québec. Later, learning that people in Québec would not be able to understand the St. Paul dialect, Commission officials realized that, rather than emphasize cultural bonds, the language problem actually highlighted the “problem” of Canadian regionalism. Similarly, *Helicopter Canada*, with its vistas of a largely unpopulated, rugged country, reinforced the public perception of Canada as a cold, empty country. Fortunately for the Commission, however, the medium of film lends itself to manipulation and, in each instance, officials worked jointly with NFB staff to ensure that the final products reflected, at least as much as was possible, Commission goals and objectives. *Helicopter Canada*, with its beautiful images of an impressive landscape, revealed that Canadians had something to be proud of, and *Centennial Fever* showed Canadians how to demonstrate their pride.

As promotional tools for the national anniversary, both films articulated a vision

of cultural tolerance and political harmony, and, emphasizing the diversity of the Canadian experience, provided audiences with an overview of Canadian society, always returning, however, to the central theme of citizenship and unity. Both films promoted an image of historical tradition that helped cultivate a sense of cultural cohesion and political stability and, in this way, furthered the objectives of the Centennial Commission. Moreover, rather than communicate change, the films, exemplifying a Durkheimian, understanding of the role of public ritual and celebration, served, in fact, to authenticate existing traditions and advance the status quo. While both *Centennial Fever* and *Helicopter Canada* paid homage to the past, the primary focus was on the future. Acknowledging that the “the second century of Confederation must be based on what has been achieved in the past,”¹²² producers and Commission officials emphasized the theme of the a new beginning, actively communicating the message the country was on the threshold of a future full of promise.

¹²²NA, RG 69, Vol. 190, file, 4-8-10 (vol. 2) National Project: Helicopter Canada Film “Letter April 15, 1966, to P. Aykroyd from N. Goldschmidt.”

CHAPTER THREE

Out of the Past: The Future

“ . . . [symbols] seldom persist unchanged . . . [undergoing] modification and selective exposure in order to correspond to . . . changes in values, . . . [but] the basic function of the symbol system is unaltered. [S]ymbols continue to transmit values and ideals to succeeding generations, thereby lending both continuity and reaffirmation to the cultural contents which they carry.”

M. Kenneth Brody, “Yankee and the Bicentennial,” *Sociological Inquiry*, (Fall 1982): 263.

Of all the Centennial year events, perhaps one of the most popular and well remembered was the Confederation Train and Caravan project. Organized by the Centennial Commission, it came to exemplify the Centennial spirit for many Canadians. In small towns like Swift Current, Saskatchewan, people “stood eight deep in a line [that] extended a city block in temperatures of only 24 degrees above zero,”¹ to see the much anticipated Confederation Train. The project succeeded in focussing people’s attention on Canada: its past and its future.

Faced with the task of persuading massive numbers of Canadians to get involved in the anniversary of Confederation, Commission organizers looked for ways to excite interest in what was a considerably abstract phenomenon. In an effort to give tangible, meaningful expression to a rather obscure and removed historical fact, planners adopted a strategy that encouraged Canadians to celebrate the national anniversary in their own unique and personal way. By not defining how people should celebrate, planners hoped Canadians would feel free to express their enthusiasm in a range of ways and, most

¹“Thousands flock to visit train,” *The Leader Post*, 28 March 1967, p. 2.

importantly, participate. While the approach proved successful, some officials expressed concern the tactic might arouse regional loyalties, emphasize discord, and thereby undermine the primary goal of reinforcing national unity. Therefore, they advised the generous use of symbols, imagery, and language that transcended local, regional or personal loyalties and stressed the collective experience and points of shared contact between Canadians. Moreover, claiming it was critical they develop an event that would “anchor” the celebration, they promoted the idea of supporting one large project that would function as focal point Canadians could identify with. Serving as a type of teaching tool, the program exemplified sociologist Lloyd Warner’s theory that symbolic events, like the Caravan and Train initiative, function to orient and reassure visitors by presenting a comforting vision of the past and the future.

It was soon evident that the Confederation Train and Caravan program satisfied this objective. The Commission advertising firm, Vickers & Benson of Toronto, concurred, declaring the “the importance of the . . . [program could] . . . not be over-estimated” because “the train, as a tangible, visible entity,” worked to “create and transport the presence of Centennial - giving it a cohesive form on a National basis that few other [projects] could hope to achieve.”² As the embodiment of the Centennial, both the Train and Caravan projects generated extraordinary interest and inspired thousands of Canadians to participate in other Centennial projects, as well as develop their own, more idiosyncratic expressions of national loyalty.

²NA, RG 69, Vol. 542, File: Train Dela Confederation - Promotion, “Advertising and Promotion Plan by Vickers and Benson Ltd., May 1966.”

At the official dedication ceremony in Ottawa, the Secretary of State, Judy LaMarsh, told the assembled audience that the Confederation Train was “in many respects, a very representative Centennial project.”³ Remarking the project symbolized “the co-operative attitude which . . . [was] . . . a dominant theme for [the] historic celebrations,” she spoke of how the Commission, various branches of the federal government, and private sources had worked together to design and construct the display.⁴ Likely in an effort to emphasize the Centennial theme of national unity, she also took time to acknowledge that the project had demanded that three levels of government work cooperatively to arrange the complicated train schedule. She neglected, however, to credit the Centenary Council with having first considered and promoted the project.

The Confederation Train project had first been proposed by John P. Kidd of the Canadian Citizenship Council. In September 1956, Kidd wrote to the President of the Council suggesting possible Centennial programs. Noting it was an idea he had “dug out of [his] old files,” he remarked the “Freedom Caravan” was a project sponsored by the American Heritage Foundation some years earlier.⁵ Comprised of six cars designed to carry museum displays documenting American history, the exhibit had toured for two years throughout the States. According to Kidd, John Diefenbaker had expressed interest

³Ibid., Vol. 529, File: PHA - Confederation Train - Ottawa, January 1, 1967, Ceremonies, “Notes for Secretary of State at the Official Dedication of the Confederation Train.”

⁴Ibid.

⁵NA, MG 28 I 25, Vol 14, File: Kidd, J.P. Exec. Director - Memos to President of CCC [1956-59]. “Memo September 27, 1956 #8.”

in mounting something similar in Canada and had raised the matter several times in the House of Commons. Kidd suggested the exhibit, designed to appeal to high-school students, would celebrate Canadian heritage and the “idea of freedom, and growth and workings of self-government,” and should travel across the country during the school year.⁶ Recognizing that it was too large a project for the Council to undertake single-handedly, he recommended the organization work with local Chambers of Commerce and members of the business community. The Council eventually established a committee to consider the project in greater detail, and even went as far as to secure quotes for the semi-trailers. It was the Centennial Commission, however, which was the direct beneficiary of the Council’s preliminary investigative work. Commission staff recognized the potential of the project and, before long, it was incorporated into the official Centennial program.

In April 1964 Cabinet approved an expenditure of up to seven million dollars for the Confederation Train and Caravan project. Released for the purpose of developing an exhibit and acquiring artifacts to display, the funds were also used to cover the cost of purchasing sixty-four trucks and sixty-four trailers for the Caravan exhibit, as well as six coaches for the Confederation Train. From the beginning, the project proved to be an organizational and logistical challenge. First, officials confronted the difficult task of transforming the commercial caravans and coaches into travelling entertainment, educational facilities. In the case of the Canadian Pacific railway coaches, this required gutting and modifying the interiors, in preparation for the installation of the new, modern

⁶Ibid.

exhibit equipment and displays. The Confederation Train consisted of fifteen units, decorated on the exterior with colourful symbols. There were six exhibit cars, seven service cars which housed the sleeping, dining and baggage compartments, and two diesel engines. The exhibit had a travelling staff of twenty-two, as well as a compliment of seven RCMP officers, in full dress, who were responsible for security. It was open to the public seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. The commercial trailers for the Caravan exhibit also had to be designed to meet the unique exhibit requirements. By the summer of 1965 suppliers had responded to the tenders sent out by the government and exhibit organizers recommended the Executive authorize a contract award to ATCO for sixty-four tractors and sixty-four trailers, at a total cost of one million, twenty-seven thousand, five hundred and forty-four dollars. In addition, they advised purchasing six Canadian Pacific Railway coaches for seventy thousand dollars per unit, with Canadian Pacific agreeing to overhaul the equipment for an additional nine thousand dollars per coach.⁷ While this part of the exercise had been comparatively straightforward, what followed - writing the storyline and developing the display - proved to be much more complex.

According to a Centennial "Fact Sheet," the Confederation Train was designed to "bring to the people of Canada a vivid recreation of . . . [their] history . . . as well as a unique conception of what the future may hold for Canada."⁸ The exhibit, a multi-media display that incorporated sound, light, odour and three-dimensional exhibits was a

⁷NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File: 4-13, "Memo to the Executive Committee Re: Confederation Train & Confederation Caravans: Progress Report on Acquisition of Equipment & Design of Exhibits," June 11, 1965.

⁸Ibid., Vol. 542, File: Confederation Train, "Fact Sheet"

massive undertaking. Beginning “one million years ago when Canada was a tropical land,”⁹ the story highlighted significant historical markers in the country’s past. By late 1964, however, there were still problems with the storyline. According to one official, while it had “come a long way,” and had “improved considerably. . . there [was] still some room for improvement.”¹⁰ Maintaining there was “still too much emphasis on material and economic accomplishments,” he expressed concern that “political developments and outstanding personalities” were downplayed.¹¹ Having reviewed the storyline in detail, he prepared a revised draft, incorporating his suggestions. In particular, he recommended the storyline “attempt to be equitable in its treatment of all the groups and regions in Canada.”¹² “Without exaggerating the contribution of any one group,” he claimed the exhibit had to recognize the duality of Canadian history as, in his opinion, not to do so would invite criticism from “a large number of Canadians.”¹³ Most importantly, though, he advised senior staff against taking the “easy way out by concentrating on material accomplishments,” arguing that the train and caravans should “stimulate pride in being Canadian and awareness of what this means in terms of problems and conflicts.”¹⁴ Considering Centennial celebrations were planned to reinforce

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., Vol. 420, File: Storyline; Train & Caravans, “Memo from A. LeBlanc to Mr. R. Elliott, Mr. L. Maiden, 29 Dec., 1964.”

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid. “Memo from A. LeBlanc to Mr. George E. Gauthier, R. Elliott, C. Gauthier, L. Maiden, Jan. 27, 1964.”

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid. Vol. 420, File: Storyline; Train & Caravans, “Memo from A. LeBlanc to Mr. R. Elliott, Mr. L. Maiden, 29 Dec., 1964.”

national unity, the challenge was how to address the problem of rebellion and dissent in a way that would not undermine Commission objectives. Perhaps not surprisingly, examples of historical conflict and political dissent were minimized, with officials preferring instead to interpret the past in a way that reinforced national loyalty.

In anticipation of the lines of people waiting to visit the Train and Caravans, designers developed exterior displays to keep crowds entertained. Organizers also went to great lengths to stress that the program was an exciting and unique experience, assuring people that even the exteriors of the Train and Caravans, decorated with designs by several Canadian artists, were interesting.¹⁵ Along with the twenty foot letters spelling “Canada” and “Confederation,” the caravans were covered with images reflective of Canadian history and society. In addition to the exterior graphics, there was also an entertainment stage at the entrance to the Caravan exhibits and in the outside quadrangle area visitors could view regional displays, designed to acquaint them with the facts and figures about their own area. Called “triadetics,” the pyramid shapes constructed from skeletal frames of aluminium tubing featured mechanical exhibits documenting in sound, light and photos the development of the local region. The British Columbia display, for example, had a model of construction equipment used on the Peace River development and dozens of helicopter models which whirled with the turn of a crank. As the train and caravan exhibit were open to the public until eleven in the evening, the display also featured high-tech lighting that highlighted what planners described as the “modern, even

¹⁵Ibid., Vol. 538, File: Train Promotion, “Confederation Train Pamphlet.”

swinging, representations of the Canadian scene.”¹⁶

Eager to differentiate the exhibit from a conventional museum visit, organizers went to considerable lengths to characterize the Train and Caravan project as a fun, enjoyable experience. The press kit emphasized the dynamic nature of the exhibit, noting it was “not a museum or an art gallery or a history lesson,” suggesting it was “more like a time machine trip to visit the people of all walks of life who lived and worked, laughed and wept in Canada.”¹⁷ Also, promotional literature, designed to alleviate potential areas of concern, took pains to reassure Canadians that text in the Train and Caravan exhibits was kept to an absolute minimum¹⁸ Secure in the knowledge that they would not have to endure a profusion of written material, people were eager to visit the display confident that it would be a pleasant, entertaining experience. This was in stark contrast to the accepted view of museums as serious places people went to learn, but certainly not to have fun.

Described by one scholar as “powerful identity-defining machines,”¹⁹ public museums have, since their inception, played an important role in authenticating and legitimizing “the spiritual heritage of the nation.”²⁰ The roots of the present day institution can be traced back to late eighteenth century Europe. Recognized as the “first

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., Vol. 528, File: Peter H. Aykroyd - Confederation Caravan - Press Kit. “Arrival Story.”

¹⁸Ibid., Vol. 538, File: Train Promotion, “Confederation Train Pamphlet.”

¹⁹Carol Duncan, “Art Museum and the Ritual of Citizenship,” in *Exhibiting Cultures*. I. Karp and S.D. Lavine eds., (Washington: Smithsonian Institutions Press, 1991), p. 101.

²⁰As quoted in Steven D. Lavine “Hispanic Art in the United States,” in *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 85.

truly modern art museum,” the designation of the Louvre as a national museum in 1793 signalled the birth of the public museum as a symbol of civic pride, “political virtue,” and national sovereignty.²¹ Transformed from the palace of Kings to the place of the people, it was a “powerful symbol of the fall of the *ancien régime* and the creation of a new order.”²² Open to all people, the museum championed a more democratic vision of society, and welcomed everyone to visit and learn about the national past. The museum movement flourished throughout the nineteenth century, with many wealthy patrons founding institutions throughout Europe and North America, no doubt driven, in part, by the social and political prestige conferred on them as a result their philanthropy. Exemplifying a spirit of civic duty and a commitment to the common good, the movement also enjoyed support among government officials who soon recognized the advantages to be gained from establishing public institutions devoted to compiling and preserving an authoritative account of the national collective memory.

One scholar observed that, “historically, it can be argued that museums have been created to promote the aspirations of their creators.”²³ Because while “[m]useums and their . . . exhibitions are morally neutral in principal, . . . in practice they always make moral statements,” and it is this “alleged innate neutrality . . . that enables them to

²¹Carol Duncan, “Art Museum and the Ritual of Citizenship,” in *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 88.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 93.

²³Elaine Heumann Gurian, “Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities,” in *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 178. “Art museums have been created by wealthy patrons and collectors to reinforce their status and aesthetic, while science-and-technology centres have been created . . . to enlist the public’s concurrence about the progress and future of industry. . . [even] counterculture museums have been created by people of all classes who want to preserve a particular viewpoint that has not been expressed in other museums.”

become instruments of power as well as instruments of education and experience.”²⁴ Invested with a cultural prestige and authority, museums function as vehicles to inspire national pride. The Louvre, for example, with its origins in the collections of Louis XIV, was designed to demonstrate “how the world was ordered around . . . France of the Bourbon dynasty.”²⁵

In 1867, the year of Canadian Confederation, Louis Napoleon of France “organized the Paris Exposition for the purpose of impressing the world with the stability of his government.”²⁶ According to one scholar, “the objects . . . [were] the heroes of this new type of festival.”²⁷ By divorcing the objects “from the contexts to which they originally belonged,” and adopting a style of display traditionally reserved for exhibiting treasures from the past, the French “elevated to the status of art” ordinary objects intended for sale, as these commodities were the new “emblems of power.”²⁸ In the twentieth century contemporary art and cultural history exhibits and collections, both private and public are “charged with the ideology of the sponsor who made the display possible,” or reflect the vision of the individual who curated the show.²⁹ Due to the constraints of time and space curators implement a selection process that privileges particular objects over others. Typically organized according to broad thematic historical markers such as the ancient world of Greece and Rome, the Medieval or Renaissance

²⁴I. Karp, “Culture & Representation,” *Exhibiting Culture*, p. 14.

²⁵Masao Yamaguchi, “Exhibition in Japanese Culture,” in *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 61.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹*Ibid.*

periods, or national milestones, museum exhibits have, traditionally, advanced a linear view of the world that illustrates, either through works of art or cultural artifacts, how society has “progressed,” to its present state. Throughout the process, however, “[d]ecisions are made to emphasize one element and to downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others.”³⁰

For example, when deciding what to display or how to arrange a display, curators base their decisions on what viewers will consider appropriate. However, “assumptions underpinning . . . decisions vary according to culture and over time, place, and type of museum and exhibit.”³¹ Depending on what objects are displayed and how they are arranged, museum exhibits can communicate a variety of messages to viewers that “either aid or impede . . . appreciation and understanding of the visual, cultural, social, and political interest of the objects and stories exhibited.”³² Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that organizers of the Confederation Caravan and Train program, anxious to consider the experiences of all Canadians, struggled with what to include in the exhibit and how to arrange displays.

Fearful of tiring or boring visitors with too much text, organizers made extensive use of historical artifacts and reproductions, as well as maps, artwork and photographs. During the late 1960s, museum professionals began to embrace an “interactive,” hands-on approach that stimulated all the senses and allowed visitors to engage in a more pro-

³⁰Steven D. Lavine and Ivan Karp, “Introduction: Museums & Multiculturalism,” *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 1.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²*Ibid.*, p. 14.

active sense. The aim was to provide “an evocative and expressive, rather than a documentary, style of presentation.”³³ Instead of presenting a chronological history of Canada, organizers elected to arrange the interior displays into several general subject areas, in an effort to present an inclusive account of the national past. In her memoirs then Secretary of State, Judy LaMarsh, remarked that “[n]o attempt was made to tell the whole story of Canada, only the lasting impressions were there - of lonely, arduous exploration and settlement; of the politics and wars and Depression of a growing nation; of its transportation and farms and industries.”³⁴ Rather than provide a comprehensive history, the exhibit was designed to evoke a feeling of pride in visitors and, highlighting past achievements, impart an appreciation of the Canadian “story.” This approach exemplifies the principal of the collective experience, de-emphasizing differences and highlighting connections. Fearing that there is no actual consensus about a common history or the concept of a unified nation, government officials design events like Centennial so as to emphasize collective ties, no matter how tenuous or artificial. The success of an extravaganza like the Confederation Caravan and Train program, therefore, depends largely on careful planning and effective management.

Having developed a strategy, organizers then faced the difficult task of how to translate abstract themes and principals into tangible displays using historical artifacts. Given that “an exhibition is a cultural artifact that articulates a producer’s visions, biases,

³³Peter Cochrane & David Goodman, “The Great Australian Journey,” *Australian Historical Studies: Making the Bicentenary*, 91 (October 1998): 34.

³⁴LaMarsh, *Memories of a Bird in a Gilded Cage*, p. 186.

and concerns,”³⁵ it is helpful to consider how the exhibit was constructed and structured. By considering what organizers chose to feature and display, this study endeavours to provide a better understanding of government goals.

Upon entering the first caravan trailer, “Beginnings,” visitors encountered a cave-like wall of pre-historic times, with the Centennial symbol carved into it. As they moved through the exhibit, they emerged from the cave and encountered a Gaspé Coast seascape, complete with the cries of seagulls and waves lapping against Perce Rock, the site of Jacques Cartier’s landing in 1534. There was also a map of North America tracing the route taken by the first inhabitants of the continent, from Asia across the Bering Strait and through Alaska to “Canada.” A second map tracked the movement of tribal groups throughout the country, identifying their final settlement areas. In this section visitors were introduced to native culture and society. Along with images of native settlements, there were also several examples of native art and culture, including Inuit stone carvings, intricate beadwork, artifacts from the West Coast Haida, Plains Indian drawings and, perhaps for dramatic effect, an Iroquois shield.

During a promotional preview for CBC radio, Commissioner Fisher escorted a reporter through the exhibit. The journalist, obviously impressed with the displays, remarked in amazement how the physical environment had shaped society and culture. Later, as the two men walked through the exhibit highlighting native culture and society, Fisher commented on the complexity and ingenuity of early native civilization, telling the reporter they “were the greatest do-it-yourself . . . people . . . the world [had] ever

³⁵Elaine Heumann Gurian, *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 178.

known.”³⁶ Remarking that “the white man learned a great deal from [them],” he concluded that “we owe him so much in the development of civilization on this continent.”³⁷ The reporter graciously concurred, remarking that “without the knowledge of the Indian, the first white men would not have survived.”³⁸ With this official, if fleeting, recognition of the important role native culture and society played in Canadian history Fisher could rest easy, confident that he had “paid his respects.”

Writing about the Australian Bicentenary ‘88 Exhibition, Peter Cochrane and David Goodman observed that organizers adopted the theme of the journey, “an abstraction of the immigration experience,” as the central focus of the Bicentennial Exhibition.³⁹ Recasting Aborigines as the first immigrants to the continent, organizers highlighted shared experiences and downplayed differences. Remarking that “the celebration was “as much about 40,000 years of the Aborigine and the four weeks of the Vietnamese boat people, as it was about 200 years of the British and their descendants,”⁴⁰ the authors note the general manager of the Australian Bicentenary Authority took great pains to emphasize the collective experience. The strategy served as a levelling mechanism, designed to demonstrate that “everyone has an ethnic background.”⁴¹ While perhaps not as obvious, organizers of the Confederation Train and Caravan exhibit had

³⁶NA, Audio Visual, 8332, ACC 1989-0551, “CBC Radio Tape: The Caravans are Rolling, May 1 1967, Part II.”

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Cochrane and Goodman, “The Great Australian Journey,” p. 26.

⁴⁰*Australian*, 25 August 1980, as quoted in “The Great Australian Journey,” *Australian Historical Studies*, p. 26.

⁴¹Ibid.

employed a similar approach.

Manufacturing a vision of a shared history, organizers worked to strengthen national unity and re-enforce national identity, by highlighting collective experiences. Casting North American aboriginals as Canada's "first immigrants," organizers established a common frame of reference that many non-aboriginals could relate to and understand. The result was an equalizing effect that stressed a horizontal perspective of Canadian society in which no one cultural group was considered more important than any other.

The immigrant experience was a recurring theme throughout the Centennial exhibit, with many displays focusing on the stories of the early settlers and the arrival of new Canadians during the late nineteenth century. As visitors moved through Caravan exhibit they entered the second section, "Exploration and Immigration," where they were greeted by the sound of the voyageurs singing and maps, recessed into the floor, documenting European exploration.⁴² Becoming gradually more detailed, the final map, an "aerial photo of Canada's latest land acquisition, the man-made Ile. Ste. Hélène in the St. Lawrence River, the site of Expo '67,"⁴³ served to emphasize the Canadian spirit of exploration and achievement. The caravan display evoked romantic images of rugged,

⁴²The first map, drawn up by Portuguese explorer De La Costa in 1500, shows an unrecognizable North American coast line. Successive maps, French maps of 1560, 1632, the now famous Samuel de Champlain map, 1703 and 1752 document the ongoing encroachment by Europeans. A British map from 1804 illustrated Hudson Bay Company holdings and a railroad map of 1907 "... marks Alberta and Saskatchewan as provinces, the Northwest Territories as part of Canada and the CPR stretching coast to coast." [NA, RG 69, Vol. 528, File PHA - Press Kit, "Background Information: Interior Exhibits."]

⁴³Ibid.

fearless explorers taming a wild country and its “savage” inhabitants. A wooden sled, heavily packed with furs, spoke of the extraordinary wealth waiting to be exploited. In a corner, stored in what was described in the press material as a “treasure chest,” were the “the goods the Indians wanted for their furs: mirrors, beads, knives, axeheads, crimson flannel.”⁴⁴ Along with artifacts from the fur trade, navigational instruments were also on display. The most famous item was a reproduction of Champlain’s astrolabe.

Engraved into the Caravan walls were the names of well known early explorers: Cartier, Champlain, La Salle, Joliet, Frobisher, Hudson, Vancouver. Speaking to the reporter, Fisher, eager to emphasize the exhibit was unbiased, reassured him that they had been placed in “no particular preference to any of them.”⁴⁵ On the Train, however, one whole room was dedicated to examining Champlain’s role in Canadian history. A large wall map traced what promotional material referred to as his “adventures” from 1603 to 1629 and a picture on the wall highlighted Champlain’s military victories over the native community. Champlain “the builder” was represented by a picture of Quebec City’s first building, as he and his men were reputed to have wintered there. Finally, visitors faced a life-sized model of Champlain dressed in seventeenth century clothing. Designed to provide people with a “vivid impression of . . . [Champlain’s] energy and accomplishments,”⁴⁶ the display presented a selective account of an idealized historical

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵NA, Audio Visual, 8332, ACC 1989-0551, “CBC Radio Tape: The Caravans are Rolling, May 1 1967, Part II.”

⁴⁶NA, RG 69, Vol 529, File: DPRI - Confederation Train Kit for 1967, “Background Information.”

figure. Reinforcing the image of a noble man who, surviving in a hostile physical and social environment, worked to establish New France, designers proffered a larger than life figure already familiar to many Canadians. Considered by many Canadians as a national hero, Champlain emerged from the exhibit as a proud “founding father.”

Visitors to the Caravan then proceeded to a section that focused on the development and growth of Canada prior to Confederation. They walked through a replica of an eighteenth century Quebec tailor shop. Then, quickly moving from French to English Canada, they found themselves in an Upper Canada tavern, complete with the sound of horses hooves on the pavement outside. Inside the “fireplace and lanterns flicker[ed] warmly,”⁴⁷ and the smell of beeswax candles emanated throughout; on the table was a copy of William Lyon Mackenzie’s *Colonial Advocate* of 1830. Subsequent displays highlighted the pre-Confederation battles of Wolfe and Montcalm in 1759; the war of 1812; French-Canadian militiamen and British regulars repelling the American at Chateauguy in 1813 and the Fenian raids into the Maritimes and Quebec. The sounds of battle eventually gave way, however, to material documenting the Confederation conferences in Charlottetown and Quebec City.

Visitors then moved into what was described as the apex of the exhibit, the Confederation Chamber. Compared to the previous sections, this exhibit was stark and simple. The room, designed as a place where people could pause and reflect, had royal blue walls and plush red carpet. The only display in the room was a sculpture, by

⁴⁷Ibid., Vol. 528, File: Peter H. Aykroyd - Confederation Caravan - Press Kit, “Background Information: Interior Exhibits.”

Canadian artist, Sylvia Lefkovitz, cast in bronze and lit by a single spotlight. Lefkovitz, a Canadian sculptor working in Milan, had won a competition held by the Commission. The thirty-six Fathers of Confederation were cast in the centre of the sculpture. They were surrounded by citizens from the time, representing all walks of life: a farmer, trapper, Indians, housewife and children playing.⁴⁸ Stressing that Canadians joined together to build Canada, the sculpture articulated the principal of national unity, highlighting how Canadians had worked collectively to achieve national goals. John Fisher too, talking to the CBC reporter, took the opportunity to emphasize the important spirit of co-operation highlighted in the work of art. With patriotic music playing in the background, Fisher told the reporter that, in his opinion, Charlottetown and Quebec resulted in something uniquely Canadian. Observing that “Confederation . . . came together without revolution, without wars, without bloodshed,” and noting that no one came to the table “with any guns, or any malicious intent,” Fisher took pride in the fact that the Fathers of Confederation were “men of goodwill who decided like gentlemen to . . . dream of a nation.”⁴⁹ Downplaying political tensions, both past and present, Fisher invited guests to take a moment to reflect on the “good fortune that is [theirs] to be Canadian to be living in this great land.”⁵⁰ According to the planners, the story of Canada, was one of progress and constructive development for all citizens. The subject of historical conflict and opposition emerged infrequently in the exhibit, with organizers

⁴⁸NA, RG 69, Vol. 529, File: DPRI - Confederation Train Kit for 1967.

⁴⁹NA, Audio Visual, 8332, ACC 1989-0551, “CBC Radio Tape: The Caravans are Rolling, May 1 1967, Part II.”

⁵⁰Ibid.

preferring to emphasize stories that reinforced the national unity theme and promoted the commonly held conviction that Canada was a tolerant, inclusive and peaceful nation. By avoiding overt references to anything potentially difficult or explosive, organizers designed an exhibit that functioned to instill a sense of shared values and emphasized common bonds.

The treatment of the Riel Rebellion demonstrates the organizers' reluctance to tackle controversial issues. Riel was described in press kit material as "brilliant but deranged,"⁵¹ and Riel's struggle was reduced to a brief, overly simplified account. On the Train, the first Riel Rebellion was represented by Louis Riel's pistol, a photograph of Riel and copies of original rebellion documents. Planners avoided any direct or thorough exploration of the historically significant event. On the Caravans, organizers chose to display a photo of a soldier holding a gun to signify the defeat of the rebels. Press kit information noted, in passing, that the Métis "tried again in 1885, but failed," observing curtly that "Riel was executed."⁵² With little real explanation as to the circumstances of the Rebellion, or any reference to ongoing tensions in the modern aboriginal community, organizers presented a highly sanitized view of Canadian history, that was moderated with symbols dear to the Canadian mainstream.⁵³ For example, designers placed a scarlet tunic of the Mounted Police alongside the Riel artifacts. As a powerful Canadian symbol

⁵¹Ibid., Vol. 528, File: Peter H. Aykroyd - Confederation Caravan - Press Kit. "Background Information: Interior Exhibits."

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³A photo displayed on the Train showed a more "harmonious" historic encounter between North West Mounted Police Sergeant Walsh and Chief Sitting Bull, perhaps implying a more sensitive treatment of natives.

of an institution treasured by many Canadians, the uniform conjured up heroic images of honourable, loyal Mounties who, in the end, always got their man. Fashioning the police force as a model of justice and truth, the display helped reinforce the view that the Rebellion, as an act of treachery, demanded the immediate response and intervention of the government. Planners fashioned a story that inspired national loyalty and pride, promoted civil obedience and conformity and thwarted alternative views that might have undermined the status quo.

Similarly, a section chronicling the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway highlighted the efforts of William Van Horne and financier Donald Smith, seen driving in the last spike, rather than the hundreds of workers who laboured to complete the mammoth project. Displays documenting the wave of immigration at the turn of the twentieth century too made little reference to the personal struggles and tragedies faced by new immigrant families. Instead, visitors to the Train walked past “illuminated panels of glowing yellow grain.” In the background they heard “strains of ethnic songs” and saw beautiful displays of Ukrainian traditional dress.⁵⁴ With bucolic images of golden wheat fields on the Prairies and colourful, uplifting examples of ethnic culture, planners promoted the more familiar vision of Canada as a sanctuary and a remarkable land of opportunity, choosing not to consider the hardships and discrimination that lay ahead for many of the new Canadians. Likely in an effort to avoid criticism for having organized such a highly managed event, organizers did not remove all references to Canada’s

⁵⁴NA, RG 69, Vol. 529, File: DPRI - Confederation Train Kit for 1967, “Information Kit.”

difficult past. Organizers did not, however, adopt a judgemental tone or suggest systemic inequity or racism, choosing not to impart feelings of guilt. Even with these occasional references to tensions in the historical landscape, the dominant theme throughout the exhibit promoted the commonly held view of Canada as a sanctuary.

One of the most graphic and realistic displays described in some detail the horror of trench warfare during World War I. Visitors walked “past a gritty army blanket used as a door” and found themselves in a muddy trench, the floor littered with “clips and rounds of ammunition, . . . empty mess kits and bully beef tins, [a] gas mask and a rifle.”⁵⁵ Exploding shells, as well as rifle and machine-gun fire, helped amplify the visceral experience and visitors no doubt left convinced of the old adage, that “War is Hell.” Perhaps to help clear the disturbing sights and sounds of war from their minds, visitors then walked into a lively scene from the Roaring Twenties, replete with honky-tonk music, a racoon skin coat, potted palms and a Mack Sennet movie playing on the screen. “Another abrupt division between eras await[ed] beyond [a] beaded curtain,” however, as people confronted a grim news headline announcing the crash of 1929. With photos of unemployed men travelling the railway and images of the Great Trek from Vancouver to Ottawa, as well as reproductions of signs declaring “No Men Wanted,” organizers managed to impart some feeling of a period characterized by desperation and hopelessness. Visitors then heard the familiar sounds of war as the exhibit shifted to World War II. Just as quickly, however, they moved forward to contemporary society, with displays championing Canadian achievements in science, medicine, industry the arts

⁵⁵Ibid.

and international affairs, in the post-war period.

The final section of the Caravans and the Train was devoted to an exploration of the future, but according to organizers “not in the conventional manner of predictions, collections or imagined future scapes.”⁵⁶ Instead, the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, the group charged with designing the exhibit, suggested the section include “a series of questions, comments and facts gathered from a group of interested and interesting Canadians.”⁵⁷ Intended to be “visually uncomplicated” so visitors could reflect on what they had seen, it also afforded guests an opportunity to give some thought to the questions posed. Organizers were concerned, however, about what questions should be asked. Consideration was given as to the appropriate balance between “serious” questions that invited reflection on the future of the country and questions that would simply inspire visitors and “leave them in an elated frame of mind.”⁵⁸ The challenge was to create a contemplative atmosphere that invited Canadians to celebrate the national achievements and successes of the past one hundred years, while also considering what the future held for them as individuals and as citizens. The challenge was to design something that, while not obviously political, furthered, indirectly, the political objectives of the Commission. The Executive remained confident planners would achieve a proper balance and exercise sensitivity when deciding how best to address the problems that lay ahead for the country. As visitors left the exhibit, they saw

⁵⁶Ibid., Vol. 377, File: 4-13, Commission Executive Committee Minutes, “March 14, 1966 - Item # 7, Confederation Train & Caravans [Doc. EC-66-42].”

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

a “swirl of [familiar] faces”:⁵⁹ Barry Morse, Harry Jerome, Wayne and Shuster, Kate Reid, Oscar Peterson, Pierre Berton, Robert Goulet, Gordie Howe, Paul Anka. But, as they progressed down the corridor there were also “portraits of unidentified Canadian men, women and children softly spotlighted, reflecting a variety of moods and expressions.”⁶⁰

The music, Bobby Gimby’s Centennial song, *CA-NA-DA*, played in the background, sung in both French and English by the “Young Canada Singers,” a group of ten year olds from Montreal and Toronto.⁶¹ Described in promotional material as almost deafening, the sound level helped build a dramatic and emotional atmosphere “in an attempt to stir the thousands of Canadians”⁶² who visited the Train and Caravan, thereby inspiring pride and enthusiasm as they ventured in the post-Centennial era. According to a press release, organizers expected that visitors would “come out feeling what a great country [Canada] is and what a future it has, rather than with the simple satisfaction of having seen a good exhibit.”⁶³ One thing was certain: before long, the Gimby song became a surprise hit and a memorable highlight of the national anniversary.

Gimby, a “Toronto society orchestra leader,”⁶⁴ had approached Vickers and Benson, the Commission advertising firm, in 1966 with words and music for a Centennial

⁵⁹Ibid., Vol. 529, File: PDRI - Confederation Train Kit.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹See Appendix D: Lyrics to Bobby Gimby Song Ca-na-da.

⁶²NA, RG 69, Vol. 529, File: PDRI - Confederation Train Kit.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Charles Gerein, “Gimby *Canada* disc: Dealers are swamped,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 January 1967.

song. The Centennial Commission agreed to underwrite an initial recording and, in addition, paid Gimby seven hundred and fifty dollars for the unlimited use of the song in several promotional spots on television and radio. Organizers also used the “catchy tune”⁶⁵ as background music at provincial meetings held to organize the Confederation Train and Caravan program. It was also used in the film *Preview '67*. Immediately, it generated a great deal of enthusiasm and was soon considered by many as an unofficial Centennial song. Eventually, realizing they had a “hit” on their hands, the Commission Executive Committee authorized the purchase of the copyright, and its promotion as the official Centennial song. The Commission also secured Gimby for the duration of the Centennial year, arranging for him to play the official song at many official events. Dressed in green tights and a cape, he captivated audiences and, reminiscent of the Pied Piper, generated great excitement among Canadian children.⁶⁶ In January 1967, 25,000 copies of the recording were shipped to retail outlets across the country and within days dealers had sold them and were “going crazy with requests.”⁶⁷ Distributors projected sales in excess of 250,000 copies, a record number for Canada. As Centennial year drew to a close most Canadians were familiar with the song, having heard it in school, at home, on the radio and at numerous Centennial events. While organizers had hoped Canadians would remember their visit to the Confederation Train or Caravans, it was soon evident

⁶⁵NA, RG 69, Vol. 198, File: Bobby Gimby Song, “Memorandum to Management Committee: Centennial Songs in General, Dec. 9, 1966.”

⁶⁶The Commission paid a copyright cost of \$3,650.00, as well as per diem and consultant fees of \$17,500.00 to Gimby. They agreed in May of 1967 to a further payment of up to \$25,000.00 to ensure that he was kept on until the close of the year.

⁶⁷Gerein, *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 January 1967.

that most people, especially children, remembered the ubiquitous *CA-NA-DA* more than any other Centennial event.⁶⁸

The Train and Caravan project was an enormous success and after only four weeks on the road, the attendance at the eight caravans surpassed all the projected estimates. Within a sixteen week period, five million people had visited the caravans, far exceeding the figure predicted for the full twenty-eight week project. By early October of 1967 over six million people had toured the Caravans. Attendance numbers were similarly impressive for the Train, with well over two million people having visited the exhibit by the fall of 1967. By the end of the run, 2.5 million people from 63 communities had visited the Train and 6.5 million from 655 communities had seen the eight caravans that travelled to remote areas of the country not supported by rail service. Interestingly, figures tracking attendance as a percentage of provincial population revealed the Caravans, designed to reach remote, rural areas, were the most heavily attended with close to fifty percent of residents visiting the displays. No doubt, the fact that the exhibit was free and the “only show in town” likely accounts, in some part, for the high attendance in rural Canada. In the Maritimes and North West Territories the percentages surpassed the fifty percent mark and the Yukon figures, at one hundred and forty-seven percent, suggested that attendance exceeded the local population.⁶⁹ That

⁶⁸Another popular feature was the air-horn whistle that announced the arrival of the exhibit. Specially designed by Robert Swanson, British Columbia’s chief inspector of railways, it played the first four notes of Canada’s new national anthem, *O Canada*, as the Train or Caravans reached a stop at 9 a.m. to signal the opening of the train.

⁶⁹NA, RG 69, Vol. 542, File: Train Dela Confederation - Promotion, “Attendance As a percentage of Population by Provinces.”

Canadians in remote areas were so supportive likely surprised Commission staff who, back in 1964, had decided not to support an exhibit designed to tour the north.

In January of 1964, the Commission considered a proposal to develop a Centennial exhibit that would be carried by barge over the Mackenzie River system. After considerable discussion the Executive rejected the proposal, deciding it was imprudent given the “high cost and low return of the [project].”⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the project was pursued privately, and on June 17, 1967 “[a]n Indian Princess smashed a bottle of domestic champagne . . . to launch Canada’s Centennial barge - a 32 day floating birthday party for remote settlements of Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River.”⁷¹ The one-hundred and twenty foot *Radium 100* left Hay River, a community 700 miles north of Edmonton, for the eighteen hundred mile journey to the Arctic Ocean. Edward Horton, who had first pitched the idea to the Commission, told the gathered crowd that “he hoped it would help unite the north, and give northerners the feeling that ‘we and the people down river are part of Canada.’”⁷²

As Centennial year drew to a close, planners were no doubt delighted to learn that, due to its popularity, requests were flooding into Ottawa to repeat the tour in 1968 for those people who had missed the first tour. Perhaps the only disappointment for organizers was the figures tracking the train exhibit attendance in Quebec. With sixty percent of the tour finished, only five and a half percent of Quebeckers had visited the

⁷⁰Ibid., Vol. 419, File: Barge Exhibit, “Memo: Sept. 2, 1964.”

⁷¹“Northern Centennial Launched,” *Calgary Herald*, Mon, June 19, 1967, p. 31.

⁷²Ibid.

exhibit, compared with thirty-eight percent of the population that went to see the Caravan display.⁷³ The tremendous discrepancy between the figures supported the findings of a survey conducted earlier by the government, illustrating, graphically the level of discontent among a growing number of educated, urban residents who were not satisfied with Quebec's position in the Confederation.

From the beginning, organizers had expressed concern that Quebec would not support the Train & Caravan project. Therefore, keen to avoid any awkwardness, planners, devoted a great deal of attention to the details of the exhibit. In late 1966, a Francophone staff person toured the Confederation Train exhibit and, noting several potential "problems," made recommendations for improvement of displays to planning staff. He advised using more French-language newspapers to illustrate events like the Depression and the Second World War. Noting that most of the material was taken from *Le Droit*, he suggested drawing examples from a broader selection of French papers such as *Le Devoir*, *Montréal-Matin*, *Le Soleil*, *L'Action*, *La Tribune* or *Le Nouvelliste*. While he did not "believe that this point would be criticized by French groups in the West," he did think that it would be "in Quebec City, in Sherbrooke and in Trois-Rivière and in Montreal."⁷⁴ The individual also commented that an exhibit composed of unilingual traffic signs would be improved if designers made greater use of the international-signs that used symbols rather than words. In any case, he suggested that there should be a mix of English, French and bilingual material throughout the exhibits. Organizers, already

⁷³NA, RG 69, Vol. 542, File: Train Dela Confederation - Promotion.

⁷⁴Ibid., "Letter: From J.M. Des Rochers to L. Maiden, Chief of Division, Confederation Train & Caravans, Publicity Officer, Dec. 22, 1966."

having responded to concerns about display material, had implemented changes to the exhibit in an effort to secure the ongoing support of the Quebec Provincial Government. The problem had involved a controversial display proposed by designers during the developmental stage.

Planners had considered holding a competition for school age children across the country. They would be asked to draw pictures illustrating what, in their view, were the causes of Confederation. The pictures were then to have been displayed in a section of the Train and Caravans highlighting Confederation. The Province of Quebec, however, through the Department of Education, objected saying they would not participate in the contest, believing the concept was too political. Quebec notified the Commission that “should [it] mount drawings identified as by children from schools in other provinces in the two caravans intended for the Province of Quebec, the Provincial government would withdraw all cooperation for [the] project.”⁷⁵ After extending an apology to the Quebec Government “for the mishandling of [their] relations with Quebec in this matter,” the Commission passed a resolution at their March meeting authorizing the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission “to assemble material to be used as an alternative manner of illustrating the causes of Confederation in that particular section of the Caravans.”⁷⁶ Eager to avoid public criticism and keen to have Quebeckers participate in the national anniversary, federal officials preferred to remove the offending section and, whenever possible, emphasize the bilingual character of Canadian society. The incident

⁷⁵Ibid., Vol. 377, File: 4-14 Centennial Commission, Exec. Committee Minutes, “January 10, 1966 - Item #10.”

⁷⁶Ibid., “Minutes: March 14, 1966.”

demonstrated the fragility of the relationship between Quebec and Ottawa. Subsequently, organizers proceeded cautiously when it came to promoting Centennial in Quebec, as the celebration continued to receive mixed reviews in the province.⁷⁷ Quebeckers were more willing to celebrate the possibilities of the future than to reflect on the past, as there seemed little to celebrate. Sensitive to this sentiment, exhibit designers chose to accentuate national themes that demonstrated how Canadians, working cooperatively, triumphed against great odds, rather than highlight divisive moments in the historical record.

Given that the goal of Centennial was to strengthen national unity, it is perhaps not surprising that organizers chose to interpret contested moments in Canadian history as examples of how Canadians had “weathered the storm” and managed to emerge even stronger. Throughout the exercise exhibit designers tried, perhaps in vain, to reconcile competing visions of the Canadian social and political landscape. This, of course, influenced the choices the designers made when constructing the story. While organizers introduced innovative display techniques into the Train and Caravan exhibits, producing a

⁷⁷According to LaMarsh, however, the exhibit “drew remarkably few criticisms although there was one that, fittingly enough, came to the fore almost immediately in British Columbia.” A visitor had taken issue with the fact that there was no portrait of Her Majesty, the Queen. LaMarsh, accounts for the omission in her memories by suggesting that “it was forgotten because the train’s displays were impressions of Canada, and the Crown as a Canadian institution still [had] not made much impression.” Eventually, “Laurie Wallace, the Deputy Provincial Secretary of B.C., and the senior civil servant responsible there for Centennial celebrations, presented the train director with a dreadful portrait . . . taken from the wall in someone’s back office.” Remarking that she was annoyed “at his tactlessness,” LaMarsh requested that “the Karsh portrait of the Queen, commissioned by the NFB for the Centennial year, be flown to the West Coast and put on the train.” Ironically, the portrait was eventually hung in the Confederation room, but a “companion painting of Queen Victoria never appeared.” LaMarsh, *Memories of a Bird in a Gilded Cage*, p.186-7.

theatrical experience, complete with lights, sounds and actors, they did not seriously challenge the tradition of using the institution as a tool to universalize and normalize national narratives. While the familiar temple-like facade of the conventional museum was absent, and the tone was distinctly fun and friendly, the exhibit, nonetheless, reflected elements of the conventional museum experience. Like conventional museum settings, the centennial exhibit was a special space, “reserved for a particular kind of contemplation and learning experience . . . [that demanded] . . . a special quality of attention - what Victor Turner called ‘liminality.’”⁷⁸ Following a route that told a story designed to amplify feelings of community pride and promote goodwill among Canadians, many visitors left the exhibit confident that Canadians were honourable people who shared many common stories and experiences. While there were moments, such as the Quebec “incident,” when the “audience [had] its way of escaping control, from refusing to follow the exhibition plan,”⁷⁹ the vast majority of visitors identified with the vision of Canada portrayed throughout the exhibit. Imparting a sense of a shared national identity, it united visitors, reminding them of historical traditions and accomplishments common to all Canadians. Through the vehicle of public ritual and display, the Caravan and Train exhibits functioned to advance existing cultural and social norms and promote the ideals of mainstream Canadian society. In this context, the exhibit presented a largely “invented tradition,” presenting a highly sanitized vision of the Canadian historical past.

⁷⁸Carol Duncan, *Exhibiting Culture*, p. 91.

⁷⁹Ivan Karp & Steven D. Lavine, eds. *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 15.

At the opening ceremony in Victoria to launch the Train, Secretary of State, Judy LaMarsh, stated that it was her “hope and conviction” that the Confederation Train would “add a new strength and a new meaning to . . . national unity.”⁸⁰ If organizers measured the exhibit’s success by the number of people who lined up to visit the Train or Caravans, they would have been correct to declare that it was, without doubt, one of the most successful projects sponsored by the Centennial Commission. It is more difficult, however, to gauge success based on whether the exhibit succeeded in strengthening national unity. Nevertheless, it did articulate a vision of Canadian national identity that resonated with many Canadians, who, having waited patiently in long lines to walk back in time, emerged from the exhibit ready to move into a bright, new future.

⁸⁰NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File: 4-14 Centennial Commission, Exec. Committee Minutes, “Minutes: March 14, 1966.”

CHAPTER FOUR

A Fair to Remember: EXPO '67

“A fair is for the masses and not for the thinkers. What the masses want are monuments.”

Mayor Jean Drapeau

After attending the 1958 Brussels Exhibition as the Canadian representative for the Canada Day celebrations, Senator Marc Drouin returned home to Montréal convinced that Canadians should host an international exhibition as the centrepiece of Centennial celebrations in 1967. While the Government Exhibition Commission questioned the wisdom of staging such a large event, remarking that while it was “technically possible,” it was “hardly worth the effort,”¹ the idea attracted the attention of the newly elected Montréal Mayor, Jean Drapeau. Within no time Drapeau was championing the Expo project to anyone who would listen. He was not, however, the first person to consider the merits of hosting an international exhibition in Montréal.

In 1895 A.S. Brodeur “published drawings showing the islands in the middle of the St. Lawrence River . . . as a suitable location for an international exhibition.”² The proposed site, l’île Ste. Hélène, was never used, however, as both the 1917 and the 1942 exhibitions were cancelled due to war. In fact, Montréal almost missed the opportunity to host the event again, as initially the Soviet Union had secured the right to host the 1967 Exhibition to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Fortunately for

¹John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*, (Toronto: Studio Vista, 1977), p. 166.

²Ibid.

Montréal, however, as costs mounted, Moscow experienced a change of heart and eventually withdrew from the project. Mayor Drapeau seized the opportunity to submit a bid and forwarded an application to Paris immediately. According to popular legend, the paper-work arrived at the official headquarters just as the deadline for receiving renewed applications expired. Montréal, is reputed to have been the only city that met the deadline, and it is suggested that this was due, in large part, to Drapeau's "eyes and ears" in Europe, Georges Marchais.³

Marchais was a "short barrel-shaped wine-dealer with astonishing connections in all the capitals of Europe."⁴ Rumoured to have made his fortune "trafficking arms to Egypt and Saudi Arabia,"⁵ Marchais was reputed to have worked for the *Le deuxième bureau*, the French intelligence agency. Along the way, he cultivated useful relationships with many of Europe's most powerful people, and enjoyed extraordinary access to European power brokers and decision makers. Appointed by Drapeau as *Le Conseiller Chargé de Mission pour l'Europe*, Marchais was charged with keeping the Mayor informed of the "situation" on the continent. Perhaps more importantly, though, Drapeau anticipated Marchais, capitalizing on his social and political connections, would take every opportunity to promote the worthiness of the Canadian application.⁶

³Brian McKenna and Susan Purcell, *Drapeau: A Biography* (Toronto: Clark Irwin, 1980), p. 146.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 147. While Drapeau claims he never paid Marchais, he was rewarded with an appointment to the *Chambre de Commerce France-Canada*, and was engaged to serve as an "advisor" for Canadian business and government in Paris.

In addition to enlisting people like Marchais to advance the Canadian submission, Drapeau also lobbied the Conservative government vigorously in an effort to secure their support for the city's bid to host the Exhibition. Also, cognizant of the unpredictable nature of politics, Drapeau spoke to Leader of the Opposition, Lester B. Pearson, detailing the benefits of backing the rather grandiose project. In his memoirs, Pearson recalls Drapeau's visit, remarking that he thought the Mayor's "plans for Expo . . . were quite literally out of this world."⁷ Pearson describes how Drapeau, sensing the future Prime Minister's skepticism, spread his plans on the floor and set about to convince him that Expo was a worthwhile project. Looking back, Pearson agreed, conceding that it had been a highly memorable and successful event. In those early days, however, few people shared Drapeau's uncompromising vision and unwavering conviction that Expo would be a hit. On November 1962, Montréal was awarded the right to stage the six-month-long event, and Drapeau had his opportunity to prove the skeptics wrong.

From the start the venture was fraught with difficulties, not the least of which was the challenge of deciding where to locate the enormous fair. Several sites were considered.⁸ Drapeau, however, favoured enlarging the existing St. Lawrence island of Ste. Hélène, but the site was not large enough to accommodate the vast fair. Undeterred, Drapeau, ever the visionary, proposed constructing a new island adjacent to Ile Ste. Hélène. Eventually, after quarrying nearly twenty-five million tons of fill and depositing

⁷Pearson, L.B., *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*, Vol 3: 1957-1968, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 306.

⁸There was fierce competition regarding the site, with one provincial cabinet minister rumoured to have "applied pressure to have the fair located on a site that would have benefited a group of land speculators." McKenna and Purcell, *Drapeau: A Biography*, p. 148.

it into the St. Lawrence, Canada's newest land acquisition was christened Ile Notre Dame, no doubt in deference to its famous Parisian namesake. Even with this job behind them, however, organizers still faced a gargantuan task. With less than five years remaining until the opening of the gates, organizers had to develop an enormous facility that would be larger than many Canadian small towns. In an effort to ensure the success of the event, the government assembled a motivated team of professionals to plan and run Expo '67.

Pierre Dupy, Canada's ambassador to France, was appointed Commissioner-General of Expo,⁹ and during the months leading up to the event he succeeded in encouraging 61 countries to participate. Dupy's Deputy Commissioner, local businessman Robert Shaw, was "vested with the job of creating and running Expo."¹⁰ In turn, Shaw retained retired army colonel Edward Churchill as Director of Installations. According to author Robert Fulford, Churchill "soon became Expo's favourite legend,"¹¹ renowned for implementing the Critical Path Method¹² of scheduling and organization. In addition to the Critical Path method, however, Churchill also made effective use of the

⁹Dupy replaced Paul Bienvenue. Bienvenue had been appointed by then Prime Minister Diefenbaker who considered it an opportunity to reward Conservative supporters in Quebec. Drapeau, however, was not pleased with the choice. Thus, accompanying the change of government in 1963, was a change of senior personnel in the newly formed Expo organization.

¹⁰Brian McKenna and Susan Purcell, *Drapeau: A Biography*, p. 150.

¹¹Robert Fulford. *Remember Expo: A Pictorial Record*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1968), p. 11.

¹²"Critical Path analysis is an extremely effective method of analysing a complex project. It helps . . . to calculate the minimum length of time in which the project can be completed, and which activities should be prioritised to complete by that date. The essential concept . . . is that some . . . activities are dependent on other activities being completed first. For example, you should not start building a bridge unless you have designed it first! [D]ependent activities need to be completed in a sequence, with each activity being more-or-less completed before the next activity can begin." *Mind Tools Site* (www.demon.co.uk/mindtool/critpath.html)

emerging technology of computers. He also implemented financial incentives to ensure contractors completed work on time and, most importantly, engineered a “peace treaty with the province’s big labour federations,” to guarantee the project did not fall behind schedule.¹³ While often praised for completing the herculean task of building Expo ‘67, one critic put the accomplishments in perspective remarking that “[m]uch is made about what Churchill, Shaw and those other guys did at Expo . . . but when you throw that kind of money around, it’s not hard to get problems solved and get something built.”¹⁴

In 1962 *The Canadian World Exhibition Corporation*, the administrative body charged with organizing and overseeing Expo, was established by an Act of Parliament. The terms agreed to saw the federal government pay 50% of the cost of Expo, “the province 37½ percent and the Montréal area municipal governments 12½ percent.”¹⁵ According to historian J.M. Bumsted, the “total cost of Expo 67, estimated at \$167 million in 1964, can never truly be calculated,” as “indirect expenses” for infrastructure improvements, \$500 million for highway construction, and \$300 million to build pavilions on the site, “were not included in the official cost of \$430 million.”¹⁶ It was a massive undertaking, “a mega project on a scale equal to the construction of the transcontinental railway or the St. Lawrence Seaway.”¹⁷ Early on, the project was criticized and during the construction phase people in both Quebec and the rest of Canada

¹³McKenna and Purcell, *Drapeau: A Biography*, p. 150.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 166.

¹⁶Bumsted, “The Birthday Party,” p. 12.

¹⁷Ibid.

questioned the suitability of the massive expenditures for the project.

The mayor of Granby, Quebec, Paul Trépanier, observed ironically that while money was found to build massive monuments and buildings, “needy families of Montréal, Quebec, Sherbrooke, and Trois Rivières [continued] to wallow in unsanitary dwellings.”¹⁸ Drapeau only served to exacerbate the situation when, showing little sensitivity to critics’ concerns, he ordered the “construction of . . . blue and white fences seven feet high to mask the poverty” of the inner-city.¹⁹ Responding to criticism of his increasingly autocratic management style, Drapeau is reported to have said that “[w]hat every team needs is one big star.”²⁰ Drapeau was Expo’s star. Given his grandiose, flamboyant style, it is not surprising to learn that Drapeau promoted the idea of building a monument, reminiscent of the Eiffel Tower, on the Expo site.

Initially there was even some discussion surrounding a proposal to dismantle the famous Parisian tower and re-assemble it at the Montréal exhibition site, leaving in its place a sign that read “Gone to Montréal for Expo 67.” While recognizing the logistical and financial challenges of such a public relations stunt, one observer commented that, in fact, the idea was scrapped because the owners of the Tower worried that once the Parisian landmark was removed it might never be re-assembled.²¹ Drapeau denied that

¹⁸McKenna and Purcell, *Drapeau: A Biography*, p. 150.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 151.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹It seems that when the tower was originally built for the 1889 Paris Expo, some Parisians, appalled by the construction, formed a Society with the purpose of trying to get rid of what the members considered an eyesore. The Society still existed in 1960 and the owners of the Tower feared the organization would block reconstruction if the tower was dismantled. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

the Eiffel Tower plan was serious; but he continued to promote constructing a modern monument, and in the winter of 1964 he unveiled a model of the proposed tower to considerable fanfare. Shortly thereafter city councillors approved funding to study the project in greater detail and Expo commissioners approved the project. The project was eventually abandoned, however, because, as the lowest bid exceeded the estimated cost of \$22 million dollars by \$6 million dollars, it was decided that the tower was too expensive to build.²² Drapeau had to wait until the 1976 Olympics to build his tower. Undaunted, Drapeau moved the Expo project forward at a break-neck speed, masterfully defending and justifying the growing expenditures. While in the view of some Canadians the Expo extravaganza represented a tremendous misuse of funds, for other people it was a worthwhile and positive exercise.

In a commemorative article written in 1996, David Eley remarked that he moved to Montréal in 1966 and watched “the physical construction of the fair site from a distance.”²³ In his view, “the building process . . . [was] an important experience for Canada, but more particularly for the province of Quebec and the city of Montréal.”²⁴ It signalled the “coming of age of the Quiet Revolution” and a time when the province “hosted the . . . world,” and was “embraced by the attention, affection and admiration of . . . nations.”²⁵ Like host cities before it, it was Montréal’s moment to step into the

²²Ibid., p. 54.

²³David Eley, “Theme Park for a Happy Future,” *Compass: A Jesuit Journal* 14 (March-April 1996): 18.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

limelight.

Beginning with the first International Exhibition in London in 1851, the early International Exhibition movement was concerned primarily with highlighting the achievements of trade and industry. The London exhibition, held in Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, celebrated British technological and political supremacy. Visitors encountered a wide array of displays highlighting the Empire's technological progress and innovation. Similarly, cultural exhibits emphasized western superiority, presenting non-European cultures as "uncivilized" and "primitive." Nevertheless, they provided colourful backdrop and were sufficiently exotic to be of interest to the curious crowds. The 1867 Paris Exhibition, the "first example of a true thematic exhibition," signalled a change in display style and a shift in focus. By the close of the century, fairs were no longer organized simply as a means to "bolster trade," but rather with the more ambitious aim of energising a flagging economy or strengthening national pride.²⁶

According to historian John Allwood, as the International Exhibition movement evolved, organizers recognized that the success of the event hinged increasingly on two critical components: "showmanship and an audience."²⁷ Responding to public demand, organizers developed exhibitions that were more thematically cohesive and functioned to both entertain and educate visitors. Allwood notes that

[as] international exhibitions became a fashionable form of international public relations, indeed a mandatory exercise if the country was to be classed with the world powers, so it became less important to consider financial profit as one of

²⁶Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*, p. 8.

²⁷Ibid., p. 9.

the major motives.²⁸

However, in an effort to rationalize the vast sums of money spent, organizers frequently found it helpful to organize exhibitions around a significant historic event or theme.²⁹

The 1889 Paris Exposition, for example, commemorated the centenary of the French Revolution, while the 1904 St. Louis Exposition observed the Louisiana Purchase of 1803.

By the turn of the twentieth century, fairs had become more and more spectacular, as organizers competed to eclipse the achievements of previous host countries. At the 1904 St. Louis Exposition visitors were faced with a nine mile walk to review the largest agricultural display ever assembled, and an eleven acre field showcased the latest flying technology, with hot air balloons, kites, flying machines and airships on display.³⁰ Canada participated in many of these early exhibitions, sending displays highlighting Canadian culture and society. In the case of the St. Louis exhibition, however, “the ornate pavilion [was] used only for receptions and as a headquarters for the national contingent.”³¹ By 1967 the situation had changed, as Canadians, not content to simply participate, prepared to host what many people anticipated would be the best World Exhibition organized up to that point.

The theme of the Montréal exposition, *Terre des Homes*, translated as Man and his World, was inspired by the book of the same title by French author Antoine de Saint-

²⁸Ibid., p. 75.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 112.

³¹Ibid., p. 112.

Exupéry. Variations on the principal theme included - Man the Explorer, Man the Creator, Man the Producer, Man in the Community and Man the Provider - with each motif becoming a pavilion or complex of pavilions at the Fair. According to one observer,

The aim was to communicate to each visitor the complexity, the wonder, and . . . the dangers of the world in which he lives; to penetrate the mysteries of science, . . .; to take a glance at the world of tomorrow; and . . . to bring home to the visitor that he himself is the central point in all of this. He is not just a passive spectator . . ., but an active participant, in charge of his own destiny amid constant change.³²

In an effort to emphasize the international scope of the fair, organizers devised an ingenious strategy to encourage guests to the fair to visit all the pavilions. Rather than follow tradition and sell admission tickets, they chose instead to issue “passports.” As visitors moved from pavilion to pavilion, their passports were stamped with visas, giving visitors the impression that they had journeyed abroad.

The international press raved about the Fair, with reporters from all over the globe declaring Expo a magnificent success. They praised Canada for hosting an event that was unlike any other World Fair and that did not simply duplicate past European or American examples. According to the media from overseas, Expo gave expression to a uniquely Canadian vision, one that left visitors with the sense that Canada had “grown up.” Expo projected an atmosphere of confidence and sophistication that severely subverted the heretofore commonly held view that presented Canada as something of a cultural and industrial backwater, largely dependent on the support of other, stronger nations. Much

³²Jean-Louis de Lorimier, ed., *Expo '67: The memorial album*, (Montréal: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1968), p. 54.

to the delight of organizers, media coverage of the fair was extensive, with articles appearing in professional trade journals, magazines and newspapers, as well as on television and radio. Some American radio stations even went as far as to provide daily Expo updates, with “[o]ne radio station, in Washington, D.C., broadcast[ing] the temperature at Expo every morning, along with . . . regular weather reports” throughout the day.³³ When criticism was directed toward Expo, it was, according to one journalist, likely to have come from a Canadian.³⁴ In an article for the *New York Review*, for example, Montréal resident and writer Mordecai Richler described Expo as a “good-taste Disneyland.”³⁵

From the beginning, many Canadians had expressed reservations about the planned Exhibition, fearful that it would overshadow planned Centennial celebrations and drain funding from the national event. While there was enthusiastic support for the fair in the host province, elsewhere Canadians were less certain about the project. Writing in December of 1963, a journalist from an Alberta paper, the *Ponoka Herald*, remarked

another year is just about finished and still there is little or nothing in the way of definite, concrete projects to mark Canada’s 100th birthday in 1967 . . . Montreal’s proposed world fair for 1967 has little or no meaning for the rest of Canada. The most that can be said for it is that it is a tourist promotion deal for Montreal and adjacent points for Quebec.³⁶

Complaining that the few meetings held to consider how to prepare for Centennial usually

³³Robert Fulford, *This was Expo* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1968), p. 29.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 28.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶NA, RG 69, Vol. 414, File: News clipping Summaries, “*Ponoka Herald*, Dec. 17, 1963.”

“evaporat[ed] into a vague talk about biculturalism - in both French and English,”³⁷ the journalist expressed serious reservations about the event. Two years later another journalist declared he was concerned that Ottawa had not managed to generate sufficient interest in the national anniversary, arguing that the “further away from Ottawa one gets, the less interest there is in the coming Centennial.”³⁸ Writing that the “most widely publicized event - the Montréal World’s Fair - has been trumped up as a national affair,” he noted that “like all world’s fairs, it remains the primary concern of its place of origin . . . and not something . . . Canadians [could] easily identify with the concept of nationhood.”³⁹

Other Canadians shared these concerns and worried about how the multi-million dollar project would effect Commission celebrations. Initially, the federal government had committed to support the World Fair to the tune of twenty million dollars, observing that any additional funding required by the Corporation would be secured by way of temporary loans guaranteed by Canada and the Province of Quebec.⁴⁰ The formula seemed relatively straightforward, but there was continuing unease among Centennial supporters. No doubt they were not reassured when, at a 1964 press conference, a journalist asked whether there was a ceiling for Expo funding and Pearson replied no.⁴¹

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸“Hard to Get Excited.” (Editorial) *Calgary Herald*, Friday, May 7, 1965.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰In fact, more funds were channelled into the project indirectly, as the Government joined with the Province of Quebec and the City of Montréal, spending \$185 million for roads, transit etc.

⁴¹NA, Audio tape #R07228 - series 4, “Press Conference with L.B. Pearson, January 3, 1964.”

Similarly Centennial organizers were dismayed by the rumours circulating about the mounting project costs of the Exhibition.⁴² Reports about escalating costs only served to amplify the fears of centennial advocates and affirm misgivings many supporters initially expressed when the government had first considered supporting Montréal's bid to host the event.

As early as 1960, Senator Donald Cameron had asked whether the World's Fair could not "be brought to Canada in some year other than 1967."⁴³ In order that there "be no misunderstanding," Cameron reassured those present that he thought the Fair would be good for business and that "Canada, particularly Montreal and Quebec, would derive a lot of useful advertising and publicity from the venture."⁴⁴ And while he did not consider Centennial and Expo mutually exclusive, he did worry that it would result in the redirection of government funding from Centennial to Expo. He urged the government to "give immediate assurance that the substantial contribution to the Fair [would] not be used as an excuse to curtail things that should be done for the Centennial."⁴⁵

Later, in 1962, the Canadian Citizenship Council passed a resolution recommending the Board of Directors make a presentation to the federal Cabinet urging them not to take the funds for the Montréal World Fair out of the one hundred million

⁴²Writing some years later, *Le Devoir* editor Claude Ryan, warning against supporting Montréal's Olympic bid, turned to the example of Expo, remarking that during the course of the project, the initial 1964 estimate of \$167 million had grown to \$234 million in 1965, \$379 million in 1966. By the end of the event, however, costs had exceeded everyone's estimates, reaching a staggering \$430 million. McKenna and Purcell, *Drapeau: A Biography*, p. 150.

⁴³*Hansard*, "Debates of the Senate," Wednesday March 30, 1960, p. 458.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

dollars already allocated for the Centenary.⁴⁶ During the discussion that followed, committee members agreed that, while it “would be an error not to consider the Montreal World Fair as a worthy Centenary project, . . . the Fair should not displace other Centenary projects either fund-wise or personnel wise.”⁴⁷ The group also thought the Fair should come under the authority of Trade and Commerce rather than the “still-to-be appointed Centennial Commission.”⁴⁸ Private citizens too expressed concern about the public perception of the Government sponsored event.

T. H. Taylor wrote to advise then Secretary of State, Judy La Marsh, that there was an “urgency to bring the centennial out from under the shadow of Expo ‘67.”⁴⁹ Taylor had been watching the evening CTV News and was greatly disturbed when an M.P. suggested that Expo ‘67 was the “focal point of Canada’s centenary celebrations.”⁵⁰ Disagreeing, Taylor characterized Expo as a commercial venture that appealed to an international audience whereas, Centennial, by contrast, involved primarily Canadians and was, in his view, a largely spiritual and patriotic event. In closing, he suggested that when “people talk[ed] about Expo to the exclusion of the centennial,”⁵¹ it had an adverse affect on the national celebration. It proved to be a continuing challenge for Commission staff who, while keen to find a way for Quebec to participate and celebrate, were sensitive

⁴⁶NA, MG 28 I 85, Vol. 30, File: Program Research & Development Committee - R. Elliott. “Mins. of PRD Committee, Sept. 18, 1962.”

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹NA, RG 69, Vol. 354, File: 130-2, “Letter from Thomas H. Taylor to Secretary of State, LaMarsh June 17, 1967.”

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

to the possibility that the success of Expo might eclipse Commission events. Their fears were not, as it turned out, completely unfounded.

Expo certainly did garner the lion's share of the media coverage, with the international press, in particular, covering the event extensively. This helped blur the distinction between the events for many Canadians, with few people appreciating that two separate organizations were responsible for each project.⁵² Given, however, that the fair generated a great deal of interest and excitement, particularly in the host province, it was not really a disadvantage that many Canadians believed it was an official Centennial project. In the final analysis, the majority Expo visitors were from the United States (44.8%), Montréal (26.9%) and the province of Québec (4.8%). While almost 20% of visitors were from the rest of Canada, there is nothing to suggest that this had a negative impact on Centennial events and programs sponsored by the Commission.⁵³ It is more likely that Centennial was a beneficiary of the Expo '67 hype, as the press coverage probably inspired people to get involved and participate.

While the Centennial Commission and Expo organizers did not work together a great deal during planning stages, believing the two "events" were distinct, they did look to capitalize on opportunities to act co-operatively, especially organizers from Expo who wished to involve as many "investors" as possible. Mayor Drapeau, for example, approached the Commission in late 1965, inviting them to consider publicizing

⁵²The memory of Expo endures with many Canadians. As I was undertaking research for my Dissertation, I was constantly surprised by how many people, upon learning my study was about Centennial, immediately made reference to Expo '67. For many Canadians, the two events remain synonymous.

⁵³Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 170.

Centennial events in what he described as a Canadian Guide of Centennial Year that would highlight Expo '67 as the main event. Remarking that it was a "known and regretted fact . . . that . . . the people of Montréal and . . . the area . . . have the impression that Expo '67 is the sum total of the Canadian effort for Centennial,"⁵⁴ he proposed the guide, a calendar of events, would induce Canadians and foreign visitors to travel throughout the country to participate in other Centennial events. Similarly, in his view, it would help attract interest from Canadians outside of Quebec in Expo. Shrewdly exploiting the Centennial theme of unity, Drapeau suggested support for the guide would help further both projects and thereby help Canadians better understand the "relationship of Expo '67 with the overall federal centennial program."⁵⁵

The Commission Executive Committee thanked Mayor Drapeau for his presentation, but voted to proceed with the proposal only after it had been given further study by the "appropriate authorities within the Government."⁵⁶ The Commission, wary of associating Centennial with a commercial product, did not immediately consider the project was worthy of their support. In the end, however, after the obligatory period of study, the Commission decided to proceed and purchased sixty-four pages in the guide, at five thousand dollars per page. Anticipating the Commission would use only twenty of these pages, they elected to approach the Provinces to advertise their local events at the same rate per page. While the two organizations joined forces for this project and

⁵⁴NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File: Executive Committee, "Minutes: October 18, 1965."

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

continued to liaise as Centennial year approached, the link was somewhat artificial, with each group pursuing their own objectives largely independent of each other.

Like Centennial, however, Expo had an official song that caught the imagination of visitors and captured the spirit of the moment. The lyrics spoke of a “magic island,” where visitors would “step into a dream . . . like a painted summer scene.” Certainly many of the pavilions were fantastical, conjuring up images of extraordinary, modern worlds where anything was possible. Dr. Karl Schwanzer, who designed the Austrian Pavilion, remarked that Expo exhibited, “[t]he most exciting collection of buildings” he had ever seen.⁵⁷ And architects visiting from around the world agreed. With designs that challenged accepted construction practices, tradition was scrapped in favour of exciting new designs. The German pavilion, designed by Otto Frei, was an enormous plastic tent, and the Netherlands pavilion was a massive structure composed of thirty-three miles of aluminum tubing that looked to some as if it was still under construction. The Explorer and Producer theme buildings, truncated tetrahedrons, were originally to be welded together, but as there were not enough welders in Canada to complete the work, builders resorted to using two million, five hundred thousand nuts and bolts instead.⁵⁸

Habitat 67, the innovative, experimental housing project designed by Canadian architect Moshe Safdie, garnered considerable interest and international press. Hailed as an outstanding permanent monument to honour the legacy of Expo, the project was conceived, by the twenty-four year old architect as an answer to the challenges of urban

⁵⁷Fulford, *Remember Expo: A Pictorial Record* (McClelland & Stewart, 1968), p. 31.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 36.

living. The prefabricated units were piled one on top of each other in such a way that the roof of one unit functioned as a garden space for the apartment above. Built on a production assembly line, the units came with kitchen and bathroom services pre-installed.⁵⁹ The project was, however, like Expo itself, controversial. The initial estimate for the project was \$40,000,000, but the federal government reduced the building project to one-sixth the size of the original plans, and implemented a maximum budget of \$11,500,000.⁶⁰ By the opening of the Fair most of the one hundred and fifty-eight prefabricated units had been rented, with thirty-six left open for the public to view.

Perhaps the most popular and ironically the most controversial building on the site was the American pavilion, a geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller. While the exterior dazzled visitors, the interior exhibits disappointed many Americans who felt the displays, focussing too heavily on American pop-culture, were trivial and did not do justice to the imperial power. It was, nonetheless, popular with visitors who could chose to view the pavilion on foot or ride the Monorail through portions of the exhibit. Along with the Fuller pavilion, other exhibits captured visitor and media interest. The Czechoslovak Pavilion, for example, was an unexpected success, with visitors often lining up for three hours to view impressive cultural displays and unique multi-media presentations like the Kino-automat movie which allowed audiences to write the plot. The British pavilion offered visitors a lighthearted look at contemporary Britain. Designed by James Gardner, the irreverent exhibit poked fun at British characteristics and

⁵⁹Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*, p. 168.

⁶⁰Ibid. In the end the project exceeded the budget, costing \$22,000,000.

habits, refusing to take itself too seriously.

Adopting a different approach, the Indians of Canada pavilion disturbed many visitors, but was, nonetheless, celebrated for its honest, uncompromising portrayal of the harsh realities faced every day by Canada's aboriginal people. In March of 1966, most likely in response to questions in the House about the level of representation of aboriginal culture and society at Expo, the federal government issued a press release announcing that there would be an Indians of Canada pavilion. Andrew Tanahokate Delisle, Chief of the Caughnawaga First Nation, was appointed commissioner of the pavilion and charged with the responsibility of providing visitors with an honest, sincere depiction of aboriginal life in Canada. The result was a controversial exhibit with an "overt political message that . . . made many non-Natives uncomfortable,"⁶¹ as many displays highlighted past injustices endured by Canadian aboriginals. For example, upon entering the exhibit, visitors were confronted with a sign that, accusatory in tone, read: "When the white man came we welcomed him with love, we sheltered him, fed him and led him through the forest. Many Indians feel our fathers were betrayed."⁶² Many of the displays were critical of white society and its treatment of natives, pointing to how, through mechanisms like the residential school system, natives were compelled to abandon their culture in an effort to assimilate. Scattered throughout the exhibit there were also positive messages. For example, the designers challenged stereotypes, showing that "contemporary Indians were not just trappers, farmers and fishermen, but . . . also lawyers, teachers, politicians and

⁶¹Todd Lamirande, "Expo '67 Revisited: Indian pavilion faces Canadians with cold truth." *First Perspective* 6 (June 1997): 14.

⁶²*Ibid.*

doctors.’⁶³ Nevertheless, here too the message proved too political for some visitors.

Not everyone, however, was offended. Many visitors recognized that, while the truth was shocking and difficult, it was important to confront the difficult issues openly.

Functioning as a consciousness-raising exercise, the Canadian Indian pavilion attempted to educate visitors, particularly Canadians, about native concerns, and serve notice that aboriginal people expected to participate actively in making the decisions that shaped their future. Ironically perhaps, the pavilion display succeeded in expressing a key theme of Expo: the hope for a better future.

Expo celebrated the potential of human kind and the future and made little reference to the past. The exhibition was about new beginnings and, with its emphasis on “tomorrow,” drew inspiration from the contemporary world, choosing, when possible, to gloss over the difficulties of the past and present. Expo organizers achieved this by largely ignoring history, preferring instead to emphasize the promise of a prosperous future. A government report describing the general concept and thematic outline for an exhibition proposed for the Canadian pavilion at Expo offers useful insight into how government officials, in contrast to designers for the Indian pavilion, chose to deal with difficult, controversial issues.

The display, a stylized maple tree comprised of the leaves, trunk, roots and soil, was designed to trace the development of Canadian society. The leaves, some seven hundred photographs of Canadians, reflected the diversity of the Canadian population and offered visitors an opportunity to “get to know” their fellow Canadians. The trunk

⁶³Ibid.

signified the many organizations, professional associations, service clubs and political parties that had contributed to building Canada. It was covered in the crests, badges, and symbols of the groups that influenced the country. The lower portion of the tree, and the roots, was divided into four sections which considered the factors that helped shape the country: urban living, ethnic diversity, cultural duality and industry. Finally, the soil exhibit considered the external forces that Canadians had had to address as the country grew and matured. Discussing how best to develop the “root” feature of the exhibit, designers conceded that throughout Canada’s history there had been events that were beneficial and other that had been detrimental to the country’s development. However, when confronted with how to incorporate problematic and contentious issues or events, they decided that

where a problem exists it will be faced, but the attempted overall effect in each support exhibit will be to emphasize the positive aspect of the “new” situations, not to criticise the shortcomings that may exist.⁶⁴

Unlike the Indian pavilion, which positioned difficult, sometimes unpleasant realities front and centre, demanding the viewer confront his or her biases, the Canadian pavilion was more permissive with visitors, presenting a harmonious vision of the national fabric. Preferring not to adopt a highly critical or overtly political approach, government designers produced an exhibit that affirmed the popular contemporary view that Canada was a tolerant country, where people worked cooperatively to solve their differences. The vision was comforting, as it did not seriously challenge Canadians conceptions of

⁶⁴NA, RG 69, Vol. 407, File: Canadian Government Committee - 1967 Exhibition, “The People: General concept, exhibit description and thematic outline, July 28, 1965.”

themselves or their country. Visitors left reassured that Canada was a good place to live and Canadians were good people who looked out for each other. While the delivery was in stark contrast to that at the Indian pavilion, the messages were not so very dissimilar, however. Both the Indian and Canadian pavilions emphasized the exhibition theme of new beginnings, highlighting an opportunity to foster new partnerships built on mutual respect and understanding.

In addition to the innovative architecture and thought provoking exhibits, visitors could also see an impressive selection of multi-media presentations and innovative films. According to one account, “the real revolution was not in making films, but in watching them.”⁶⁵ Cinema at Expo demanded viewers “look at . . . subjects in new ways, . . . stretch our visual imaginations . . . indeed, to *participate* in the film rather than just absorb it.”⁶⁶ Multi-screen, experimental technical extravaganzas were the order of the day, with fifty-five of the sixty-two participating countries screening a film at their pavilion.⁶⁷

The Telephone Industries’ pavilion screened *Canada '67*, a film that used the circle-vision technique. Nine cameras were mounted in a 360-degree circle and projected on to nine screens, cocooning the audience of 1,500 people in an assortment of sights and sounds.⁶⁸ At other pavilions, visitors were confronted by images projected on to a 30 foot

⁶⁵Robert Fulford, *Remember Expo*, p.59.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷One of the requirements of Expo organizers was that films shown at the fair could not be seen in an ordinary theatre. Organizers expected technical innovation, therefore, with only one exception, all the films required special screening equipment.

⁶⁸Robert Fulford, *Remember Expo*, p. 63.

vertical screen. At the Man the Explorer pavilion, “the audience sat on a turntable which moved as the film, *Polar Life*, appeared on consecutive screens.”⁶⁹

As early as November 1962, the National Film Board had been preparing for the event, and, in anticipation of both Centennial and Expo, the Board undertook “a spate of hiring.”⁷⁰ In addition to an official theme pavilion, there were plans underway for “one commissioned film for the Canadian pavilion,”⁷¹ but perhaps the most successful NFB submission was *Labyrinth*, by Roman Kroitor, Colin Low and Hugh O’Connor, and Tom Daly, all from Unit B at the Film Board.

Described as a “philosophical journey,”⁷² visitors to the Labyrinth Pavilion entered a lobby decorated with sculptures. “Elevators then distributed the visitors to one of four levels surrounding chamber 1, before they were ushered into a tear-drop shaped auditorium of eight balconies on four levels on either side of the theatre.”⁷³ The audience watched a 20 minute film that used vertical and horizontal screens 11.3 metres long, “which forced the viewer to look alternatively from side to floor.”⁷⁴ A comprehensive theatre sound system, along with 288 speakers placed around the balconies, ensured that it was a truly multi-media experience. Footage for the production was shot in remote locales throughout the world, like, for example, Ethiopia, Cambodia and Crete.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 67.

⁷⁰Gary Evans, *In the National Interest*, p. 121.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 115.

⁷²Ibid., p. 124.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Additional footage came from Japan, India, Britain, the Soviet Union, as well as the United States and Canada. During the course of Expo, 1.3 million people saw *Labyrinth*, with many people waiting patiently for up to seven hours to view the unique film.⁷⁵ Having cost an astonishing \$4.5 million to produce, *Labyrinth* did enjoy considerable critical acclaim, with the *New York Times* declaring the film “as special to Expo 67 as the Eiffel Tower was to the Paris Exposition of 1889.”⁷⁶ In keeping with the Expo 67 spirit of innovation, the film technique was a forerunner of the emerging IMAX technology.

Along with film productions, Expo 67 offered visitors a range of live theatre and dance performances. In addition to booking local and national groups, organizers engaged the services of talented performers from around the world, because Expo organizers maintained that visitors should, above all, have fun. With this as their goal, they had to design a Fair that maximized enjoyment and minimized aggravation. Of course, one of the largest hurdles, considering the international scope of the event, was the language issue. Rather than try to create a multi-lingual Fair, however, designers chose instead to avoid language all together.

Picture-signs, combined with bilingual signage in the two official languages, ensured that all visitors were able to enjoy the park and find what they were looking for. The Expo symbol too was used to maximum effect, appearing on a variety of publicity items ranging from ashtrays to flags and umbrellas. Designed by Julian Hébert, it represented man and his world. The basic motif, a vertical line with outstretched arms,

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 126.

⁷⁶Ibid.

was reputed to be the ancient, universal symbol for man. The symbols were joined together in pairs, denoting friendship; the pairs were arranged in a circle which suggested the earth which, in turn, articulated the Expo theme of *Man and his World*.⁷⁷ Unlike the Centennial symbol, however, Expo '67 officials promoted the commercial use of the Expo symbol and "expected to bring the corporation a very substantial income."⁷⁸ This was in complete contrast to Commission officials who wanted to "make the [Centennial] mark available for the widest use on payment by the licensee of a nominal fee of \$10.00."⁷⁹ While the Centennial Commission did insist that the symbol should not be associated with items in "bad taste," and that it should not be "incorporated in products, especially souvenirs, produced abroad and imported,"⁸⁰ there were few real restrictions regarding its use. In fact centennial officials encouraged all Canadians to make use of the symbol. Expo officials expressed concern that the unconventional Commission policy would jeopardize their ability to market the exhibition symbol. They did not, however, demand that Centennial staff amend their policy. Instead, each organization opted to adopt two different strategies in an effort to realize their shared goal of hosting successful and memorable events. Like their Centennial peers, Expo organizers faced innumerable challenges head on, undeterred and confident they could find a solution.

⁷⁷NA, MG 31 D 21, Vol. 8, File: H.M. Wallis Canadian Centenary Council Papers, January - August 1965.

⁷⁸NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File: 4-15 Centennial Commission - Symbol, Medallion, Flag. (Feb. 19, 1965 memo from C.J. Lochnan, Special Assistant, Under Secretary of State to G.G.E Steele)

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

Since Expo '67 was conceived as a celebration of humanity's indomitable creative spirit, tenacity and desire to succeed against enormous odds, it was fitting not only that organizers managed to build the fair in record time, but also that it was considered by many people to have been the most successful exhibition held to that point. In the end Expo "welcomed 64,218,770 paying visitors and turned a profit of \$67,816,172,00."⁸¹ Quebeckers eagerly embraced the sites and sounds of other cultures and countries, as for many of them it was the first time they had been exposed to such an diverse array of cultures. Reminiscing, one visitor recalled how "locals began to take it in stride" remarking that they had seen "the chairman of the Soviet Union today," or General de Gaulle or some other world leader.⁸² Considering that over the span of the event, 92 heads of state visited Expo '67, it was quite possible that they had.

With its ultra-modern displays and predominately optimistic message, Expo '67 captured the imagination of participants and visitors alike. Even many of the skeptics were dazzled. Described as a "futuristic utopian city of buildings, streets, waterways, parks and public squares,"⁸³ the Expo world was innovative, positive and full of promise. In the spirit of Benedict Anderson's "imagined community," the sheltered archipelago in the middle of the St. Lawrence, seemed, for a brief period, to exemplify the possibilities of a new, ideal world where people from many countries and cultures, speaking a multitude of languages united to celebrate the accomplishments of humanity.

⁸¹Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 168.

⁸²Eley, "Theme Park for a Happy Future," *Compass*, p. 18.

⁸³Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

Centennial R.S.V.P.

“Ce n’est pas à cause de la Confédération que les patates ne poussent pas en hiver.”

Quoted in Separatist Advertisement, *Le Devoir* 25 July 1967.

All Canadians were invited to participate in Centennial; in fact, as the year approached and the public relations campaign expanded, citizens likely felt a growing sense of obligation to get involved. Promotional pamphlets, for example, advised Canadians that “[t]he real success of the Centennial in 1967 . . . depend[ed] on the extent to which every Canadian [took] part and help[ed] to do something worthwhile in his own community.”¹ Not content simply to secure the support of Canadians across the country, organizers also supported a campaign to encourage Canadians living abroad to return home for Centennial. The emphasis on Canadian participation did not preclude organizers from inviting the rest of the world to join Canadians as they celebrated the anniversary of Confederation. With Montréal hosting the 1967 Exposition, it seemed only natural that organizers should reach out to the world community and invite participation by other countries. In preparation for, and anticipation of, the visitors expected from around the world, the Commission sponsored a program of community improvement and rural beautification, claiming in a press release that

[i]f we paint up, clean up, light up and plant in communities in all of our provinces, what a new Canada we can present in our Centennial years to

¹NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File: 4-14 Canadian Centenary Council - Promotional pamphlet, “Out of the Past: The Future.”

ourselves and to visitors!²

But it was not simply a matter of sprucing up the country. Speaking to Canadian Club members in Montréal in 1966, Centennial Commissioner, John Fisher, remarked that “you can't just force people to celebrate, you have to give them a motivation, an incentive to participate.”³ Organizers recognized that people had to feel included in the planning process if it was going to be a success. Moreover, observing that “no one government or group can ever be expected to do it alone,”⁴ he encouraged everyone to get involved and share in the responsibility of planning an outstanding national event.

Initially the Centennial Commission had had difficulty convincing the public to prepare for the national anniversary, however, as Canadians were reluctant to get involved. According to Commission staff, this problem required their immediate attention because the support of volunteer organizations, various levels of government and the general public was critical to the eventual success of the event. Equally important, in their view, was the unqualified endorsement of the Canadian business community. A report written by Commission officials on how to generate interest in the corporate world, suggested that realizing this goal would be difficult. Conceding that “public opinion does influence corporate philanthropy,” staff observed, nonetheless, that “many of the industrialists are not convinced that the public are sensitized, or even

²Ibid, Vol. 981, file, PG 15-6-2-14 (vol.1) “Press Release [no date].”

³NA, MG 31 D21, Vol. 10, File: H.M. Wallis: Canadian Centenary Council Papers, Jan. - May, 1966, “John Fisher’s Talks: The Canadian Club, Montreal, January 31, 1966.”

⁴Ibid.

interested in Centennial.”⁵ Moreover, given that “corporations are disposed to equate the cost of Centennial projects with the potential or benefits to their public image,”⁶ the official doubted that business would get “on side” until the Commission or the Centenary Council, as the organizer of private sector, could demonstrate it was to their advantage to do so.⁷

While there was some cause for concern, officials remained confident that, eventually, Canadians would warm to the idea of a Centennial celebration. Their certainty was eventually confirmed, when, as the date approached, more and more people began to develop Centennial projects and to organize community events. Officials had always encouraged the public to celebrate Centennial in their own particular fashion and Canadians, taking them at their word, expressed their national pride in astoundingly creative and sometimes rather curious ways. Hundreds of women’s groups across the country organized a “dizzying array of projects ranging from the wild-and-wacky to the wholly admirable.”⁸ Women also wrote Centennial “anthems,” with one lady calling long-distance to sing her composition to a “speechless Centennial official.”⁹ Mrs. Kenneth Sinclair worked for two and a half years “hooking a fourteen-by-ten-foot rug,

⁵NA, RG 69, Vol. 530, File: DPRI - MacRae, Wm. - Memos. “Public Relations & Information Branch - Preliminary Report on A National Plan to Motivate a Strong Consciousness of Centennial Within the Private Sector of the Canadian Community - February 14, 1966,” 7.

⁶Ibid.

⁷In fact, business had demonstrated an interest in the event early on, when the Canadian Centennial Council began to formalize a plan of action to get all Canadians, particularly those in the business sector, on side.

⁸Catherine Sinclair, “What Women Are Doing for Canada’s Centennial,” *Chatelaine Magazine*, April 1967, p. 38.

⁹Ibid., p. 111.

portraying the Houses of Parliament bordered by the provincial flowers, with end panels depicting Canadian industry and an outside border of the provincial crests.”¹⁰ While Commission officials were somewhat bewildered by her generous offer to loan it to them for public display, they were no doubt pleased that Mrs. Sinclair had included the new Maple Leaf in her handiwork. Students from Victoria Composite Secondary in Edmonton, Alberta built a Centennial Park,¹¹ and an Ottawa resident established the Bytown Bottle & Glass Museum where he displayed his collection of 10,000 bottles. A patriotic dry-cleaner named “Vic” organized a “Fly a Clean Flag” program, offering to dry-clean anyone’s Canadian or Centennial flag for free.

The list of creative and unique projects began to grow, as Canadians created Centennial hair-dos, grew beards,¹² took part in neighbourhood beautification projects, wrote plays, planned dances, held contests, sewed Centennial toques, sponsored sports tournaments and hosted youth exchange programs. Increased public interest was corroborated with the results of a survey conducted by the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities. According to the survey, in 1963 only forty-three communities reported having some sort of Centenary organization, but by January of 1964 the number had grown considerably, with over 300 businesses having formed

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹According to the Chair of the Committee, Oksana Jendyk, the “park,” a circular concrete wall adorned with the provincial crests, was jokingly referred to by senior students as the “ashtray,” as students, not allowed to smoke inside the school, would go to the park to smoke and butt out their cigarettes in the sandy central section of the memorial. [Interview with Oksana Dexter [née Jendyk], Manager of Cultural Services, West Vancouver, B.C., 18 September 1998.]

¹²Mr. Waring Pentland, a member of the West Vancouver Historical Society, grew a beard to commemorate the importance of Centennial. He still has it. [Informal interview with Mr. Pentland]

Centennial organizations or committees. While the northern Alberta town of St. Paul reputedly planned the most Centennial events, to the delight of organizers it was increasingly evident that most communities in the country were planning to participate actively in the anniversary of Confederation. Fortunately for the Commission, it seemed the event would be a team effort after all. Throughout the planning stages, however, officials worried constantly about one particular guest: Quebec. Federal government officials were anxious that Quebec join in the festivities, as the province's participation would function to emphasize the important government principles of bilingualism and biculturalism. Moreover, their participation would help to advance the central Centennial theme of national unity.

From the beginning, the Commission faced, somewhat irresolutely, the question of Quebec and the problem of generating excitement for an event that many Quebecers, it was feared, viewed at best with ambivalence. Sensitive to the Quebec issue, Commissioner John Fisher attempted to allay public concern during a speech to a service group in Montreal, reassuring audience members that "Quebec had joined the program with the greatest enthusiasm."¹³ Conceding Quebec had chosen to proceed a little differently than other provinces, he confirmed Quebec was, nevertheless, on side. As the Centennial year loomed, however, this "fact" seemed less certain.

In November of 1966, a *Globe & Mail* article suggested Quebec's enthusiasm was flagging. The newly elected Premier, Daniel Johnson, was quoted as saying that "worse

¹³ NA, MG 31 D 21, Vol. 10, File: H.M. Wallis CCC Papers, January-May 1966, "John Fisher's Talk at the Canadian Club, Montréal, January 31, 1966."

things have been celebrated.”¹⁴ The rather indifferent remark, combined with his reluctance to fully endorse the event, did little to comfort commission organizers eager to present a unified front. Federal officials were quick, however, to quash the suggestion that the province was not an enthusiastic participant. They drew public attention to comments in the same article by Quebec Provincial Secretary, Yves Gabias. Gabias remarked that, after having consulted with the Premier, he could confirm Quebec would “give its most complete and open co-operation . . . as long as the good spirit and present tact of the commission” continued.”¹⁵

The matter seemed settled, but, with Centennial just around the corner, several more articles appeared in the press that cast doubt on Quebec’s commitment to the national anniversary. An editorial in the *Montreal Star* in December of 1966 claimed Quebec was going to “participate in, but not celebrate the centennial of Confederation.”¹⁶ The unnamed journalist, unsympathetic to this approach, complained that such a position was intolerable. Writing that Quebec had had “a whole century to decide about its place in Canada” and that the provincial government had had “a thousand opportunities to get out if they wanted to,” the journalist concluded that, as they had not done so, Quebec must “prefer what they have to the alternatives that present themselves.”¹⁷ Given these circumstances, the writer suggested “it [was] surely not asking too much that Québec

¹⁴Frank Howard, “Johnson sidesteps centennial endorsement,” *Globe & Mail*, 24 Nov. 1966.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶“Participate, but not celebrate,” *Montreal Gazette*, 29 December 1966.

¹⁷Ibid.

should not only 'participate' in the centennial of Confederation, but should celebrate it."¹⁸

In fact, the provincial government did get involved in many of the official centennial projects and programs and in communities throughout the province people organized centennial events. Ongoing concerns about Quebec participation did cause complications for planners, but, as elsewhere in the country, the problem proved largely one of disinterest, rather than outright political hostility. A senior commission official reported that, after having spoken with "highly placed authorities in the Quebec Government," he was convinced "there [was] no animosity on [Quebec's] part toward the Commission or its work . . . in fact one could describe their attitude as one of indifference."¹⁹

A report prepared for *L'Agence Canadienne de Publicité Montréal*,²⁰ the Commission's advertising firm in Quebec, appeared to verify this concern. It found that many respondents, urban and semi-urban Quebecers between 15 and 34, were confused about the meaning of the anniversary. The report was designed to canvas the Francophone community to assess the level of public knowledge about the event, as well as the degree of interest in national, regional and local events. While forty percent of respondents considered Confederation an "association" between the provinces, another twenty percent regarded it a "union entre deux nations." Sixty percent believed

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹NA, RG 69, Vol. 540, File: Quebec & the Centennial, "Memo: Sept. 6, 1966"

²⁰Ibid., Vol. 425, File: Agence Canadienne de Publicité - Rapport de travail, "Étude de motivation des canadiens d'expression française pour les fêtes du Centenaire de la Confédération, Mai 1966."

Confederation was a political arrangement and forty-one percent viewed it as an economic agreement; only twenty-five percent believed it was a social contract. To the delight of the Commission, the great majority of the people polled thought Confederation was an historically significant event, with forty-three percent responding they thought it was an occasion to manifest national loyalty. An interesting exception to the findings, however, was with men between 15 and 34 who lived in urban environments. They were more sympathetic to the separatist platform. Similarly disturbing to federal officials were statistics indicating only seventeen percent of the respondents thought Centennial provided an opportunity to strengthen Anglo-Franco Canadian relations, and only fifteen percent thought it was an occasion to get to know other Canadians better. Moreover, while three-quarters of the people polled responded that they intended to visit Expo '67, nearly half were undecided about participating in or attending other planned Centennial events. Like other Canadians, before 1967, Quebecers were largely indifferent to the idea of a national anniversary. The mood, a complex mix of ambivalence and growing resentment, was perhaps best exemplified in a book, *My Country? Canada or Quebec?*, written by Quebec author Solange Chaput-Rolland.²¹

Initially, Chaput-Rolland and Gwethalyn Graham had secured funding under the Centennial Publications Program to co-author a book that would continue work first begun in their joint effort, *Dear Enemies*. The book, described as a dialogue between the two Francophone and Anglophone friends, validated the bi-cultural fact of Canada and

²¹Solange Chaput-Rolland, *My Country, Canada or Quebec?* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966)

placed the issue front and centre. Soon after submitting their application, however, Graham was diagnosed with cancer and in August of 1965, Chaput-Rolland telegraphed the Commission that, as her co-author was unwell, she would have to find someone to take her friend's place. Sadly, Graham died a month later. Chaput-Rolland did not replace Graham, deciding instead to continue the project alone.

Described as a "daily diary reflecting impressions of Canada as seen by a French Canadian,"²² the book explored relations between French and English Canada. With a grant of \$2,500 to cover travel expenses, Chaput-Rolland travelled from coast to coast, speaking with fellow Canadians and educating herself about the Canadian "experience." Conceding that due to "the limits of [her] Centennial grant, and because of . . . family obligations," she agreed that it would "be impossible for [her] to pass an exhaustive judgement on Canada."²³ Nevertheless, only eight days into her across-Canada tour, Chaput-Rolland declared emphatically that her country was "decidedly Quebec."²⁴ Her apparently hasty conclusion was driven largely by what she believed was English Canada's indifference to Quebec's problems. Particularly galling to her was that, in her opinion, audiences across Canada were not listening to what she had to say. In Alberta she encountered hostility about the "Quebec problem," and in B.C. there was, in her view, complete ambivalence. Adding to her frustration was the response from the media which

²²NA, RG 69, Vol 549, File: Chatelaine Magazine, "Letter to Mrs. Doris Anderson, Editor from, Angela Burke, P.R. - Womens' Program, CCC, August 22, 1966."

²³Solange Chaput-Rolland, *My Country? Canada or Quebec?* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1966), p. 16.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 19.

she accused of rarely reporting what she said, but rather what they wanted to hear.²⁵

Arguably, while the threat of Quebec separatism figured prominently in the minds of Canadian politicians, it was still an anathema to many in English Canada. While disturbed by the potential break-up of their country, there was confusion about why Quebec would consider this a viable option.

A comedy skit on a CBC variety show promoting Centennial typifies English Canada's attitude toward the Quebec situation. In the piece, Johnny Wayne, of Wayne and Shuster fame, plays a the role of a "professor" charged with the responsibility of coaching a rather witless hockey team. In true Canadian self-deprecating style, the scene opens with the comedian instructing the team, not on strategy and plays, but on how to get to the ice. Once the team leaves to look for the rink, Wayne takes sportscaster Ward Cornell to the lockers to show him memorabilia he has collected over the years. Upon reaching the fourth locker, he opens the door and a very pretty young woman steps out. Remarking that she picked him up in Montréal, Wayne says she is his Centennial project. As she leaves the set he calls out to her, "au revoir ma Belle, à tout à l'heure." Then, blowing a whistle hanging from his neck, the actor raises his eyebrows mischievously and says rather incredulously, "how can anybody, who's put together like that, want to separate?"²⁶ Though rather unsophisticated and a little crude, the act serves to illustrate English Canada's puzzlement over the Quebec "problem."

Many English Canadians were of the opinion that Quebec, "la belle province,"

²⁵Ibid., p. 13.

²⁶NA, Audio Visual, "Canada One Hundred Years Young, - January 1, 1967" part 2, Item#16. Acc# 1982-0194, V1 8209-0095.

had little to complain about. Moreover, growing numbers of people in western Canada were convinced Quebec received preferential treatment from the federal government.²⁷ Francophones, however, held an opposite view. It is quite likely the comedy sketch would have been interpreted by many Quebeckers as proof of English Canada's insensitivity and lack of understanding of what was, in their opinion, a complex issue. The characterization of Quebec as a pretty young girl only served to reinforce cultural stereotypes and confirm the suspicion of many Quebeckers that they occupied "a subordinate position, ruled by the majority."²⁸ The widening political chasm was not due, however, solely to Anglophone ignorance of French culture and society.

Writing that she had "lost confidence in English Canada's open-mindedness," Chaput-Rolland observed that while it was "easy for the other provinces to accuse Quebec of narrow nationalism" they were no better, each believing their view was correct and above reproach.²⁹ She was critical too of intolerance in her own province. A case in point is that of L'Union Général des Étudiants du Québec who refused to take part in a Centennial project sponsored by students from the University of Alberta. The event was designed to bring students together from all over the country to share their concerns and educate the Canadian public about the challenges they faced. L'Union declined to take part because the organization was boycotting all Centennial celebrations. Chaput-

²⁷At the 1963 Centenary Council conference the theme of B.C. separatism was raised by Council Co-President, Dr. Marce Faribault who expressed fears about the investment climate in Quebec. "Language Push Basic Aim," *Montreal Gazette*, 19 April 1963, p. 27.

²⁸Ramsay Cook, "French Canada and Confederation." *The Maple Leaf Forever*, p. 117.

²⁹Chaput-Rolland, *My Country*, p. 80.

Rolland, while cognisant of the seriousness of their concerns, asked, “why on earth they are so pretentious?”³⁰ Writing that their “refusal to mix with students of other provinces, [and] their lack of courtesy in not inviting them to their campuses, are forms of narcissi[sm],” she remarked that, in her opinion, “[t]o . . . pretend [Quebeckers] are the only individuals in Canada aspiring to better democracy and social reforms is a ridiculous assumption.”³¹

Chaput-Rolland’s study emphasized the complex nature of English-French relations and illustrated the difficulty individuals faced when considering the alternatives. Writing,

I find myself torn by a strange paradox: this trip, this diary, has been made possible because of a Centennial grant, yet the more I visit in Canada, the less reason I find to celebrate a hundred years of living together.³²

Further complicating the issue was her fear that, even “if Quebec were to secede from Canada,” there was no assurance the province would automatically become an exclusively French enclave or that the culture and society would flourish.³³ While angered and frustrated by English Canada’s apparent insensitivity to Quebec’s concerns, and increasingly convinced that her loyalty lay with Quebec rather than Canada, she was not completely convinced that separation was, in the final analysis, the most effective way to proceed. Perhaps in an effort to offer a more inclusive, tolerant alternative to the separatist paradigm, Chaput-Rolland wrote about “solidarity,” rather than national unity.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., p. 80.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

Whereas the latter implied political and cultural assimilation, the former suggested a more complimentary, respectful relationship, with English and French Canada working together as equal partners. Thankfully for the Commission, her vision of future French-English relations did not subvert Federal policy. In fact, the Government could point to new initiatives like the Commission on Biculturalism and Bilingualism as proof of their commitment to forging a new partnership with Quebec.

Not surprisingly, however, many English Canadians were offended by *My Country*, considering it disloyal and inflammatory. In March of 1967, Commissioner Fisher received a letter from Rees C. Hugh, a Member of Parliament. Hugh wrote to find out whether Madame Chaput-Rolland “proposed to reimburse the Commission through the sale of her insulting book.”³⁴ He also wanted to know why she was able to secure a grant in the first place. No doubt Hugh would have been appalled to learn the jury considered that the Chaput-Rolland/Graham project reflected, perfectly, the goals and objectives of the publishing program, and scored the initial application forty-eight out of a possible fifty points. Described in reviews as “an impassioned and critical look at English-Canada,”³⁵ it did lead to a dialogue between French and English Canadians and managed to penetrate English Canada’s indifference. Most important from the Commission perspective, however, was the fact that Chaput-Rolland addressed the subject of Centennial. Her review of the planned national celebration was mixed. Remarking that she thought it was “rather foolish to imagine that because we . . . sing *O*

³⁴NA, RG 69, Vol. 214, File: Applications, correspondence of writers considered for program, “March 13, 1967 Letter to J. Fisher from R.C. Hugh, MP.”

³⁵Catherine Sinclair, “What are Women Doing . . .,” *Chatelaine*, p. 112.

Canada for 365 days in 1967, we will, the next year, all become big loving brothers,” she did not suggest an outright boycott and, in fact, wrote that she could not “understand what Quebec [would] gain by letting hotheads ruin the plan for a Centennial year of celebration.”³⁶ While it was not the resounding approval the Commission had hoped for, Centennial organizers, eager to present a unified front and have Quebec participate, happily accepted any support, no matter how qualified. For example, organizers welcomed Daniel Johnson’s lukewarm endorsement of Centennial, even if reference to the national anniversary was little more than a thinly veiled guise to speak on the delicate matter of constitutional reform.

During an address to the National Centennial Committee in April of 1967, Johnson welcomed delegates to Quebec City, telling them graciously that “Quebec [had] been looking forward to the celebration of the Centennial of Confederation.”³⁷ Shortly after these opening remarks, however, his address assumed an overtly political, partisan tone. Conceding the Centennial of Confederation was an important and historic event for Canada, he recounted “its meaning and importance in relation to . . . constitutional reform.”³⁸ Arguing that the Fathers of Confederation “understood the need, at certain junctures in history, . . . to revise political structures to take into account not only the present but also the future . . .,” Johnson suggested that, because the country was in a

³⁶Chaput-Rolland, *My Country*, p. 73.

³⁷NA, RG 69, Vol. 421, File: Discours, “Notes for an Address by the Honourable Daniel Johnson, Prime Minister of Quebec at a Dinner on the Occasion of a Meeting of the National Centennial Committee and Conference - April 25, 1967.”

³⁸Ibid.

period of crisis, it was essential that serious consideration be given to Constitutional reform.³⁹ Informing delegates that the federal government had “no responsibility in matters that concern the intimate life of a people: its education, its laws, its family and social organizations,” the Premier insisted the French-Canadian “nation” could only rely on the government of Quebec.⁴⁰ Moreover, maintaining the federal government should stop trying “to impose . . . uniformity,” on Quebec, Johnson, like Chaput-Rolland, pressed for a more equitable relationship.⁴¹ According to the Premier, a new partnership would only be achieved by re-evaluating the Constitution and “encouraging the evolution of . . . federalism” to meet the challenges confronting Canadians in the next one hundred years.⁴² Concluding his address, Johnson suggested that the “best way of celebrating the Centennial [was] to seek a formula that [would] . . . enable . . . descendants of French culture and of English culture to celebrate a second Centennial as Canadians.”⁴³ Perhaps not surprisingly, it was a familiar theme and the source of recurring tension between Ottawa and Quebec.

Forty years earlier, 20,000 people had gathered in Montréal on the occasion of Canada’s Diamond Jubilee to hear Henri Bourassa speak on the origins of Confederation. Embarking on “a sober, even pessimistic assessment of Canada’s social and political

³⁹Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 5.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 6.

⁴³Ibid.

evolution since 1867,”⁴⁴ Bourassa focussed his attention on “*les difficultés qui ont existé et qui existent encore entre les deux grandes races qui sont associées dans la Confédération.*”⁴⁵ Remarking that he thought it “was doubtful . . . whether Confederation in its present deformed state could long endure,” Bourassa declared that the Jubilee year should not be marked “by the mindless celebration of a deeply flawed status quo, but by a solemn commitment to renew and redefine the Confederation pact.”⁴⁶ Like Johnson during the Centennial, Bourassa exploited the Jubilee to meet his own objectives, using it as a platform to criticize the existing system and agitate for change.

In the case of Premier Johnson, while organizers were likely chagrined that he couched his message of Canadian unity in terms of constitutional reform, officials took heart that the Premier’s remarks served to emphasize the continued good political, social and cultural health of the nation. While the federal government never planned Centennial as an overtly political event, the Liberals, like the Conservatives before them, did want it to realize political objectives. Centennial officials, charged with planning and implementing the national event, found themselves in the difficult position of having to design a non-partisan, fun and unpretentious national celebration that also achieved the more political objectives of strengthening national unity and re-enforcing Canadian identity. It was, in the view of some senior staff, a tall order.

⁴⁴Robert Cupido, “‘Sixty Years of Canadian Progress:’ The Diamond Jubilee and the Politics of Commemoration, *Canadian Issues: Canadian Identity, Region, Country, Nation* (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1998), p. 24.

⁴⁵*Le Devoir*, 23 June 1927, as quoted in Robert Cupido “‘Sixty Years of Canadian Progress,’” p. 25.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 25.

In a memo to Fisher in September 1964, Commission Secretary Claude Gauthier wrote that the organization had to exercise caution, as “the natural temptation to a group . . . involved in the celebration of a political event which took place over 100 years ago, [is] to espouse the political objectives of the Government.”⁴⁷ In Gauthier’s opinion, the issue was further complicated by the fact that, there were “two opposing theses, to a large extent one was identified with the English speaking element of the population, the other with the Province of Quebec.”⁴⁸ English Canada promoted the continuation of the status quo, with some minor concessions to accommodate the realities of the twentieth century Canadian experience, such as developing a greater spirit of co-operation between provinces and the “broader recognition of bilingualism across the country.”⁴⁹ The country’s future was not so clear in Quebec, with individuals and organizations promoting solutions that ranged from a modest suggestion of a model of “associated states,” to calls for comprehensive constitutional reform. The most radical “solution” was separatism. Gauthier considered whether the Commission could or should identify itself with any of these approaches.⁵⁰ Implying the answer should be no, he suggested the Commission would do best to resist the trap to become overtly political, particularly when it came to the Quebec issue. In the end, the Commission adopted an unofficial policy regarding Quebec participation. While not exactly a policy of appeasement, organizers were careful not to provoke provincial officials and, for the most part,

⁴⁷NA, RG 69, Vol. 408, File: C. Gauthier, “Memo to J. Fisher, Sept. 25, 1964.”

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

exercised tact when implementing centennial programs and events in Quebec, always inviting their involvement and, after consultation, responding to any of their concerns. In spite of this approach, however, the year did not pass without incident.

Perhaps of all the officials scheduled to visit Canada during Centennial year, Charles de Gaulle instilled the greatest anxiety among organizers, as the General, always a controversial public figure, was renowned for his unpredictable manner. According to historian John English, "Pearson was 'apprehensive' about a de Gaulle visit, but since invitations had to be sent to all heads of state, little could be done."⁵¹ The "de Gaulle visit was unwanted, but necessary,"⁵² and officials believed that cancelling the planned visit could "provoke a series of events leading to catastrophe."⁵³ Further complicating the situation was the fact that the Quebec government had also extended an invitation to the General. The result was extensive discussions between provincial and federal officials over the General's itinerary and whether de Gaulle would visit Ottawa or Quebec City first. Prime Minister Pearson was adamant that Premier Daniel Johnson would not thwart plans for the official visit, stating that "if de Gaulle would not come to Ottawa, there could be no visit." In the end, however, Ottawa "reluctantly agreed to the French proposal, provided that a strong federal presence in Montréal was accepted by the Quebec government."⁵⁴ According to de Gaulle biographer, Jean Lacouture, de Gaulle was "all

⁵¹ John English, *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Vol. II. (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), p. 327.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁵³ *Ibid.* Ironically, while not quite a "catastrophe," de Gaulle's visit was highly controversial and placed the government in an awkward situation.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

the more willing” to travel to Canada, “when he learnt that the federal authorities in Ottawa did not at all care for the fact that [he] had been invited by the Quebec government.”⁵⁵ Long before he even set foot on Canadian soil during the Centennial year, General de Gaulle’s visit was already characterized by controversy. As the day of his arrival approached, there were further signs that his visit might aggravate already sensitive federal-provincial relations.

It did not help matters when federal and provincial officials scheduled competing press conferences. According to a CBC reporter, the Quebec newsroom had been dismantled and taken away, “because it was on federal property in a federal building.”⁵⁶ Unfortunately for federal organizers, the situation did not improve. During the official welcoming ceremony, a television commentator remarked that many Quebecers considered de Gaulle’s presence a “Royal” visit. The same journalist also pointed out that many of the boats on hand to greet de Gaulle’s ship flew the *tri-coloure* and the *fleur-de-lis*, but not the Maple Leaf. Later, adding insult to injury, there were audible boos from the crowd when the band played *God Save the Queen* and some people waved placards with Quebec nationalist slogans. Unfazed, the Governor General assured de Gaulle that Centennial celebrations would have been incomplete without his visit. Premier Johnson thanked de Gaulle for the “immense honour and joy” he brought to Quebec with his visit and welcomed him to New France. Ironically, as the ceremony

⁵⁵Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The Ruler, 1945-1970*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Harvill Press, 1991), p. 450.

⁵⁶NA, Audio Visual Tape, “De Gaulle Visit to Quebec July 23, 1967” Program # 61-2-1799-8000, Tape# 06858, Accession# 1985-642.

finished the CBC announcer observed that de Gaulle, very sensitive to protocol, would not do anything to jeopardize the sovereignty of Canada.⁵⁷ In retrospect, the remark certainly seems ill-fated.

In his recent study, *The Gaullist Attack on Canada, 1967-1997*, John F. Boshier claims that, prior to 1967, “Charles de Gaulle and his government were gathering information and strengthening ties with Quebec.”⁵⁸ Moreover, he suggests that when de Gaulle accepted Johnson’s invitation to attend Expo he “saw the journey as an opportunity to assist the nationalist movements of Quebec.”⁵⁹ According to Boshier, de Gaulle was aware of the historical significance of the anniversary year for Canada, and, astutely exploiting the powerful tools of symbolism and spectacle, designed his visit to emphasize the Franco-Quebec bond. He travelled across the Atlantic “in a warship named *Le Colbert*, after the minister of Louis XIV who had presided over the first great French migration to Canada.”⁶⁰ And, prior to arriving in Quebec, he visited the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. Had de Gaulle flown to Canada, he would have had to have landed first in Newfoundland, as the island airstrips were too small. According to Boshier, de Gaulle “wanted to avoid all the English-speaking parts of Canada, such as Newfoundland.”⁶¹ Characterized as a “kind of historic, almost imperial voyage,” de

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸J.F. Boshier, *The Gaullist Attack on Canada, 1967-1997* (McGill-Queen’s University Press: Montreal & Kingston, 1999), p. 38.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 39.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 39.

Gaulle took every opportunity to “suggest that Quebec was still French.”⁶² Whether it was by snubbing the Canadian navy, refusing to return their welcoming salute or, during his “triumphal” procession to Quebec City and Montreal, his constant “allusions to the essential Frenchness” of Quebec, Boshier suggests, de Gaulle’s staged visit left little doubt as to his “hostility to Confederation.”⁶³

The rhetoric increased and controversy followed de Gaulle throughout his visit. Journalists were quick to read symbolic meaning into de Gaulle’s visit to Expo, noting that while he “inspected the French pavilion for thirty-five minutes, [he] breezed through the Canadian art gallery in fifteen, and spent thirty minutes in Quebec’s glass showcase.”⁶⁴ Further adding fuel to the fire, the press reported that the Quebec motorcade was “dominated by ten Citroen automobiles which had been imported from France.”⁶⁵ While all the cars had Quebec licence plates, they had been bent to fit, thereby obscuring the portion that read “1867 - Confederation - 1967.” The situation culminated when, following his official visit to Expo, the French President succeeded in offending thousands of Canadians during a nationally televised speech at the Montreal City Hall, when he uttered the now infamous words, “vive le Québec, vive le Québec libre.”

There is ongoing debate as to whether de Gaulle deliberately planned to utter the inflammatory remark or whether it was simply an unfortunate blunder. According to

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., p. 40.

⁶⁴Joseph Kraft, “Opinion: Le Grand Charles, Le Grand Failure,” *The Daily Colonist*, 26 July 1967, 5.

⁶⁵Frank Howard, “Separate Quebec seen by de Gaulle,” *Globe & Mail*, 24 July 1967, p. 1

Xavier Deniau, who accompanied de Gaulle, “far from being improvised, his declaration . . . had been prepared as a result of the warmth of the Québécois.”⁶⁶ Others who knew him well argue it would have been “quite out of character for him to make the speech he made as a blunder in the excitement of the moment.”⁶⁷ While opinion remains divided, increasingly scholars maintain that the remark was premeditated.

Response from the Federal Government was immediate, but, at first, perhaps a little too subtle. No federal government representatives were among the guests at an official dinner hosted by de Gaulle later that evening.⁶⁸ The following day Pearson issued a statement admonishing the General for his statement.⁶⁹ According to Maurice Sauvé, a Liberal Member of Parliament, however, it was the French-speaking members of “cabinet, Marchand and Trudeau, in particular, who mobilized Pearson against General de Gaulle’s intervention.”⁷⁰ “Giving in to their pressure,” Pearson “hardened his tone and took responsibility for a statement, the terms of which . . . [were] discussed for three hours.”⁷¹ According to Lacouture, the “statement issued by the Ottawa cabinet, . . . could not but reflect a compromise between the Prime Minister’s concerns not to exaggerate the incident and the determination of the ‘hard-liners’ to be firm.”⁷² While Pearson stated

⁶⁶J. F. Boshier, *The Gaullist Attack*, p. 42.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ironically, Pearson had to review English transcripts of de Gaulle’s speech before responding.

⁷⁰Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The Ruler, 1945-1970*, p. 457.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

that the Canadian Government vehemently objected to de Gaulle encouraging the Separatists, thereby inviting the collapse of Canada, the Prime Minister was quick to make a distinction “between the French and de Gaulle.”⁷³ Concluding that “Canada has always had a special relationship with France,” and that Canadians “attach the greatest importance to our friendship with the French people,”⁷⁴ Pearson chose to emphasize common bonds between the two countries and downplay the inflammatory nature of de Gaulle’s remarks.

On July 25, the day following de Gaulle’s provocative remark, *Le Devoir* carried a full page advertisement that seemed to validate government concerns. Placed by an organizations identified only as “un groupe de jeunes Québécois,” the advertisement itemized sixteen areas where, in their view, Confederation had failed French Canadians. Examples pointed to the abolition of French from schools in Nova Scotia in 1864, New Brunswick in 1871, as well as other provinces over the years. The group also questioned the unequal distribution of wealth between English and French in Quebec and drew public attention to perceived threats to French culture and society. It was the last point, however, that was perhaps the most problematic for the federal government. Stating that

ni le statu quo, ni le fédéralisme coopératif, ni le statut particulier, ni les États associé ne peuvent remédier à notre situation de façon satisfaisante,⁷⁵

- the group advised French Canadians that there was only one solution to the problem,

⁷³John English, *The Worldly Years*, p. 343.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵*Le Devoir*, 25 July 1967, p. 16.

“l’indépendance du Québec.”⁷⁶ Much to the chagrin of the government, the issue of Québec nationalism was front and centre at a time when the Liberals wanted to reinforce Canadian identity, emphasize national unity and downplay separatist concerns. The Pearson government, while attentive to the possibility of controversy, was not well prepared to deal with the situation. From the beginning, government officials mishandled the visit, and, as a result, the Prime Minister soon found himself in a reactive, rather than a pro-active, position. Moreover, the de Gaulle incident demonstrates graphically how difficult it is to ‘manage’ national mega celebrations, and ensure that the events unfold as planned. Fortunately for the government, however, many Canadians, outraged by de Gaulle’s remarks, took the opportunity to speak out against the separatist movement and rebuke the French President.

The government received nearly one thousand telegrams by the evening of the “incident,” with the majority reputedly arriving from Quebec.⁷⁷ There were also reports that radio stations and newspapers in Ottawa had received threats to assassinate de Gaulle.⁷⁸ Montréal businessman Fernand Bolduc wrote an open letter to President de Gaulle stressing that, in his opinion, the majority of French-speaking Canadians wanted to remain in Confederation.⁷⁹ Mme. Cecile J. Schmid wrote a letter to complain that the Quebec government had gone too far, giving a “false impression of the real Province of

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷“Pearson Rebukes Guest,” *Daily Colonist*, 26 July 1967, p. 1.

⁷⁸Ron Collister, “Livid Ottawa May Stage Gigantic Snub,” *Daily Colonist*, 26 July 1967, p. 1.

⁷⁹Fernand Bolduc, “An Open Letter To de Gaulle,” *The Gazette*, 27 July 1967, p. 2.

Quebec.” Writing that Quebec was “not a French Province,” she emphasized that it was a “North American Province with a French language and culture,” which, in her view, was “a very different thing.”⁸⁰ G.E. Govier wrote asking when Canadians would stop “fawning over the English monarchy or French Presidency and grow up?”⁸¹ Given that in 1967 Canada was celebrating one-hundred years of sovereignty, it was a fitting question. It was, however, one that many English-Canadians were not, at least in the case of the monarch, yet prepared to address. Nevertheless, many Canadians agreed that the General had abused his position and spoken out of turn.

Tradition has it that Pearson, incensed by the de Gaulle incident, snubbed the President and cancelled the visit to the Canadian capital. Boshier argues, however, that de Gaulle never had any intention of visiting Ottawa, and that “it was de Gaulle, not the Canadian government, who made the decision to cut short his visit.”⁸² Furthermore, he suggests that while “it fitted de Gaulle’s purposes in Quebec to appear to have deliberately snubbed Ottawa, it also suited his government to pretend that he returned directly to France because of Ottawa’s ‘brutal reaction’ to his speech.”⁸³ Any resultant fissures in the diplomatic relationship could, therefore, according to Boshier, be “blamed on Canada,” while the French adopted an attitude of “injured innocence.”⁸⁴ According to an Edmonton journalist, “when all [was] said and done, [Canadians] might come to the

⁸⁰Cecile J. Schmid, “First and Above all Canadian,” *The Gazette*, 27 July 1967, p. 6.

⁸¹G.E. Govier, “Apron Strings,” *The Gazette*, 27 July 1967, p. 6.

⁸²Boshier, *The Gaullist Attack*, p. 40.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

conclusion that Canada, though jolted badly, initially hasn't been seriously hurt."⁸⁵ In fact, in an indirect way, the incident actually served to bolster support for Centennial across the country. Using the de Gaulle incident as an example of collective behaviour, it is evident that the episode motivated many Canadians, particularly in English Canada, to get involved. People rallied to support their country and demonstrate their national pride. While the press covered the de Gaulle story for several days following his speech in Montréal,⁸⁶ the affair did not, in the end, dampen public enthusiasm for either Expo or Centennial. Canadians continued to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of Confederation across the country.

As the year progressed, Centennial fever gained momentum, but organizers, not content, continued to promote the anniversary in the popular press and on television. One television commercial proudly announced that "[i]n 1867 they'd never have believed how far our country could come in one hundred years."⁸⁷ Declaring that after "a hundred years of freedom and growth," Canada had arrived at "the most exciting year ever,"⁸⁸ the commercial bombarded audiences with images of a vibrant, active and energized nation. Families picnicked and fathers took vacation snaps, cosmopolitan couples headed out for a night of entertainment in the city, people used the wonderful new recreation facilities

⁸⁵"The Great Centennial Year Debacle: Picking up the pieces," *The Edmonton Journal*, 27 July 1967, p. 4.

⁸⁶*Le Devoir* ran a selection of letters to the Editor for three consecutive days. The response was mixed, with people writing in support of de Gaulle, as well as people writing to condemn his statement.

⁸⁷NA, Audio Visual, Reference # VI 8712-0033, "Government T.V. commercial."

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

built with Centennial grant money, cars raced along new highways and, in the closing shot, a young couple walked through the grass into a future full of promise. Missing from the fictional and idealized vision of Canadian life, however, was a group that remained largely marginalised in society: members of Canada's aboriginal community.

Organizers appreciated that if they were to realize their objective of projecting a unified, Canadian image, they needed to involve the aboriginal community in a meaningful way that was in keeping with the Commission mandate. This, staff feared, would prove difficult, because “1967, as the Centennial year of Confederation, [was] meaningless to Indians.”⁸⁹ Moreover, many aboriginals were “far from enthusiastic” about celebrating an event that, instead of happiness, was marked by “defeat and bitterness.”⁹⁰ Rather than anger, however, the prevailing mood was one of indifference. Again, the Commission tried to stimulate interest in the national event and motivate people to participate actively.

Speaking at the fourth North American Indian Pow-Wow in Wikwemikong, Ontario, Commissioner Fisher acknowledged the important role natives could play during Centennial, saying,

“[a]s Indians you have so much to offer Canada, so much to share with the rest of [Canadians], so much to contribute to a once-in-a-lifetime Birthday Party such as the Centennial Year.”⁹¹

Continuing his appeal for native involvement, he spoke of how “[h]istory teaches . . . of

⁸⁹NA, RG 69, Vol. 450, File: Assistant Chief - Cultural Division - Indian General. “Memo to Mr. Robbins Elliott from Mr. Stan Zybala.”

⁹⁰Ibid., News Article: Lawrie Peters, “Around Town,” *Calgary Herald*, 13 April 1966.

⁹¹Ibid., Vol. 363, File: 130-14, “Excerpt from Speech by Fisher August 2, 1964.”

your charity, your cheerfulness and your fortitude.”⁹² Turning to a study by Professor Morris Bishop on Algonquin life,⁹³ Fisher spoke of a time when there was a “perfect equality,” between natives who “knew no rich or poor” and demonstrated “[a] keen sense of humour, and courtesy, patience [and] endurance.”⁹⁴ Adopting the “noble savage” model, the Commissioner, attempting to garner their support of Canada’s aboriginal community, invoked heroic images of the past, instead of confronting the reality of modern day inequities and injustice. But it was a difficult task, given natives were not easily swayed by officials summoning images of aboriginal generosity and forgiveness. The audience remembered history differently from the Commissioner.

One official suggested that for the occasion to appeal to the native community, it would have to be interpreted as the beginning of a new, better century, rather than a celebration of a past that, for natives, was marked by years of exploitation and the devastation of native culture.⁹⁵ Organizers also recognized that it was critical for native communities to get involved in the planning process as early as possible. So, in January 1964, commission officials met with representatives from the National Indian Council of Canada (NIC) to discuss how natives could participate in centennial programming.

The N.I.C., founded in 1960, was made up of Indian associations and federations from across the country and existed to co-ordinate local and regional Indian activities, initiate national programs designed to develop effective leadership, to act on behalf of

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid., referenced Morris Bishop, *White Men Came to the S. Lawrence*.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵*Calgary Herald*, 13 April 1966.

member organizations and liaise with governments at the civic, provincial and federal level.⁹⁶ At their 1963 annual meeting in Winnipeg, the Council established a Centennial Committee and elected Wilfred Pelletier Chair. Charged with “creating . . . programs that [would] crystallize . . . Indian leadership with a view to [eventual] full participation . . . in Canada’s every day affairs,” the committee worked to foster a spirit of co-operation between aboriginals and the larger Canadian community.⁹⁷ After some consideration, committee members proposed several themes for possible Centennial projects: travel and exchange programs, economic development, historical and cultural programs, political leadership training, and an executive development program. In January 1964, N.I.C. Centennial committee members met with Commission staff in Ottawa to present their report and discuss program ideas. Of particular interest to the Commission was a possible exchange program between natives and non natives and a cultural/historical program. The cultural and historical program included a national dance troupe, Indian Day celebrations, a touring art exhibit, summer schools and seminars and an Indian history of Canada. Both programs complimented existing Centennial projects and helped realize the Commission objective of celebrating Canadian heritage while also forging new relationships and strengthening old ones. The following day the press announced the N.I.C. had made a formal submission to the Commission. Subsequently, Commission staff found themselves fielding calls from the media interested in acquiring more information about the N.I.C. report. They indicated it was still under consideration and

⁹⁶NA, Vol. 429, File: 4-23-2-1, “Submission to Centennial Administration from the N.I.C.”

⁹⁷Ibid.

advised reporters a decision on how to proceed was not expected immediately. With media attention increasing, Centennial organizers found themselves in a reactive rather than a pro-active position. The challenge was to respond effectively and develop a cohesive Indian program.

In addition to the proposed N.I.C. programs, Commission officials decided that another effective way to advance the acceptance of the national anniversary in the aboriginal community was to include them in the Centennial Grants capital projects program, having them participate on the same basis as municipalities applying for funds. While some officials expressed doubt about the likely success of such a program, they agreed to proceed, in any case, as they were eager to find ways for natives to become more involved in the celebration. The Cultural Division, charged with the responsibility of overseeing Indian programs, developed policy guidelines for the Commission Board. In a lengthy memo they acknowledged that declaring Indians a special group would be controversial, but suggested there were many valid reasons to extend special assistance to native groups. Noting no other group in Canada was so marginalised and faced such "chronic and abject poverty,"⁹⁸ the report argued that, because of the exceptional circumstances, the situation demanded an unusual response.

A source of particular concern to officials was how best to administer funds for aboriginal projects. While making brief reference to the traditional choices of Indian Affairs or the Church as a third party authorized to disburse funds on behalf of natives,

⁹⁸NA, Vol.412, File: Indian Participation "Memo to the Commission Board: Participation in Canada's Centennial by People of Indian Ancestry - Some Policy Considerations," p. 3.

the report did not recommend this, remarking that “Indians are very hostile to having programs organized and implemented for them by a third party.”⁹⁹ Instead, A.J. Cormier, Chief of the Planning Branch, Cultural Division, recommended that the Commission work with the National Indian Council. But, in view of the fact that the N.I.C. did not represent all natives in Canada, he suggested they “leave the door open to regional Indian organizations who [might] wish to come forward with Centennial proposals.”¹⁰⁰ Cormier also suggested a grant in aid to the N.I.C., not exceed twenty thousand dollars per year, for administrative purposes. Before formally adopting the policy, Cormier advised the Commission Executive that “the policy should be seriously tested on Indian leaders,”¹⁰¹ and, following their approval, be presented at the subsequent National Conference meeting for ratification.

At the October 1964 Board meeting, Directors “expressed considerable doubt as to the value and effectiveness of the approach proposed.”¹⁰² Realizing there was considerable division among Canadian natives, Directors worried that the N.I.C. did not represent the interests of all aboriginals. Moreover, the policy, as proposed, did not make provision for the Métis or Eskimos. Given, however, that at the time, no other group came forward with a plan to mobilize native participation in the community, the Directors finally decided to adopt the principles of Cormier’s report with the proviso that Centennial staff withhold payment of the grant until there had been further consultation

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰²Ibid., Vol. 414, File: National Indian Council “Brd. Minutes, 12-13 October, 1964,” p. 9.

with other Indian leaders. Furthermore, the grant would be paid in installments “at the discretion of the Commissioner and on condition that acceptable reports [were] provided every six months, both on programming and on financing.”¹⁰³ Within the year, this caveat proved fortuitous, as the Commission Indian program ran into difficulties and was the centre of a factional dispute between native organizers struggling for control.

In December of 1964, the *Toronto Daily Star* reported an “Indian maid” had toppled the thirty-two thousand member N.I.C.¹⁰⁴ The controversy surrounded the disbursement of Commission funds and at the centre of it all was Kahn-Tineta Horn, a twenty-two year old Mohawk from the Caughnawaga reservation near Montréal. In 1963 Ms. Horn wrote to Secretary of State, Maurice Lamontagne, urging the Government to consider the “the possibility of aiding the cause of . . . Indian people”¹⁰⁵ during Centennial year. She proposed developing a model Indian village similar to Upper Canada Village, suggesting it would give natives “something to aid the restoration of their pride and desire for achievement.”¹⁰⁶ She also wrote to the Prime Minister and Commissioner Fisher with suggestions for an aboriginal festival at Expo ‘67. In 1963 she was elected “Miss Princess Canada” at the N.I.C. meeting in Winnipeg, but the following year, she was suspended from the Board and deposed as Council Princess, allegedly for “promoting

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ “Centennial funds frozen: Indian maid topples 32,000-man council,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 10 December 1964.

¹⁰⁵NA, RG 69, Vol. 429, File: National Projects: N.I.C. and Projects. “Memo: October 8, 1963 to Hon. Maurice Lamontagne, from K.T. Horn.”

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

programs contrary to Board policies.”¹⁰⁷ She campaigned to re-establish her position in the organization, but was rejected by delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Council in August of 1964. Subsequently, she lobbied the Commission, requesting they discontinue their support of the N.I.C.

At their November 27, 1964 Board meeting, Commission Directors reviewed a staff report regarding the N.I.C. and discussed whether they should continue to support the organization. Members decided they should extend financial support to Indian groups only with “the fullest support of and on the advice of the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.”¹⁰⁸ The Commission chose to freeze funding to the N.I.C. because of rumoured irregularities about how the grants were used. During 1964 the Centennial Commission awarded \$16,000 to the Council. A grant of \$9,000 funded a travel and exchange project for native youth. A further \$7,000 was awarded to hold a seminar of Indian leaders from across the country to develop Centennial programs at the regional and local level. These funds were in addition to the \$20,000 annual administrative grant approved by the Board of Directors in October of 1964. The Commission soon learned, however, that the planned seminar had not been held because, according to N.I.C. officials, the funds had had to be used to cover unanticipated administrative costs. The channelling of funds to defray administrative expenditures did not work, however, and the national Council headquarters, located in Toronto, were closing. Even prior to this revelation, the Commission Board had already

¹⁰⁷Ibid., “Memo: December 11, 1964 to Hon. Maurice Lamontagne, Secretary of State from Georges E. Gauthier, Associate Commissioner.”

¹⁰⁸Ibid., “C.C.C. Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - Nov. 27, 1964. Item #8.”

decided to freeze funding to the organization. Complicating matters was the fact that the inquiry into the N.I.C. had begun not with the Commission, but with Frank Howard, Member of Parliament for Skeena, B.C. Howard was quoted as saying he “wasn’t happy about the financing and operations of the council,”¹⁰⁹ because there was no representation from the West Coast. Horn further exacerbated the situation when she alleged the “commission dropped the N.I.C. because it [wanted] to deal with treaty Indians only,”¹¹⁰ a claim the Commission vehemently denied. The Commission advised the press that, contrary to the understating of the N.I.C., the Government had not committed itself to a three-year program of grant assistance and that, as in any other case, grants were subject to review and assessment on an annual basis. Planning Director Robbins Elliot reported the “\$16,000 grant was to finance an ‘experiment’” and that Commission staff would now assess how successful it had been. Arguably, it was an expensive lesson but it did teach staff and Directors that they should proceed with the Indian program cautiously. But more controversy loomed.

In September 1965 a *Globe & Mail* article reported on an “Indian Seminar” held at the Banff School of Fine Arts. Sponsored by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, the Commission had awarded one thousand dollars to organizers. Representing eight provinces, delegates were young Indians, primarily university students and teachers who, according to the Commission official present, “were very articulate, knowledgeable

¹⁰⁹“Centennial Funds Frozen,” *Globe & Mail*, 10 December 1964.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*

[and demonstrated] . . . genuine leadership qualities.”¹¹¹ Of the fifty-two participants, a small minority, “dominated the seminar” and issued an “inflammatory press release that purported to summarize the five days of discussion.”¹¹² Dubbed “radicals” by the Commission representative, the “rebel” delegates moved several controversial resolutions. They denounced the Department of Indian Affairs, arguing it should be run by and for Indians and parallel the structure of the Veteran’s Affairs department. Critical of the Government, they condemned the accepted practice of developing policies that affected Indian people without consulting them, concluding provocatively this illustrated natives lived “under a true dictatorial system.”¹¹³ The most scathing indictment, however, focussed on the churches and their dominant role in native society and disrespectful treatment of natives.

Commenting on the outburst, Reverend Ahab Spence, an Indian priest at the Anglican residential school at Sioux Lookout, Ontario, dismissed the protests, saying

[t]his attitude toward the church comes from a few radical young Indians . . . I don’t feel that this opinion is held by most of those attending the seminar and it certainly is not shared by many on the reserves, I’m sure.¹¹⁴

In spite of the controversy, the Commission official concluded that “all in all . . . the grant money was well spent.” Writing that “the ferment among young Indians [was] the best indication that an enlightened leadership [would] emerge in the not too distant

¹¹¹Ibid., Vol. 450, File: Assistant Chief - Cultural Division - Indians General. “Memo: September 22, 1965, to Mr. A. LeBlanc & Mr. R. Elliott from S. Zybala.”

¹¹²*Globe & Mail*, 6 September 1965.

¹¹³NA, RG 69, Vol. 450, File: Assistant Chief, “Memo: Sept. 22, 1965.”

¹¹⁴*Globe & Mail*, 6 September 1965.

future,” the official took heart, commenting that the “young radicals of today will be more tempered in another decade.”¹¹⁵ The remark suggests a complete lack of understanding of the growing politicization in the Canadian native community. In their haste to find ways to involve natives in Centennial, Commission staff found themselves, on several occasions, in the awkward position of reacting to a difficult situation. In addition to the N.I.C. incident, staff faced a similarly uncomfortable situation some time later in British Columbia. The Commission awarded seven thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars to the Confederation of Native Indians of British Columbia, in order to defray transportation and accommodation costs for delegates attending four regional meetings held throughout British Columbia. The meetings were organized with the purpose of trying to unify native Indians throughout the province, but the Confederation of Native Indians, like the N.I.C. before it, did not enjoy the support of all B.C. native associations. In particular, the Native Brotherhood of B.C. and the Nisga’a Tribal Council opposed the Centennial Commission funding of the fledgling group. Writing to the Commission in November of 1967, Frank Calder, President of the Nisga’a Tribal Council and a member of the B.C. Legislature, objected to the grant as, in his view, it had lead to the creation of a splinter group. According to Calder, the grant would damage the efforts the people working with him to build Indian unity in B.C., as it would create an environment of “suspicion [and] division.”¹¹⁶ Speaking on behalf of five pre-existing native organizations dedicated to Indian unity, Calder advised the Commission to “terminate the grants to the

¹¹⁵NA, RG 69, Vol. 450, File: Assistant Chief, “Report on Indian Seminar.”

¹¹⁶Ibid., Vol. 431, File: Native Issues Pertaining to Centennial, “Memo: From F. Calder to the Centennial Commission, Nov. 21, 1967.”

Confederation of B.C. Indians forthwith.”¹¹⁷

Commission staff had given the Confederation application for financial support careful consideration and had consulted with native leaders in British Columbia, but still they had been unable to escape criticism. While it remained something of a puzzle for some Commission staff how to involve the native community in Centennial, they continued, nevertheless, to try to find creative ways for aboriginals to participate. Their vigilance may have been fuelled in part by fears of a Quebec-like boycott, but it is evident from the documentation that Commission officials were actually committed to developing better relations between natives and non-natives throughout Canada. In the view of one staff person,

Centennial year offer[ed] a very special opportunity to justify ourselves vis-a-vis the Indians of Canada for the terrible indifference which we have manifested towards them in the last 100 years.¹¹⁸

Early on in the planning process, staff agreed that while they would be pleased to offer direction and assistance if requested, members of the aboriginal community should be free to develop their own centennial plans, just like any other group or organization. As demonstrated with the N.I.C. and B.C. examples, the approach proved challenging and was sometimes problematic, but the strategy did prove effective more often than not. As with other Centennial projects, the key to participation, lay in not dictating projects, but in encouraging people to design and implement their own Centennial projects and plans.

According to the Editor of the Calgary *Elbow Drum*, the newsletter for the Indian

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid., Vol. 429, File: 4-23-2-1, “Inter-Office Memo regarding Relationship between the Centennial Commission and the Indians of Canada.”

Friendship Centre, “for those natives who were in compliance with the white man's way of living, 1967 has much to offer.”¹¹⁹ He illustrated his point using the example of the campaign to build a new Indian Friendship Centre in Calgary. Planned as a Centennial project, members hoped to raise one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars toward the construction of a much larger facility. The project fit neatly into the Commission's vision of appropriate projects and, therefore, warranted support. The campaign literature, however, communicated a complex mix of ambivalence and hope, experienced by many people in the aboriginal community during 1967. Entreating potential donors to “[h]elp turn our defeat of 1867 into a victory,”¹²⁰ the material implied Centennial year signalled a new beginning natives in Canada and that they too, like other Canadian citizens, could look forward to a better future. Paradoxically, just as aboriginals were organizing politically in an effort to play a more active, meaningful role in Canadian society, many people in Québec were seriously considering separating from Canada.

Commission officials, eager to promote a spirit of national harmony, endeavoured to find ways for both Québec and members of Canada's aboriginal community to participate. Given the inherent political tensions, however, it was often difficult for either group to reconcile Commission policy of national unity with their experience of cultural and social marginalization. Not convinced that Centennial provided an opportunity to find points of common contact with other Canadians, many aboriginals and Québécois nationalists remained sceptical of the governments motives and, consequently, were

¹¹⁹Ibid., Vol. 450, File: Assistant Chief - Cultural Division - Indians General.

¹²⁰Ibid.

reluctant to join the celebration. Moreover, believing that the Liberal rhetoric of national unity implied conformity and capitulation, some people decided to resist the Centennial “moment,” or, as in the case of the young aboriginal “radicals,” use the opportunity to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the status quo. Exemplifying Raymond Williams’s theory of tensions between established and the newly emerging “structures of feeling,” the reluctance of aboriginals and Québec Francophone communities to celebrate Centennial demonstrated clearly that not everyone believed they were members of the ‘imagined’ Canadian community. Ironically, perhaps, it is likely that officials would have not have regarded this as a significant setback. Rather, it was a “victory” of sorts, as one of the primary objectives of mega-celebrations like Centennial is to get people talking to each other, exchange information, share experiences, and learn about one another, in an effort to forge common bonds and cultivate a sense of shared history. Officials confronted a difficult challenge, as they worked to design a national celebration that articulated a vision of cultural cohesion and political stability that included Canada’s Aboriginal and Québec Francophone communities. Recognizing, however, that managed events like Centennial can help strengthen the national identity, as well as play a crucial role in building a sense of shared aspirations, officials were adamant that, like other Canadians, Québec and First Nations people should be invited to the celebration. While, some people may have chosen to participate, rather than to celebrate, the event was still successful, as it provided an opportunity for citizens to think about what it meant to be Canadian, and consider the future of the country.

CONCLUSION

I still carry with me the excitement, the anticipation, the enthusiasm, and the belief in human potential that the Centennial Year seemed to promote . . . despite my critical awareness of the persuasive strategies, message design, the social construction of reality, and all the lengths the government went to instill in me the appropriate patriotic attitude, the lingering Centennial attitude still feels good.

Leanne Stuart Pupchek, "Remembering 1967," *ACS Bulletin AEC*, Winter 1997-1998, 14.

More than thirty years after Centennial, the national event continues to evoke warm memories for the many thousands of Canadians who took part and celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of Confederation.¹ But perhaps they look back a little forlornly, remembering a period that suggested renewed optimism and hope in the future. In retrospect, there is a natural temptation to find fault with the highly managed nature of the event. It would also be easy to criticize Canadians for failing to maintain the cooperative spirit engendered by Centennial. It is more difficult, however, to dispute the fact that Centennial was, from an organizational perspective at least, a success.

Writing about the American Bicentennial, historian Robert G. Hartje remarked that when American officials began preparing for the national event, they looked to the Canadian Centennial as an example of a good working model. Concluding it was "well organized with good leadership on many levels," they reported that

¹While researching and writing this study, I have spoken to many people, informally, about Centennial. I am constantly amazed by how eager people are to talk about their Centennial memories. Many people who were children at the time remember Bobby Gimby's song, *CA-NA-DA*. Ms. C. Howett, recalled her visit to the Confederation Train, and Mr. N. Grey of Vancouver proudly produced the Centennial medal he was given as a student in Nanaimo, B.C. Adults regularly reminisce about a trip to Expo '67 or a family driving vacation. In every instance, people remember Centennial year fondly.

it involved government spending in productive and innovative projects . . . [that] . . . always recogniz[ed] local integrity . . . it [also] included arts and history prominently, . . . thus releasing creativity and identifying important traditions of the past.²

Perhaps most importantly, however, the American planners recognized that their Canadian counter-parts had “allowed for the distinctive contributions of race, creed, language, and personal interests.”³

Realizing from the beginning that mass citizen involvement was critical to the success of the event, the Centennial Commission developed a program designed to encourage the widest range of public participation possible. Officials acknowledged that this sweeping approach might result in some unconventional Centennial projects. But this was not considered a serious problem, as the Commission never intended to control how individual Canadians chose to celebrate.⁴ In fact, their reluctance to dictate the “how” of the celebration helps explain, in part, why Centennial was so successful. Canadians were not forced to express one concept of Canada or Canadian identity. Officials did not pressure Canadians to adopt one particular vision of Canada or reduce their experience to one all encompassing theme. Instead, organizers invited everyone to get involved and express their national zeal in their own unique fashion. In fact, while Commission officials no doubt preferred a ringing endorsement of the celebration, they

²Robert G. Hartje, *Bicentennial USA: Pathways to Celebration* (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1983), p. 55.

³Ibid.

⁴Provincial and municipal governments applying for funding under the Centennial capital projects program had to meet strict criteria. The Commission exercised more latitude, however, when considering applications from organizations and individuals, but the proposed project still had to reflect the Commission mandate.

were willing to accept criticism too. Madame Chaput-Rolland's study on the state of the Francophone/Anglophone relationship, for example, was not a ringing endorsement in support of the Canadian Confederation. Similarly, young aboriginals were not discouraged from voicing their dissatisfaction with contemporary Canadian society and its treatment of First Nations people. Given that the Commission believed that Centennial offered an opportunity for Canadians to meet each other and share ideas, organizers welcomed all dialogue, even if it was critical. From the Commission's perspective, the most feared response to Centennial year would have been complete indifference on the part of the general public. If, however, Canadians did chose to participate and celebrate the national anniversary, there were several options available to them.

They could attend the official events hosted throughout the year or, if they wanted to play a more active role, they could join forces with members from their local community and organize an event of their own. In case they preferred to express their national pride privately, people were invited to undertake personal projects too. The Commission asked only one thing of Canadians: that they do something to commemorate Centennial. As the St. Paul example illustrates, Canadians responded to the request enthusiastically, devising ingenious and creative ways to demonstrate their loyalty to Canada.

Acknowledging that they could not control every aspect of the celebration, organizers decentralized the actual execution of many projects, leaving local committees to arrange the details, but the Commission retained control over developing themes and

principles for the celebration. Focusing their attention on disseminating “ideals and values” like national unity and patriotism,⁵ staff organized an ambitious public relations campaign that made full use of the print press, films, radio and television. They worked diligently, spreading the key Centennial message of national unity. Of course it was an ongoing challenge to realize contemporary political goals, given that the Commission, charged with celebrating an historic event, was not authorized to address the controversial issue of national unity directly. Fortunately for planners, the Commission mandate was broad. Official literature stated that the Commission “hoped that the public may be made fully aware of the way in which Canada . . . came into being and the contributions to its growth and development that have been made by peoples of several races and many nationalities.”⁶ But, as the official material was short on specifics, organizers enjoyed considerable latitude when it came to planning and implementing events. With programs like the Train and Caravan exhibit, planners managed to arouse feelings of national pride and reinforce established concepts of Canada as a country built by ordinary people in a spirit of tolerance and harmony. Exhibit designers selected images and stories that highlighted shared points of connection between Canadians and, Confederation, the reason for the celebration, was portrayed as a fine example of what Canadians can accomplish when they work cooperatively. In addition to commemorating past achievements, however, Centennial was also designed to educate Canadians about the present and encourage them to consider the challenges of the future.

⁵Ibid.

⁶*The Centennial Handbook: Guide du centenaire* (The Canadian Centennial Commission, 1967), p. 7.

Speaking to members of the Key Club in Ottawa in April of 1965, Commissioner

Fisher remarked that

[t]he Centennial Year, and its attendant celebrations and observances, gives us an almost heaven-sent opportunity to take a second look at ourselves; to decide once and for all where we are going, what direction this Canada of ours should take.⁷

Promoting a similar theme, Associate Commissioner Robert Choquette told members of the Meat Packers Council of Canada that Centennial offered “Canadians everywhere a rare chance to build for the future . . . [and] the hope of reconciling the differences . . . plaguing [the] nation.”⁸ These aspirations, while noble and sincere, were perhaps a little too ambitious. In as much as the celebration induced many people to travel across the country and meet their fellow Canadians, Centennial can be credited with developing a greater understanding between Canadians. But, it did not manage to bridge the growing chasm between English, French and aboriginal Canadians. Officials could point to the fact that Quebec did participate in Centennial, but because support from the government remained lukewarm throughout the event, organizers could not claim complete victory.

Reflecting on the matter, Peter Aykroyd, Director of Public Relations, speculated whether, if the Commission “had focused on engendering the maximum participation of Quebec, [they] might have altered the course of Canadian history.”⁹ In his view, because the Commission “failed to carefully analyse destructive forces,” they “were in no

⁷NA, RG 69, Vol. 981, File: AG - 15-6-2-14 (Vol.1) “Notes from an Address by Mr. John W. Fisher, to the Key Club Convention, Ottawa, April 22, 1965.”

⁸Ibid., Vol. 414, File: News clipping Summaries, “*Windsor Star*, February 5, 1964.”

⁹Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 77.

position to oppose them.”¹⁰ In fact, from the initial planning stages forward, the Commission endeavoured to find ways for Québec to participate in the Centennial. In consideration of the provincial government’s objection to the term “National,” the federal Liberal government, changed the name of the National Centennial Administration to the Canadian Centennial Commission, in an effort to accommodate their request. Similarly, officials, ever sensitive to Québec’s unique cultural and historical background, always involved Francophones in the development of the many official programs and projects. In the case of the Confederation Train program, the Commission Executive directed designers to modify displays that may have been construed by Québécois visitors as controversial or insensitive. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that Francophone culture was respected and well represented throughout the exhibition displays. Arguably, Commission staff went out of their way to ensure Québec’s concerns were addressed and, wherever possible, rectified. In the end, however, the Commission was unable to prevail against growing Québec nationalism. The provincial government participated in the capital grants projects, and many, rural communities organized Centennial events. However, enthusiasm for Centennial did not approach the interest and excitement Quebeckers expressed in Expo ‘67.

From the outset the federal government asserted Centennial should be a time “of national stock-taking and a re-dedication for the future.”¹¹ According to a senior official with the Commission, “[t]he program should have a strong Canadian flavour but should

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹NA, RG 69, Vol, File: C. Gauthier’s Correspondence, “A Program of National Significance for Centennial Year.”

also have important provincial and local aspects.”¹² Given the wide range of events organized by the Commission, provincial and municipal governments, as well as service groups, private organizations, and business, it appears they were successful in realizing this goal. Millions of Canadians flocked to the Confederation Train and Caravan exhibits. Hundreds of young Canadians took advantage of government subsidized travel exchanges, using the opportunity to visit with fellow citizens across the country and strengthen the links between communities. Still other Canadians attended the many cultural performances organized through the Festival Canada program, while others went to local theatrical productions. People watched the popular RCMP Musical Ride or turned out to see the Armed Forces Military Tattoo. Ironically, perhaps the best attended and remembered event of 1967 was Expo ‘67, a festivity that, while not hosted by the Centennial Commission, served, nevertheless, as a Centennial centrepiece.

While there were many big-budget, professional shows and performances and hundreds of locally organized events, it was the thousands of whimsical and very sincere personal projects that made Centennial unique and memorable. Whether it was a flying saucer pad, a new Centennial hairdo or, perhaps, a Centennial garden or neighbourhood beautification project, Canadians came out in force, finding unusual ways to express their national pride. On hand to officiate at the official Christmas “light up” ceremony in Simcoe, Ontario, an official from the Commission thanked members of the local Centennial Committee and the Chamber of Commerce and the other local service groups for all their hard work over the year. Congratulating them for the impressive list of

¹²Ibid.

Centennial celebrations they held throughout 1967,¹³ he observed that, while there had been many wonderful official projects and programs, it was because of the enthusiasm of communities like Simcoe that Centennial could be considered a success. Remarking that

[i]t is one thing for governments to organize programs, even for people to respond to programs organized for them by their governments, [he noted that] . . . the real measure of 1967 goes well beyond that to the thousands of projects . . . undertaken by the people themselves.¹⁴

The key was the fact that, in his view, people celebrated “not because they had to, but because they wanted to.”¹⁵ This, no doubt, was affirming for the hundreds of people who had worked so hard to spread the Centennial message. In fact, many Canadians wanted to have several of the Centennial programs extended after 1967.

Arthur Stinson, previously Program Director at the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, was commissioned to undertake a feasibility study on maintaining several of the Centennial programs. His report, *The Stinson Report: Centennial Programs After '67*, considered the practicability of continuing official programs and was submitted to the Government in December of 1966. In early November of 1967, the Cabinet agreed to approve several recommendations forwarded by the Cabinet Committee on Cultural Matters. They agreed to continue the Travel and Exchange program, subject, of course, to the findings of a review of government spending. However, while many people had lobbied the Government to extend the

¹³Simcoe was reported to be among the top five communities in Ontario when it came to organizing Centennial events.

¹⁴NA, RG 69, Vol. 421, File: Discours, “Speech: Christmas light ceremony in Simcoe, Ont.”

¹⁵Ibid.

Confederation Train and Caravan exhibit, having written to Ottawa to praise the program, Cabinet decided to close it at the end of 1967. The Department of National Health and Welfare was given the responsibility of maintaining the Centennial Athletic Awards Program, again provided it “could be reconciled with the priorities and resources of the department.”¹⁶ The Community Improvement program was referred to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for further study, “with a view to its continuation.”¹⁷ Cabinet agreed to continue the Changing of the Guard ceremony, and also recommended establishing a permanent visitor orientation and reception area on Parliament Hill. Another colourful legacy of the national event, the Centennial Flame, was also kept to commemorate the historically significant year. The splashy production, *Son et Lumiere*, however, was discontinued.

Perhaps the most difficult thing to sustain after 1967 was the Centennial spirit of goodwill and national pride. Speaking to a group of citizens in Simcoe, Ontario, a Commission official urged them to continue to work toward improving Canada beyond December 31st, 1967 and encouraged them to “keep the important things -- our new knowledge of ourselves, our new understanding, our new confidence -- strong in [their] minds and . . . hearts.”¹⁸ Even before the event began, however, there were great expectations about what Canadians could achieve. For example, the editor of a national magazine wrote that,

¹⁶NA, RG 69, Vol. 380, File: 02 - Cabinet Decisions: Centennial Projects.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸NA, RG 69, Vol. 421, File: Discours, “Speech: Christmas light ceremony in Simcoe, Ont.”

as we approach our 100th anniversary, . . . Canadians should be sure it is a time of re-affirmation; of renewed confidence, strength and determination to make something still better out of our country, to make our distinctive citizenship still more worthwhile for ourselves and our descendants.¹⁹

It was a formidable challenge, because it demanded people work, individually, to build a better society in Canada, once the official party was over. And, according to historians J.L. Finlay and Sprague,

[t]hroughout their history, Canadians [have been] relatively unenthusiastic about large issues perceived from the standpoint of political abstractions. If there was ever national purpose it had to be specific - a tariff, a railway, or something easily translated into physical, tangible terms.²⁰

Fearing Canadians would consider Confederation a rather dull, uninteresting political occasion, organizers had worked steadily in the years leading up to Centennial to develop an exciting program that inspired Canadians to get involved and celebrate. They succeeded in transforming an intangible, elusive moment in Canadian history into a meaningful event for people across the country. It was, perhaps, somewhat unrealistic to expect that Canadians would continue to express the same level of patriotic enthusiasm and excitement once the party was over.

Celebrations like Centennial are, according to sociologist Frank E. Manning, “. . . an important, often crucial means through which people proclaim their identity and fashion their sense of purpose.”²¹ As a type of participatory cultural performance, they

¹⁹“Editorial,” *Maclean's*, 6 March 1965.

²⁰J. L. Finlay and D.N. Sprague, *The Structure of Canadian History* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall, 1979), p. 342

²¹Frank E. Manning, *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983), p. x.

provide tangible expression to what is largely an abstract idea; celebrations help define a sense of community spirit, and thereby intensify identification with the community. At a national level celebrations provide governments a convenient vehicle for promoting “[the] official myth of community solidarity.”²² Promotion of the myth of solidarity is crucial to the success of the event as, paradoxically, there is in fact little real agreement about the character of national identity. Fearing that there is no consensus about a common history or a unified nation, governments design events like Centennial so as to emphasize collective ties, no matter how tenuous or artificial. The success of mega-celebrations like Centennial, however, requires careful planning and effective management. In his “how to” guide written for the American Revolution Bicentennial, historian Robert Hartje claims that for a national mega-event to be successful

it must be accepted as an important ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ affair; and its planners must recognize man’s search for identity [and] his need for festivity.²³

In the case of Centennial, the Commission realized both goals, fashioning a fun event that, with few exceptions, did not challenge the status quo in a serious way.

Espousing a theory of cultural harmony and tolerance, most official programs imparted a familiar concept of Canadian identity. While recognizing the contribution of immigrants to the growth and development of the country, the prevailing message was one that emphasized unity over division. While officially, Canadians were encouraged to work cooperatively and not “rock the boat,” unofficially, however, Canadians were given

²²Lloyd Warner, *The Living and the Dead*, as quoted in Peter H. Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, pp. 5-6.

²³Hartje, *Bicentennial USA*, p. xiv.

licence to express their patriotism in a more idiosyncratic and irreverent fashion.

Whether that meant preparing a UFO landing pad for an unexpected guest, organizing a Centennial “biffy parade,”²⁴ or racing a bathtub from Nanaimo to Vancouver, was of little consequence. As at any good party, guests blew off a “little steam,” and, in a carnivalesque environment, poked fun at themselves and their neighbours. But, of course, it was all in jest and, in time, everything returned to “normal.” Of course, these fleeting, socially sanctioned moments of non-conformity, served primarily to generate greater enthusiasm and support for an event that, in the end, promoted a comforting vision of Canadian society.

As a ceremonial occasion, Centennial commemorated an historic event, but it was also an expression of hope for many Canadians. Centennial and its crowning glory, Expo '67, was a catalyst that unified Canadians for a brief period of time and launched them into what promised to an exciting and prosperous future. Centennial, however, was about affirming “sameness rather than proclaiming breakthroughs.”²⁵ Like other commemorative celebrations, Centennial “reaffirm[ed] the status quo, the authority of existing institutions, and the need for loyalty to the nation-state itself.”²⁶ Accordingly, the editor of a Calgary aboriginal newsletter suggested that 1967 had a lot to offer those

²⁴J.M. Bumsted, “The Birthday Party,” p. 5. “Bowsman, Manitoba, . . . began its Centennial celebration by parading more than half of the area’s outhouses before a crowd of 400 before putting them to the torch.”

²⁵William M. Johnston, *Celebrations: The Cult of Anniversaries in Europe and the United States Today* (London & New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991) p. 111.

²⁶John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,) p. 229.

people who were willing to conform to the dominant Canadian culture and society.²⁷ This is not surprising considering that Centennial served to refocus Canadians at a time when, according to one observer, the collective identity of Canadian mainstream society was increasingly under “attack”²⁸ from within and without. Encouraged to celebrate their common, collective experiences, no matter how artificial, and reaffirm their national pride, the year-long birthday bash served to distract Canadians from their worries, having them focus instead on past accomplishments and, more importantly, on future achievements. Centennial arrived at a time when many Canadians were in need of a patriotic boost and relief from the social, political and cultural challenges that confronted them. According to Robert G. Hartje, “[t]he Centenary produced a psychological ebullience that crossed ethnic, age, and social lines. Centennial leaders stimulated Canadians into a new belief in themselves and their nation.”²⁹ The year long birthday bash, complete with cakes, balloons and presents, as well as a catchy birthday song, fired the imagination of many Canadians who, for a brief moment, seemed united by a shared outpouring of national pride, and “[t]hroughout the year 1967, all across Canada, people ‘got the spirit.’”³⁰ Commissioner, John Fisher, emphasizing the importance of the national anniversary of Canadian Confederation, maintained in a 1963 *Maclean's* article, that “if...[Canada] were not having a centennial, we would have to invent one.”³¹

²⁷NA, RG, Vol. 450, File: Assistant Chief, Cultural Division, Indians General.

²⁸Peter H. Aykroyd, *The Anniversary Compulsion*, p. 40.

²⁹Robert G. Hartje, *Bicentennial USA*, p. 56.

³⁰Bumsted, “The Birthday Party,” p. 15.

³¹John Fisher, “If the Centennial is almost here, can John Fisher be far behind?” *Maclean's*, 18 May 1963, p. 1.

APPENDIX A¹

STATEMENT OF EXPENSE Year Ended March 31, 1968

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>Cumulative to 1968</u>
Programs & Projects of National Significance:	\$13,370,455	\$12,518,554	\$37,689,420
Grants to Provinces for Approved Projects of a Lasting Nature:	10,696,218	18,839,980	34,981,525
Administration:			
Salaries	1,643,620	1,442,109	4,578,157
Exhibits, displays & films	1,220,611	1,484,535	3,003,706
Professional and special services	930,056	863,743	2,246,136
Travel	181,176	211,875	634,057
Telephone & telegraph	150,562	104,933	320,846
Accommodation	106,500	95,400	341,900
Informational programs and publications	100,659	186,689	399,727
Stationary, supplies and office equipment	99,103	148,543	378,312
Employee benefits	90,166	80,285	260,141
Accounting services	78,400	70,600	173,600
National Conference on the Centennial of Confederation	30,216	42,268	174,234
Other	<u>164,792</u>	<u>152,498</u>	<u>403,142</u>
	<u>4,795,861</u>	<u>4,883,478</u>	<u>12,913,958</u>
Grand Total of Expenditures	<u>\$28,862,534</u>	<u>\$36,242,012</u>	<u>\$85,584,903²</u>

¹Figures from RG 69, Vol. 377, File: 40-19 Centennial Commission - Monthly Statements, *Report to the Secretary of State of Canada on the examination of the accounts and financial statement of the Centennial Commission, year ended March 31, 1968.*

²According to the *Statement of Expense*, a "balance of \$7,253,476 was held at March 31, 1968 by the Minister of Finance at the credit of the Centennial of Confederation Fund, available for grants to provinces for approved projects of a lasting nature." The projected estimate of the total grants to be made out of the Fund was \$41,735,000."

APPENDIX B¹

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (Year Ended March 31, 1968)			
Category	1968	1967	Cumulative to Date
Confederation Train & Caravan	\$4,556,368	\$5,394,934	\$11,405,663
Performing Arts	1,846,800	1,347,925	3,875,456
Promotion of Centennial Abroad	879,850	676,834	1,556,684
Youth Travel - Federal/Prov.	851,580	619,229	2,089,260
National Capital	489,172	51,137	551,601
Youth Travel - Volunteer Orgs.	450,509	362,133	1,141,3326
Promotion of Train & Caravans	447,138	457,077	904,225
Promotion of Performing Arts	375,857	198,487	574,344
Centennial Medals & Medallions	332,191	161,916	499,428
Publications Assistance	321,728	137,853	551,919
Canadian Folk Arts	267,575	84,435	436,190
Films	244,076	195,223	718,453
Centennial Athletics	212,876	629,608	867,524
Voyageur Canoe Pageant	185,169	130,249	354,619
Son et Lumière	146,943	267,284	457,898
Canadian Universities Participation	145,000	184,210	385,560
International Assistance	141,890	100,000	316,890
Visual Arts	123,038	135,606	263,870
Student Involvement	101,559	15,020	116,579
Promotion of Centennial Symbol	95,714	21,354	154,239

¹NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File: 4-19 Centennial Commission - Monthly Statements,
"Financial Statement, year ended March 31, 1968."

**PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
(Year Ended March 31, 1968)**

Category	1968	1967	Cumulative to Date
Isolated Communities	87,546	55,977	143,523
Participation by Indians	86,924	66,817	198,982
Promotion of Canoe Pageant	84,853	46,425	131,278
Representation & Ceremonies	78,637	---	78,637
Community Exchanges	74,000	53,795	163,845
Special Provincial Projects	73,172	---	73,172
Community Improvement	71,304	50,535	146,611
Dictionary of Canadian Biography	60,964	44,036	160,000
Les Jeunesses Musicales du Canada	60,000	110,000	175,000
Promotion of Youth Travel	43,172	9,463	52,635
Spectacle on the Hill	35,456	27,909	65,233
Canada Guide	31,263	---	31,263
Special Travel: Spectacle on the Hill Participants	28,286	---	28,286
Church Participation	26,677	59,400	109,491
Tree & Shrub Planting	1,473	19,832	30,911
National Centennial Guide	---	320,000	320,000
Fathers of Confederation Memorial Citizens Foundation	---	179,049	2,800,000
Canadian Centenary Council	---	75,000	346,248
Assoc. des Anciens - Collège de Montréal	---	50,000	50,000
Historical Re-enactments	---	5,577	143,862
National Arts Centre	---	---	4,472,612
P.E.I. Centenary Observance	---	---	100,000
Canadian Conference of the Arts	---	---	39,230

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE			
(Year Ended March 31, 1968)			
Category	1968	1967	Cumulative to Date
Canadian Museum Assoc.	---	---	36,750
Promotion Other	210,736	113,619	324,355
Other Projects under \$25,000	100,959	60,606	245,70
Totals	\$13,370,455	\$12,518,554	\$37,689,420

APPENDIX C¹

GRANTS TO PROVINCES FOR PROJECTS OF A LASTING NATURE			
Year Ended March 31, 1968			
Confederation Memorial Program:			
Province	1968	1967	Cumulative to '68
Newfoundland: Arts & Cultural Centre - St. John's	\$382,768	\$2,117,232	\$2,500,000
Nova Scotia: Medical Science Bldg. - Halifax	---	1,827,715	2,475,018
New Brunswick: Prov. Admin. Bldg. - Fredericton	---	191,180	2,500,000
Québec: Le Grand Théâtre de Québec - Québec City	223,598	1,158,146	1,381,744
Ontario: Centre of Science & Technology - Toronto	---	2,500,000	2,500,000
Manitoba: Concert Hall - Winnipeg	416,525	1,347,300	2,500,000
Saskatchewan: Performing Arts Centre - Regina Performing Arts Centre - Saskatoon	---	187,960 1,005,065	417,595 1,250,000
Alberta: Museum/Archives Bldg. - Edmonton	69,192	2,268,838	2,500,000
British Columbia: Museum/Archives Bldg. - Victoria	1,260,006	775,909	2,455,508
Yukon: Museum/Civic Admin. Bldg. - Whitehorse	16,831	233,169	250,000
N.W.T.: Regional Library - Hay River	177,855	---	177,855
Total:	2,546,775	13,612,514	\$20,907,719

¹Table data from, NA, RG 69, Vol. 377, File: 4-19, Centennial Commission - Monthly Statements, "Financial Statement, Year ended March 31, 1968."

GRANTS TO PROVINCES FOR PROJECTS OF A LASTING NATURE

Year Ended March 31, 1968

Centennial Projects Program:

Province	Number of Projects	1968	1967	Cumulative
Nfld.	87	\$260,256	---	\$260,256
P.E.I.	30	77,118	1,887	79,005
N.S.	36	416,250	183,947	672,413
N.B.	56	274,820	167,554	449,936
Quebec	56	2,477,306	1,673,218	4,150,524
Ontario	551	2,091,262	1,663,634	4,226,520
Manitoba	173	411,406	421,077	866,279
Sask.	399	358,863	225,229	645,594
Alberta	275	546,734	639,285	1,186,019
B.C.	333	1,198,197	240,123	1,488,517
Yukon	11	18,109	11,512	29,621
N.W.T.	1	19,122	---	19,122
Totals	2,008	\$8,149,443	\$5,227,466	\$14,073,806

APPENDIX D¹

Lyrics to Bobby Gimby's Song *Ca-na-da*

English Lyrics:

Ca-na-da
We love Thee
Ca-na-da
Proud, and free

North, South, East, West
There'll be happy times
Church bells will ring, ring, ring

It's the hundredth anniversary of
Con-fed-er-ation
Ev-ry Bod-y sing, to-geth-er

Ca-na-da
Notre pay - ee
Ca-na-da
Long-ue vie

Hurray, vive le Canada
Three cheers, hip, hip hooray
Le Centenaire!
That's the order of the day

Frères Jacques, Frères Jacques
Merrily we roll along
To-gether, all the way

Counter Melody:

One little, two little, three Canadians
Now we are twenty million
Four little, five little, six little provinces
Now we are ten big provinces - sea to sea

¹NA, RG 69, Vol. 198, File: Bobby Gimby Song, Ca-na-da, Main Branch File, vol. 1,
"Song Lyrics."

APPENDIX D

French Lyrics:

Ca-na-da
Notre Pay-ee
Long-ue Vie

Nord, sud, est, ouest
Ding, dong, ding
Allons Canadiens, tre unis

Le Centenair de la Confederation
Oui, chantons tous en chantons

Ca-na-da
We love thee
Ca-na-da
Proud, and free

Hurrah, vive le Canada!
Three cheers hip hip hooray!
Le Centenaire
That's the order of the day

Frères Jacques, Frères Jacques
Merrily we roll along
Le enfants du pay-ee

Counter Melody:

Un petit, deux petit, trois Canadiens
maintenant nous sommes vingt million
Quatre petites, cinq petites, six petites provinces
Et nous some dix plus les Territories, long-ue vie.

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A Note About Sources

All the primary source material cited in this thesis is held at the National Archives of Canada. I have drawn selectively on manuscript and government sources, focussing, in particular, on the papers of the Centennial Commission of Canada. With over 900 volumes in the collection, this record group was a valuable source of information about the government role in Centennial. I also consulted the Canadian Centenary Council papers and the papers of the Canadian Citizenship Council. Finally, along with the personal papers of Hugh M. Wallis, and Judy La Marsh, I also reviewed selected audio visual material.

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