

THE CANADIAN PUBLISHERS

All 217 of them

Dave Godfrey

IN THE SPRING when I was reading some of my recent fiction to a Conference at the University of Calgary, I met a student, Sonja, born in Alberta, who was finishing an M.A. in philosophy and yet had not only never studied any Quebec philosophers, or any work of George Grant, she had indeed never *heard* of George Grant; and this lack did not upset her. Nor did she know anything about recent French philosophy. What she knew was Chomsky and his disciples. What she believed, and felt the rest of the world did too, was that the Americans were better philosophers than anyone else — they alone were discussing what was important. “Better” was her key word. She would not accept my peace-offering that the space between American philosophers and our own was better termed a difference than made part of a competitive hierarchy.

When I first presented some of the material which follows, to a group of Canadian Studies students at Victoria College, the first question which followed was this: “Why don’t you writers and artists and everybody who can’t get your stuff sold just hire a manager to do it for you?” Presumably Sam Slick’s great grandson, with an M.B.A. from Harvard, would settle it all in a few whirlwind weeks.

Atypical you might say, and far from the world of publishing. But then in the opening lecture of the series in which this paper was formalized, at the prestigious Royal Ontario Museum, a member of the Ontario Cabinet, Robert Welch, charged specifically with overseeing the Ministry of Social Development Policy Field, spoke for almost an hour about the relationships between Government and Culture, and not once did he mention a single Canadian thinker, a single Canadian writer, a single specific Canadian situation, or a single Canadian book.

We are still far too far away from possessing our own world, from inhabiting a space at least part of whose complexities are made up of our own traditions, our own conflicts, our own perceptions, our own definitions and redefinitions, and our own attempts at struggling with these realities. Hiring American managers, or American-trained systems analysts or system-conceivers, is the last thing we ought to be considering. Only within the crucible of our own problems can we hope to move closer to our natural sense of being and learn to look outward with some confidence and dignity.

Now I have never pretended that a progressive, indigenous publishing industry is going to turn the heads of our Sonjas and Robert Welchs around overnight. But having put the best part of the last five or six years into an attempt to make philosophy work, to be creatively nationalistic, to be innovative within a traditional framework, and having seen some successful results along with many setbacks, it's perhaps a good time for me to look at the situation, in the early summer of 1973, and estimate how far we've come — remembering that the Royal Commission, after a good deal of expensive, high-quality research, recently concluded:

It should be clear by now that all the evidence which we have examined leads, directly or indirectly, to the conclusion that the Canadian book publishing industry is facing almost insuperable economic pressures. They threaten either to force it under, or so to attenuate it that it could only survive as an enfeebled regional cultural activity. (*Canadian Publishers and Canadian Publishing*, p. 251.)

It is not wolf, wolf, that we have been crying. Our mistake, if any, has been to attempt to keep the revolt civilized, to work within groundrules established by groups who look forward with pleasure to the inevitable results of those economic pressures.

But what is publishing that it should loom so large in the minds of certain intellectuals and activists? In an ideal world, it is nothing more than a mechanism, one mechanism among many for ensuring that the best, the most interesting and the most popular of the ideas, fantasies, facts and hypotheses of a community's intellectuals and poets, its innovators and teachers, its story-makers and its holymen, are distributed freely and cheaply to the other members of that community. A simple mechanism acting within a complex cultural environment which hopefully ensures that the individual outsider is not discriminated against, nor any group of outsiders allowed to destroy the actuality or the potential of the community's culture.

What is culture? To me it is no more than the sum of the activities of the

given community, not limited to the theories of the intellectual, or the craftsmanship of the worker, or the laws of the possessors. And one of the main reasons why publishing in Canada is in such a diseased state is that we suffer here from two very false definitions of culture, definitions which many publishers themselves not only help propagate but live out their lives within.

The first, which is essentially European, implies always that culture is something to be added to a community from above, as a lord might add fine wine to a peasant's meal. To me, once you are a member of a community, you enjoy, and are enlarged by, and limited by, its culture. You can enjoy individual exotic artifacts, but you cannot add culture to yourself alone, you cannot rise above your birthright culture without raising it up with you or participating in its enrichment, you cannot borrow improvements from outside unless your own community is willing to make that borrowing with you or you can so persuade them.

A great deal of the sterility and mis-direction of our culture and criticism stems from that "fine-wine" false definition, as well as many of the oddities of our "high-culture" elitists, but it is not basically dangerous. Even when the Southams and Dwyers let one more Factory Lab Theatre die so we can have, for example, more ballet in Ottawa, they are still more irritating than dangerous.

It is the definition, or anti-definition, of culture, which I denote as Ben Franklinism, which is the overwhelming threat. This definition sees function, mere materialistic functioning, the single-minded performance of wealth and power-garnering activities by the individual and essentially on his sole behalf, as the guiding principle of behaviour.

Ben Franklinism thus denies so many areas of complexity to culture, that, although as a set of ideas it cannot totally destroy any group's culture so long as the members remain as participants despite these harsh limitations, it can so root out and cauterize the elements of the culture as to leave the group's potential for successful evolution almost minimal. And America, of course, is the home of Ben Franklinism: our good neighbour to the south, the United States, united in their search for military power and consumptive consumption and efficient wastefulness and self-destruction.

I see that Ben Franklin anti-culture as one of those dark void stars which some say lie at the heart of the Milky Way, so concentrated in density that even light is bent as it enters the gravitational field. If you live near such a star, you obviously spend a good deal of time trying to discover what it is up to; you obviously fear its emissaries and servants — especially those who speak in Texan drawls of the "dangers" of nationalism; and battle-words obviously enter the

vocabulary of your own culture, no matter what its inner propensities, as they entered the vocabulary of Mexico when faced with the joys of Texan "internationalism" in the previous century.

And I aver that the forces set loose by a Ben Franklin cauterization of culture have a triple potential for disruption in neighbouring cultures such as our own: a) in imposing upon us the same strictly materialistic standards of America, b) in enticing us towards a General Motors/I.B.M./Maclean-Hunter culture, a new form of feudalism based on vast accumulations of power within fewer and fewer hands but sanctified in the dogma of individualism and efficiency and free-markets, c) in enforcing an internal split between what Scott Symons has called the Roundheads and the Cavaliers, between those who now control the production aspects of our culture and wish to see it further Ben Franklinized and those who seek reform and innovation within tradition.

It is possible, I believe, to define much of what our culture is, to describe precisely what is being lost within the dark star's field of force, but let us rather examine these cultural propensities within one component of the culture, book publishing, an important component not only because so much of its vitality comes from its adherence to the best of these propensities but also because it constantly demands, by its very nature, connections between those aspects of our life which some would keep separate, between art and politics, between management and radicalism, between selling and teaching, between accounting and artistry, between production and personality.

BOOKS, our books and their books, have an especially important role in any culture which is besieged by a stronger yet inferior culture. Practically as well as symbolically. In an age of increasing centralization of power, when even a bankrupt city newspaper is worth \$12,000,000, and a single television show can cost its corporate sponsors a million dollars, a small book, such as Grant's *Technology and Empire*, or Bergeron's *Petite Manuel*, or Drache's *Close the Forty-Ninth Parallel*, or Ryga's *Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, or Atwood's *Survival*, can be produced for less than a year's salary of an assistant professor. The book remains then an outlet of freedom for the disaffected and the disenfranchised, and if spoken truly and if in touch with the true propensities and beliefs of the culture, can have a far wider and more deep-reaching effect than any Kraft TV spectacular or ad campaign in *Chatelaine*.

That such books are produced under conditions of great difficulty and are al-

ways likely to simply disappear from our cultural life, however, even the Royal Commission with all its blinkers is willing to admit. The prime spur to Canadian publishing in recent years has been the vast number of circulating manuscripts of high quality with an angry creator, not too far back, somewhere behind them. Although the “internationalists” claim always that the opposite is true, the real stumbling block has been foreign control of distribution and the imposing of foreign standards of quality and relevance (and of course, although never defended, profitability). Thus, the many Canadian author/publishers of the past decade.

Now that my own infatuation with publishing is almost over, I can see that it went through seven stages and while not normative, is to some degree representative. It is first of all, difficult for me to believe that any of us became publishers in full rationality. If we had known the problems, all the problems, we might well never have started. It grew out of a gut reaction, a kind of buried anger in the mid-sixties at the constant humiliation, the sense of foreignness when you entered a bookstore or read a review, while, at the same time — to some degree — you believed the anger was justified *given your own inadequacies as well as your country's*. One thing I had learned, from Africa, was to distrust that sense of inadequacy, to look back to the remnants of one's own culture for inspiration, to the needs of the people about you for purpose, and within yourself and your friends and family for the necessary imagination and will to create new structures and new modes of action.

Given that knowledge, there are seven steps to the process as I see it.

The Egg Stage: where you finally ignore the existing structures and institutions and their frustrations to communicate your own undistorted thoughts directly to a few listener-readers, no more than can hear the sound of your voice in a room or read your manuscript.

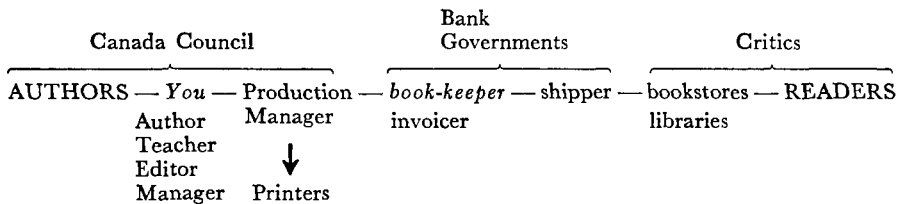
The Ego Stage: where you look at the end-result of the publishing structure, books on a store shelf, and say, quietly, I can do that. And do it. Even though that first book on the shelf cost you \$3.00 to produce and it's selling off the shelf at \$2.50, and it's only on ten shelves in the whole country.

The Joy and Happiness Stage: when you find out about Stan Bevington and the other people who've been doing it for some time without dying of smallpox; when the Canada Council finds out about you and gets you some encouragement, however minor; when your breakthrough seems somewhat miraculous and therefore repeatable and you take on other authors besides yourself and your good friends.

The fourth stage I call, Mammon Enters: Now the handouts and loans, which appeared munificent at first, are suddenly seen to be a little smaller than your needs. You enter, very confused and reluctantly, the world of regular bookstores and national distribution. You find out there are fewer than six hundred bookstores in the country that can even attempt to justify the name, while their association, the C.B.A., has only a few more than two hundred members. And you learn about invoicing, and discounts, and accounts receivable, and aged trial balances and credit lines and straight line depreciation. And bang, you're into Department X.

For into the inevitable chaos that has been building about you comes the voice of the Government, stating officially, **YOU ARE A BUSINESS, YOU MUST OBEY RULES.** They kick you out of your basement, because it's part of a residence; they question your tax-records and suggest strongly you hire an accountant whose salary would only take 120% of your annual gross, and insist you start using a six-part invoice form, filed by number and customer. And what they don't demand, the banks do. Because by now you can't pay for everything just by giving up beer and movies and new clothes. Your friendly bank has agreed you're commercial and they'll be glad to loan you three thousand dollars — if you don't have a Government of Canada Bond they'll gladly take a second or third mortgage on your house — after all, what is their purpose if not to aid struggling young capitalists?

You swallow, sign, and enter Stage Six: Fledging Entrepreneur: by now a structure has grown up between author and reader that is really quite immense; you look something like this



But you don't really have time to look at yourself; you're too involved in creating and juggling the structure to even read a book about business, because of course you're not really in business, you're just trying to do what you set out to do — get yourself and Dennis Lee and Margaret Atwood some of the readers you deserve. And pressure from the establishment institutions which keep you on the run is matched by pressures from authors; everybody, at that stage, seems to have a friend who has a great idea: about reforming the universities, or helping

new draft-dodgers, or reforming City Hall, or stopping the Spadina Expressway, or revealing the energy sell-out. And many of them are very good ideas.

OK. So why weren't we all successful? Stage Seven ought to have been a Mercedes and retirement to the Bahamas. All we had to do was stop fooling around and take a course in Accounting for Managers at the Park Plaza. All across the country from the mid-sixties on, similar structures were evolving at a rapid rate to bridge the gaps between Canadian authors and readers that have been imposed by economic colonialism. Why were they not fully successful; why is aid and support still required?

A mature culture requires constant examination and redefinition and elaboration, in minor as well as major areas. The mass-media is hopelessly inadequate for this purpose; it cannot present detail and it cannot sustain an examination for much longer than two or three months.

What would an American manager do? Suppose he came from an American house with a lingering conscience, one which had not sold out to Litton or Xerox. His average print run might have been as low as 8,000 copies. He would have been used to a budget in the following range for a 200 page book.

<i>Retail price</i>	\$7.00	<i>Unit cost</i>	
Sales	8,000 copies	Design	\$ 400.00
Retail income	\$56,000.00	Typeset	2,000.00
Minus royalties	5,600.00	Plates/paper	
Minus bookstore		print @ .35	2,800.00
discount @ 40%	22,400.00	Bind @ .40	3,200.00
Gross income	28,000.00	Total	8,400.00
Cost of sales	8,400.00	Unit cost \$1.05	

Out of the \$28,000 gross approximately 18% goes for selling and fulfilment costs, leaving almost \$15,000.00 per title for other costs such as editorial, promotion, space, salaries, interest, etc.

The first thing such a manager would obviously do is to look at a average budget for a similar type book in Canada. Because of market pressure from America, he could not sell the book at a higher retail price. But his sales expectation would be optimistic at 2,000 copies. So the budget would look like this.

<i>Retail price</i>	\$7.00	<i>Unit cost professional presses</i>	
Sales	2,000 copies	Design	\$ 400.00
Retail income	\$14,000.00	Typeset	
Minus royalties	1,400.00	@ \$10.00 per page	\$2,000.00

Minus bookstore		plate/paper/print	
discount @ 40%	5,600.00	@ 80¢	\$1,600.00
Gross income	\$ 7,000.00	Bind @ 80¢	\$1,600.00
Cost of sales	5,600.00	Total cost of sales	5,600.00
Net revenue	\$ 1,400.00	Unit cost —	\$2.80

Out of which the same 18% of gross income, or \$1,260.00, must be allocated as a firm expense for selling and fulfilment, leaving \$140.00 to pay for editorial, salaries, promotion, space, interest, etc.

What can he do? There might be an attempt to lower the unit cost, by using I.B.M. typesetting, back-street printers, one colour jackets, etc., but very quickly one of two decisions would be made: a) Do only those kinds of books which have a possibility of getting back up to the U.S. minimum press run of 8,000 copies: i.e. some kinds of textbooks, the odd popular novel, books about politics, hockey and Indians: b) Push sales of imported books, which can be brought in at a reasonable unit cost, and out of the “profits” from such sales publish the occasional important cultural book. That is, the Doubleday versus the Oxford alternative.

Between the implications of this economic contrast however, and the philosophic environment I described earlier, you have a specific social situation, a poverty cycle, which is influenced both economically and philosophically.

If publishing can be seen as symbolic in its recent innovative breakthroughs, it is also more clearly symbolic in its state of disease during the 1960's. Some would term it only disrepair, but it is difficult to prove that the patient was not very, very close to terminal.

In general, the industry simply reflected, and still reflects in economic terms, the Canadian industrial pattern: branch-plant replications based on the current mode of struggle for market-control in the U.S.A.: operating philosophies based far more on Sam Slick and Kraft Incorporated than on George Grant and Sir Adam Beck; expectations, in terms of salaries, prices, content and packaging, based on American practices rather than on our own realities, utilization of consumer-media overspill to ensure market-control for foreigners; philosophic attacks — backed by cash donations to political parties — upon nationalism and socialism; a closing of export markets by head office directives or planning strategies; fragmentation and the encouragement of destructive forms of competition with the native-owned industry; imposition of American law extra-territorially; a net non-importation of capital as the foreign-controlled segment of the industry increases, through the use of retained earnings, artificial, tax-encouraged depreci-

ation, and the willingness of Canadian banks to encourage monopoly control by directing their lending policies to favour already large accumulations of capital; and a redesigning of distribution methods — both through mass market outlets and via the idea of chain-stores — in a manner which reflects American habits and pressures far more than Canadian traditions or needs.

A GAINST THESE PRESSURES, Canadian publishing has fared little better than our drug, oil, auto or chemical industries. It does have one advantage the others lack in that each product is distinctive. A refrigerator is a refrigerator, but no matter how Philip Roth is packaged and merchandised, he still cannot have as much to say to Newfoundlanders as Harold Horwood or David French. The greater the remaining cultural integrity of the hinterland, the easier for its writers to be distinctive and to find an audience. But, as Robert Welch and Sonja indicate, in Calgary and Toronto we do not have all the advantages of Newfoundland. In terms of an urban, complex society, one attempting to come to terms in its own way with technology, rapid change and multiple moralities, we are in a very sorry state. There is a real danger of allowing America's experiments and postulated solutions to swamp our own.

Speaking statistically, by 1970 all publishers made a contribution of 0.06% to the Canadian G.N.P., significantly lower than the U.S.A. where the value added by publishing accounted for 0.26% of the G.N.P. We shaft ourselves doubly, by depriving ourselves of the contents of our own books and by giving up the chance to make almost four times as many jobs available for editors, printers, authors, salesmen, designers, etc. as are now available.

And those figures are from the 1970 Ernst and Ernst report, the first and only Federal study of publishing as an industry. The sale of Gage and Ryerson cut the sale of Canadian author books by Canadian owned firms down to a mere 2.5 percent of the total dollar market. It's as though we were in a race with the oil industry for the most shameful showing.

But all the problems are not external. It was our churches and our old families who made these two symbolic sales. The branch-plants benefit, although this is changing quite rapidly, from three other factors which should not be under their control. They benefit from a sleeping citizenry, a populace which is only slowly beginning to see connections between business and culture, which is only slowly beginning to realize that allowing McGraw-Hill to buy Ryerson means

fewer jobs for Canadians, unless they, the people, insist on certain safeguards, such as exist in the Ontario educational system's insistence on Canadian-authored textbooks.

The branch plants also benefit from the colonial mentality of many of our critics. A Kildare Dobbs represents the "fine-wine" variety. An occasional book might match his made-in-UK standards, but he is not interested in, nor capable of, the effort required to see Canadian culture as a complex entity and to view specific books at least partially within their own framework, as do the newer, younger, better critics such as Reg Vickers, Bill New, Eldon Garnet, Margaret Atwood and Sandra Djwa.

The "branch-plant" or Ben Franklin variety of critic is best represented by William French, who constantly worries himself sick — one imagines him biting his nails to the quick with worry — about the potential dangers of government interference if all these socialistic fiddlers are allowed to disrupt the beautiful free play of market forces, yet who sat, as the senior literary critic of Toronto, for years and years while the Mafia extended its control of paperback distribution from Toronto to cover most of Ontario, and yet never let out a single peep, was indeed blissfully ignorant of the entire situation, until long after the Royal Commission, in true R.C.M.P. fashion, had laid down the law to those St. Louis whiskey-runners who were working outside the established modes of exploiting the natives. Only now, in 1973, is he deigning, on C.B.C. money, to examine the publishing situation; yet when he started out on his tour he was unaware of even the names of many important new houses, let alone their members or mode of operation.

But more important, as an aid in the withering of indigenous publishing, was, and is, the "good servant" variety of colonial mentality. And this, in a sense, is the most difficult to attack. Because we do dislike rebelliousness and excess, that is one of the givens of our culture. The War Measures Act would never have been accepted in America or France or Britain or Nigeria exactly as it was in Canada. Nor forgotten so quickly. We long for order and safety, so that our children might grow up in peace and joy, and we fear the crunch, we fear even discussion of the crunch. We are primarily the offspring of servant classes, landless Normans, younger son Englishmen, crofter Scots, dispossessed Hungarians, draft-dodging Americans, West Indians exploited first by slavery or indentury and then by neo-colonialism. We specialize in insurance not inventions. It is not very difficult for the Americans to find good servants among us — Wally Mathesons and Paul Irwins and Bill Frenches: to sell their books, to buy their books, to defend

their rights to control the market — for that is “natural” according to our philosophy, our borrowed philosophy — and to manage these branch-plants.

They are good people, these Paul Boltons and Ivon Owens, many of them the nicest people in publishing, people whom you would be glad to have live down the street from you, without an evil stick in their bodies, and impossible to hate, and yet, and yet, and yet, we must rage against them for they do have a failing in that they cannot, or will not, because of deep-rooted fear, see where their actions lead. Good servants can perpetuate a pleasant society as long as they have an absentee or benevolent landlord, but they cannot create a self-reliant and independent culture, because their very role as servant denies that possibility. And when the landlord turns nasty the impossibility of their role will become apparent even to them. Or when their fellow tenants suddenly awake to the possibilities of a fuller life. Now, when Paul Bolton quits managing a branch-plant to start his own company, he first looks for an import line of books as a “base of operations.” When Ivon Owen and Oxford part company, it’s unlikely he will tear down the wall *Tamarack* has erected between art and society.

The writers should be more aware of economic realities, but there are numerous branch-planters and good servants there too, sweet Mary Jane Edwardses and hard-pressed John Metcalfes. People who would love to sell “their” book to an American book-club for example. Yet those same book clubs must be seen as an omen of the disastrous future if we do not take strong action. Of the \$225,000,000 worth of books purchased by Canadians in 1970, more than \$50,000,000 worth are purchased directly from America through book clubs. We don’t even obtain the dribble benefits of an agency system in this instance. No wonder we rage.

The seventh stage then, in most instances, was not marked by “mature entrepreneurship”. Most of us remained fledglings to some degree. Rather, through the problematic evolution of the Independent Association, we sought solutions to the problems which were larger than any given firm. Again, since we were seeking solutions rather than imitating foreign models, the process is still somewhat hazy and open to various interpretations. And, since the membership includes older houses as well as new houses, community presses and commercial firms, Marxists, anarchists, capitalists and the inevitable neurotics of any remnant industry, everything I am about to say will offend at least one member.

Canadian social philosophy is still basically inarticulate. When Abe Rotstein and Robert Fulford and I were editing *Read Canadian* we wanted to do a chapter on Canadian social philosophy, for we all felt that it would be possible to

know whether a certain way of acting or organizing, especially as a group, was basically within or without an acknowledged Canadian framework, but we couldn't find enough books to make a chapter. Still, Toronto is not Chicago, C.U.S.O. is not the Peace Corps, C.B.C. is not C.B.S., Ontario Hydro is not I.T.T., Calgary is not quite Houston, R.M.C. is not West Point, the C.L.C. is not a mirror image of the A.F.L.C.I.O. There is, I believe, a similarity to the way in which such Canadian organizations differ from their American counterpart. Suffice it to say at this point that they are characterized more by order than by competition, more by a habit of bumbling humanity than by a required necessity of greatness, more by a sense of purpose than by an adherence to materialistic practicality. I think that neither Haliburton nor the Blackfoot Indians, two of my touchstones for a sense of our traditions, would be too unhappy with the I.P.A. Nor would Sir Adam Beck, nor our farming ancestors gathered together for communal barn-raising, or stump-pullings, or church-buildings.

The official organization for Canadian book publishers was something called the Canadian Book Publishers Council, ridden with Ben Franklinism. In typical fashion within Canada's weird industrial structures, more than two-thirds of the members of this national trade association were branch-plants. They would not, could not, and did not agree with the basic premises of our struggle. They offered us, if we joined, a special new committee to deal with, yes, Canadian books.

If the I.P.A. can be seen as the seventh stage of an individual's involvement in the art/industry of publishing, then, it is worth examining briefly, for it represents in many ways something more fruitful *in kind* than any of the individual publishing houses which have sprung up in the last few years. If it works, and no one can guarantee that it will even survive, its example would be useful for other industrial components of our culture.

Like all trade organizations, we spend a good deal of time lobbying the government and other segments of the industry. But membership is limited to Canadian-owned firms, which is not typical. Annual fees are only seventy-five dollars and associate membership is available for firms who don't yet have the requisite ten books in print yet. Within the I.P.A., the individual publisher is able to face some of the larger problems that he was barely even aware of while locked in the chaos of the fledgling entrepreneur, problems which in many cases are as much cultural as industrial. For our environment is not American, of course, and neither should be our solutions or goals.

The I.P.A., to some extent, is worker democracy at the ownership level. The membership outlines major areas of concern and sets general policy. Then indi-

vidual publishers head committees to deal with specific problems and are given relative autonomy to solve detailed problems as they see fit, with the proviso that any member is free to sit on any committee if he so desires, and the practicality that in general people work on committees in which they have some self-interest. The executive committee comprises all such chair persons plus officers elected so as to represent the various regions of the country and the different interest groups within the I.P.A. It contains then, since it is essentially co-operative, the seeds of being something more than the average trade association, something creative and yet within our traditions.

I have described to some extent the negative aspects of being "good servants", including the inability to respond to the new shapes of accumulated power, to IBMism, that is to the social structures resulting from that desire to become a New World King or Duke or Lord which is a major factor in Ben Franklinism.

One way which our current form of corporate, hierarchial industrial structure perpetuates itself, despite its essential wastefulness and unhappiness, is by problem-solving on a corporately individual basis, so that, as each problem is solved, whether in the technical, management financing, marketing or interaction spheres, that solution remains a secret of the individual corporation, part of its growth and strength. We are so conditioned to this that we look upon it as natural. But, especially for people in the condition of Canadians, is it necessarily the best answer?

To some extent the problems which large corporations have solved are real problems, especially in a country with the ethnic and geographic diversity of Canada. We know that the small firm, although perhaps in a psychological and philosophic way representing the ideal size for a unit of production cannot hope to act satisfactorily if it acts always on its own. We have constantly before us, among many examples, the death of most of Ontario's small dairies and cheesemakers, whether co-operative or capitalistic, when Kraft really turned on the muscle it had developed in the competition-rewarding environment of America.

The question is how to remain a good servant, which is part of our ethos, without becoming a good servant of a destructive master. One theoretical way out is worker control, but most of Canada's workers are excellent servants; the awakening of national consciousness which must foreshadow innovation is only beginning there. The battle for full worker participation is one which must eventually be fought and won, but at least in English-speaking Canada few workers are in the forefront of the current struggle.

The possibility remains of using the I.P.A., as a forum, if not as the total

framework, for a new process, one whereby the owner-publisher would retain control over her basic production unit, finding manuscripts, making editorial decisions, convincing reviewers to review and buyers to buy, and, above all, working with her chosen authors, while vesting in a larger co-operative body those aspects of industrial operation which demand magnitude of scale and the resultant dangers of wasteful competition and accumulation of power.

You do not, of course, break a poverty cycle merely with theory. The individual publisher breaks it with books which do sell more than the average, books like Anansi's *Survival* and James, Lewis & Samuel's *Corporate Welfare Bums* and New Press's *Shrug* which sell from twenty to fifty thousand copies. Such best-sellers further increase our consciousness of ourselves, provide a decent return to author, and, simply by being successes, revitalize the climate for other Canadian books.

Group pressure on governments for a wider and fairer distribution of funds has helped make available important books which don't fit this best-seller category and yet which, once published, help in similar ways to revitalize the climate. Librarians suddenly realize, often on demands from their customers, that Canadian books are playing a more important role in their borrowings. Even the branch-plants, faced with this changing climate, are forced to increase their token Canadian publishing, at least for the moment.

In terms of a broader view of what we have been up to it is possible to say we have basically been engaged in a survival battle for the Canadian off-shoot of Anglo-Saxonism. But we have found very compatible allies in the French-Canadian publishers, who are organized very similarly, but started much easier; they loaned us much of our constitution, many of our principles, and a great deal of our inspiration.

ON THE OTHER HAND, there are many problems we have not yet even begun to face.

It is supposedly a national goal to create a mosaic culture within Canada, but then where are the books in our unofficial languages? What is to be the relationship of the German-Canadian book to the Anglo-Canadian book? The recent Ontario Royal Commission, in its admittedly minimal budget, set aside \$25,000.00 for books about native peoples, which wouldn't be enough to establish even one good Indian or Eskimo-controlled house; it set aside no funds

whatsoever for books not published in English. We have never seriously questioned the premises of our "national mosaic" myth, and this is not the time to do so, but isn't one of the reasons for such a myth the fact that we don't see our own culture as viable? The centralist, liberal, mercantilist, "non-culture" represented by a Lester Pearson or Bud Drury, views culture as somehow concerned with Italian opera and Ukrainian Easter eggs and Nova Scotian folk songs and can therefore perpetuate a myth of many cultures knowing that none of these "cultures" (except for the problem children such as Hutterites and Doukhobors) posed a threat to Canada's C. D. Howe and Donald MacDonald version of Ben Franklinism. Once our own culture breaks free of Ben Franklinism however, the problems of real sub-cultures and unmelted cultures will become clarified. In the next decade this is one of the major difficulties we will face.

The geographic diversity of Canada is a condition we are more used to confronting. Here is an area where the I.P.A. has waited almost too long to press for a formal, socially-supported, east-west axis to countervail the north-south one imposed by American economic forces. Upper Canada is closed off almost totally to books from the coasts. Quebec is, in many ways, another country. A proposal we have submitted to the Secretary of State would enable us, after a detailed preliminary study, to set up a co-operatively owned national distributor, which would act as a middleman with the wholesalers who control distribution in the various cities and regions and also professionalize the attempts of the publishers to enter the mass market.

The average bookseller too is in many ways a victim of the poverty cycle, happy selling foreign books for so long that now he is unprepared for the surge of competition from American-style chains, from the book-clubs, and from direct mail selling. Hopefully ways can be found to increase the self-sufficiency of the independent Canadian bookseller, but a necessary first step for many of them will have to be a realization of their common plight and of their potential for common action. If, for example, they exerted common leverage against publishers who sold directly to libraries and library jobbers, or if they formed their own book club and mailed promotional material to their own customers and potential customers, or if they formed a co-operative to do joint-purchasing of major titles, they could gain some of the advantages of the chains without sacrificing individuality and independence. Together with the new co-operative national distributor and the I.P.A., they could set up a system to greatly simplify the distribution chain, including, for example, single payment

of invoices, common order forms, on-line processing of order, and regional warehousing.

Another important area of policy rethinking must concern education. Here we have a terrifying example of Canadian non-co-operation. Until the provinces can learn to develop learning materials jointly, we are wide-open victims for overspill from large runs of American textbooks; we will be inevitably provided with freedom of (American) choice.

One of the tied-in problems here, of course, is the unfortunate centralization of book publishing in Toronto and Montreal. The other provinces use rather simplistic, almost primitive methods of retaliation; each province, as with resources, opens itself up to the quickest and least productive raping, in order not to lose out to a sister province. By co-operation, each province could long ago have established at least one indigenous publishing firm with sales over a million dollars, instead of accepting the crazy situation now where twenty branch-plants have a salesman in each of the ten provinces, providing an absolutely minimal amount of employment for authors, printers and management.

This distortion caused by educational authorities fosters another distortion, where U.S. and U.K. companies, with their vaster sales forces and sales income, act as parasites on the more gentlemanly small publishers. A Coach House takes many chances on young poets and fiction writers, and then, when the good has been sifted from the bad, the branch-plants hire a Canadian editor like Mary Jane Edwards and slap together an anthology for sale to the educational market. The small publisher is too exhausted by his losses on original publishing to be able to afford the large capital investment required for such an anthology.

Here the failure is partly ours, for we should long ago have organized boycotts of such firms, refusing jointly to sell them rights and seeking author support to establish the boycott and to broaden it out from an obvious base in Canadian literature and political writing.

Another of our failures has been to accept the subsidiaries' pattern of ignoring export markets. It is true that our first responsibility is to distribute our own authors to our own people, and we should not rush into exporting solely for the sake of exporting as the Liberals would have us do. But, in my more confident moods, I see some value for the rest of the colonized world in what we are struggling to achieve in Canada. In many cases, of course, we have to learn from them. East Africa has a publishing company sponsored by three governments and India was far ahead of us in insisting on the nationalization of foreign firms.

We have been relatively successful in unrusting the governmental pump, but neither the Pelletier policy nor the Report of the Royal Commissioners presents anything more than crisis support. Both present a case for "immaculate consumption"; that is, they are unwilling to attack openly the facts of American domination of this segment of our life and they give in to nationalistic demands only to the extent of agreeing with the obvious, that there must be an opening up of channels for Canadian writers. They would like, somehow, to see more Canadian books consumed, but not at the expense of McGraw-Hill's multi-million dollar sales. They present no policies aimed at the necessary withering away of the branch plants. The Royal Commission is more learned in its approach, more innovative in seeking crafty ameliorations without attacking the distortions, but except for the field of guaranteed loans, the Federal Government has been far more advanced in its practices.

The philosophy I have outlined as a counter-response to the problem is by no means adhered to by all Canadian publishers, although it is in many ways a product of compromise. A few rampantly mercantilistic individualists such as Jack McClelland and the various Maclean-Hunter dukedoms refuse to accept its premises, although so far none of them have turned down any of the cash benefits of government support. Even for the established firms, life is such a constant struggle that there is a great tendency to ignore new solutions and refinements.

I have mentioned the vacuum in "multi-cultural" publishing, but there has been a similar inattention to the problems of regional publishing which will require even higher levels of social support if it is to be viable, and about which the society will also have to make value judgements as to the necessity of, and nature of, its being. We are also far from devising a "freedom for servants" strategy, which would assist those Canadians who are too fixed in their ways to break free from their branch-plants without encouragement. The resale of Gage back to its employees and private investors offers an important opening for radical and innovative action. Special attention should be paid to the possibility of instant assistance for experienced bands of ex-branch-plant employees who wish to start their own firms.

On the other hand there are encouraging signs that the remnant Canadian magazines, who stand roughly where we did five years ago in terms of communal action, are beginning to band together and look for their own solutions.

And finally, we must be on guard against a substitution of Canadian for American monopoly. If power and wealth are to be distributed equitably and

equally, government policies must be set and funds distributed in consultation with the various segments of the industry, real consultation. Limits must be set on the size or the extent of any individual or corporation's control within the industry. Coles, Maclean-Hunter, Classics and the concept of a publishing czar represent as much of a potential threat to our culture as McGraw-Hill. One interesting precedent, set by the Royal Commission, would limit any given wholesaler of books to a market of 1.4 million people. The Ontario government approved this, as a barrier to the expansion plans of the Mafia, but then quietly reneged on it when Maclean-Hunter became the controlling partner in Metro News. But we are not fighting the battle for Canadian independence in order to see the old American replaced by a new Canadian version. Other similar precedents must be firmly established and adhered to.

Nonetheless, with all these sins of omission and commission and potentiality, few could deny that the situation has improved in the past five years. The survival raft is still a raft, but there's a little more fresh water per day, and more and more friends floating around on similar rafts. Perhaps some day soon we'll begin to hook up even more and start heading towards land. Perhaps we'll even reinvent the paddle.