

Canada's French-Speaking Viceroy

Two nations with one government — that is Canada, the country that "could not be," and is.

One monarchy with seemingly contradictory functions — that is the regime that Queen Elizabeth heads.

British and French live side by side without mingling in Canada. Monarchies and republics stand shoulder to shoulder in the British-led Commonwealth of Nations, with a Queen at their head.

Now to these crosscurrents add a new one: Queen Elizabeth, in Britain the defender of a Protestant faith, approving as her Viceroy in Canada a noted Roman Catholic.

There are other paradoxes in the naming of General George Philias Vanier to be Governor General of the one-time Dominion, now a fully independent nation in a vast commonwealth. One is that he belongs to French-speaking Canada but was appointed by a Prime Minister, Mr. John Diefenbaker, who is perhaps more than usually pro-British among Canadians.

General Vanier's appointment is another milestone on the long march of French Canadians toward equality

in fact as well as theory with the Canadian Anglo-Saxons. That some of the latter seem inclined to oppose the gains of their French-speaking countrymen is not a sign of opposition to equality itself, however, but of apprehension. Some of the Anglo-Saxon Canadians fear that the basis of equality and responsible government that has been preserved under British institutions in Canada may be lost in a gradual acquisition of political power by a community which employs religion, language, and culture as bulwarks against national fusion and allegedly as instruments for exacting privilege from the rest of the population.

However, Canada has had two French-speaking Prime Ministers. They left records of great national service. They are honored today by both Canadas, which are nearer to being one because of them. General Vanier seems to belong in their company. His appointment should help French-speaking Canadians to identify their interests more closely with those not only of Anglo-Saxon Canada but of Britain and the Commonwealth.