Knowledge Park

KNOWLEDGE PARK

by Stephen Franklin

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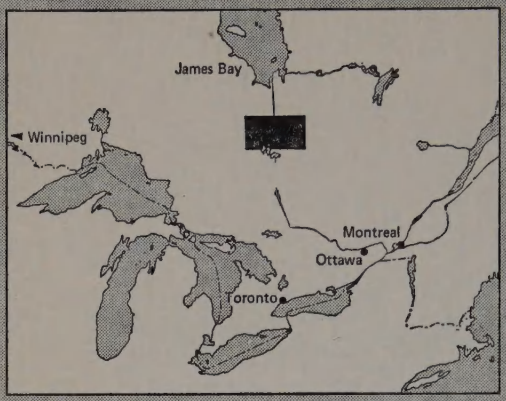
for ELSA
who transformed past and present
three times into future



LOCATION OF KNOWLEDGE PARK

Yesterday

Floodwood River
Communications Centre

To Smooth Rock Falls
International Airport

Native Indian
Library

Mistango
Lake

Data Centre Two

N

Cochrane

International
University
of the North

Libraries
of Leisure

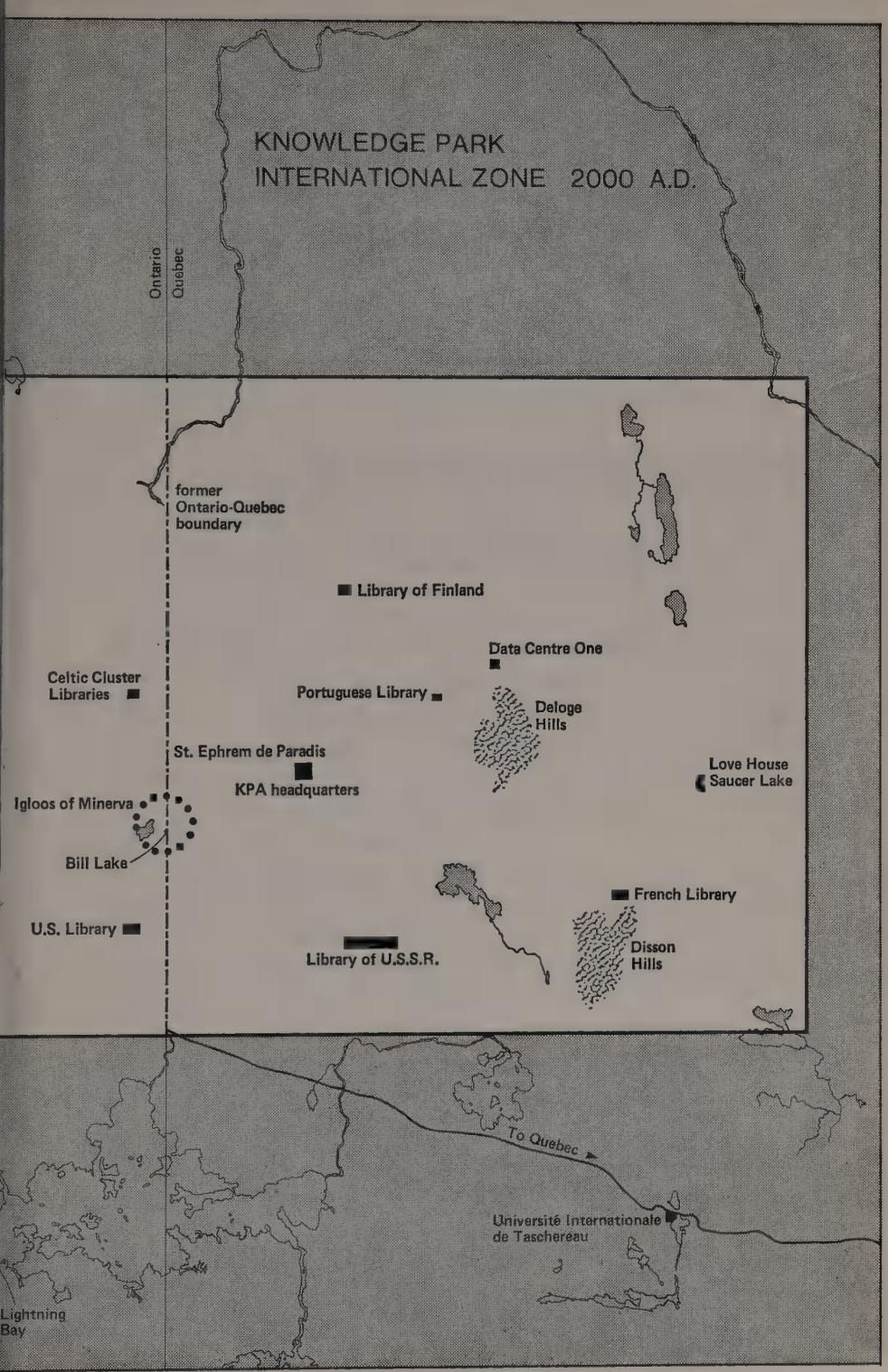
Lake
Abitibi

Iroquois
Falls

0 10 20
Scale of Miles

To Toronto

Matheson


KNOWLEDGE PARK
INTERNATIONAL ZONE 2000 A.D.
Ontario
Quebec
former
Ontario-Quebec
boundary
Library of Finland
Data Centre One
Celtic Cluster
Libraries
Portuguese Library
Deloge
Hills
St. Ephrem de Paradis
KPA headquarters
Love House
Saucer Lake
Igloos of Minerva
Bill Lake
French Library
U.S. Library
Library of U.S.S.R.
Disson
Hills
To Quebec
Université Internationale
de Taschereau
Lightning
Bay

"Some men see things as they are and say why.
I dream things that never were and say why not."

– Robert F. Kennedy

Chapter One

HARRIS looked at the calendar panel set in the surface of his desk to the left of the print-out screen. He already knew it was June 26, yet he checked again as if there was a remote possibility that time had reversed itself during the night. It hadn't. It never did.

There were five days left. July 1 had been chosen as his retirement date so that he could take part officially in the first Canada Day ceremonies of the new century at Bill Lake. It was, despite his special position, an unexpectedly generous gesture on the part of the Knowledge Park Authority. It would round everything out, for it was there that the whole thing had started so many years ago.

Although it was not at the precise geographic centre of Knowledge Park, Bill Lake had always been both the practical and the symbolic centre, suggested by the Originator because it was the one lake in the area which straddled the border of northern Ontario and Quebec.

Once the International Zone was established, such considerations ceased to matter. At the time, back in the seventies, the political significance of the choice was immediately apparent to the prime minister.

"It is a prosaic name for a lake, I admit," the Originator said, "but the lake itself is much like a thousand others in the bush. It is less than a mile long and no more than a quarter of a mile wide with trees down to the water's edge. But it does have some distinct virtues. It is just large enough

for contemplation, yet small enough for tranquillity and still enough for reflection."

"A pity it's not right here in Ottawa," the prime minister observed and continued discussing other aspects of the Proposal with undisguised exuberance.

Harris remembered that dinner party at 24 Sussex Drive very vividly. It was the only time he ever dined at the prime minister's house, but more than that he remembered it as the evening Canada changed its course.

He quoted the Originator's description of Bill Lake at the press conference the day The Knowledge Park Proposal was published. Usually there were only the book editors, critics and a sprinkling of writers and booksellers at publication parties. This time most of the Press Gallery had come down from Parliament Hill and the conference room on the ground floor of the National Press Club overflowed with bodies.

As the author, Harris had to field all the questions. The Originator, characteristically, had vanished. How much would this scheme cost in the first five years? Has the government already been approached? Is this a serious suggestion or just a wild flight of fancy? Has the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion been consulted regarding the location? Isn't it true that the traditional way of life of 6,000 Indians will be destroyed if this scheme ever succeeds?

Question after question until Dick Wesson of the *Regina Leader Post*, who never read press releases or background papers, piped up: "Where in the hell is this Bill Lake, anyway, that nobody's ever heard of?"

"It's a small lake up in the Abitibi Hills," Harris said, and then he described its other virtues of peacefulness and harmony as the Originator had done. And Wesson kept quiet after that.

Harris was accustomed to being on the other side of press conferences, asking the questions, not answering them. But it was worth it this way. The book moved very well. The paperback edition sold 60,000 copies in the first month, a

phenomenal sale. And Harris was caught up in a whirlwind of appearances, explanations and travels.

That was all long ago. This Saturday, as he had every July 1 for eleven years, Harris would walk out the narrow stone causeway which stretched to the centre of Bill Lake. Ten feet beyond, the bronze canoe appeared to lie in the water and the sculptured figure of the Originator sat casting for small-mouth bass. Harris would unlock the translucent sphere, take out the manuscript of the original 32-page Proposal, and read it to the crowds standing on the shore.

The ritual was always the same. Once the ceremonies were over, Harris planned to slip away. He hated protracted farewells. He would take the rapido to Smooth Rock Falls international airport and board Air Japan's night flight to Tokyo. Three weeks at the inn outside Kobe with his old colleague, Saiko Yakimura, should be sufficient to acclimatize him to retirement. Then back to Vancouver, the ketch, and a leisurely voyage up the Straits of Georgia to the cottage at Sointula. The salmon were running again better than they had for thirty years.

Harris made an effort to pull his mind back from both the past and the future to the present. He swung his chair to the right and focused his attention on his typewriter. Only six more days, five really, and he had scarcely begun his Recollection. It had to be done. The Wisdom Report, his son called it with a trace of derision. It was an apt name whether Adam believed in it or not. It was an attempt to assemble the individual hindsights of mankind; to pass on accumulated insights from one generation to another; to codify ordinary wisdom. The Recollection was the summation of what each man and woman had learned in a lifetime. Some people voice-recorded their Recollections at the communications centre in their town or village; others wrote them.

When it was first introduced nine years ago, it was very popular. It gave everyone his say. It put the field worker on the same level as the philosopher, the pipeline layer on a par with the politician. And each year the best excerpts

from the Recollections were anthologized in the *Book of Thoughts* in seven volumes. But it was a prodigious undertaking.

It would be faster if he used the direct voice printer. But the way his mind skipped and slid these days, that would be a waste of paper. And it meant speaking in AntiBabel. Harris had taken an immersion course in AB soon after philologists at the Library of Language perfected the universal language. He could converse quite comfortably. Expressing ideas in AB was harder. And besides, he was a writer.

Harris looked at what he had written.

St. Ephrem
Knowledge Park, I.Z.
Canada
June 25th, 2000

Recollection
of
Harris MacNeil

biographical note:
Richard *Harris* MacNeil, C.C., D.Lit., F.I.I.C.
Writer, consultant
Member, International Council, Knowledge Park, 1983-2000
Identity: CAN 763-921-800
Born: Elbow, Saskatchewan, March 14, 1930
Educated: Pauline Johnson P.S., West Vancouver, B.C.
R. B. Bennett High School, Calgary, Alta.
Married: Sointula, B.C., 1958, to Arla Vaasa. 1 s. 2 d. 5 grandchildren
Publications: Confessions of a Gopher Hole Watcher (humour), 1972
The Big Bend (novel), 1973
The Knowledge Park Proposal (with A. Le M. Mansell), 1975

Farley Mowat: A Critical Study (criticism), 1977

Argillite Carvers of the Queen Charlotte Islands, 1984

Looking Down a Long Dark Tunnel Towards Daylight (memoirs), 1987

The second page, on which the Recollection began, contained only a few random thoughts:

> Change is the only constant. . . . The first requirement is flexibility in the face of change. . . . Human nature is constant only to the degree it is believed to be. . . .
>
> The sun changes its spots more often that the leopard. But the leopard *does* change his spots. . . .
>
> Chance is a series of points perceived in a pattern of change. . . . Foremost among the Seven Deadly Fears are the fear of loving and the fear of being loved. Then follow the fear of asking, the fear of giving and the fear of trying. And the last two are the fear of changing and the fear of dying, which are two parts of the same fear. . . .
>
> Original sin is a red herring: an excuse for the inexcusable. . . .
>
> To be is not to be! It does not exist, it is an imaginary point between was and will be; it is existence in motion, not at rest. . . .

Harris pulled the second page out of the typewriter, crumpled it and stuffed it down the recycle chute. The soft *whoosh* of the suction pulling the waste paper down the tube broke the silence in his study.

Public noise above a level of 60 dbA was outlawed in stages by the Noise Pollution Act of 1987 passed by the government of the Second Confederation. New insulators, sound-proofed walls, floors and ceilings and, by 1993, virtually all machinery and equipment had been redesigned to suppress decibel levels to 50 dbA in industry and 15 dbA in offices and homes.

Harris used to enjoy the sound of typewriter keys hitting the platen. It was a satisfying indicator of work in progress. Nowadays his typewriter was so quiet he often forgot to switch if off.

Sanda put a glass of tea on his desk and switched off his typewriter. She switched the print-out from the desk console to the wall screen and let it roll. As she scanned the night reports, she began to massage his neck muscles. It was a ritual Harris enjoyed.

Sanda Nu was his morning assistant. She came from Pyapon on the Irrawaddy River delta. She was a graduate of the University of Rangoon and an expert calligrapher. Sanda spent three hours each day as his morning assistant and the remaining work hours with her pens and brushes in the Library of Burma. There were machines which could reproduce her calligraphy very faithfully, but none which could create it. Sanda was expected to learn twice as much from Harris as the extent of her input. So was his afternoon assistant, an intense young Irish musicologist named Liam O'Brien, whose specialty was Gaelic folk songs.

Harris liked both his assistants. He enjoyed their stimulus and companionship. And this was what they were meant to provide, since the work, in the old sense, was all done by machines. Because she was a woman, there was an added dimension to his relationship with Sanda Nu.

Sanda did not need to be equipped with a noise suppressor. She moved with a delicate and silent grace, spoke softly and had the gift of timeliness.

"Why is it that the only love which lasts is unrequited love?" Harris asked.

"It is not unrequited. It is only unconsummated," said Sanda and moved away from the back of his chair. "Arla is on the picture phone," she added.

"My father would have loved you too," said Harris unexpectedly. He would have. Andy MacNeil had been a journeyman printer with two passions in life which were not always compatible. One was for Bodoni Bold and a handful

of other type fonts he regarded as meeting the most exacting standards of clarity and beauty. The other passion was for Little Touch, a brand of rye whisky as raw as it was cheap. Less pronounced than these two passions, but clearly present, was Andy MacNeil's fondness for women, "in their place," as he used to put it.

Harris pressed his picture phone button. His wife's voice floated into the room with the peculiar softness the modulator system produced. It was difficult to reproduce anger with the voice modulator, although this was a secondary benefit not anticipated by the Northern Electric engineers who designed it.

"How is it coming?"

"You know me, a deadline writer to the end. I think I'll take a look around the Park and get down to the Recollection again tomorrow."

He watched Arla's face. At sixty-two she retained the translucent complexion he admired so greatly the day they met. It was '58, the summer they blasted Ripple Rock out of the narrows between the mainland and Vancouver Island; the largest non-nuclear underwater explosion in history. Harris covered it for the magazine. After he filed his story he took the weekend off to troll for tyee. Maybe it was the explosion, but the king salmon weren't biting and in disgust he put in to Sointula. There was a Finnish colony on the island and he had never been there before.

After lunch he walked along the beach to the lighthouse and that's where he met Arla. She was not the lighthouse keeper's daughter, but his niece. She was twenty and had graduated from UBC just long enough to become a program researcher for CBC television in Vancouver. Harris was twenty-eight and the western editor of *Maclean's* magazine. He watched her reflection in the silvered mirrors of the lighthouse, and two days later he called his father's old friend Craig Brown on the ship-to-shore radio. Brown had taught Harris how to fly cast and given him a hip-wader course in writing. In his other capacity, he was empowered to join

people together in holy wedlock. He came across from Campbell River the next day and married Harris and Arla in the lamp room of the lighthouse.

They had been together for forty-two years, and the bonds between them were as strong as they were loose. They worked together for a long time. When the children were grown and her hair had turned white, Arla felt the ancestral tug of those well-read fishermen on the Gulf of Bothnia and went to Helsinki to study for a year.

Long before Canada became the world's major producer of films and videotape cassettes and Knowledge Park Press the dominant print publisher, Helsinki prided itself on the largest bookshop in existence and a public library system eight times as great as Canada's.

Arla came back to Canada and Knowledge Park as director of the Library of Finland. It was not one of the larger ethno-lingual libraries in the International Zone, but it was a superb example of steel sheath architecture — a windowless rectangle polished on two sides and enamelled on the remainder, supported on piles in Trudeau Lake, twelve miles south of the Hurricanaw River power plant.

Harris suspected her preoccupation with the Library of Finland was, in part at least, an effort to absorb the disruptions of their impending separation. Arla was staying on at Knowledge Park after his departure Saturday. She was eight years younger, not that this in itself mattered, but she had passed her last ERCC test with flying colours.

Retirement dates for some years had been determined largely by Effective Resilience and Continued Capability Tests. The old will-o-the-wisp of the sixties — the Generation Gap — had been successfully extinguished by the ERCC, and now age differentials were not a determinant. ERCC's began at thirty and continued at increasingly short intervals every five years to age fifty, every two years to sixty, and annually after that. Harris had passed his last ERCC by one percentage point. He suspected a "fix" to allow him the luxury of lasting into the 21st century. He still scored well on physical

resilience, but not on attitudes. He'd become past-oriented and he knew it.

"That's a good idea," Arla was saying. "A ride around the Park will clear your mind. Take Sanda with you. I'm sure she's never seen Data One, or met Vasilii."

"I thought we would have dinner at Disson Hills," said Harris. "Can you make it by 2000 hours? Chez Son Pere?"

"Yes," said Arla.

Harris got up from his desk and walked out onto the morning terrace. The hydrangeas were a deeper blue this year since he'd planted the iron spikes in the earth around them. The begonias were growing well and the magnolia bush in the wooden tub was ready to blossom for the second time. At this hour of the morning the sun refracted on the eastern curve of the canopy, creating diamonds of light.

They were on the tenth floor in the western quadrant of St. Ephrem de Paradis, which was the best location. They looked both ways. They had a morning and an evening terrace. The morning terrace looked out over the centre of town. And the evening terrace offered a view of the leisure lands, the perimeter fountains and the solar reflectors. On clear summer evenings it was possible to see, off to the south-west between the crest of the fountains and the rim of the sky canopy, the huge domes of the Igloos of Minerva rising up out of the pine trees.

"It is beautiful, isn't it?" said Sanda. It was. The controlled environment towns had been well worth fighting for. They were comfortable and comforting. They had a unity, an individuality and a harmony so often lacking in the old towns outside.

Was it luck, Harris wondered, which had limited them to 8,000 residents and 2,000 transients, because the technology of sky canopies could not at that time accommodate a larger area? Or had the population limits been defined sociologically?

Harris couldn't remember. As a pragmatist he was satisfied that it had worked. St. Ephrem de Paradis was the first

controlled environment town built in Knowledge Park. Now there were twenty-nine others between James Bay and Lake Abitibi, some of which were more modern and sophisticated. But Harris liked St. Ephrem de Paradis best. Perhaps it was because it was the only new town built on the site of an existing community.

Moishe Safdie designed the new town, adapting the architecture of Habitat in Montreal to form a complete circle of honeycomb-tiered apartments: a circle one mile in diameter and ten storeys high. It looked like a giant stadium, a cross between a ball park and a synthesis of the Casbah and the Colosseum. There was a huge courtyard with small squares, gardens, cafés and meeting places about it. And in the middle was the Hub. The Hub was the transit terminus, the distribution and communication centre of the town.

The absence of roads had made the task of planning St. Ephrem and its sister towns much easier than it otherwise would have been. But without automobiles, of course, no roads were necessary.

The Burmese woman turned away from the terrace rail overlooking the town. "What was it like, Harris, when you first came here?" Sanda asked.

"The black flies were terrible," he said. "Come on. I'll tell you about it on the way to the Hub. I want to have one more look round the Park."

"You *are* a procrastinator," said Sanda.

"There was not much here then except black flies and mosquitoes, and the black-fly bites were the more painful of the two," said Harris, as they rode the elevator down to the courtyard.

"It was an empty place. There were few people in all this area. A gravel road ran north through the bush from La Sarre. Driving up it, you seldom saw any other traffic but the logging trucks hauling out pulpwood. Here and there someone had cleared a couple of acres of land with a frame house and pasture for a team. There were a few mines at one time, but most of the men worked in the woods or ran a trapline.

"St. Ephrem was the end of the road. There was nothing north of it. Nothing much right here. Two streets, a general store, a service station and, next door to it, the hotel. There was a small church, Our Lady of Perpetual Help I think it was called, with its silver spire poking above the tops of the spruce trees. I doubt if there were as many as three hundred people here. Most maps did not even carry the name, just the thin line of the road ending abruptly in nowhere.

"I remember how depressed I was the first time I came here. The Originator and I were doubled up in one of the hotel's four bedrooms and I spent half the night trying to scotch tape the cardboard stiffeners from my shirts over the holes in the window screen.

"In the city, the Proposal had been breath-taking and magnificently ambitious. Up here it struck me as wildly improbable that this backwoods community could ever become the headquarters for the active repository of the knowledge of all mankind. It required an effort of the imagination and will greater than I possessed. Fortunately the Originator had no such doubts."

Sanda tried to visualize the old town as they walked across the plaza toward the Hub. The old St. Ephrem vanished when the new controlled environment town was built. A solitary building, Seguin's log cabin, was preserved. It stood small and neat, somehow secure and permanent, in the north quadrant of the leisure grounds.

The Hub was not as high as the honeycomb tiers of the town encircling it. It rose in a circular column five storeys above ground. Two glass tunnels like the spokes of a wheel extended from it through the stacked apartments to the outside world. Harris and Sanda took the elevator to level three. There was no great hurry and Harris preferred the minirail to the express monorail at level two. Level four contained the town offices, and on the top level were the assembly rooms.

They found a four-passenger car in the northbound departure bay. Once they were seated, Harris switched the

starter and they waited for the car to be fed onto the line.

The train and trench system of transportation throughout the 5,000 square miles of Knowledge Park seems natural and sensible now; almost inevitable. Yet it was regarded as impractical and inflexible when it was proposed. However, like most startling "innovations," it was not new. It was a logical synthesis of two earlier technological developments: the pipeline and the elevated monorail train.

The first short monorail line had its inaugural run in the German town of Wuppertal in 1899. Sixty years later it was the talk of visitors to the Seattle world fair. In miniaturized form, it was an outstanding feature of Montreal's Expo '67.

An oil pipeline stretching one thousand miles from the Texas panhandle to Chicago was the talk of 1931. By 1960 Canada had constructed both the longest crude oil pipeline and the longest natural gas pipeline in the world. The introduction of solid freight capsules and multipipe were no more than refinements of the system.

Multipipe not only transported freight capsules in the largest diameter pipe, but also power, coaxial cable, fossil fuels, water, sewage and recycling slurry in its attached cluster of smaller pipes.

When the Originator proposed the train and trench system as the basic form of transportation in Knowledge Park, it appeared too revolutionary to work. It spelled the end of the private automobile. And although there was a growing discontent with the stranglehold of the highway and the automobile, both were too much a part of life to relinquish lightly. Only in a new place, starting from scratch in the bush, was it feasible at all.

Their minirail car emerged from the tunnel through the walls of St. Ephrem, passed over the leisure grounds, penetrated the gap in the perimeter fountains and travelled silently out from the shelter of the sky canopy into the open environment.

The minirails ran on rubber wheels atop the broad steel A-frames. Beneath, in each direction, flashed the underslung

express monorail trains. And between the legs of the A-frames ran the multipipe trench system.

There were cleared and graded trails beside them and off into the bush for the power buggies, the hover carts and the snow toboggans of the maintenance men and the eco-crews, the fire watchers and first-aid squads. But there were no highways.

Harris MacNeil punched up destination code 203. The Portuguese Library was on the way to Data Centre One and he wanted to drop in there first. Afterwards he'd take her down to Data One. It would be a rare opportunity for her. The big silo was off limits not only to all visitors, but also to KPA staff who had no direct function there. As a member of the International Council, Harris had a pass key to the deep level elevators. Until Saturday.

It cost three billion dollars to sink Data Centre One 780 feet into the bedrock of the Deloge Hills; more to equip and stock it. But no one now doubted it was worth it. It was commonly claimed that it contained half the memory of mankind, and the other half was in Data Centre Two at Mistango Lake. That was not accurate. Much of the creative and speculative output of man's mind had been condensed into the two vast subterranean silos. But not all was considered worth storing there.

After all, there were also the twelve theme libraries housed in the geodesic domes around Bill Lake popularly known as the Igloos of Minerva. There were 160 special subject libraries and 139 national libraries or language group libraries. And each one of these was hooked up electronically not only to Data One or Data Two but also to International Information Retrieval HQ at Floodwood River.

Seldom were more than four percent of contemporary fiction, sixteen percent of non-fiction and twenty percent of visual documentary material in the humanities and social sciences stored each year in Data One. In the exact sciences at Data Centre Two, the percentages were higher; so was the discard rate.

"Where are we going first?" Sanda asked.

"The Portuguese Library," Harris said. "Then Data One and afterwards we'll have lunch in Yesterday."

There were a lot of people who disapproved of the name for the new dwelling town. Too whimsical, they thought, particularly since it had nothing to do with the past. The town was built across the Yesterday River. It was Erickson's swansong as an architect. He spent two years in the Library of Habitation immersed in the literature of Venice, Babylon and Tenochitlan, the great Aztec capital on the site of which Mexico City now stands. And he designed Yesterday.

He employed the cantilever principle to create hanging gardens sixty feet above the river bank, so that the town appeared to be two halves of a bridge which never met. And he diverted the river into a network of ornamental canals which bisected the courtyards and buildings.

Yesterday had been open barely a month and Harris had been too busy to visit it. No towns in the Park were occupied until they were completed. The old concept of villages growing into towns and towns into cities, of haphazard and piecemeal expansion, was now as unacceptable as cancer, which it once resembled.

The new community was less a town than it was a huge hotel. It served the International Film Library, the Documentary Film Board vaults, the Creative Film Institute and the Central Videotape Archives, all of which were clustered in that part of the Park. Since many of the staff were comers and goers, Yesterday was designed as a transient town. Adam would be living there off and on, which was why Harris was particularly interested. His son was winding up production on a film in the Bantu Republic. Besides, Harris understood there was a Spanish restaurant in Yesterday where they served a superb gaspacheo!

"I always dreamed of coming here when I was a child in Burma," Sanda said. "Everyone in school wanted to see Knowledge Park one day. But I was scared. I had seen a film of the Igloos of Minerva in winter and I thought it would

not be warm and soft like Mandalay, but cold and hard. Now I know how beautiful it is and some days I think I will stay forever. You love it, Harris. I know because I listen to your thoughts when your mind is open. Will you miss it very much when you go?"

"I cannot know yet," Harris said. "I have lived with it since the beginning. And it is a long time since I have lived without it. Lately I have fallen into the heresy of thinking that the libraries themselves may be less important than the opportunity we gave ourselves to learn how to live well: to be tranquil and busy at the same time, to escape the stress and loneliness of the old cities, to start again, not at the beginning but at the end."

Sanda looked out at the life in the bush. The trees were not nearly as big as they were in Burma and they had been thinned sufficiently to see very easily the life of the forest animals, the walking trails and scholars' cabins. In the distance the sky canopies shimmered over the dwelling towns and the silhouette of a library would take shape above the skyline.

"The forces against us were at first very strong – the doubts and greeds, the differences and insularities, the problems. We lived then, about the time you were born, in a problem-oriented society. We doted on them.

"Each new problem was greeted with pious glee by the papers, the magazines and television. We were like monkeys scratching each other's heads for lice and, finding them, we popped them in our mouths and scrunched on them with relish."

Sanda shuddered. "It sounds horrible."

"It was."

Harris put his hand over Sanda's. He noticed how the liver marks of age mottled his hand more than ever. And she felt his thought.

"Soon your hand will be as brown as mine," she said.

"It was horrible because it was so negative," Harris said. "We were between two faiths. Hellfire and damnation

were exorcised but we still felt uncomfortable enough to create hundreds of new small hells for ourselves. Some of the problems were real enough, but we made them an end in themselves. The solutions were often an anticlimax."

"My grandmother chewed betel," Sanda said.

"Perhaps it was necessary," said Harris, not listening. "We were coming to the end of the second millennium in which we'd worshipped an instrument of great cruelty, suffering and finality. It made us want to crucify ourselves . . . and each other, of course . . . in case God was watching."

There was a soft click as their car switched automatically from the main A-line to the Portuguese loop. It gave Sanda an opportunity to change the subject. She felt uncomfortable listening to such talk.

Like most of her friends in the Park, Sanda believed in Positive Focus. She wore the slender, elongated Y symbol of the laser as a brooch on her aingyi or her KPA jumpsuit.

Privately, however, she was glad the Buddha was fat and smiled, or wore on his face the serene gravity of contemplative wisdom. The bo tree beneath which he sat was beautiful and fruitful. It bore figs. And nobody had hanged the Buddha from its branches.

Sanda did not think she would have liked a lean and anguished prophet, conceived without joy and executed in a shameful way. It was no wonder, she thought, that he was a bachelor. Yet she did not wish to offend those who were Christians, as most of the Africans in the Park still were, and many South Americans too from the Confederation.

"How is it that you speak Portuguese?" Sanda asked. "Not many Canadians do, do they?"

"I lived in Portugal once, in a place called Setubal by the sea. I was writing a book and it was a good cheap place to live. It was a novel about a real man I admired, a Canadian long dead with one eye who was a great mapmaker. In the mornings I sat in the square under the jacaranda trees in a haze of mauve blossom and sunlight and wrote about the strength of the human spirit and a terrible winter in the

mountains on the Big Bend when David Thompson was waiting to explore the Columbia River.

"Afternoons I spent at the harbour learning to speak Portuguese and watching the sardine fishermen unload their catch. They painted their boats very simple, unforgettable colours: a blue that looked as if they had pulled it out of the sky, a red with no anger in it, a green through which the yellow glowed with a passionate intensity.

"I was there for a year. And it was long enough to finish the book and learn Portuguese."

The Portuguese Library looked like a ship, Sanda thought. Not a representational ship, but a suggestion — the way the walls, sheathed in stained wooden planks, swelled up from the ground and the library narrowed at one end like the bows of a schooner. Even the sky canopy reminded her of a great white sail.

From the open rotunda they went first to the map room. Sanda knew that was where they would go. Harris was very fond of old charts and maps. She was not sure why. Perhaps it was because of this David Thompson, or because he loved boats.

When the librarian discovered they were there, he greeted Harris very warmly and took him off to his quarters, leaving Sanda with his deputy, a handsome young man. Luiz Sousa took her to have a small cup of rich black Brazilian coffee beside the cork tree which grew in the rotunda.

It was he who explained how grateful they were to Señor MacNeil. When the national libraries were begun, the Portuguese community in Canada did not have much money. And it was Harris who had done so much to help them. That was at the time the Gift of People's Act was passed in Ottawa.

She did not think Luiz Sousa had come in under the Gift. It was no longer necessary, unless you wanted immediate citizenship. And he spoke with scarcely a trace of an accent.

No, he said, he was born in Canada. His father and mother were poor immigrants. His father worked at first as a labourer, cleaning out the septic tanks of the wealthy on the

slopes of West Vancouver. It was only later he saved enough money to buy a small peach orchard in the Okanagan Valley, where it was hot and dry and more like home. And Luiz was able to go to Notre Dame, a small university not far away in the mountains at Nelson. Sanda liked him. He was proud of Canada and proud of his Portuguese heritage.

When Harris and Sanda were ready to leave, she suggested they walk instead of taking the minirail.

"I don't like being up high all the time. Sometimes I like to feel the earth under me and the trees around me," she said, "and it can't be far."

Harris agreed. It was barely two miles to Data One and the sun was warming the countryside. They set off along the walking trail through the bush. The trails were well maintained by the eco-crews; the underbrush cleared, the deadfalls taken away, the path levelled. At random intervals there were scholars' cabins in small clearings, each individual in some way although the exterior design might be the same. All of them were built by young Canadians during their KPA service. Every Canadian citizen between seventeen and twenty-one had the right to serve for one year in Knowledge Park. Few failed to exercise that right.

Their predecessors had won it in the hard years at the start, defeating the muskeg swamps and the black flies, manning the rock crushers, stumping the five-acre organic farms, working as oilers on the big pipeline laying machines.

Now by the age of seventeen each of them had one craft, trade, skill or accomplishment. At first film and photography were popular because they usually led to service abroad with the Knowledge Park Youth Corps. Later there was an increasing preference for cabinet-making, carving and cabin building. At one time it was typography, art and design. Now that every child could use a keyboard by the age of eight and there was no longer any need to write in longhand, there was a growing interest in Sanda's art, in calligraphy and illumination.

Sanda and Harris walked in silence for some time. They

were consciously screening their thoughts from each other.

Harris was aware that the walk was a pretext, an excuse for his morning assistant to do what was necessary. In a few minutes she would suggest they stop to rest, either in one of the available thinking cabins or else beside a small lake on the trail not far ahead. Sanda Nu would offer him a green memory capsule and after he had swallowed it she would lead the conversation gently toward the time period she wanted to activate.

He did not like pills. He had a generational distrust for chemical changers. FDR's widow, Eleanor Roosevelt, he recalled, had taken three sugar-coated garlic pills a day to improve her memory. And she had not suffered physically or socially; quite the contrary. But that was different.

There was no evidence that the memory capsule was harmful. It had been tested exhaustively for side effects. The human chroniclers on the Knowledge Park staff had used it with great success to record the reminiscences of 115- and 120-year-old Hunzas up in their Himalayan valley back in 1988. It was a classic test case.

The memory capsule did not interfere with normal motor responses. It shifted the present backwards. At first he would talk in the present about the past and then he would move back until past was present. You were very much in the hands of whoever gave it to you. If Sanda's questions, for instance, were about how he felt when he was seven, he would tell her about the big Labrador at the corner of Lawson and 23rd he had to pass every morning on his way to Pauline Johnson public school and his fear of dogs for many years afterward.

But she would not ask him about his childhood. She would ask him about the beginning; the small things only he could remember because he was the last of the first.

Sanda's thoughts were also on the green memory capsule. She was not accustomed to recording memory capsule recollections and already experienced a feeling of intrusion. Individuality was the most precious of the seven freedoms. It

distinguished woman from object and man from automation. But perhaps the memory capsule did not after all make man an automaton. It did not have the same effect as the truth serum. It was an aid to recollection, not an invasion of the past.

That is what the warden of Knowledge Park had told her on Friday.

Sanda's qualms were compounded by her strong affection for Harris. In the past year her attitude toward him had changed from awe to admiration to attraction. He was a fit and vigorous seventy and she felt no sense of age disparity. The Burmese girl had originally planned to ask him to the love house for the memory capsule recollections. This morning she had decided not to combine the two. She would listen today with undivided interest. The farewell could come later.

Chapter Two

HARRIS accepted the memory capsule from his morning assistant without protest and drank the cold, clear lake water from the Burmese girl's small cupped hands.

Sanda had chosen the lake as the place. It was quiet and peaceful. The ground rose to the north up the slope of the Deloge Hills and they could see the roof of Data Centre One.

They were sitting on a deadfall which some eco-crew had trimmed and wedged between four convenient rocks. Sanda had pulled up the hem of her longhyi and was dabbling her feet in the water, her head lowered. "Tell me about the beginning," she said. "You were the very first, weren't you, Harris, to read the Proposal?"

"There was one other man," said Harris, "a banker. He was the first. I knew very few bankers then, or ever. And I knew nothing about his work except that he was very senior for a young man and that he had been appointed some months earlier by the government in Ottawa to prepare a report on the economic feasibility of putting Canada's first communications satellite up in space.

"The banker and I played tennis. That's how we knew each other. One afternoon when his report was complete and we were waiting for our court, he said:

" 'You might be interested, Harris, in a curious document which was sent to me by a man in Alberta soon after I was asked to consider the prospects for Anik. It had nothing to

do with my terms of reference and I put it aside after a brief glance. I came across it again yesterday in my files and found it oddly persuasive. It's not in my line at all, but you're a writer. You might be able to do something with it.'

"After the game we went to his house for a drink and he fished out an ordinary 19-cent black folder. Inside were some typewritten pages and a covering letter to my Bank of Nova Scotia friend, Richard Carlyle.

> Dear Mr. Carlyle,
>
> I read yesterday in the *Calgary Herald* that you are to advise the government on the proposed communications satellite program.
>
> I hope you will encourage them to go ahead. Should they need an additional incentive, please make whatever use you choose of the attached proposal.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> Alex Mansell

"You didn't pass it on to Ottawa?"

"When you read it, you'll know the answer," said Carlyle. "It's pretty far out — a new Utopia and not very practical unless you can lay your hands on a billion and a half dollars to start it."

"It would take me a day or two," I said. "I don't need any more screwballs."

"I don't think this man is, or I wouldn't have given you that," said Carlyle. "You're a Westerner. Do you know the place this man Mansell comes from — R.R. 2, Longview?"

"Yes," I said, "it's south of Calgary, down in the Turner Valley oil fields. It's the kind of town you pass through on the way somewhere else. The foothills country just west of it over toward the Kananaskis forest road is great. It's ranching country and the fishing's good on the Highwood River; or it used to be. I'm flying out West tomorrow. Maybe I'll stop off in Calgary and follow this up."

It wouldn't hurt at all to have another story, Harris knew.

1973 had been a tough year for free-lance writers. And 1974 so far had been even tougher. The magazine business was slowly dying; the promised increase in Canadian television programs had not materialized and there was only a handful of authors who made a good living solely from books.

"What does R.R. 2 mean?" Sanda asked. She had to repeat the question before Harris replied. It meant the memory pill was starting to take full effect. Another minute and he would be engulfed in the past.

"Rural Route 2," he said. "It was a country mail route. That was fifteen years before print-out became general. Post Office mail carriers used to walk around delivering letters to people's houses. Out in the country they drove around. Businesses used telex, but private citizens still wrote letters to each other. You're a calligrapher. You've studied the history of longhand writing."

"It was the R.R. I didn't understand," Sanda murmured. She felt more uncomfortable than ever. Harris was resisting, struggling in vain to keep part of himself in the present.

Harris MacNeil returned at that moment twenty-six years to Monday morning, July 12, 1974, when he kissed Arla and the children goodbye and caught the Toronto-Vancouver non-stop flight. The black folder Richard Carlyle had given him was in his suitcase unread. He wanted to concentrate now on the research he'd collected on genetics and Drosophila melanogaster, the fruit fly. He had an assignment to interview Dr. David Suzuki, the geneticist whose research at the University of British Columbia had opened up the intriguing yet terrifying prospect of selective and repetitive human breeding.

The man in the next seat wanted to talk. He was a shoe manufacturer from Kitchener who explained the problems of women's shoe sizes in an increasingly mobile society. There had been, it appeared, a distinct geographic pattern for many years. Quebec City girls had the smallest feet in Canada; Winnipeg women, the largest. And there were similar variations within these limits. Now people were moving

so much, he no longer knew where to ship the size 10 triple A's so unerringly.

Harris wondered whether he could sell an article on regional shoe sizes. Style or Chatelaine might buy it, if it was light and informative.

After sixteen years of marriage, Arla accused him from time to time of not having any real goals in life. Not one. Perhaps it was true. At forty-four he no longer expected to write the great Canadian novel. And his old optimism was now balanced by the skepticism which was both an occupational hazard and a proper safeguard of the journalist.

He wanted chiefly to survive; to survive well enough to live and write without any important compromises; to pay for guitar lessons for Adam, art lessons for Alizon, piano lessons for Bronwen, and roughly twelve pairs of blue jeans a year.

It was a time of particular uncertainty now — as though there had ever been a time which was not uncertain for many — and large numbers of people were looking for new goals in life or old challenges to return to.

This summer had seen a return to 18th-century romanticism. The ghosts of Rousseau and Wordsworth, often unaware that their predecessors baked their own bread, ate crunchy Granola, rejected technology for nature on organic farms and backwoods communes and decided that "getting and spending" did indeed lay waste one's powers.

For a married man with a family it was hard to get and easy to spend. And the hitch-hikers who migrated across Canada did so in the back seats of the big automobiles they rejected.

Harris never flew across the Rockies without thinking of the Overlanders, of the railroad surveyors, the factors and the canoemen, who crossed the formidable barrier of successive snow-capped ranges below. Their challenges had been direct, elemental and awesome. And they made the problems of today seem petty by comparison.

Harris spent four days on the UBC campus with Suzuki

and his fruit flies, then flew to the Queen Charlotte Islands to interview the last of the Haida Indian argillite carvers. The Haidas believed Creation began with rock rising from the sea to form the Queen Charlottes, which thereby became the centre of the world. This and other myths they carved into blocks of rare sea-green argillite slate which they later blackened. The argillite totem poles, ranging in height from seven inches to three feet, were beautiful and increasingly valuable. But the old carvers were infirm or dying off one by one and the young men preferred going off up island to the logging camps rather than staying with the women in the village of Skidegate.

It was a good story. Not as good as Suzuki and his Drosophila, but worth the airstrip at Sandspit with the invariable rainslick on the runway and the sensation that the plane was unlikely to stop before it tipped into the sea. It was worth Charlotte City where the telephone operator called it a night when supper was ready, the dentist came once a year, and the taxi driver was cheerfully elusive.

When he was ready to go, there were no planes flying. Harris at last unearthed the black folder from beneath a mounting pile of dirty shirts in his suitcase, walked over to Mary's Restaurant, ordered a large piece of homemade boysenberry pie and began to read The Knowledge Park Proposal.

Harris flipped through the pages. There was no preamble, no introduction, no biographical note on the author or his qualifications. It just began:

The Knowledge Park Proposal

The proposal is quite simple. It is that Canada should begin to build the greatest library the world has ever known.

The purpose is equally simple. It is to create, in the course of time, a centre where all the knowledge about everything in the world can be placed.

What I envisage is not, of course, one library, but a

community of libraries; libraries in every language and on every subject. This community of libraries would contain the collective memory of mankind. And it would become not only the record room of man's imagination, learning and discoveries, but the active clearing house of all knowledge and the information centre for the world.

This may seem a fantastic and grandiose proposal for a country with so relatively small and short a literary and scientific heritage. It is.

Yet the need was never greater, the time never more ripe; and the advantages, once fully considered, never more apparent. And Canada, as I shall explain later, is indeed suited to such a huge endeavour.

Perhaps it would be easier to visualize it as I do in the form of a Knowledge Park: an area of forest and lakes, rivers and rock, much like Banff or Jasper or Wood Buffalo National Park, but a sanctuary in this instance not so much for mountain goats or bison, as for the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the world.

Imagine an area such as this, perhaps 5,000 square miles in extent, and spaced comfortably around it a community of one hundred and fifty or more great libraries. There would be libraries of agriculture and anthropology, biography and biology, commerce and habitation, music and medicine; a library of beliefs and a library of the sea. There would be libraries for every science and discipline and pursuit; for criminology and geology, paleontology and philology, sociology and zoology, for drama and poetry, for astrophysics and engineering and transportation.

There would also be an international community for foreign libraries encompassing all the language groups of the world; a Russian library, an Icelandic library, a Spanish library, a library of Sanskrit and a library of Hebrew, a German and an Italian and a Chinese library.

To many of us a library suggests a place of books and manuscripts and papers. But these would also be libraries

of films and videotapes and photographs, of sound tracks and recordings, of microdots and microfiche cards and computer data retrieval systems.

All would be interrelated and linked to core libraries, electronic data centres housed in subterranean silos sunk deep down in bedrock, virtually impregnable.

There would be an information communications centre, itself a small city transmitting and disseminating knowledge over networks of coaxial cables, microwave relays, facsimile transmitters. And high above Knowledge Park fixed in space would be a galaxy of communications satellites to beam out all the known things of the world.

Only once before in the history of Western civilization had an attempt been made to house all knowledge in one place. That was the great library of Alexandria, begun by the Greek pharoah Ptolemy I and continued by his sons and their sons. It made Alexandria the cultural centre of the Mediterranean world, a city of half a million people. The great library of Alexandria contained 532,000 papyrus scrolls, the equivalent of 100,000 modern books. It was magnificent but vulnerable. Julius Caesar set part of the library afire putting down the rebellion of 48 B.C. Mark Antony later made amends to Cleopatra by raping the library at Pergamum of 200,000 scrolls to replace those destroyed by her former lover. Ultimately it was all in vain, for the great library of Alexandria was destroyed, no one knows quite how or when, by successive waves of Arab conquerors.

Twenty-five years after Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales,* during the Ming dynasty in China, the emperor Yung Lo ordered the compilation of a 10,000-volume encyclopedia of Chinese literature and learning. It was so massive it was never printed. The solitary copy survived for five hundred years. In the Boxer rebellion of 1900 fire destroyed all but a fragmentary 168 volumes.

Ashurbanipal, bloody successor to a bloody line of Assyrian warrior kings, was more fortunate. He earned his

place in the history of civilization by creating a library of 30,000 clay tablets of Babylonian and Sumerian literature, discovered by modern scholars 25 centuries after his capital at Nineveh had been obliterated.

But I do not think of Knowledge Park simply as a storehouse for posterity. I think of Knowledge Park as a modern composite, infinitely more complex and secure, of the great library of Alexandria and of that other structure easily visible across the harbour from it, the lighthouse of Pharos, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, emitting, in this instance, not light for Phoenician mariners and Roman galleys, but laser beams of learning and knowledge to all parts of the earth.

Knowledge Park can be such a composite. It can be Canada's contribution to the past, the present and the future of mankind; a point of positive focus; a solution.

Now let me get down to details. I estimate it will cost one hundred million dollars the first year, rising to one billion dollars in the fifth year. After the tenth year, costs will rise, but so will income.

Harris MacNeil paused there. His coffee was cold. He tried to wipe a boysenberry stain from the previous page of The Knowledge Park Proposal and asked Mary for another cup of coffee. He could feel the adrenalin begin to flow.

The excitement of a good story was always compensation enough for the uncertainties of life as a free-lancer. And this was a good story! Carlyle was right. The man wasn't a nut. A visionary, a dreamer perhaps, but not a kook by any means.

A forest filled with books! A city of libraries! A universal data retrieval system! It was a great idea! It had more impact than the Mid-Canada Development Corridor, however imaginative that plan was. And it made much more sense than the plan not too long ago to reverse the flow of half the rivers in the Arctic drainage system and make them run southward to the U.S. And that produced plenty of copy.

Harris had the story alone so far. Or did he? Mansell might

have sent copies of The Knowledge Park Proposal to all sorts of people. Somehow he doubted it. Harris itched whenever he was in this position. Magazine deadlines were so long; four weeks at the very least and often three months between the time the story was written and its appearance in print.

The rain continued to slash against the window of Mary's Restaurant. The water taxi to Sandspit wouldn't be running in this weather. He turned back to the Proposal.

People may well ask at this point: "Why should we even consider such an incredible undertaking? Look at the cost. It will ruin us!"

There are many good answers, but the two best are these. Because for the first time in history it is possible. And because, as never before, it is necessary.

It is possible now in a way which was impossible twenty-five years ago. New technology has made it so. The development of data retrieval systems, fourth-generation computers, memory discs, microphotography on a scale of reduction hitherto undreamed of, facsimile reproduction, photocopying, magnetic tape and videotape cassettes, have made it possible.

Electronic libraries are not something around the dubious corner of the future. They are here now, effective even in their infancy. The National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland, is computerized to produce an international Index Medicus of new findings and research in medical fields.

Vaults stacked with computer memory discs, like a gambler's fortune of silver dollars in an underground poker game, are possible. It is equally possible now to reproduce rare books without the rape of other libraries, to duplicate with ever greater fidelity the priceless manuscript, the sole surviving volume. And it is easy now to store the anthropology of 22 cultures in a single square filing cabinet of microfiche cards. Although time-consuming, it is technically possible to miniaturize the 12 million books in the

U.S. Library of Congress to one cubic yard of microdots.

If it is already feasible to create a universal library, it is also necessary, and compellingly so. For we are in the midst of the greatest outpouring of knowledge in human history. The world is hard put to keep up with it and, at the moment, cannot do so.

This Information Explosion threatens our capacity to absorb it. Already quiet warnings have been sounded that the development of scientific knowledge may grind to a halt within three decades because of our inability to handle its volume.

No existing institutions can tackle the job; can sift and sort and store all this new knowledge, relate it, transmit it and pass it on.

The great libraries of the world were never designed for such an influx. Almost all of them are old and overcrowded. Most are squeezed into the centres of great cities. The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the largest library in all Europe, is older than the invention of the printing press. Its use is limited to scholars. It is increasingly hard to secure a seat in the British Museum. The Bodleian in Oxford, the Leningrad library, the Vatican library, are palaces of the past, cramped and archaic. All are very vulnerable to destruction. They are also incomplete, partial and far from universal in scope.

It is increasingly difficult to sustain the costs of necessary acquisition at university libraries. The Harvard Library alone will have ten million volumes by the end of the century – if it can afford them.

We are, it is clear, being snowed under by a seemingly endless blizzard of books, papers, new facts and findings. And if we are to contain this Information Explosion and make the fruits of it rapidly available to all who may benefit by them, we must seek a solution which is breathtaking in concept and stupendous in scope. The Knowledge Park Proposal, I believe, is such a solution.

Harris paused again and realized that Mary was waiting to close up. He closed the black folder and walked back to the hotel. The rain was now falling straight down. The wind had died. And the sky was less dark.

He checked the airport. No plane from Vancouver was expected until tomorrow, but the Grumman Goose was in from Rupert and going out again. Harris packed his two precious argillite totem poles in a Campbell's soup carton, borrowed a green plastic garbage bag to cover his portable, and caught the Goose. The old amphibian should have been retired years ago. Passengers aboard it were never certain whether they had been airsick or seasick, but they were usually sick. Nevertheless, it lurched down safely on the inlet at Prince Rupert. And from there it was possible for him to reach Vancouver.

Harris put through a long-distance call to Alex Mansell as soon as he arrived. The operator gave him the number 23-r-5. A party line. Mansell answered.

"This is Harris MacNeil speaking. I'm a writer and . . ."

"Yes, I've been expecting you," Mansell interrupted. "Carlyle was kind enough to write and tell me he'd passed the Proposal on to you. Do you fish?"

"Yes," said Harris.

"Good," said Mansell. "Try and make it by tomorrow evening. It's ideal for rainbows right now."

"I will," said Harris. But the line was already dead. Obviously not a talkative man. There was little danger he'd run off at the mouth, Harris decided. It might be just the opposite. Like pulling dragon's teeth.

He sounded as if he were in his late fifties and had not been a rancher all his life. The Alberta foothills country was deceptive. So was the Cariboo. Full of surprises. You couldn't tell what people would be like. Their backgrounds were often very different from their present lives. It was assumed now that this generation was the only one which had opted out and gone to live in communes or drifted around Morocco on borrowed motorbikes. It was not true.

Harris decided to spend the evening visiting his father. Harris valued his father's opinion and his independence of mind, although the two men were not very close. His mother led an exemplary life and died of cancer of the bowel when she was fifty-three. His father had led a life of footloose immoderation and should have died of arteriosclerosis, cirrhosis or a dozen other disorders. He was seventy-four and very well.

He had a small printing shop in New Westminster on a side street down by the north arm of the Fraser River and he lived in the back with a cheerfully disputatious common-law wife almost half his age.

"Did you quit or were you fired?" Andy MacNeil asked his son as soon as he arrived.

"I was fired."

"I'm pleased to hear that. Quitting is the luxury of fools who put pride before severance pay," said his father.

Andy MacNeil was very fond of aphorisms. His first job as a twelve-year-old printer's devil was for Bob Edwards of the *Calgary Eye-Opener*. His irreverence, his thirst and his taste for aphorisms, the family always said, were all directly attributable to the inimitable prairie editor.

Harris now thought of one of Bob Edwards' aphorisms which somehow fitted the conversation:

One reason the *Eye-Opener* has such high ideals is that Calgary is over 3,000 feet above the level of the sea.

Harris had been fired from *Maclean's* in one of several purges and palace revolutions which had afflicted Canada's national magazine of late. It had been two purges earlier, but he did not often see his father and they seldom wrote to each other.

"Are you all right?" asked Andy.

"I'm fine," said Harris. "You have to hustle when you're free-lancing, but I'm fine." He changed the subject and asked his father whether he remembered a family named Mansell around Calgary, High River, Longview way.

"Mansell, Mansell. There was a Mansell who was a

Presbyterian minister in Calgary. Poor man," said Andy.

"Why poor man?" Harris asked.

"He went down East one summer and came back with a wife. She was a French-Canadian girl from Montreal, which the church elders might have forgiven, if she hadn't also been a very beautiful woman. They couldn't forgive her being both a Catholic and beautiful, so they drove the poor man out of the ministry. But he died years ago."

"It may be his son who wrote this," said Harris handing his father The Knowledge Park Proposal. "I'd like your opinion."

Harris watched his father start to read very quickly through it. The old bastard still didn't need glasses. He watched Jen pour another round of drinks; two fingers of rye and some water for Harris and herself, three fingers for Andy and an equal quantity of milk. As if that would do any good. But maybe it did. He thought of another Bob Edwards' saying which was one of his father's favourites:

> If men could read women's thoughts, they would take many more risks than they do!

When he'd finished reading, Andy poured the moose milk down his throat in one long slide and handed the empty glass to Jen. "It's one hell of a good idea, I'll tell you that. And it's a big enough idea it might work," he said. "It would too, if you could keep those civil servants' hands off it. People are looking for something new to take hold of. They always are, but more so now when most of the things they believed in aren't working out.

"Remember Diefenbaker in '57 with his Vision of the North? A hell of a lot of people believed in that. But John wasn't sure enough of himself and he never came through. He let those boys of yours on Bay Street bamboozle him."

Harris let it pass. He wasn't going to be drawn into the old argument tonight about the evil influence of Eastern money men. Andy did not like Toronto and couldn't understand why anyone, particularly his own son, would choose to live there when he could live out West in God's country. "I

agree it's a great idea, but it's also crazy and impractical and it'll never happen," Harris said.

"Maybe not," said his father. "You never worked on the *Stratford Beacon-Herald,* did you? What a closed little town that was and how people laughed when young Tom Patterson suggested a Shakespeare Festival Theatre that'd draw playgoers from New York and Philadelphia. Remember the editorials in your Toronto papers poor-mouthing Jean Drapeau and his plans to create Expo '67 on dirt fill dumped in the St. Lawrence?

"And what do you think those fancy Englishmen said when Sam Cunard arrived from Halifax and promised the Admiralty he'd build a fleet of ships that'd cross the Atlantic on schedule, winter as well as summer, and wouldn't sink? They said he was just some crazy, impractical colonial. Or take the CPR. Do you think the Canadian Pacific Railway sounded practical when there was less than one person per square mile between the Bay of Fundy and Esquimalt harbour? Of course it didn't!"

"So you think I should take this Knowledge Park seriously?" said Harris.

"Did I ever tell you what Bob Edwards once wrote in the old *Eye-Opener*?" Andy asked. "He wrote: The path to success is paved with good intentions that were carried out.

"There's a lot of truth in that. Jen," Andy added, "how about carrying out some good intentions toward these glasses!"

Harris woke late. His father's taste in rye was still terrible. He called room service for a large fresh orange juice and made himself a screwdriver. Instead of going over the Proposal and making notes of questions he wanted to ask Mansell or walking the two blocks to the Vancouver public library to check out *Who's Who,* he concentrated on clearing his head in the eucalyptus room and the sauna of Vic Tanny's.

He waited until he was aboard Air Canada's DC-9 circling

out over the straits and turning east up the Fraser Valley before he pulled out the black folder and a large memo pad. He flipped through the early pages until he came to the section justifying why Canada should build the universal library. Mansell wrote:

> No one else is doing it. That is one reason. And we are surprisingly well suited to it. Our two founding nations, French and English, represent two of the mainstreams of Western civilization and culture. Beyond that, we are a polyglot people, a multi-lingual mosaic, eager to retain the diversity and variety of our heritages against the blurred sameness of the North American melting pot.
>
> We want more people. We need more people if we are to hold on much longer to one-fifteenth of the world's land surface. And we want to lose fewer of those we nurture, raise and educate.
>
> We have the basis for armies of ethnic scholars, translators and researchers. And we are temperamentally well suited to it: cautious, uncommitted, accurate and documentary-minded. We are not too partisan, not too involved with the world. And we haven't done that much for it yet.
>
> Europe is too crowded for it. Asia, Africa and South America economically and culturally incapable of it. The U.S. too weighted with the partiality and problems of a super power.
>
> Why not Canada? We have the space for it. We have some of the technology for it and can acquire what we don't have. We have the intrinsic wealth and resources for it: the water and the uranium and the paper; the architects and engineers, the hardrock miners and contractors. We have ten millions of population under the age of twenty-six to work and train for it.
>
> It would give us point and purpose and keep a great many of us peacefully and fruitfully occupied for a century to come.

Projected only ten or fifteen years hence, think what it might be like. Think of the uses that could be put to it by scientists and scholars, agronomists and oceanographers, educators and medical researchers the world over.

Consider the understanding, the appreciation and the enrichment which would ensue.

Imagine as many as 20,000 Canadians coming and going like bees to the honey of the world's knowledge and back to the hive. Imagine TV units and film crews fanning out across the continents in their hundreds to record the rhythm of life everywhere, the cultures and habits of people, their achievements and pleasures and pursuits, the biographies of the living, both famous and ordinary, the relics of the past and the events of the day.

Think of the squadrons of sound men recording the cries of night animals, the songs of Samoans, the voices of great actors, the music of solitary flutes, the swell of great orchestras, the vernacular of all men.

Consider botanists and bibliographers, dramatists and demographers, artists and antiquarians, researchers and writers, assembling year after year the greatest accumulation of erudition, artistry and information ever conceived by man.

Harris turned to look out the window of the aircraft. They were across the Selkirks. Away to the north, maybe thirty miles, was the Big Bend. Ahead were the Rockies. He returned to Mansell's manuscript. There was no doubt it was a remarkable document, a dream as monumental as the mountain range ahead.

For every man and woman in the field, for every expert browsing in old bookshops, for every agent at distant auctions, every technician with a microphotography team, every negotiator seeking the agreement of other states, there would be three or five men and women working in Canada, either in this expanded city of libraries or elsewhere in the country. Librarians, cataloguers, computer

programmers, film processors, editors, translators, communicators, restorers. . . . There is no end to the possibilities.

The benefits to Canada would be great from the start. The benefits to the world, to the developed and underdeveloped world, to the defeat of ignorance and the pursuit of enlightenment, would be in time greater by far.

That said, how would we start?

We would have to start with now. We would have to work swiftly forward into the future and slowly backward into the past.

Choose a large area of relatively uninhabited crown land. Find a place near the centre of it, a small lake perhaps, and begin to build. Build the first twelve libraries around it as a nucleus of all the other libraries to come.

Lay coaxial cable, erect microwave relay towers, put up more satellites in space, create a network of communications.

Take advantage of the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of cities, and build communities in harmony with man and the environment. Ban the automobile.

Begin to train young Canadians of every condition for all the roles they may play. Train them deliberately and specifically from an early age. Give them the pride of specialized skill in a framework of intelligent awareness.

Begin to collect books; all the books we can properly lay our hands upon, the new books published in every language, the old books deemed of value or interest; the papers, monograms, theses, research reports, articles.

Begin to collect films and photographs and sounds, but not things, not artifacts. For this is no museum of other people's objects.

Guard against taking from others whatever they might wish to keep. Where we cannot collect, copy or reprint.

Enter into international agreements for the storage and use of all thoughts, findings and imaginings of the mind, all outpourings of the human spirit. Initiate a suitable system of international recognition and recompense. Renegotiate copyright laws and royalty codes.

> And since we cannot at first accomplish it alone, invite the nations of the world to give Canada a gift of people to work in and for Knowledge Park – not necessarily many people, but those they can spare: an Aramaic scholar here, a Turkish writer there, two young Filipino librarians. Grant them, if they wish it, instant citizenship.

The "fasten seat belts" sign flashed on as the plane bumped in the customary turbulence over the foothills. They were letting down. Harris read one more paragraph.

> Put everything in this knowledge bank. Open a savings account for the world! And if this sounds uncommonly high-minded, think instead of putting it in an enjoyment bank – as people buy a handful of paperbacks for rainy weekends, or long-playing records for lazy afternoons.

Tilden's had a u-drive waiting for him at McCall Field. Harris drove through North Hill and down into the city. Since the time he was in high school, Calgary had grown so much he could lose his way in a minute. He took the old route by the Stampede grounds over the hill past the Jewish cemetery and onto the McLeod Trail south out of the city. At High River he turned west. The man at the Texaco station in Longview gave him directions out to the Mansell ranch. It wasn't hard to find. There were two barns, the stables, a silo and a caragana hedge to shelter the dun-coloured frame house.

There was no one about. The woman who answered the door told him Mr. Mansell was out riding, led him into the living room and left him.

It was a bigger room than he expected, certainly comfortable, almost luxurious and quite clearly masculine. He suspected there was no Mrs. Mansell.

He saw it was in reality not one room but three – the dining room at the far end and a field-stone wall which split the remainder of the room into a living room and a study. He could see the end of the bookshelves.

Harris took out his red leather notebook and began writ-

ing down a description of the room. It was always good to get a little colour into a story. It provided clues to the personality of the owner. There was a handsome print of a racehorse over the centre fireplace and to the right several framed photographs of quarter horses. On the opposite wall Harris recognized an oil painting by Maxwell Bates and a watercolour by Gerald Tailfeather. He remembered the Indian artist lived nearby, in Okotoks or Black Diamond, which town he wasn't sure. Stacked on the big coffee table were copies of the *Western Horseman,* the *Beaver,* the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Canadian Oil Register,* which suggested Mansell's interests extended beyond horseflesh and universal libraries.

As he moved towards the study, Harris was confronted by a sculpture on a black stand. From a distance it looked like one of Gerald Gladstone's metal disc pieces immured in a solid plastic cube. When he came closer Harris realized the objects embedded in it were an ore sample of some kind and a geologist's pick.

"Be careful of it," said a female voice, "it's worth a million dollars."

When Harris turned, he saw in a corner of the library previously hidden from his view a woman sitting cross-legged on a polar-bear rug. She was leaning against the front of a black leather wing chair and she had a book in her lap.

"I know I should have coughed," she said, "but at first I was busy reading and did not notice you. And then it was too much fun watching you case the joint."

"The book must be very absorbing," said Harris.

"It is," the girl said holding it up. "It's called *The Big Bend.* Alex asked me to read it and tell him what I thought of the author. I'd say he was a romantic who didn't want to admit it. I think it's very good."

Harris looked at the book jacket and the photograph Louis Jacques had taken of him six years ago. "Thank you for those kind words," he said. "You still have the advantage."

"My name's Trudy," she said. "Trudy Kinsella. I'm a

neighbour . . . sometimes . . . or I was . . . Now I'm not sure."

Harris said nothing.

"You don't know much about Alex, do you? Not many people do anymore." She uncurled her legs and stood up. "You didn't reach one of the clues." She walked over to a framed diploma on the wall behind the desk. It granted a Ph. D. in geology from McGill University in the year 1938 to one Alexander Le Moyne Mansell.

"I know," said Harris, "he is a lineal descendant of Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, hero of New France, whom we took in Grade Seven."

"Grade Five," said Trudy Kinsella. "And you are quite right. He is. On his mother's side. She lives in Montreal. I don't know very much about his father, except that he was a recluse. Alex has been rather like him in a way, until this week."

There were now at least half a dozen questions Harris wanted to ask Trudy Kinsella; including why a very attractive and open, auburn-haired woman of approximately thirty-one was unmarried. He had no opportunity to do so then.

The man who entered the door at this moment was obviously his host. He was unexpectedly tall. Harris was six one and a half and not accustomed to looking up at many men. Alexander Mansell must, he estimated, be at least six four. And he was lean and erect which accentuated his height. He had black hair and black moustache which made no concessions to the current fad. He wore it as if it had been there a long time. He looked like one of those black Irishmen or island Scots whose legacy was a storm-tossed ship of the Spanish Armada wrecked on the coast four centuries ago. Alternatively, Harris thought, he might have been a Piegan chief riding into David Thompson's camp at Rocky Mountain House. He was about sixty, and his eyes, Harris decided, were as sad as hell.

"Glad you made it, MacNeil," he said. "I see you two have met. Shall we eat?"

Jesus, thought Harris, he's not going to offer us a drink!

Chapter Three

"WHY were his eyes so sad?" asked Sanda Nu. "I never thought of the Originator as a sad man."

Harris did not answer. He sat motionless on the log bench gazing down into the black water of the lake.

She should not have interrupted him, Sanda realized. It might lessen the effect of the memory capsule. She could see his mind trying to swim up to the surface; to reach the 21st century.

"And so you sat down to dinner without a drink. . . ." said Sanda.

Harris found himself once again in the Alberta foothills in the summer of 1974.

The dinner was excellent. For Harris' money the Cypress Club in Medicine Hat served the finest steaks in Canada. This one came very close to perfection. And he had not tasted wild strawberries like these since he and Arla travelled through France in '68. Alexander Mansell clearly lived well.

There were only the three of them at the table. It was the young woman, Trudy Kinsella, who carried the conversation, keeping it light and general. Harris discovered she was the deputy librarian at the University of Alberta, was born on the next ranch and that her father bred Appaloosas rather than quarter horses, which was the basis for a continuous and fierce, if friendly, argument over their respective merits.

Mansell said little during the meal and made no mention of his Proposal. Harris waited. No sense in pushing it. It gave the two men an opportunity to size each other up. He

thought Mansell was very sure of himself, an unhurried man who had been isolated for a long time and could afford to wait. They took their coffee to more comfortable chairs in front of the fireplace.

"Let's get down to business, Mr. MacNeil," Mansell said abruptly. "You want to write an article about this Proposal of mine for your magazine. Why?"

Harris stirred his coffee. He'd taken it black on the off-chance Mansell would offer brandy. "Why?" he said. "Well, because I think it's a damn good story. It's a much better dream than most I come across. I think it will interest people . . . and also, I know I can sell it."

"Not because you believe in it?"

"I believe it's a legitimate idea and a highly intriguing one," said Harris. "But I don't have to believe in every scheme I write about. I'm not much for bandwagons; most journalists aren't."

"So I understand," Mansell said dryly. "But doesn't it get lonely sometimes just peering in other people's windows?"

The guy was trying to get under his skin, Harris realized. And he was succeeding. There were an increasing number of moments in his life when he felt like committing himself to something. Crusaders could be a pain in the arse, yet he envied them in a way.

"Yes, it does," he replied equably. He wasn't going to be stampeded by any rancher.

"You called it a dream. I assume you don't regard it as a practical proposal capable of fulfillment. You don't think it will ever be built?" Mansell was pressing him.

"I didn't say that. You're trying to put me on a spot I haven't reached. I haven't decided. I never make up my mind in advance. I think it is a hell of a big idea to swallow all at once. And there are a lot of questions I want to ask before I do."

Harris paused. "Last night in New Westminster I showed your Proposal to my father. He was all for it. While we were arguing about it, he reminded me of something Bob Ed-

wards wrote in the old *Eye-Opener*: The path to success is paved with good intentions that were carried out."

"I like that," said Trudy.

"So do I," said Alex Mansell. "Would you like a Cognac?"

"Yes," said Harris.

Mansell poured three snifters of Courvoisier.

"I'll try to be as honest as you've been," he said. "When I first began thinking about Knowledge Park, and for a long time afterwards, it was a dream; a private dream and no more. I used it each winter to move from one day to the next and from week to week.... It provided a continuity I needed then.

"Slowly, without my realizing, it became very real. I found myself writing letters to people I had once known asking them for information of one kind and another. I did not tell them what it was for. And they did not ask.

"Before long I'd gathered a surprising amount of material, not all of it, I admit, supporting my idea. But much of it did. I would sit here in the evening reading the report of the AEC contract for the trillion-bit memory; Earl G. Fossum's paper on the Optimization and Standardization of Information Retrieval Language – that's one of the big hurdles; Universal Print Reader Techniques or the final report of the Bunker-Ramo Corporation on the Fulcrum Technique for Chinese-English Machine Translation.

"There was only one discouraging aspect. A lot of the research was being done under defence contracts for the U.S. government. But wars have a habit of advancing technology and the results are more important than the reasons.

"A couple of times I thought of doing something with my idea. Both times I put it off. I did not want to become involved. And it would have been impossible not to be. I believe the time is better for it now, and for me. There is always a time when it is too soon and a time when it is too late and a right time."

Harris thought of his grandfather Harcourt in Elbow, Saskatchewan, a dusty man who managed the grain elevators

during the week and on Sundays stood in the grey frame church, not a speck of dust on his black suit, reading the Scriptures. Harris was five when he first became intoxicated with the cadence and power of words as his grandfather read Ecclesiastes.

The words struck a similar response in Trudy Kinsella. "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven," she said softly.

"Yes," said Mansell absently. "I have decided it is time to stop dreaming and act. I am setting up a foundation to take care of the preliminary work and launch the Proposal. There are technical aspects to this which I'm not qualified to deal with and I'm looking now for qualified people to undertake these studies.

"For the moment I am going to operate from here. We've already cleared twelve stalls at one end of the stables and the entire loft. The stalls will be made into offices next week. It'll help us all keep our feet on the ground if they're mucking out only a few yards away and we can smell the horses. There's a young man coming in from Winnipeg this weekend to make a model. He'll have the loft. His name is Horniak and I'm told he's the most imaginative maquette-maker the University of Manitoba has ever had.

"Not long before you arrived, MacNeil, I asked Trudy if she would come and help me. It is unfair of me in some ways to ask her to give up such a promising career in Edmonton. In any event, she has not decided yet."

"Yes, I have," said Trudy. "I wanted a little time to think. But I knew what my answer would be. Imagine how I would feel if it succeeds and I'd been left out. And if it doesn't? Well, at times I think I'm addicted to magnificent failure!"

"It won't fail," Mansell said.

You clot, Harris thought. You stupid, obtuse bastard. She's not talking about your city of libraries being a failure, she's talking about you two! What he said was:

"Well, that sounds great. I appreciate that you're serious

about this whole scheme, but there are some questions I'd like to ask if it's not too late in the evening."

"Fire away," Mansell said.

"What you're asking, as I understand it," said Harris, "is that the whole country should stop fiddling around with whatever they're doing, turn around and pitch in on one single project. Because that's what it amounts to!"

"We did it in 1939, 1940, '41, all through the war," said Alexander Mansell.

"It's an old argument. Why can't we, in peace time? I buy it myself," said Harris, "but we never have yet. It makes sense. Yet we never do it."

"If we did, why this idea? Libraries and librarians, present company excepted," said Harris, "don't have what you'd call a real image. Andrew Carnegie gave us a lot of money to set them up. Egerton Ryerson thought they were great. So did H. G. Wells. Lately they haven't done so well. The only booster I can think of is the man in The Music Man, Professor Harold Hill. And it was the woman he was after, not the books."

"Did you see that piece in the paper the other day?" Mansell asked. "The knowledge industry has taken over as the number one industry in the U.S. ahead of defence procurement and automobiles."

"Precisely," said Harris, "and you think you're going to take over from Litton Industries, IBM, Time-Life, Encyclopedia Britannica, AT&T, ITT, Gulf and Western, Xerox, National Cash Register and all those boys!"

"Yes," said Mansell. "Oh! They'll be part of it certainly, at first. But the States is too involved to take on this kind of role. It's not something that any one of the super powers can tackle. The rest of the world wouldn't accept it."

Trudy interrupted the conversation. "I don't think Alex is so concerned about the possible commercial rivalry," she said, "as he is about the ultimate value of a fairly neutral centre where everything could be sorted out and stored – and

used by everyone who wanted to use it. It's a matter of credibility – whom you can trust to look after it all without twisting it to fit your particular ideas."

"One of the things which baffles me," said Harris, switching his tactics, "is why you chose this godforsaken place up North as the site for it. You're a Westerner. What's wrong with the Prairies, or the B.C. Interior, or the Peace River district if you like, or somewhere further south?"

"*Where* it is matters much less than *whether* it is," said Alex. "And when you get right down to it, it's not up to me to decide that. But I needed to visualize some place I knew while I was thinking it out.

"At first I was inclined to pick somewhere on the Prairies, up around Waskesiu maybe, or east of Winnipeg somewhere near Lake of the Woods, or down in New Brunswick or up in the interior of British Columbia, in the Chilcotin perhaps.

"In the end I decided that stretch up north of Abitibi was the best area I could come up with. It has all the resources right there and although it may seem like the Arctic to you people in Toronto, it isn't. The 49th parallel runs right through it. Most of it's south of where we are right now. It's roughly the same latitude as Paris, or Vancouver.

"Another advantage is that it's surprisingly close to most of the big cities and the major universities in the East. It's roughly 350 miles from Ottawa and 400 miles from Quebec, Montreal and Toronto. Boston, New York and Chicago are all within 650 miles, and Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Cincinnati and Washington, D.C., are all inside the 750-mile circle.

"So it may be *out* of the way, but it isn't *far* away. And I'm in favour of shifting the focus north. The people behind the Mid-Canada Development Corridor had the right idea. If you ignore three-quarters of the country and concentrate your cities in a narrow strip along the U.S. border, you simply invite all the problems we know exist in crowded cities and crowded highways all over the world. We still have a chance to avoid that.

"It isn't only a question of living conditions. It affects how we feel about ourselves. It's living strung out along the border which gives us our elephant and mouse attitude and makes us feel small. If we took advantage of the bigness of Canada and shifted ourselves northward, we'd begin to feel bigger and more independent."

"Trudeau had that idea, you remember, a few years back, after he'd been to Siberia," Harris said. "He suggested if young Canadians weren't satisfied with the way life was, 100,000 of them should go up North and build a new city. Nothing's come of that."

"I thought it was a good idea, didn't you?" said Trudy. Harris had to agree he felt the same.

"The advantage of the Abitibi country," said Mansell, "from a practical point of view, is its emptiness. The area is relatively uninhabited. There are timber rights and mining claims, but the cost of resettlement and compensation would not be high. Another advantage is there is a virtually unlimited source of power from all the rivers flowing into James Bay and a virtually unlimited source of paper."

"As for the winters," Trudy said, "they wouldn't be any worse than they are in Edmonton, and we survive. Besides, Alex thinks in ten or fifteen years we'll be able to build climate-controlled towns with plastic umbrellas stretched right over them. And he says – don't you, Alex? – that it wouldn't be difficult to have open water in James Bay all year round if we wanted, so that cargo submarines could dock there whenever they liked!"

Alexander Mansell stood and excused himself. "I'm used to turning in early," he explained to Harris. "Is six o'clock too early for you, MacNeil?"

"No," said Harris, although it was. He realized he did not know which room he was sleeping in, but Mansell had already left.

"You must forgive Alex," Trudy said. "He's not used to company. Would you pour me another drink before I go home?"

Harris took the brandy snifters and poured a liberal drink

in each. The Courvoisier was making him feel much better.

"I think it's important to tell you a little about his background," Trudy said, "because otherwise it's hard for strangers to understand him. But I'd like to tell you 'off the record.' Maybe he'll tell you himself, but until then, can it be between you and me?"

Harris nodded.

"He's a geologist really. You know that," she said. "He's very good, I understand, very dogged and precise, but also a man with hunches. And he never forgets a thing. He has one of those photographic memories. His special field was economic mineralogy. The war started before he'd had a chance to do much, but he knew a lot. He joined the army right away. He was supposed to be an ordinary officer in the infantry, but really he was in intelligence, father says.

"It was all to do with scarce strategic minerals; finding new sources for the allies and not letting the enemy have them. He was loaned to the Russians in the Urals somewhere and he had a bad time in the Battle of Stalingrad. When he got out they brought him back to Ottawa to work for the government.

"After the war he became a private consultant geologist in Ottawa. When things were quiet he'd head off into the bush on his own. And that was how he discovered the Loon Lake mine."

"Loon Lake!" said Harris. "Christ, of course. That explains your first remark to me about the sculpture being worth a million."

"That's the original ore sample and the pick he used to chip it off," Trudy said. "It was one million in cash and twenty percent of the shares, I think he got. Whatever it was he was suddenly very rich and need not have worked again ever if he didn't want to. Alex was only thirty-six then and not the kind of man to take things easy. He was busier than ever, apparently; mining and oil and other businesses all over the continent.

"That was when he bought the ranch although they hard-

ly ever visited it. He and his wife had two children, a boy and a little girl. They had a house in Rockcliffe, a big summer cottage in the Gatineau hills up at Thirty-One Mile Lake; everything they could want.

"I think they were very happy, except perhaps that he travelled so much. Usually she didn't come down from the cottage to meet him at the airport. But this day she did. The brakes failed coming down a hill, there was a flaw in the fluid system, and she crashed into a logging truck. All three of them were killed. The logs broke loose and crushed the children in the back of the station wagon.

"As soon as the funeral was over, Alex came out here to the ranch. He sold the house in Ottawa, closed his office and gave the summer cottage to a boys' club. He started to work the ranch himself with only one hired hand and Mrs. Rosser to keep house."

"And he's been here ever since?" Harris asked.

"Yes," said Trudy. "That was ten years ago. He vanishes sometimes, without explanation, for a few weeks. He packs back into the mountains now and then, but most of the time he stays here. The first two years we did not meet him at all. Nobody did except Harvey Simpson, his lawyer from Calgary, and Bob Semphill, the veterinarian from High River.

"Then one week-end a high wind ripped half the roof off our old barn. We were all battling to lash tarps over it to protect the feed, and Alex appeared. He pitched in so quietly we scarcely realized he was there until there was a lull in the storm and we saw him spread-eagled over the black tarpaulin like an exhausted crane."

"And that was when you fell in love with him?" said Harris.

"Is it so obvious?"

"Not to him," said Harris.

There was a note on the staircase directing him to his bedroom. Although he was tired, Harris wrote three pages of notes before he went to sleep. He had a feeling events were moving more swiftly than he wanted; the story might not

keep its lid on long enough for him to break it. He wanted to have it alone.

They did not fish the Highwood River itself. They fished Ezra Creek. Harris felt good. He had not lost his touch with a fly rod. They were eating a lunch packed out in the Land Rover before they spoke again about Knowledge Park.

"One thing that bothers me about this site you suggest," said Harris, "is the obvious political motive, straddling the border of Quebec and Ontario, half and half. I can just imagine the guys out here, and down East, saying: 'There they go again, sweetening the pot for Quebec!' How do you answer that? Is it a sop to the French-Canadians?"

"It's not a sop. It may be part of the solution," said Mansell testily. "People are always belly-aching about the disadvantages of a bilingual country. I prefer to think about the advantages. When it comes to Knowledge Park, or Parc des Bibliothèques, they're very clear; two cultures, both important, in one gulp."

"Even so, what's in it for Nova Scotia or Saskatchewan?" Harris said. "Why should they go along with it?"

"If you think of it in narrow terms, simply as a national park with boundaries and entrance gates and a community inside it devoted to a huge data retrieval system, you might be correct," said Mansell. "There would be regional opposition, or disinterest. But that is a very narrow view, isn't it? If you think them through, the ramifications are much wider. I didn't discuss it in the Proposal, because I didn't want to make it sound too commercial, but the supporting industries could very easily be spread all over the country.

"As I visualize it, Knowledge Park will be the centre of an industry which may extend not only all over Canada but throughout the world. Some of the needs are fairly obvious: paper, printing, book binding, lithography, film labs, research laboratories, manufacturing plants for specialized equipment, videotape, magnetic tape, wall screens, projectors, print-out machines, recorders, microform magnifiers and scanners. Initially we will have to buy some of the hard-

ware from other countries: the U.S., Russia, Japan, West Germany, Britain. There's no reason why ultimately we shouldn't supply the hardware as well as the software ourselves.

"And that's only the half of it," Alex went on, not pausing to let Harris in edgewise. "There's the whole question of training and education. I foresee having a school of underwater photography in Nanaimo and Halifax, an institute of microphotography in Moose Jaw, a college of translators in Prince Albert and Trois Rivieres, an ecole cinemathèque in Moncton and Beausejour, Manitoba, a computer sciences polytechnic in Kenora. And that's only a beginning. Because it is quite clear we are shifting educational ground very quickly and the old academic suppositions are increasingly useless."

Harris let it all lie there for a while. They packed up their gear and headed back toward the concession road. Five miles from their destination, Mansell swung the Land Rover to the left, in toward another ranch. "I have to stop in here," he explained.

The ranch house they were approaching looked unusual. The split rail corral was painted apple green. The stables were stained a deep brown and all the doors were a vivid orange. To the left of the house was a truck garden Harris estimated must cover five acres. And although some of the produce grew in traditional rows, there were also square blocks and even circles of vegetables. There were three aluminum bunkhouses and a cookhouse in the yard. Harris wouldn't have been surprised to see a drilling rig nearby, but there was no sign of one.

When they stopped, a man came out of the house and Mansell introduced him: "Ed, this is Harris MacNeil. Ed Notke. I'll be twenty minutes," he said and walked to the first of the bunkhouses.

"Nice place you have here," said Harris.

"Not mine," said Notke. "It's Mr. Mansell's. The kids call me the Catalyst or, sometimes, the Resource Centre, but

I guess I'm kind of the ranch foreman, the way I look at it."

"The kids?" said Harris.

"College students," explained Ed Notke, "most of them although some don't go anymore and some never did. He bought this place when old Jim Hasseltyne retired a couple of summers ago. Said there wasn't enough work for the kids around the province. All he needed was five or six strong lads, hard workers. So he hires thirty and tells 'em to run it themselves any way they like. Only he put me in here to give 'em a hand. Guess I'm the only foreman in Alberta who gives advice but never gives an order!"

"How's it working out?" Harris asked.

"You'd be surprised. I surely was," said Ed. "Most of these kids are from the city – Lethbridge, Edmonton, Calgary – and near half of them are girls. They know they don't know much about ranching and they listen to what I tell 'em. And then sometimes they just don't. They got me half believing now that horses do like green paint more than white. And except for paint we don't buy much in town anymore. Like regular Hutterites they are. Over there, that's an organic truck garden. It's good tasting too.

"But sometimes they puzzle me. You ever heard of reading poems to a mare in foal? You should come over to the stable. They got it rigged up like it was a radio station. They're playing different kinds of music to the horses, trying to find out which they like best. And they got this tape machine which has these poems on it very soft to make the brood mares feel good."

"So it's sort of commune, is it?" said Harris. "I mean, they all live together and share everything?"

Ed Notke started to close up. Harris could feel the almost tangible withdrawal, the big clam toward the stranger from the city. "They get paid wages same as any other hands," he said. "They work hard, I'll tell you. There's not a tidier spread between here and Pincher Creek. What they do evenings is their business."

"No, I didn't mean that," Harris said. But of course he did.

Ed Notke said he had chores to do and excused himself.

You're losing your touch, Harris told himself. You've been in Toronto too long!

He began to wonder whether Mansell's motives were entirely altruistic; whether his gesture toward the students was that of a wealthy man whose own children, had they lived, would now be that age; or whether he was using them as guinea pigs, training cadres for Knowledge Park. He would have liked to talk to some of the students.

The door of the bunkhouse clacked open and Alex emerged and they drove away.

"Ed told you about this place, I imagine, and you're wondering what I'm up to," said Alex. "I don't blame you. It is complex. I think it helps them and I am also interested not only in what they think but how they think. You can't make any intelligent projection of the future without assessing what the people who inhabit it think. So in a sense they are in a test tube. I'm trying to find out how they respond to an unfamiliar environment and the natural challenges without any directives. I haven't told them about the Proposal, although this summer I think I will."

"How many people do know about it?" Harris asked.

"Very few," said Mansell. "Trudy and her father, Harry Kinsella, who is a close friend; my lawyer; Carlyle, of course; you and those you've told. No one else."

"The man from Winnipeg who makes models?"

"No," said Mansell. "I asked him to construct a model of a major project for which there were no blueprints, just ideas in my head. That intrigued him sufficiently to accept."

Harris was relieved. He should be able to keep the lid on this story until it was in print, unless Mansell's enthusiasm ran away with him.

"You seem to have thought of everything," he said. "What about control? Who is going to own it? And who is going to

run it? Do you see a crown corporation like the CBC or the National Film Board or Polymer? Or a government department? Because it strikes me what you're talking about is an enormous bureaucracy, whichever way you slice it. And it is going to wield an enormous amount of power. I think you'll run into a lot of flak. Some people will say you're a socialist and others are going to call you Big Brother. They're going to accuse you of trying to set up a Ministry of Truth like Orwell's in 1984."

Mansell stopped on the crest of a hill. His land stretched out toward the north-east and the house was visible in the distance.

"I anticipate criticism and misunderstanding," Alex said quietly. "It's true, there are dangers. I think we can build in safeguards. It's not really up to me, it's up to Canada to decide and that means the government. I have my own ideas of how it should be organized. Knowledge Park itself, the physical part of it, should be crown land as the national parks are, held in trust for the people. Ultimately I think it should be an international zone, with not only right of access to all countries, but an international council to decide its policies. But for the construction of the libraries and equipping them and stocking them, for the operation of them in the first phase, I like the idea of a consortium."

"Like Panarctic, you mean," Harris broke in, "with Ottawa and the oil companies as partners?"

"Something like that," said Alex. "Only I think it is possible to go a step further and make it a three-way partnership in which the government might own forty percent of the stock, private industry thirty percent, and the remaining thirty percent a public issue of shares limited to Canadian citizens and which may only be re-sold to Canadians."

"Even then, wouldn't the smart money men, the entrepreneurs, end up owning most of them?"

"Not if you limited the holdings. There's a plug for every loophole," said Alex. "I myself am not much of a committee man. I've worked in government. I know the pitfalls of

bureaucracy. You must too. You've worked for the CBC. There are solutions. One is to put everyone on short-term contract, to have no permanent and inviolate staff. Another is to contract work out; to give it to commercial publishers or film companies, or electronics outfits. You can keep the whole structure loose and open and competitive . . . if you want to."

"Last night you spoke about a foundation," said Harris. "Where does that come into the picture?"

"The foundation is private," said Alex. "And temporary. It is simply to get the idea off the ground. We will need as much ammunition as we can get to support the Proposal; research, technical reports, feasibility studies. And promotion. I am aware of that. In the end it boils down to establishing a lobby, recruiting support, persuading people it's a good idea." Mansell started up the engine again and drove off. "I understand your wife has quite a reputation for this sort of thing."

"Yes," said Harris, "if she believes in something, she is very good at making people enthusiastic. She transmits excitement. It is very hard to resist her."

"That's what we need," said Alex.

"This foundation of yours," said Harris, "do you mind telling me how much money you've put in to set it up?"

"Enough," said Mansell.

"That's a bit vague when you put it in print."

"Four million," said Mansell. "But I'd rather you did not play that up. It is simply money which accumulated of its own accord and doesn't have any real value unless it's put to use."

"Well, it does indicate how serious you are about Knowledge Park," said Harris.

They were interrupted by their arrival at the ranch. Mansell unwound himself from the driver's seat and lifted out the fish. He was, Harris estimated, at least sixteen years older than he, yet he was much more limber. So much for the simple, outdoor life! Mansell gave the trout to the housekeeper

to prepare for supper, and the two men went upstairs to change.

Harris took a shower, pulled a 26 of Hudson's Bay Clansman out of his suitcase and poured himself a long Scotch. It was Friday, He must phone Arla and say goodnight to the children. He could not see himself getting away before Sunday.

He took stock of the situation. Harris wondered whether he was right to take the adversary approach on this story and play the devil's disciple. On some stories it was better to needle, argue and doubt; on others it was best to be interested, intent and supportive. He rarely made a conscious decision on the approach, preferring to play it by ear.

It occurred to him that he was no longer the dispassionate observer. This pipe dream of a lonely rancher was taking on the feel of reality. He had begun to believe that Knowledge Park might be feasible. The four million dollars helped. It was a lot of money.

He himself was not very mercenary; perhaps not mercenary enough. The thought nevertheless crossed his mind that Mansell might ask him and Arla to work for the foundation. It was tempting, although they could hardly keep up the house in Toronto and leave the children to spend very much time in Longview, Alberta.

More and more he found himself facing this old toss-up between the independence and integrity of the writer and the bread and butter needs of a forty-four-year-old family man.

He made some notes on the day's conversation, dressed and went downstairs. It sounded as though there were several people in the living room, all enjoying themselves.

There were. They all had drinks and, with the exception of Mansell, standing by the fireplace, they were all clustered around one woman.

"It's fantastic!" she was saying. "When do we start? It would be a help if I knew where Abitibi was, but I've always been lousy at geography!"

Arla broke off as soon as she saw Harris and came over to kiss him. "Where have you been?" she said. "I know, pacing up and down your room writing the lead paragraph in your head . . . and then throwing it away. We get through more paper in our house than you could throw a tree at!"

"I smell a conspiracy," said Harris. "I'm the one with the nose for news . . . nobody told me you were coming."

"I didn't know myself until midnight last night when this mysterious voice phoned and invited me," said Arla. "Aren't you happy to see me?"

"Yes," said Harris. He was. Arla had been there since lunch time, he discovered. Harvey Simpson, Alex's lawyer, met her at the airport and drove her down from Calgary. She had already made friends with Trudy and read the Proposal. She was bubbling over with it. And her enthusiasm was infectious. It was the first time Harris had seen Alexander Mansell smile.

Chapter Four

HARRIS could feel the effects of the memory capsule wearing off. There was no sudden transformation, only a slow realization that he was looking at the past backwards from the summer of 2000 rather than being there in the summer of '74.

For more than an hour he had been forty-four again instead of seventy. It was a good sensation. No wonder the demand for memory capsules was so high among pensioners. Some of them spent a quarter of their income on them. It was a complete reversion rather than a nostalgic excursion; the sensations were those of the earlier time. Harris was conscious of a heightened awareness of the young Burmese calligrapher beside him.

Sanda Nu paradoxically was conscious of his fallibilities. After listening to his spoken recollections uncensored by retrospect, she saw him in a less exalted light. And she wondered about the child.

Sanda was fortunate. So everyone said. She had an IPC rating of one-M plus one. The golden option of motherhood. International Population Control headquarters in Vienna had authorized her to have two children. Sanda appreciated her privilege, although not all women wished to be breeders, and accepted the responsibility. Yet the choice was difficult.

The one-M child, the first of her children, must be a miscegenate, a child sired by a man of different ethnic origin, in accordance with international policy for total human re-

unification. The second child might be the product of any union she chose – a fellow Burmese, the father of the first child or any man who was an approved father. For the population control regulations applied equally to men and women. If only some could be permitted to reproduce – and the growth in world population had made that imperative – then it should be the fittest, in every way. It was a rational approach to breeding.

Sanda could apply, as some child-bearers did, to the nearest branch of the Sperm Bank for quick-frozen semen ejaculated by a famous violinist or a dead statesman, an athlete or astronaut, a fisherman or a philosopher. Artificial insemination by the illustrious had a certain cachet, Sanda recognized. Yet she wanted a tangible man at the moment of conception. Of that she was certain.

When she was sixteen and first underwent the series of IPC tests all women had to take, her one-M plus one rating upset her. Where would she find a man of another race and what would he be like? Now she had no qualms. The IPC rules allowed her to have children, they did not compel her to.

She felt sorry for the women who were denied children. There were ways around it; parts of the world where it was virtually impossible to enforce IPC regulations. Yet it meant cutting yourself off from many places and many careers and becoming a population control dodger in some village in the interior of South America, or Africa.

At twenty-eight it was time Sanda had her first child. Whomever she chose, she must first submit his code number to Vienna for a compatible breeding check on the computer. She had surreptitiously run a compatibility check on Harris two weeks ago. It was positive. This morning she had been on the point of asking him to father her one-M child. She felt it would provide a sense of continuity to Knowledge Park. She was aware now that the beginnings of the Park had been more human and less elevated than she supposed. She did not yet know whether this altered her feelings.

Harris understood what she was thinking. She had forgotten to close off her thought patterns. The move was hers. Sexual equality had shifted the impetus, and the etiquette of courting had been accommodated to international legislation. The flexibility of human institutions was remarkable if the threat was great enough.

Whatever the disruptions, the first fifteen years of the IPC proved the population explosion could be contained. And within five generations, the experts said, racial re-unification programs would result in a new and healthier breed of humans the colour of ochre.

The idea of another child pleased Harris. His actuarial life expectancy, despite the depradations of the first forty-five years, was eighty-four; another fourteen years. He might never see the child; yet its existence would warm the future.

They had been sitting on the log seat beside the lake for a long time and both felt cramped. They rose and stretched themselves, then strolled slowly along the trail toward Data Centre One.

"What I remember most vividly about that first week-end," Harris said, "was the struggle going on inside me between my desire to break this story as soon as possible, my excitement – and vanity – as a journalist; and the growing realization that it wasn't the best way to do it for the success of Knowledge Park. I was slowly being strangled, boxed in, scuppered, sunk without trace.

"The lawyer, Harvey Simpson, started it, of course. 'If MacNeil writes this magazine story,' he said, 'and gives away the proposed site of this remarkable venture, every land developer, every two-bit entrepreneur and promoter, is going to buy up land north of Abitibi Lake long before the federal government can declare it a national park.' He was right and I should have thought of it myself. To decide on a location did, as Alex had said, give the Proposal a concrete basis. But to divulge it too soon would be unwise.

"And then the whole philosophy of an initial announcement in the media was questioned by the older rancher,

Harry Kinsella. MP's, he said, were sick and tired of reading it first in the papers or hearing it on the radio and seeing it on TV. And they, after all, were the people who would decide whether it went ahead or not, especially if they were Liberals!

"Arla could see me beginning to grow angry – and stubborn. I already had the story! I had enough material to fill a whole issue of *Weekend* or *Maclean's* or *Saturday Night*. And although there seemed to be a tacit assumption that we were going to work for the Foundation, Mansell hadn't yet asked me to. And I hadn't accepted.

" 'Calm down everyone,' said Arla looking pointedly at me. 'There's no one way to do this, we've got to do it every way. It's just a matter of the timing. Harris wants the story first because he got it first. That's natural. He should do too. But the way I see it, Alex wants Knowledge Park to be a good way of bringing the best of both worlds together – English and French. So we have to get into *Le Magazin Maclean* or *Perspectives* at the same time. We can send copies of the Proposal to the prime minister and the cabinet just beforehand; and to the premiers. And I think Alex should come to Toronto and we'll tape some television interviews about it so that they'll all hit right after Harris' story comes out.'

"Trudy stepped into the pause that followed. 'Wouldn't it be a good idea, Alex,' she asked, 'if the Proposal was expanded first into a book; not a very big one, but a paperback book? We've been sitting around for hours and hours asking questions and arguing about the best way to go ahead. Imagine what it's going to be like when everybody's talking about it! If Alex answered all the questions first and put them in a book, wouldn't it be better? Then we could put in photos of Mr. Horniak's model too.'

" 'It is up to Harris to do as he chooses,' said Alex, who was the quietest one of the group and, despite it, dominated the gathering by the sheer invincibility of his convictions. 'I think Arla is quite right. We should attack on all fronts. So

is Trudy. A book would be a great help – if Harris would consider writing it. Certainly I can't. To begin with, I'm not an author, and there will be a lot else for me to do.'

"He was tempting me, deliberately. We turned in without my giving an answer on either point. It was very late but I was restless. At four o'clock I slid quietly out of bed and started toward the door. 'Don't waste too much time on the lead paragraph! It's not your paper!' Arla mumbled and curled up again in the bed.

"There were only seven crumpled sheets of typewriter paper in the wastebasket beside Alex's desk when I got the lead I wanted for my magazine piece:

> Longview, Alberta (July 25) . . . An amazing idea has been put forward by a lean and quiet-spoken rancher from the foothills of Alberta. He wants to build the Eighth Wonder of the World in Canada. What is more, he plans to make it come true. If he succeeds – and there are no "ifs" in his vocabulary – it will transform us into a nation of wise men, sages and scholars; the guardians of all we have imagined, thought and discovered since the dawn of civilization.
>
> His idea is to create a place where all the knowledge acquired over the centuries can be housed; a city of libraries such as the world has never seen.
>
> He calls his dream Knowledge Park. And he is determined to see his universal wisdom and information centre built somewhere up in the North, in the great stretch of forest and bush which 22 million Canadians hunkered down close to the U.S. border have seen fit to leave largely tenantless.
>
> The Originator of this Proposal, which dwarfs in concept any project ever undertaken in Canada since Jacques Cartier first dropped anchor in the Baie des Chaleurs, is Alexander Le Moyne Mansell.
>
> A lineal descendant of one of the most prolific and outstanding families in French-Canadian history, Mansell first

won fame – and fortune – as the loner geologist who discovered Loon Lake Mine. A mining and oil tycoon before he was forty, he quit his career abruptly and disappeared from sight after tragedy struck his family in 1964. For the past decade, the six-foot-four mystery man has been quietly raising quarter horses on an isolated foothills ranch near Longview, Alberta.

If he succeeds, Canada may find its rightful role in world history and, incidentally, corner the international market in the knowledge industry: book publishing, documentary films, television and sound recordings. . . .

"Either that memory capsule is working overtime or you didn't need it," said Sanda. "Remembering that word-for-word after thirty years!"

"I should do," said Harris. "I sat on it long enough!"

"Sat on it?" said Sanda.

"Waited to use it," Harris explained. "It was nine o'clock that Sunday morning when Arla came down in her housecoat, nibbled quietly on my left ear which was always a dangerous manoeuvre and read the first page.

" 'It's a bit purple,' she said, 'but congratulations anyway. You got your lead and that's what's important!'

" 'I've written 6,000 words while you've been asleep,' I said. 'And, anyway, people like purple. How about breakfast?'

" 'Upstairs?' Arla asked.

" 'Upstairs,' I said.

" 'No plates?'

" 'Or cups or saucers or knives or forks!' I said."

"You're an unregenerate lecher," said Sanda. "Unregenerate? Is that the right word?"

"It means 'just as bad as ever,' if that's what you mean," said Harris.

"Yes, I do," said Sanda.

"I think we are here," said Harris. They were. In front of them was the surface structure of Data Centre One. There

was nothing intentionally phallic about its design, yet it did resemble a giant mushroom with a stalk the same circumference as the 781-foot silo beneath it. No, that was inexact. It was a little smaller. There was a perimeter wall of glass enclosing the reception areas and foyers. In the event of an explosion in the air above or even a direct hit, the great curved mushroom cap would be forced down on its stem 26 feet into the core of the silo, crushing the glass walls and everyone in the foyers, but effectively sealing Data One. Once you had lived with it for a few weeks, you forgot about it; or so most of the surface staff said.

Harris took out his pass key and opened the elevator for Sanda. Vasilii Kharkov would be down on the 48th level, but Harris planned to stop several times to show his morning assistant how Data One was arranged. The first 40 feet were of no visual interest. They housed the hydraulic shock absorber system designed to soften the downward thrust of the mushroom cap in the event of nuclear explosion above. As Harris and Sanda descended, electrolytic vacuums cleaned the dust particles from their clothing.

The silo was planned so that the levels with the most heat-producing machinery were closest to the surface. Levels 2 to 10 contained the computers. Directly beneath them were the micro levels, filled with microdots, microfiche cards, thermoplastic film reductions. Further down were the videotape cassette, the magnetic tape recording and the master film levels. And at the very bottom of the silo were the essential book levels and the irreducible archives. At intervals down the great silo were living quarters and maintenance areas.

Data Centre One was most easily described, Harris thought, as a vertical tunnel containing a series of highly sophisticated giant juke boxes. It occurred to him that Sanda Nu had probably never seen a juke box. So the analogy would mean nothing.

The big room on each level was circular and so designed that all material in it could be selected by mechanical arms and carried to the transmission machinery. A 35mm film

master print, for instance, could be selected, automatically transported to a tele-cine chain, racked up, converted from film to videotape, transmitted by cable to Wildwood River communications headquarters and from there transmitted by satellite to Bangkok or Leningrad or Buenos Aires.

Microdots or microfiche cards could similarly be selected, placed under a magnifier and simultaneously processed by a facsimile transmitter and routed via Wildwood to those who requested the material.

In most areas of Data Centre One, these processes were normally carried out by human staff. The automatic factor existed as a safeguard.

Harris decided not to stop at level 2 or 3. These were the encyclopedia rooms containing condensed information on every subject in the humanities. It was already programmed into the computers and the process was virtually automatic. Level 4 was the computer centre for history, anthropology and biography. They stopped there for five minutes while he showed Sanda around and introduced her to the chief programmer for the South-East Asia area. He and his staff were engaged in a continuous round of re-evaluating and programming the input of new information arriving from subject libraries and national libraries throughout Knowledge Park.

Harris skipped the other computer levels, but he could not resist a last glimpse of the Dictionary Room. It was one of the great triumphs of Knowledge Park and very close to him. He had started his career with words, and he knew how easily they could be misunderstood by people who spoke the same language, let alone misinterpreted by those who didn't.

The Dictionary Room covered two levels and it was not one but many rooms. It was the culmination of years of dedicated work in the Library of Language and Philology and the Computer Software Centre.

He led Sanda to a console in the big centre room. "What was the first rhyme you learned as a little girl in Pyapon?" he asked. "Now put it in in Burmese."

Around the room the wall monitors flashed as the computers translated the first line of the rhyme into Arabic, French, Russian, Spanish and language after language.

"This is where we have finally built the tower of Babel all the way up to heaven," he said quietly, speaking in AB. "It has taken us quite a time, but the descendants of Noah can once again speak the same language."

It was an overstatement, Sanda knew, but a very understandable exaggeration. The seventh-generation computer could translate words and information with great skill into every language, living or dead. Yet it still was not possible to program a poem, or any true literature.

Harris sensed her thoughts. "Perhaps it will never come. Perhaps it is better that it shouldn't," he murmured. "Information, yes; imagination, no!"

Harris said goodbye to Antonio Vespucci who had been his morning assistant – what was it, six years ago? He put his arm round the slender shoulder eight inches below his and led Sanda back to the elevator. They would go down now to level 27, to the Fiction Room, the storytellers' level. Levels 25 and 26 contained micro files of literature – *War and Peace* reduced from Tolstoyan immensity to a few small rectangles of thermoplastic film; *The Pickwick Papers* squinched into microdots.

It was the small, undeveloped countries without a written literature who had in a sense created level 27. It was when Armand Patrie was director-general of International Library Co-operation for KPA that the idea had been raised by him after a trip through the small republics of West Africa.

> "Vous savez, nous devrions resusciter la tradition ancienne du raconteur. Il n'est pas toujours possible de recueillir les légendes de certains pays. Ils n'écrivent pas. Ils font propager leurs histoires verbalement. Et c'est un moyen excellent!"

At the time, we kicked ourselves for not having anticipated

the need. It was one of the few aspects of Knowledge Park's function the Originator had overlooked and so had everyone else on the Knowledge Park Authority.

Within three months the Originator had persuaded Ottawa, despite their objections that it would increase their budget deficit, to provide funds for schools for storytellers in three locations: in Cape Breton at Ingonish, at Trois Pistoles on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, and in Gimli, the old Icelandic town on the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

The storyteller program turned out to be one of the most popular and, in the old sense, most profitable departments of KPA. People enjoyed the spoken word. With eyes closed the imagination ranged free. Chapter by chapter a novel would unfold or a short story reach its culmination. Ignoring criticism that this was a retrogression to the 19th century or further anti-clockwise in the circle of history, listening to the cadence and meaning of words became a satisfying occupier of the hours.

It was not surprising. Despite the concentration on eye exercises throughout the fitness cycle, the Age of Images took an increasing toll on the eyes and the mind. It was a relief not to watch. As leisure and longevity expanded, the desire to listen increased.

The schools for storytellers at first attracted mellow Shakespearean actors, radio announcers brushing up on breath-control, poets eager to deliver their own lines with more skill, and the young eager for almost anything. But the most positive surprise was the re-discovery of the natural-born storyteller: the coal miner or gill-net fisherman, the mother or the corner store proprietor, with the innate gift of dramatized reading.

There were some who liked to see as well as hear the storytellers. And so the best of them were recorded on one-inch videotape cassettes as well as magnetic sound-only tapes. Within a few years after the destructuring of the 13-year school system, when the high schools had been turned into continuous creative learning centres, it was common to see

clusters of young children and old men and women listening together to the storyteller tapes. It was possible, of course, to listen to them at home alone, but the pleasures of congregation, which had been lost sight of in the industrial city until the late 1960's, were now firmly re-established.

Harris and Sanda continued their descent past the library levels. The number of works in book form stored in Data Centre One was not very great. As Harris recalled, it was about 100,000 volumes, most of which had been specially printed on treated paper resistant to yellowing, brittleness and decay. However, there were about 10,000 rare books in every language which were regarded as a necessary record of human civilization.

Vasilii Kharkov was in his quarters on level 48. It was some months since Harris had seen his old friend, and the huge frame of the Russian seemed to have shrunk, the pallor of his face to have increased.

He was one of the seven guardians of Data Centre One, sharing with Marie Claude Lancon, Joshua Whiteside, the formidable Señora Alvarado and their colleagues the ultimate responsibility for the great silo. Two of them were always on duty or on call within the silo. Vasilii, however, had not emerged for a year, obsessed as he had become with finishing his work.

As a brilliant young student of linguistics in World War II, he had been detached for duty as Alexander Mansell's interpreter. The Originator had kept in touch with him by letter in the intervening years and invited him to come to Knowledge Park with the first Russian contingent to enter under the Gift of People's Act. Since he was by now a leading authority on the 150 languages spoken within the U.S.S.R., he was appointed to establish the initial collection in the massive granite library of the Soviet Union at Low Bush River.

Later when the decision was taken to develop an international language, suitable for both speech and computer input, it was he who took the lead in the synthesis of the

Cyrillic alphabet of his native land, the Devanagari of India, the Roman alphabet and others with both the International Phonetic Alphabet and such earlier international languages as Volapuk, Esperanto and Interlingua. The result, as we all know, was AntiBabel, a clear and practicable language without dangerous phonemic variations open to misinterpretation. Above all, it was logical.

What it lacked was the richness of a literary tradition, the variety and subtlety of older tongues. Vasilii Kharkov had embarked on an ambitious novel, a trilogy of Russian life from 1917 to 1987, which he hoped would become the first great work of literature written in AntiBabel.

Harris did not think it was possible yet to write a great work of the imagination in AB and would not be until people had used the language maybe for a hundred years, had stretched it and broken it in. It was difficult ever to write a great novel in any language.

But he did not want to say so to Vasilii. In the end there wasn't much else to say except goodbye.

By the time they reached the surface it was too late for the planned lunch at Yesterday. The new town was more than halfway across the Park, some 60 miles to the west. It would take them forty minutes even on the express monorail. Instead Harris decided to eat at Deloge West, a Youth Corps village only a few minutes away. The food was not so good. It was the atmosphere he enjoyed, the exuberance and unorthodoxy of the students.

The village of Deloge West, with the exception of the transit line and the communications system, had been built entirely by students during their year of service with the KPYC. There were other student villages scattered around the Park although, like many other workers, most of the thousands of students lived outside the Park and commuted to work each day.

Deloge West was for shift workers and special crews, those who had to be close at hand. It was built like a Huron village with rows of longhouses to provide the commune

style of life still favoured by this new generation. There was a village centre where the students met, talked and ate in an informal way, or used the electronic resource centre adjoining.

At this hour there were only thirty or forty students at the centre. Harris and Sanda went to the kitchen for bowls of fish chowder and a salad and returned to talk. Most of the discussion revolved around the prospects for world disarmament. It was no longer a question of "if," but of "when." None of these students, whether they were from Quebec or Canada, had been born when the armed forces of Canada were disbanded. They might have seen an occasional member of the UN peacekeeper forces in their home town, or the Canada coastal patrol. Otherwise, their knowledge of soldiers and guns would be second-hand.

When they took their leave, Harris was still reluctant to go straight back to St. Ephrem de Paradis. St. Ephrem! Harris remembered his delight when he dug up the first bit of information about that gentleman. It would be in the fall of 1974 after he had agreed to write the expanded book on The Knowledge Park Proposal.

Ephrem, he discovered, meant "double land." Canada, the double land! A perfect choice. As for St. Ephrem himself, he was a 4th-century Syrian author, a poet and theologian born in Mesopotamia, the cradle of Western civilization. It struck them all then as so exactly appropriate it could not have been entirely fortuitous.

Harris chose to return to St. Ephrem in a wide loop, stopping briefly at the Celtic Cluster to pick up his afternoon assistant, then swinging around to the south past the Igloos of Minerva. Sanda phoned Liam O'Brien to meet them.

The libraries of Ireland, Scotland, Brittany, Wales and Cornwall made up the Celtic Cluster. The site on the shore of Detour Lake was very popular with visitors. Each of the libraries was highly individual in design, although all were built of stone, quarried in their native land, cut and shipped and built in the Park. They did have an atmosphere to

them: a strange mixture of the romantic and the sturdy, poetic and solid. And this was true even of the tiny Library of Cornwall, quarried out of Bodmin moor, which contained more pride than it did literature.

The greatest attraction of the Celtic Cluster undoubtedly was the Declaiming Hall. It was here that poets spoke and bards sang; here that the reminder stood of the richness of the spoken language.

Knowledge Park was not envisioned as a circus, a place of entertainment. That had been superimposed. The Originator was too private a man to be so predisposed.

Yet the Celtic Declaiming Hall, the visual richness of the Library of the United States, the great amphitheatre at Allister, presumably the film maze at Yesterday, and such other innovations as the thrust stage of Stratford North and the Ibsen Memorial Theatre, had contributed to the richness of life in Knowledge Park.

And it was the Originator, in one of the few purely quixotic acts Harris could recall, who decided they should assign the twelfth dome to the Library of Music. There were to be twelve libraries built in a big circle around Bill Lake. The Originator was adamant about that. They were to be alike in exterior design, thus both cutting costs and providing symmetry. And they should be geodesic domes, since this design had already proved very practical for northern construction. Each was to be a different colour with variations of interior design for function and variety. All this he had decided.

It remained to be decided what realms the twelve libraries at the centre of Knowledge Park would encompass. Harris was on one of his many trips to Alberta that long fall and the two men were in the study drawing up the final list. Trudy was, as Harris had first seen her, sitting on the polar bear rug, leaning against the leather armchair, reading and listening.

"These are the theme libraries, aren't they?" Harris said. "So, I suppose it's a question of what's most important and keeping it loose. Later on we can break it down into specialized libraries."

"Yes," said Alex. "Simplicity is the key. And usefulness. There's no point building it unless it is of use to mankind."

"So, what's first?" Harris asked. "Man?"

"Life," said Trudy. She and Alex had been married that week and perhaps she already felt, or imagined she felt, life quickening within her. They were married without announcement or ceremony in front of the fieldstone fireplace, Allan Venn officiating, no one present but Harry Kinsella and Alexander Mansell's housekeeper. When he heard, Harris felt mildly cheated; deprived, if nothing else, of an occasion.

So the first library in the Igloos of Minerva had become the Library of Life. It included all the biological sciences: zoology, botany, ecology, genetics, biophysics, bio-engineering. Someone else might have put God first, Harris thought as the express monorail swung in a wide arc around the north of the Igloos, riding silently on its thin cushion of air. They put it seventh, the Library of Belief.

The Library of Man was designated that afternoon as the second: anthropology, biography, psychology and sociology included. Then came the Library of the Land: agriculture, food, forestry, geology, geography; and the Library of the Sea.

Harris questioned the Library of the Sea, in spite of himself and his love for it. Alex had been insistent. The future inportance of the sea couldn't be over-estimated. Besides which, Canada had a great deal of it.

There was also some discussion about the fifth theme – whether it should be called the Library of Habitation, the Library of Shelter or, more precisely, the Library of Structures.

"Food, clothing, shelter! Those are the basic needs if we're talking about the human condition," Harris said.

"What about love?" said Trudy.

"If you're suggesting a Library of Erotica, it's a great idea," Harris said, "but I don't think Ottawa will buy it."

They called it the Library of Habitation. As Alex pointed

out, this is what Champlain had named the first permanent buildings at Quebec, where only a few years later in 1635 the Jesuits had established the first college library in North America, the library of Laval University. The Library of Habitation was to include, at the outset, architecture, civil engineering, construction, furniture, materials, town planning and urbanology.

There were moments then when Harris wondered whether the academic community would swallow these arbitrary groupings or take umbrage at them. But the Originator was the Ph.D., not he. And if Trudy as a librarian had doubts about the classifications, she was too happy as a woman to haggle over them.

So the list of themes had grown, circling the clock: Language, Belief, Law, Literature, which might be expanded and called, instead, the Library of the Imagination. Harris tallied them up. "That's nine! What have we left out? Air. We've got Land and Sea but not Air. What about Astronomy, Meteorology, Aviation, Space? For that matter, what about Transportation?"

"You haven't got a Library of Work," Trudy pointed out. "A lot of us have to do that! I'd say that's basic to the human condition. You could put industry and trade and mining and commerce all in that one. And finance too, I suppose." And so it was. The tenth igloo became the Library of Work.

It seemed irrational to exclude a Library of Health. Yet on this score, Mansell was hard to convince. They would be accused of overlap and duplication, especially by the Americans who were justifiably proud of the automated National Library of Medicine at Bethesda, Maryland, and the international Index Medicus it promulgated. The prevalence of disease in the world and Trudy's suggestion that they might co-operate with NLM in Bethesda instead of competing, just as the Library of the Land should co-operate with the Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome, finally won the evening. And there was only one to go.

The highly sophisticated new National Science Library,

built at a cost of $12,844,000 on the outskirts of Ottawa, was nearing completion. To suggest duplicating it immediately in Knowledge Park would be as impolitic as it was unnecessary. To suggest that the twelfth dome be the Library of Canada would be equally unwise and narrowly chauvinistic.

So the last theme library remained in doubt that day. It was not until the following morning that Mansell, who had been out riding for some hours, strode into the ranch house and said: "What is it we are striving to produce through the creation of Knowledge Park? It is harmony, isn't it? Well, we shall make the twelfth dome the Library of Music."

Harris emerged from his reverie as their express car slowed for the switch onto the Joe Lake loop. The yellow dome of the Library of Health loomed up to the left and beyond it the Library of Work, the colour of faded blue jeans. It was at least twenty years, he thought, since he had seen a pair of blue jeans. Although, wasn't it only two or three seasons ago that they had published an absorbing history on blue jeans and their influence on the new society?

O'Brien and Sanda Nu were talking about Burmese temple music, conscious of his backwards thoughts and kind enough to leave him with them. When they reached the Hub in the middle of St. Ephrem de Paradis, Harris told them to do what they wanted for the rest of the afternoon. He walked slowly toward his living quarters. Harris prided himself on his energy. He had never managed entirely to escape the work ethic so prevalent in his childhood days. It had undoubtedly lowered his score in his last Effective Resilience and Continued Capability Test. He enjoyed the three leisure days each week, but during the four work days he was unnecessarily indefatigable.

Now he felt an unfamiliar lassitude. It must be that damn memory capsule, he told himself. He never slept in the daytime. Yet now he went to their bedroom, loosened the velcro fastener on his jumpsuit, hung the suit in the radiant cabinet to cleanse it, threw the sweat-absorbent long john liner into the recycling chute, bombarded himself with the fine jets of

the shower cabinet, switched to the blower-dryer and lay down on the big liqui-bed. He programmed a 1920 hours shake – that should give him time to meet Arla in Disson Hills – and he was asleep within a minute.

The alarm rang insistently in the dry compartment of Harris MacNeil's pillow. The dream lingered as he dressed once more and made his way to the Hub. He was five minutes late reaching Disson Hills. Arla was already waiting at their table.

Disson Hills was the most Gallic of all the controlled environment towns in Knowledge Park. The French Library was the only ethno-lingual library in Knowledge Park built inside a town. Quebec had insisted on it, precedent or not. The library stood anchored to the plateau atop the Disson Hills and the town cascaded down the slopes around it. There was a feeling of past glory about it and also of a close-knit community, as if the library was a chateau on the Loire and the town was there to protect it.

Nevertheless, Harris and Arla enjoyed it. The food and the wine were very good. And it was a place to recapture the past when the bonds between them were more joyous. This restaurant in particular, Chez Son Pere, was renowned for its quaint adherence to the martini. Arla was drinking one as he arrived. Whenever he had a martini Harris felt a terrible urge to smoke a cigarette. Fifteen years had not rid him of the craving. There were small communities of tobacco smokers who still practised the habit. It was not illegal in itself to smoke, but there were few public places where it was permitted and the commercial tobacco fields had all been ploughed under.

Arla had been talking earlier in the day to Bronwen in Chungking and reported that she looked very well. Their youngest child, Bronwen MacNeil, was the Canadian ambassador to the People's Republic of China. She was fortunate to be alive. The day the Three-Minute War occurred she had been on leave in Canada and so had escaped the destruction of Peking.

Family gatherings were rare these days. Alizon lived in a small village in the hills of Tuscany. That was where her studio was. They saw her only on the picture phone at infrequent intervals and they felt her presence more in her paintings which hung on their walls at St. Ephrem. Since he was on the Knowledge Park staff, Adam visited them more frequently. But his operational headquarters as chief of the African division film units was in Dar-es-Salaam.

Harris ate the last of his escargots and began dunking bread in the residue of garlic sauce. "All afternoon I've been thinking about the summer of '74; that first week-end at the ranch and your surprise arrival, remember?"

"And you were so impatient to get the story written and into print before it leaked out. Of course I do," said Arla. "You woke me up at five in the morning, you were so eager to get to a typewriter. And in the end it was seven months before it ran."

"I took a memory capsule," said Harris. "It's incredible how effective it is. You go back completely. It's an odd sensation."

"Does it make you feel young again?" said Arla. "Because if it does I'm taking half a dozen!"

"Pick your moment. We'll take one together," said Harris. "Yes, it works completely. You not only think you're there, you feel you're there. But afterwards you feel very tired, or at least I did."

"It'd be worth it," said Arla.

"It wore off before I had gone much past September. I was thinking about Allan Venn and I couldn't remember the call sign of the television station in Lethbridge. And I realized I wasn't in the past anymore."

"You probably couldn't remember it even then," said Arla. "It was CJOC. It must have been that November we first saw the program because you had almost finished writing the paperback and Claude was in Toronto listening to the tapes with you. That's when I noticed how often the Originator used the expression 'positive focus.' "

"You don't need any memory capsule," said Harris, pour-

ing her another glass of Sancerre. He remembered it now. Claude Ladouceur wrote the French version of the expanded Proposal, *Phenix D'Alexandrie au Nord?* – taking the chapters as Harris finished them and reworking them for the translation. And they were checking the tapes of all the conversations held at the ranch. The first snow had fallen when they next went to Longview and they were able to ask Alex about the curious phrase. It was then he told Harris and Arla about Allan Venn and his philosophy of Positive Focus, and persuaded them to watch Venn's weekly television program.

At that time there weren't more than perhaps 15,000 adherents of Positive Focus. The program originated in Lethbridge and was being syndicated to Red Deer, Alberta; Great Falls, Montana; and Coeur d'Alene in Idaho. Venn had not written his book and he had yet to adopt the elongated y laser symbol. But already the response was growing.

For the first time Harris watched Allan Venn writing his equation:

Complexity plus Change = Consternation

and listened to him talk of Focusing and Energy Channels. Harris was no philosopher, yet it sounded to him like a dubious mish-mash of Dale Carnegie, Ayn Rand's objectivism translated into group terms, Social Credit pragmatism, and maybe a faint trace of Mussolini's brand of fascism.

A doubter by profession, Harris was well aware that the west side of the continent from Baja, California, to British Columbia was a breeding ground for strange sects and odd messiahs. He had written about the Numerologists and Lord Martin Cecil's cattle-country Emissaries of Divine Light. Only a few months earlier he had investigated the Jesus Freaks. Phrases like Group Dynamics put him immediately on his guard. He was prepared to overlook what seemed to him the redundancy of the name Positive Focus. The one thing that attracted him was the absence of anything negative, any noticeable animosity or bellicosity on Allan Venn's part.

Allan Venn was a former evangelist whose faith in God had

departed, a former radio operator in the merchant marine whose belief in the efficacy of goal-orientation was profoundly influenced by seventeen days adrift in a lifeboat. Challenge produces Response, he was fond of saying. Allan Venn talked constantly in capital letters, which made him suspect in MacNeil's eyes, expounding his Common Goal theories and discussing the Human Lifeboat.

A great many men and women had, of course, practised Focusing long before Allan Venn made it popular: Joan of Arc, Mahatma Gandhi, John Jacob Astor, Napoleon – all the single-minded, intent and very dedicated people in history. Others had also practised Group Focus. Tribes, towns and nations group focused whenever they went to war. Hitler lost World War II because, said Venn, he dissipated his Focus, choosing to turn on the Russians instead of continuing to focus on the British.

Venn was attracted by the mobilization of national effort possible in time of war. He believed it was possible in time of peace even in a free economy. He was a pacifist and regarded war of any kind as an example of Negative Focus.

He was a Californian who had chosen to come and live in Canada and, like many immigrants, was more enthusiastically Canadian than many who were born here. His experiences as an evangelist on the platform and on TV had made him an accomplished spell-binder. And he was opportune. With half a million Canadians out of work, the international money system in disarray and the values of the education system in doubt, new solutions were attractive to many. Alexander Mansell was impressed by him.

Some years later, when action gave way to reflection and analysis, some critics had questioned whether the Originator would have achieved the creation of Knowledge Park had it not been for Allan Venn. Venn encouraged this speculation.

Harris did not think it was true. Nor did Arla. The Originator had been attracted by the positive aspects of PF. Yet he had been equally influenced by the critical path system developed in the world of engineering.

Harris sipped his café filtre. It did not matter what the degree of Venn's influence on the Originator had been, he reflected. Both men had accomplished, as best they could, their purpose; both were dead. Knowledge Park and Positive Focus continued. Back in the early seventies Allan Venn used the cathedral builders of mediaeval Europe and the moon-landing astronauts of the U.S. space program as examples of Positive Focus, occasionally tossing in the pharoahs of Egypt and their pyramids as earlier oligarchic examples. By 1980, however, Knowledge Park had become for him the supreme example of Positive Focus in action.

Chapter Five

HARRIS took his facsimile edition of *The Globe and Mail* from the machine and wandered into the kitchen to have breakfast with Arla. It was the one meal of the day they had in their apartment. It was more sociable to eat in one of the cafés down in the squares. And since so many people worked alone in the electronic study of their own apartments, it was customary to seek company at mealtimes.

Arla only cooked when they were at Lightning Bay on their off days. Like most of the permanent staff in Knowledge Park, Harris and Arla owned a house outside the International Zone. There were no private homes inside the Park. The KPA owned all the towns. Lightning Bay was on the south shore of Lake Abitibi only twenty minutes by express rail from St. Ephrem de Paradis and they were fortunate enough to have a waterfront lot. Their house was an old-fashioned log siding summer cottage which had been winterized. It was not elaborate, but it was relaxing and comfortable.

Arla was reading the *KPA International News Digest.* It packed in more concentrated news, but Harris still liked to start the day with *The Globe and Mail.* Three-quarters of their circulation was facsimile and their street editions in Toronto now followed the standard 30-centimetre page width of all fax newspapers. Harris liked the format, the four columns of clear type. It was so much easier to handle

and to read than the ungainly old nine-column newspapers.

The front page of *The Globe and Mail* for Wednesday, June 28, 2000, was largely devoted to stories from Confederation Island, which was to be expected. The last week of June was fixed by law as the time for the annual meeting of the Confederate Assembly.

In the great circular hall of Place de la Deuxième were gathered the prime minister of Canada, the prime minister of Quebec and their respective governments; the members of the Joint Senate; the premiers of the five provinces with their delegations; and the representatives of the Knowledge Park International Zone.

They met to debate the future policy of the Confederacy, to discuss any planned changes in the constitution, to introduce legislation, renew accords and ultimately to issue communiqués before everybody sat back to enjoy themselves and watch the First of July fireworks.

Confederation Island was an attractive as well as a symbolic place to meet. The man-made island in the Ottawa River between Nepean Point and the Rideau Falls was built while the finishing touches were still being put to the constitution of the Second Confederation. It was midway between Quebec and Canada and therefore of both, but in neither.

Most of the real work was done by the permanent secretariat and the Joint Senate before the Confederate Assembly met, but there were usually one or two surprises. The premier of Columbia, carrying on the tradition of earlier premiers, was always good for one small bombshell. And the boisterous, independent Northerners on the Province of Chimo delegation were sometimes more than Premier Harry Anulik could handle.

Money was at the root of most of the arguments at the Confederate Assembly. How much should the State of Quebec pay for the umbrella services, provided by Ottawa and enjoyed by Quebec; for Coastal Patrol providing ecological protection of the continental shelf, fisheries arbitration, ice-breaking and rescue operations; for External Affairs'

representation in non-Francophone countries; for the full services and research of the Department of the Environment, the Department of Science and Technology and all the junior departments, agriculture, mines, fisheries and so on.

This year, however, there had been growing speculation of a fundamental change in the making, a desire by Quebec to amend Article 2 of the constitution respecting sovereignty and return to its pre-1982 status as a province. The economy of Quebec had never been so strong and ebullient, yet the costs of autonomy were heavy. The dilemma of Quebec lay in not wanting to ask for re-admission unless they were assured that the five provinces and the government of Canada were prepared to accept them.

There was also the question of United Nations approval. Quebec's great triumph in persuading the United Nations to move from their untenable location in New York to Terre des Hommes in Montreal hung now like a millstone around their necks. The UN found it ideal to have its headquarters in a small autonomous state, a semi-Switzerland, close to both the Knowledge Park International Zone and the twin international universities at Taschereau and Cochrane. The UN might veto a return to provincial status.

Nevertheless, *The Globe and Mail* predicted today that Antoine Gascon, the prime minister of Quebec, would broach the subject at the Assembly, saving face to some extent by making it conditional on the return of the Acadian Corridor.

Quebec had relinquished that contentious strip of land in '82 in return for Labrador and autonomy. It gave Canada access to the new united maritime province of Acadia. But once Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont seceded from the United States and became part of a larger and more powerful Province of Acadia, the corridor was no longer necessary.

The editor of *Le Devoir*, which supported Aristide Drouin's vociferous right-wing opposition party, the Christian Democrats, predicted the same thing. He added with considerable disapproval that Antoine Gascon had been secretly taking an immersion course in AntiBabel and would

address the Assembly in Place de la Deuxième in AB instead of French.

Arla agreed with Harris that Acadia and Ontario would vote for re-admission. So would Ottawa. And the Prairie Province might also lean that way since the present government of Assiniboia was New Democratic. But neither of them thought that the wealthy oilmen, the Japanese Canadian mining magnates, or the Eskimo millionaires who ran the Arctic province of Chimo, were interested in Quebec's return. Nor perhaps was Columbia.

Even if Gascon did suggest the re-alignment, Harris thought, there would be no great urgency about it. The Second Confederation had worked out on the whole very well, far better certainly than its pessimistic opponents had expected.

In 1982 it had been a relatively untried and seemingly untidy form of geopolitical pragmatism. Since that time the idea of the self-determining nation within a nation had become commonplace. The multi-national corporation led to the multi-national confederation. The West European Confederation had been a political reality for – what was it, fourteen years? The Union of European Socialist Republics for eleven. The Federated States of East Africa stretched from the Sudan south to the Bantu Republic. The Scandinavian Union was a federation within a federation, with Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland not only politically federated but also holding membership in the West European Confederation. The independent nation state survived only in odd pockets: Ireland, Israel, Switzerland, South Africa. There weren't many.

This morning Arla showed no hurry to leave, and Harris was happy to dawdle over his coffee. He had worked since dawn on his Recollections and written 1,200 words which he felt were not too bad. He'd polish it and write some more this afternoon. And there was half an hour before the daily video-conference of the international council would require his presence in the electronic study.

What eluded him was the turning point; the moment and

the cause. When had The Knowledge Park Proposal tilted from dream into reality? And why? What was the final factor which persuaded both government and people to go ahead?

The successful launching of Knowledge Park was analysed and discussed by any number of pundits and experts in subsequent years. Yet Harris, at the centre of events in 1974 and 1975, was aware that the key eluded both them and him.

The impact of the Proposal was undoubtedly heightened by the complete suddenness with which it was presented, the ingenuity and thoroughness of the plans and the secrecy surrounding them.

With Arla's enthusiastic help, Alex Mansell spent $1,500,000 of the Foundation's funds, his own money, without a word of the project leaking out. It was a feat to earn the admiration of his peers. Captains of industry, business leaders, financial tycoons, men of power and substance, customarily dislike and distrust blabber-mouths and admire those who keep their own counsel.

They had every reason to admire Alexander Mansell. He was as discreet as he was laconic. He had the ingrained caution of a mining company geologist. From the ranch at Longview he made his preparations as though the Proposal was less a Utopian scheme than a top-secret military operation and he was still an intelligence officer. He liked small teams of independent men and women who could do their jobs on their own. He hired loners, experts in their fields, to prepare technical reports on eight aspects of Knowledge Park. While Harris worked over the final draft of the book-length version of *The Knowledge Park Proposal* and Claude Ladouceur completed *Phenix d'Alexandrie au Nord: Parc des Bibliothèques,* Arla began to organize the visual end.

It would have been illogical to make only a print presentation of a scheme which envisaged a storehouse of knowledge, half of which would be on film, videotape and microforms.

Arla flew first to the Costa Brava, walked in unannounced and persuaded a Canadian film director to give up his sabbatical in Spain and head for Egypt, there to make a film on

the Great Library of Alexandria and the ancient metropolis of 500,000 people which sprang up around it. In London she engaged an expatriate Canadian film director to shoot a second film on the great libraries of the modern world. A third crew recruited in the U.S. went to the National Library of Medicine at Bethesda, Maryland, to film the most automated and computerized of libraries.

Ostensibly all the films were being made for educational TV. As an added precaution, everybody was hired to a no-talk contract.

Back in Canada, Arla took a fourth crew to Longview herself to shoot a series of interviews with the Originator; a two-minute announcement of Knowledge Park, a ten-minute interview, and a longer talk to be inserted in a one-hour program on Knowledge Park itself with Bill Horniak's imaginative maquette and footage shot from both helicopter and canoe of the proposed site in the North. Back in Toronto, the films were transferred via tele-cine chain to videotape for stations without their own facilities.

Nothing was forgotten. Francis Parkman's seven-volume history of New France and the struggle for control of the continent was reduced to a slim pack of microfiche cards. Press kits were prepared, photographs taken, synopses written, radio tapes recorded. On the promise of a one-day lead, *Maclean's* magazine and *Le Magazin Maclean* were devoting 24 pages to Harris' article on Knowledge Park and side bar stories on its implications. Nothing had been left to chance, except the unavoidable possibility that on the crucial Friday some idiot would start a war, or a president would be assassinated or the San Andreas fault would split as wide open as the Grand Canyon and swallow the city of San Francisco. But d.v., nothing momentous would happen that weekend on the world news front.

There was no advance publicity, although this was a bone of some contention with the circulation manager of *Maclean's.* Neither book was even listed in the publishers' catalogues. And no advance copies had been sent to book

reviewers. But in every city, stockpiles of the books were waiting for immediate delivery on consignment.

To Harris there was something about it all, some air of fantasy, he found uncanny. Alexander Mansell had no such qualms. He had no experience to trouble him and so was impervious to precedent. He proceeded on the theory of maximum impact and sudden deluge. Harris suspected both theories of possessing capital letters and the fine hand of Allan Venn and Positive Focus in the background.

Arla, however, was enthusiastic about the concept. She had persuaded Alex to adopt her only major recommendation. And it was a big one, a calculated gamble with the whole strategy of secrecy. She persuaded the Originator to take the leaders of the country into his confidence before any public disclosure was made. He agreed to a carefully graduated scale of confidential disclosure.

Copies of both books, all eight technical reports, and the three major films, were delivered personally to the principal assistant in the prime minister's office two weeks before publication, and assurances sought that they be treated in confidence until then. A meeting between Mansell and the prime minister was tentatively arranged for a week before disclosure.

Confidential advance copies were subsequently delivered by hand to the senior cabinet ministers most involved: the ministers of communications, trade, external affairs; the secretary of state; the minister of science and technology; and the minister in whose portfolio lay the responsibility for national parks.

One week before publication the risk was increased to include the premiers of Quebec and Ontario, the national librarian, the commissioner of the National Film Board, the director of the National Science Library, and the chairman of the National Research Council. Day by day the list was expanded to include the premiers of the other eight provinces, the leader of the Opposition and other party leaders in Ottawa, the remaining members of the federal cabinet.

Early on the appointed Friday afternoon, copies of the book and the synopsis in English or French reached all MP's, senators, provincial legislators, members of the diplomatic corps, senior civil servants, university presidents and deans, and a list of 800 businessmen, labour leaders, educators and representatives of professional and cultural organizations.

When the scheme was made public that day, the political leaders of the country had already had an opportunity to study the Proposal in private. For once they did not have to fend off questions with the lame and familiar response: "All I know about it is what I have read in the newspapers . . . !"

Was that the lynch-pin of success? Harris, looking across the breakfast table at Arla, wondered whether it was she who had made the difference; Arla with her insistence on the primacy of parliament over the media; the elected over the electronic. He had never before thought of the turning point as coming so early in the parade of events. Or from his wife.

Harris remembered that Friday, that entire week-end (and indeed most of the next five years) as a wild swirl of activity, urgent phone calls, questions and arguments. "Was it for real? What was the angle?" And above all: "Who is he? Who's this crazy cowboy with all the money to throw around?"

What the newspapers, what the producers of the rival network Sunday evening public affairs shows wanted, beseeched, schemed and haggled for, despite all the footage provided them, was Alexander Le Moyne Mansell in person. He was not available. It was not that he refused to appear. He was not there.

The women's editor of the *High River News*, a 22-year-old girl who had only recently discovered her imposing title involved virtually every role except editor and publisher, was the first person to reach the Longview ranch. She discovered a serene Trudy Mansell already visibly pregnant and happy to talk, but unable to deliver her husband. He had gone off with a fellow rancher from Claresholm to track a troublesome cougar back toward the Livingstone Range. He might

be gone a day, or a week. That was all Trudy could tell her.

Since her own paper was a weekly, the girl filed a long story to the *Vancouver Sun,* whose city editor she had met one memorable night in the bar of the Palliser Hotel. She also filed it to the *Toronto Star,* subsequently earning herself job offers from both papers. She accepted the *Vancouver Sun's.*

The first TV crews arrived next day in a snowstorm. They interviewed Trudy and waited. When Allan Venn dropped in to visit that afternoon, he received by default his first national exposure for Positive Focus. He made the most of it.

Was Alex Mansell's absence calculated? Of course it was, Harris knew, yet he doubted whether Alex had calculated what the result of it would be. It was the beginning of a mystique which surrounded the Originator for the remainder of his life. Writers began to call him a man of mystery. And it stuck.

He was less that than an unexplained man, a man who on momentous or formal occasions always seemed to have gone fishing, a peculiarly Canadian man. The Originator was approachable enough. The difficult part was finding him. He did not have the neurotic compulsion for absolute privacy of a Howard Hughes. He was no Nubar Gulbenkian or Jean Paul Getty, nor a homegrown Sir James Dunn building a high wall around his New Brunswick estate. If he was not a loner by inheritance, his years in the bush as a geologist and his decade of solitude on the Longview ranch had made him one.

He possessed some of the qualities of Lewis Carroll's Cheshire cat. He was elusive and unpredictably gregarious. He liked to fly 2,000 miles to drop in unannounced, whether it was on an old classmate from his days at McGill or the Italian Minister of Culture in Rome.

He did not own a car other than the Land Rover, which he regarded solely as a vehicle for working the ranch. When he was in the city he preferred to walk or take a bus. "A car isolates you from the life around you," he used to say. "If I

want to be alone I prefer to do it in the country." He never spoke of the death of his first wife and their children, but there was little doubt in Harris' mind that his aversion to automobiles was coloured by it.

When the Royal Commission on the Feasibility of Knowledge Park was established, the Originator was the first witness called. He spoke off the cuff for an hour, answered questions for the remainder of the day and then asked if he might be excused to return at the summation of the hearings. He was flying to Cairo, he explained, to have a chat with the Egyptian president about the Library of Arabic.

It was a great ploy, an assertion of confidence which was the more effective for being quite unconscious.

The Royal Commission on Feasibility was announced in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State only one week after publication of the Proposal. The prime minister, forearmed, did not propose to lose the initiative to the Opposition. The terms of reference required that the commissioners sit for no more than six months and report to Parliament within nine months. And they were invited to make interim recommendations – an invitation which was virtually a command.

The chairman of the Commission on Feasibility, who was neither an academic nor a political ally, took him at his word. The chairman was a blunt, independent, enthusiastic businessman with an international operation, who had made at least a part of his reputation some years previously by engineering an improbable Olympic victory. The other two commissioners shared in their own way his taste for decisive action.

Lines of support and opposition were quickly drawn following publication of *The Knowledge Park Proposal.* It was vehemently attacked by a number of public figures who had not read it, and by some others who had. It was regarded as far beyond Canada's resources, manpower or pocketbook; an intrusion on provincial rights in the realms of education, communications and cultural affairs; a Utopian folly, a

bureaucratic monster, a technocrat's dream and an insidious affirmation of the prime minister's fundamental left-wing inclinations.

It was equally soon evident that there was much support. It had grabbed the imagination of the people, appealed to the resurgent nationalism of Canadians and at the same time won the support of the older, yet still influential internationalists of the Lester Pearson years. It appealed to the eager, angry, disillusioned young, for they recognized in its idealism and dedication an opportunity, a challenge and a direction.

Besides, the prime minister in his offhand way had once challenged 100,000 young Canadians to go North and build themselves a city, a New Jerusalem. They wanted to take him up on it.

The radical wing of the separatist Parti Quebecois and some Quebec labour leaders regarded it as an ill-disguised plot to surrender thousands of acres of Quebec to IBM, Xerox and other U.S. computer or communications giants with the connivance of Ottawa. Most French-Canadians saw in it, not only some assurance of permanence for the French language and culture in the Western hemisphere, but much more importantly a source of jobs.

What was surprising to many people, although it should not have been, was the strength and enthusiasm of the support which came from minority ethnic groups.

One of the early witnesses before the Commission on Feasibility was Sigurdur Johansson, a retired school inspector from Gimli who was something of a poet himself. He quoted from the *Icelandic Sagas*, the *Landambok* and the *Flateyjarbok* in the original tongue and at some length, but with such eloquence and elderly passion that everyone present forgave him. He spoke of the early discoverers of North America – Leif Eriksson, Thorfinn Karlsefni and Bjarni Herjolfsson – enshrined in the sagas, and of the literary heritage of the Icelanders which had not deserted them in Canada. Although the colonists of New Iceland had suffered bitterly

from the cold of winter, spring floods and an epidemic their first year on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, a library had been built in the second year of settlement. The boats of Gimli fishermen lay idle on the beach, victims of mercury pollution and a scum of detergent suds flowing north from the washing machines of Winnipeg housewives, but Mr. Johansson promised firm support for an Icelandic library in Knowledge Park.

He was not alone. Sitting in each day on the Royal Commission hearings, moving from city to city swiftly across the country, Harris listened to a succession of spokesmen for large and small ethnic groups: an influential Ukrainian woman from Edmonton, a Polish engineer from the aluminum smelters of Kitimat, an Austrian ski instructor from the Bugaboos, a millionaire Sikh lumber mill owner from British Columbia who presented the Royal Commission with rare examples of the Gurmukhi script and a copy of the Granth, the Sikh scriptures. The cumulative effect was great; the more so, Harris thought, because few of these spokesmen were well known – a Latvian piano tuner, a Greek news vendor, a Japanese woman social worker, a Dutch truck farmer, an Italian sewer contractor whose spatulate hands were still eloquent with the vanished cement of previous years.

It was also significant that Manitoba became the first province fully to endorse The Knowledge Park Proposal. There was no direct political or economic advantage to Manitoba in an enterprise straddling the northern border of Ontario and Quebec. What Manitoba did have was by far the most polyglot cabinet of any province in Canada, and an electorate of which it was for once ethnically representative.

Manitoba's endorsement was an indirect threat to the prime minister and the Liberals in Ottawa. For the prime minister's office was determined to break the pattern whereby so many imaginative schemes and innovations were first espoused by the socialists of the NDP, then taken up by the Liberals and finally enacted by the Conservatives.

The prime minister let it be known quietly that the government would welcome some more concrete interim recommendations from the Royal Commission on Feasibility. He had already moved to act on the first recommendation that a 3,200-square-mile area, 40 miles in depth and 80 miles wide, north of Lake Abitibi be designated as a national park; and all land sales or transfers and the issuance of new timber licences or mining claims be frozen or stopped.

No sooner had this been done than a crash summer work program was announced with the prime objective of countering growing unemployment. A work force of 8,000 men was hired to slash trails, lay down temporary work roads, construct work camps and conduct surveys in the new national park. If Knowledge Park did not materialize, the area would satisfy growing demands for additional national parks. If it did, then construction could begin that much sooner.

The feasibility commissioners wasted little time making further interim recommendations. A computer network communications system linking up all universities, research centres and major libraries across Canada had been under discussion for some time. Progress was stalled on the question of federal-provincial jurisdiction. Now it was urged that a crown corporation be created in partnership with CN-CP Telecommunications to provide the hardware and make the system available to libraries and universities to use as they saw fit.

To allay lingering doubts, and there were many, the commission recommended that the headquarters of the coaxial pipe system be established, not in Ottawa, but in the small northern city of North Bay. It was not only a politically motivated suggestion. In a hillside near North Bay lay the subterranean SAGE control centre for air defence, abandoned with the phasing out of NORAD missile installations.

The location had another advantage. North Bay was only 230 miles south of the proposed area for Knowledge Park. A link at some later date would be simple. The prime minister acted immediately. He was not so quick to adopt the next

recommendation, because he was less prepared for it . . . and it was more of a political hot potato.

The feasibility commission suggested the division of the National Film Board, with the French section being turned over to the Quebec government and the English half of the NFB moved out of Montreal and relocated in two major production centres, Toronto and Vancouver. The existing NFB studios would be given to Quebec with a federal grant to help maintain them.

This was no more than a realistic recognition of a spiritual split which had been widening for twenty years. Yet it represented a surrender of federal power. It was hotly argued at the time and was to have a significant influence, so some said, on the events of 1982. It would, and indeed it did, establish a precedent for carving up the English and French radio and television networks of the CBC.

The Royal Commission on Feasibility of Knowledge Park was wise enough to sweeten the pot, not only with a recommendation for an increased budget for the unilingual English NFB, but also an expansion into other areas.

They recommended the establishment of institutes of underwater film on both coasts, the transfer of the old still photography division back from Information Canada to NFB, and the creation of Photo Canada centres in Moose Jaw and Moncton with outpost studios in Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories. Microphotography units and microform processing centres were recommended for Halifax and Winnipeg. As for the budget, which had hovered around the 10-million figure for a long time, an increase to $40,000,000 was suggested. It was still only a quarter of the moneys voted to the CBC.

Harris recalled how excited Adam and his friends had been by these recommendations. In the seventies, it seemed that everyone between fifteen and twenty-five was intoxicated by film. Even more so than music, it was the medium of expression. There was little doubt that it was those thousands of new voters just above the age of eighteen who

had influenced the government to implement these ideas.

The final report of the Royal Commission on Feasibility was written, but not printed, within the time period ordered by the prime minister. Printing unfortunately would carry publication date a full three weeks past Christmas, 1975. An anticlimax.

The Originator offered to have both versions, English and French, printed by electronic typesetter at the Foundation's expense. It was virtuoso demonstration of a nearly new technique. For electronic typesetters were even then capable of "painting" as many as 10,000 letters of the alphabet per second on a cathode tube, in contrast to 500 characters per second by standard photo-offset methods. The report was published December 10th.

Harris remembered the day without enthusiasm. The results were positive and anticlimactic. Alex already knew them. Anson A. Haliburton, the chairman, had told him in advance. Harris knew he knew and was happy.

The report approved the establishment of the Knowledge Park universal library complex and its ancillary communications network almost as envisaged in the Proposal and as soon as possible, subject to certain provisos.

The provisos presented no insurmountable problems. The first was that there must be a clear and formal indication of interest and active co-operation in the libraries from at least twenty foreign states; an indication that they would not only move to establish their own national or linguistic library in the Park within ten years, but also that they would subscribe to the services of the Knowledge Park service once it was in operation.

The second condition was that contracts for the construction of the Knowledge Park theme libraries, storage silos, dwelling towns and communication centres should be let only to Canadian-owned companies; and that contracts for hardware and equipment which had to be let abroad should be limited to 20 percent from any one foreign country.

There were other recommendations as to zoning, transpor-

tation, land use restrictions, ecological control, compensation, organization and financing. But apart from the funding, few sections of the final report appeared to offer any real stumbling blocks. The funding was dependent on the successful sale of bond issues to the Canadian public. And despite protestations of support, no one knew how real it was until Canadians put their money where their mouths were. That they did so overwhelmingly, thought Harris, was less surprising now than it had been then.

Under considerable pressure from various lobbies in the communications, computer and knowledge industries, the U.S. government quietly threatened at first not to cooperate; if necessary to forbid U.S. universities and institutions to utilize the service. The administration never openly declared its hostility, yet it was clear that some of its members regarded it as an upstart, ingrate and dangerous intrusion on their supremacy.

The underlying exuberance and optimism of Americans won the day, although Canada's refusal to negotiate an airtight and inclusive agreement on a continental energy policy tried many of them sorely.

When the feasibility commission was first established, *Time* magazine put down the idea with amused tolerance. They noted that Fort Chipewyan had been dubbed "the Athens of the North" as long ago as 1793 when Alexander Mackenzie's erudite cousin, Roderick, had established a library of 1,100 books at the isolated fur trading post on Lake Athabaska. The implication was that the library at Fort Chipewyan, so laboriously stocked by canoe from Montreal, had long since vanished; and so would this modern folly.

The Tass correspondent in Ottawa was equally quick to point out that Russia had anticipated the Knowledge Park concept by twenty years with the creation of Akademgorodok, a think-tank city in Siberia with a population of 40,000 scientists; and that Russia's Orbita system of 25 communication space satellites was far ahead of Canada's Telesat program.

The Tass man was more of a thorn in the flesh than he realized, for the unfortunate truth was that the contract for the building of the Telesat satellite had been given by the Minister of Communications to a California company. And this reminder cast legitimate doubts on Canada's ability to undertake the far greater enterprise.

However, the Tass correspondent was later reprimanded when Victor Glushkov appeared as a special expert witness before the Royal Commission on Feasibility. The designer of the Russian Mir-1 computer, head of the Institute of Cybernetics in the Ukrainian S.S.R. and a leading figure in the International Federation for Information Processing, Glushkov praised the Proposal as an imaginative step toward international understanding and a scientifically sensible world data centre.

Some Canadian members of the IFIP had expressed strong reservations about programming the external mass memories of the data centres with the computer language then available. Victor Glushkov was more optimistic and it was soon evident that his scientific viewpoint reflected official position. Russia hoped to compete with the U.S. in providing hardware for Knowledge Park. Japan, blocked by American economic policies and already a major force in the resource industries of western Canada, was as interested in Knowledge Park as Russia.

The West German chancellor was the first head of state to commit his government to participation in the international library community of Knowledge Park. He was no more unmindful of the export potential than Japan and Russia. The 1971 Nobel Peace Prize winner also had another aim in view; a further detente between Bonn and East Germany. Having committed himself to participation, he suggested that the German library should be a joint endeavour of the two Germanies, sharing as they did a common language and literary heritage.

Britain, the Netherlands, Iceland, Thailand, Iran, Russia and Japan quickly followed suit. And when the *New York*

Times reported that the People's Republic of China would shortly announce support, Washington gave up its discreet demands for a saw-off quid pro quo on a continental energy policy and announced their willingness to co-operate in a continental network of Knowledge Park facilities.

Some observers later maintained that the man who did the most to persuade Canada to create Knowledge Park was the President of the United States. Whatever reservations still lingered in Harris' mind about the manifold benefits of Positive Focus, he had to admit he shared their distaste for arguments of negative effect. It was not anti-Americanism which had provided the thrust for so positive and momentous an achievement as Knowledge Park.

France was the twentieth nation to announce in favour of international library co-operation, close on the heels of Italy, Eire and Finland.

A month later when the mauve and white crocuses were already in bloom in the grounds of 24 Sussex Drive and close by the iron railings of Parliament Hill, the decision was made to build Knowledge Park.

Their dreams then, Harris reflected, seemed very large; their vision of the future as succinct and clear as the dry, snapping air of a cold day in Alberta. Yet how little had they realized its true importance. Did anyone then think that Knowledge Park would prove to be the ultimate guardian of Canada's sovereignty; that a country with no armed forces and not a single weapon but the tranquillizer guns of the Civil Police Patrol could defend itself by the force of international concern alone against the military might of any of the eight great federal powers?

Who had envisaged then that Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, or later Alaska, would vote overwhelmingly in favour of the Referendum of Secession and seek admission to the Second Confederation of Canada? Who had foretold the day when General Harlan B. Curtis, in his third year as provisional president of the U.S., would plan the first invasion of Canada since 1812 to forestall the New England

secession? Or that he would then stride in impotent rage along the corridors of the White House in Phoenix at the immediate threat of massive retaliation from all the other multi-national confederacies?

For, as Rome had been declared an open city forty-odd years previously, so now had the Knowledge Park International Zone. The security of the world's knowledge depository, which was paramount, was held to involve the security of the whole of Canada. A threat on one was a threat upon the other. And unacceptable.

His coffee was cold, Harris realized, and it was time for the morning video-conference. Sanda Nu had the wall screen in his study switched to closed circuit, the videcon camera on, the agenda on his desk print-out. The international council of KPA had one personal contact meeting a week. It was usually held over lunch and was informal. It was designed more for conversational interplay, the exchange of ideas and companionship, than for decision-making. Decisions were reached at the video-conferences, which reduced to the minimum the bane of corporate life, the committee meeting.

There was seldom much great activity at the video-conferences in the last week of June – with the chairman and several members of the International Council and the warden of KPA busy on Confederation Island.

Harris glanced at the agenda and noticed another of those appeals against classification. It was, as he suspected, an appeal against the consignment of some book to the Library of Trash. Its proper name, rammed through by some euphemistic idiots when Harris was on a tour of KPA crews in the Confederacion Sud America, was the Library of Lesser Popular Works. When he returned, Harris tried to have it changed to the Library of Bad Literature, but it was a very sensitive area.

A number of nations strongly resented having any of their creative efforts consigned to the Library of Trash. Yet it was in a way quite an honour to have a work accepted. For what

was wanted was the most representative and significant examples in each decade of formula romances, "nurse books," advertising jingles, scandal sheets, movie fan magazines and "vanity press" publications.

The idea was undoubtedly a good one: to keep a record for sociologists, anthropologists and literary scholars of the outrageous and mendacious, the crude and the vulgar.

In his exasperation, Harris had suggested, more or less tongue-in-cheek, that the Library of Lesser Popular Works should be fitted with a destruction device and timer designed to prevent it from being the only surviving library of some major threat to posterity. The Knowledge Park Authority had taken him very seriously and the devices were installed.

The Library of Lesser Popular Works, not surprisingly, was one of the most popular libraries in Knowledge Park, with the ten million visitors who came each year to see the Eighth Wonder of the World.

It remained a headache. The entrenched rigidity of such bodies as the Académie Française, which also had their own virtue – ce qui n'est pas clair, n'est pas Français – had been avoided in Knowledge Park to a large extent by the anti-bureaucratic device of denying all tenure.

Nobody's job was safe at Knowledge Park. There were no secure despots, small or large; no permanent staff as such. Everyone from the warden of the Knowledge Park Authority itself down to the most junior recycler mechanic was on contract. And the contracts were shorter for administrators than for creative staff – a stimulating reversal of form for which the Originator had fought unequivocally.

Yet questions of worth, of quality and veracity in the selective process, of what to include and what to reject, constituted a running dilemma of the thorniest sort. The history of art and music provided the clearest examples that the abhorrent often became the admired; the outrageous, the acceptable.

Harris swivelled around in his chair and asked Sanda to

find out what percentage of works in the Library of Trash had been re-classified to the other libraries in the past ten years.

He noticed that she was wearing a new longhyi today, or one that he had not seen. It was the colour of mimosas, he thought, and set off to perfection the skin tones of the Burmese woman. For some reason he had never fathomed, Harris thought of colour in terms of flowers, especially the subtler variations of yellows and oranges and pinks. It had embarrassed him privately for years as an unmasculine attribute of the mind, until the first serious evidence was adduced that plants responded to love, optimism and animosity as much as to mulch and fertilizers.

Anyway, Sanda Nu's long Burmese skirt was mimosa yellow and there were delicate gold designs embroidered on it. It looked festive – more an evening longhyi than a morning one.

The daily video-conference began. The first item of the agenda before the International Council was adoption of a technical progress report on procedures for sealing the Library of War. All appeared to be going well. A few minor points were raised.

The Library of War was not in Knowledge Park. It was an intentional exclusion. The Originator wanted to sink it in the Greenland ice cap, both as a symbolic gesture of cooling and a practical measure of isolation. The engineers demurred. So did the Danish government. It was housed instead in a deep silo drilled through the permafrost near Coppermine in the Province of Chimo. The actual site was appropriately close to Bloody Falls on the Coppermine River, within easy access of the cargo submarine base on Coronation Gulf.

Although smaller than the silos of Data Centre One and Two, the Library of War was the most sophisticated and completely computerized. It contained every conceivable piece of information on the strength, disposition, weaponry, missile sites, ship movements, and strategic plans of military

forces throughout the world. Programmed into it were complex series of games covering every permutation and combination of defence and attack, every improbable alliance and counter-alliance; every eventuality conceivable to the mind of man – or so they hoped.

The Library of War was under UN control. And systems of de-escalation, disarmament and no-advantage handicap, agreed upon in the United Nations, were programmed into it as international agreements changed. KPA was responsible only for maintenance and communications. At first the Library of War had been only a partial success. There were a number of non-cooperating nations.

December 6, 1989, changed that. The Three-Minute War, it was now agreed, was unplanned. The supposition was that it was the aftermath of a drunken orgy on the Soviet-Chinese border north of Manchouli, during which a cannon with a nuclear warhead was fired across the Argun River. Within two minutes there were no troops in the entire region left alive to fire anything at anyone. Within three minutes the Library of War had prevented a chain-reaction world war developing.

Nevertheless, the destruction of much of Manchuria, eastern Mongolia and a swath of the U.S.S.R. from Belogorsk to Lake Baikal, had already occurred and an estimated sixteen million persons were dead or fatally affected. Prevailing winds saved Japan and most of Korea from contamination. But Peking had to be evacuated in haste and was not repopulated for five years.

Agreement to ban tactical nuclear weapons was reached within eighteen months of the Three-Minute War. Apart from the danger of another accidental war, they were quite useless in urban guerilla warfare, as the U.S. discovered when the clandestine Afro-American Republic first began the Battle of Washington.

It had been hoped to achieve total world disarmament by the tenth anniversary of December 6, 1989, and to seal shut the Library of War as the new century began. They were

running a year behind schedule, which was better than most people had expected. The silo at Bloody Falls was to be sealed on December 6, 2000 – six months from now.

Sanda Nu handed Harris the print-out of re-classifications from the Library of Trash since 1990. There had been a total of 248: 50 to the Library of Humour, 36 to the Library of Pornography, and 7 to the companion Library of Erotica (the twin libraries were another burr beneath the saddle of classification); 14 to the Library of Literature; and the remainder divided between the Libraries of Music and Art. It was not a large number, although large enough, Harris considered, to show flexibility and responsiveness. He pressed his affirmative button for the re-classification now in dispute, and was pleased to see enough of his fellow members do so to win the motion without debate.

It was a dispute which should have been settled at the librarian's level, trivial in comparison with others in the realms of political science and philosophy.

The video-conference was over in 40 minutes and Harris sat back with his eyes closed to empty his mind of previous concerns and negative responses. It was a Positive Focus exercise he had found both helpful and refreshing.

When he opened his mind and eyes five minutes later, he at once realized the significance of Sanda Nu's mimosa-coloured longhyi.

Chapter Six

SHE CHOSE the love house on Saucer Lake and, lying there in the tranquil afterglow of their love-making, Harris took added pleasure from her intuition and her sensibility.

There were many who preferred the secluded love houses set deep in the stillness of trees, displaying perhaps vestiges of old shames. Harris understood that, yet did not share it. He loved the water as a man would be hard put not to who was born in the drought years on the prairie and introduced to the wonders of waves and tides and log-strewn beaches at an impressionable age. He had never seen the delta of the Irrawaddy River, but he supposed that Sanda might well share the joy of water.

The love house was circular and since it stood on three slender piers in the middle of Saucer Lake, each of the 200 rooms had a view. There was an open balcony off each room, shuttered on both sides; but it was possible from the bed to look out and see fish jump, the reeds stir as wild ducks paddled among them or, at the appropriate time of day, listen to the cry of the loons with a comfortable tristesse.

The noon hour was the favourite time, so much so that it was often difficult to make a reservation between noon and two o'clock. In addition to a miniature sauna and a circular shower stall at the back of each room, there was also a dumb waiter which would deliver a simple lunch like the black olives from Bursa, the lightly grilled goat cheese sandwiches

– a favourite Turkish snack – and the glasses of clear tea Sanda had ordered.

The two other peak periods of love house occupancy were the early morning tryst from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m., the physiologically ideal time for making love; and the old cocktail hour from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The French had a name for it, the traditional non-accountable time for mistresses and lovers.

By midnight the love houses were virtually empty. What was it, Harris thought idly as Sanda lay curled and quiet beside him, which had predisposed his mother's generation to regard each hour after midnight as more dangerous to virtue?

The clandestine, dark and unpeopled night – was that it? Or the residue of an even earlier time when coal oil lamps were dimmed at a frugal hour and anyone awake was up to no good?

"I can feel them wriggling inside me!"

"What's that?" said Harris.

"All those thousands and thousands of lovely little spermatozoa of yours," said Sanda, "swimming so hard to meet my one lonely little ovum! It's not a very romantic word in English, is it – ovum?"

"No, it isn't," said Harris. "But don't blame us. Blame the Romans. It's Latin," he explained; because although she was very good at many things, there were many odd corners of the English language and its etymology she had not explored. "You could call it a gamete; that's what it is, a sex cell. Mine are gametes too."

She rolled the word around in her mind and over her tongue. "Gamete, gamete. Yes, I like it. It's much better than ovum. Ovum is such a stiff, silly little word." She laughed. "Gamete meets gamete," she said. "No, I like spermatozoa much better for yours."

"Is it descending?" Harris asked her. "Did you check in the box?"

It was possible to trace with great accuracy the passage of

the ova down the fallopian tubes and thus pinpoint the ideal time for conception. It took only a couple of minutes inside the diagnostic box at the nearest clinic. And although doctors did not recommend it yet as a regular monthly procedure, it did no observable harm, no chromosome damage, to the ovum.

"Yes," said Sanda. "It will work. The timing is perfect. But just to make sure . . ."

"Let's have lunch first," said Harris.

Harris was moved at the prospect of a child. He had never thought of himself as having any dynastic desires. Perhaps he had. It was thirty-six years since Arla had given birth to their youngest child, Bronwen. And he had not since then provided the seed, or joined chromosomes with any woman to create a human. He felt no sense of guilt. It was now regarded as a privilege, an honour, so extensive were the options open to any woman rated for motherhood. Yet it was not that he felt either.

Harris did not often think of his father, yet it occurred to him at this moment that Andy would have been delighted if Jen had had a child. He would have berated her for her carelessness and grumbled at the imposition, but he would have been delighted.

Perhaps it was a simple response to the dynamics of life. Harris was prepared to accept that; the least convoluted explanation was usually the one he preferred.

There had at first been some opposition to the love houses from the older militants in women's lib. on the grounds of exploitation. Now there was a new generation of men and women who laughed at this, much as Harris' generation had at jerky newsreel footage of Susan B. Anthony, Emily Pankhurst and the suffragettes.

The idea of courting in the back seat of an automobile, or worse still of petting, seemed ludicrously distasteful to them. Like pregnancy fears, menopausal myths, crude contraceptive devices and the concept of women not in legal control of

their own bodies, they were strange aspects of social history; on a par with the wearing of whalebone corsets, or bleeding and leeching as surgical procedures.

Many of the proprietary aspects of marriage had disappeared with the full economic, social and sexual equality of women; just as proprietal attitudes toward children had with the advent of the new education. Human possessiveness had far from vanished in so short a time, but contractual ownership of one person by another, or of each by each, for an indefinite term, was now as illegal as slavery, and as deplored.

The hypocrisy of serial monogamy – those whom God hath joined together let no man but a divorce court judge put asunder – had contributed to the changes. So had advances in human recycling which led to an average life expectancy of eighty-seven years.

Harris, for instance, was physiologically fitter at seventy than he had been at sixty, thanks to a synthetic lung inserted four years ago. Sanda was at that moment tracing a slender forefinger along the path of the neat L-shaped scar across his sun-tanned thorax. Harris took another black olive.

"If you do that, I can't drink my tea," he said.

"Good," said Sanda.

Harris had voted against building the love houses in Knowledge Park. Or to express it as one should, in positive terms, he had voted to build them outside the Park.

He had done so in part out of loyalty to the Originator, who fought them successfully until he died; and also because he accepted the argument Alex put forward that, once anything beyond the libraries themselves, the dwelling towns and the thinking cabins, was allowed in the Park, all sorts of exceptions and intrusions would follow.

Harris was out-voted. The love houses were built, and in time he came to accept the prevailing view that they were in a way only an extension of the dwelling towns. Perhaps it was a rationalization. Nevertheless, by then the sanctity of Knowledge Park was well established and no other excep-

tions were allowed. The love houses, it was soon evident, were a beneficial extension. The reduction of stress factors and the improvements in the psychological well-being of the inhabitants of the Park were measurable.

Yet the Originator had been right in principle. From the moment construction of the first twelve libraries began on June 1, 1976, so did the pressures to relax the purity of concept and the restrictions governing what could and could not go into Knowledge Park.

The rules were tougher than many at first realized. When they did become fully aware of them, there were howls and squeals, denunciations and attempts at evasions.

The primary objective with which the Knowledge Park Authority was charged was the collection, correlation, storage and transmission of the world's knowledge – and as a result, hopefully, the creation of a saner and wiser world. The secondary objective was to innovate and experiment in better ways of living and to do so in a controlled situation.

It was the controlled situation, Harris MacNeil remembered very vividly, which caused all the sparks. If it was a planners' dream – which it was – it was an entrepreneur's nightmare. The KPA was determined to be as non-commercial as possible. No industry was allowed in the Park, not even the nuts and bolts end of the knowledge industry: the printers and paper-makers, the microform plants, film laboratories and recording studios.

Such prohibitions were not only acceptable but also widely commended. Industrial zones with stringent pollution control laws were designated in the 30-mile belt around the Park.

It was the exclusion of so many other customary facets of city life which surprised many people – delighting some and infuriating others. This only became fully apparent when the first integrated dwelling town was completed at St. Ephrem de Paradis in 1981.

Where were all the offices, the banks, the churches, the schools, the warehouses, the service stations and parking lots

of a normal North American town of 10,000 population? The answer was – there were virtually none of them. Private businesses, except those necessary to the immediate daily needs of the inhabitants, could find no place in the Park.

There was a single banking centre at which customers could transact business electronically with their own charter banks outside the Park; a single counselling centre to which lawyers could come to meet clients. There were two dictation centres operating twenty-four hours about, mostly on a phone-and-dictate basis. And there were a similar number of chapels available for use by religious groups of any persuasion. There was a centre of preventive medicine and diagnostic services, a dental service centre and, in the leisure grounds outside the town, there were health centres and facilities for virtually every sport and game, every craft and activity.

There were quite a number of small stores selling groceries, meat, fish, clothing, shoes, books and magazines. There was a bakery, a stationer's, a florist, two drug stores, a haberdashery, a hardware merchant and, back in those days Harris remembered, a cigar store.

Yet even in this regard there was a stipulation which made enemies; enemies who were strong but not strong enough. No chain stores were permitted to lease space in St. Ephrem de Paradis or any subsequent controlled environment town in Knowledge Park. Leases were limited to individual entrepreneurs with only a single business of a similar nature outside the Park; and only in one dwelling town; and only on a three-year lease renewable if performance fully satisfied residents.

If it seemed at first to be a harsh, dictatorial and monopolistic stipulation, it proved to have suitable safeguards; and it made for a variety, an individuality and a close relationship between merchant and customer which for years had been dwindling in the world outside.

Schools? There were no schools such as there had been for the larger part of the 20th century. St. Ephrem contained

four day-care centres and one large learning resources centre open to and used by the entire population whatever their age.

But there was an abundance of eating and meeting places; small restaurants, cafés, ice-cream parlours, gardens, courtyards, benches and tables and chairs. They occupied the fringes of the leisure grounds outside the town and the huge plaza inside the town. They filled much of the space allotted for half a century to the trailer transport and the family car.

The first time Mike Orfankos came up to St. Ephrem he took one look around and said to Harris: "This place is made for Greeks (because there were so many restaurants). We're coming back into our own. And why not? It's about time. But Oshawa isn't going to like it at all. Nor's Detroit."

They didn't. One of the strongest lobbies against the KPA was mounted by the automobile industry. Although it was a murderously antiquated business, long on style and short on content, myopic, lethal and frozen, it was still regarded as the bell-wether industry of North America in the seventies. Already under siege from urbanologists, ecologists, safety experts and the post-nuclear generation, yet so far undefeated and still full of power, it wanted no absolute exclusions. Nor did the oil industry. If the Edmonton Petroleum Club had known what was going to transpire, they would never have held Hensen's million-dollar draw on their premises.

If an ideal community was able to function well without the private automobile, the lone suburbanite inching downtown in two tons of vulnerable sheet metal and obsolescent piston engine, the economic status quo was in trouble.

Work roads had to be laid down. There was no other way to build the Igloos of Minerva, to lay out the vast communications centre on the Floodwood River or to begin to sink the great silos of Data One and Data Two. It would have been more economical afterwards to grade them, widen them and blacktop them, than sink the multipipe system and raise the big A-frames of the monorail transit.

The auto industry tried political pressure, ridicule and

coercion. Management and labour joined forces. The UAW persuaded the Teamsters to strike. The fiercely nationalistic Quebec trade unions countered the threats.

The result was the barring of all international unions from Knowledge Park and the belated determination of the car industry to buckle down and improve its product. The quadrapod, the emission-free circular city car with the direction stripe baked into its shock-absorbent shell, was the ultimate result. It was too late by then for Knowledge Park.

The breaking of the 1980 strike with the aid of the CNTU put the construction of Knowledge Park on a firmer footing. The critical path system was re-asserted. Canadian National finished rebuilding the grades on its right of way from Quebec City, curling north and west through La Tuque to Villemontel, Taschereau and La Sarre and slanting across the Park to Cochrane and the West. The Ontario Northland Railroad went ahead with a similar program, and the old logging railroad from Iroquois Falls became the right of way for the elevated high-low monorail system into the Park.

Not in their wildest days as Saturday night mining towns had Val d'Or and Rouyn seen such a boom as the towns of the Abitibi did. The old excesses of wild land speculation and haphazard tar-paper shanty towns were forestalled by regional planning restrictions, but not the exuberance of 100,000 construction workers, students, engineers, black fly control squads and new residents who converged on the area. Yet these were the external manifestations. They were different in scale but not in kind from the construction of the CPR, the Cariboo gold rush, the discovery of the Pembina oilfields.

What was different was the sense of direction which swiftly pervaded the country; the individual commitment and national excitement. The wave of pride which washed up over Canada in 1967 receded with the economic uncertainties of the early seventies. And the gathering swell of national self-confidence did not become a huge breaker thundering on the shore until the creation of Knowledge Park.

Before he became in old age one of Canada's most influential pessimists, Bruce Hutchison wrote in *Canada: The Unknown Country*:

"My country is written in the dark and teeming brain of youth upon the eve of its manhood. My country has not found itself nor felt its power nor learned its true place. It is all visions and doubts and hopes and dreams."

Between 1975 and 1980 the doubts began to disappear, the visions, hopes and dreams took shape and substance. The substance was Knowledge Park. Manifest destiny moved north ten degrees of latitude from the banks of the Potomac and the 39th parallel to the shore of Lake Abitibi and the 49th parallel. It was a different destiny, less imperious and in no way territorial, but no less manifest.

The Park itself for much of that time lay in the muddy throes of construction; a state of chaos more purposeful than it seemed to the casual observer. It was outside the Park, all across Canada and beyond, that the human enthusiasm found expression in a hundred ways.

The Winnipeg Free Press called it "The Time of Book Hunters." It was. As soon as the first sod was turned for the great circle of core libraries, twelve shadow libraries were set up in ghost towns, abandoned military bases and empty factories from Abbotsford to Summerside. To have waited until the Igloos of Minerva were complete would have been folly. The excitement and momentum of the Proposal would soon have dissipated.

So the shadow libraries took shape with skeleton staffs of librarians and specialists. Collection depots appeared in every city and town. And before long they were filled with books and manuscripts, scientific papers, learned papers, periodicals and tracts.

Children stopped playing nicky-nicky-nine-doors or backyard tag to call purposefully on neighbours, to rummage through attics and basements for unexpected books, sepia photographs of vanished scenes and old homesteads, daguerreotypes, Ediphone cylinders, old 78 rpm phonograph

records. Schools competed in book-hunting and film-finding techniques and students pored over speckled brown copies of the *Canadian Illustrated News* or *Grip*, deciphered day books in faded ink or admired family treasures brought from Europe in years gone by.

Jews had for some years purchased individual trees to be planted on the bare and distant hills of Israel. It was a practical and imaginative scheme. The KPA borrowed the idea and encouraged Canadian tourists to bring a book back from their travels abroad. Second-hand booksellers along the Charing Cross Road, on the Left Bank or in the back streets of Munich soon were able to spot Canadians rummaging among the rare book sections for something to take home to the universal library.

A plasterer from Guelph discovered a first edition of *The Areopagitica* in a family attic near Shrewsbury. A packet of miscellaneous papers which an Air Canada purser picked up for thirty Deutschmarks at a Frankfurt auction proved to contain three hitherto unknown poems by Schiller.

Such finds were rare and more often than not an embarrassment. (The original Schiller poems were returned to the German people.) Yet they occurred frequently enough to pique the curiosity of thousands who had never before been thought of as antiquarian book buyers. In the end it did not matter so much whether people always chose the right books or the best books, but that they came home bearing them as gifts. What, after all, were frankincense and myrrh but rendered lumps of yellowy-red gum from Burseraceae trees?

Immigrant families arrived at Toronto International Airport or in Montreal clutching at children and a single old leather-bound volume. Businessmen returned from Amsterdam or Caracas secure in the knowledge that their contributions were duty free, individually recorded and tax deductible. Young Canadians still drifting around Morocco, the Algarve or the Dalmatian coast, hitch-hiking through France or Austria, found they could support themselves, albeit meagrely, by judicious trade in books for Knowledge Park.

For whatever the impulses or persuasions to donate works – and they did include the donor's name forever in the flyleaf – much of the material for the libraries came through the ordinary channels of commerce.

It was an expensive business, buying the backlog books. And it was clear it would be a long time before there was any return on the investment. Fortunately Alex Mansell, far from quietly folding The Knowledge Park Foundation when its initial purpose was fulfilled, actively expanded it.

Hensen helped. Hensen was a wild man. He'd parlayed one diamond drilling rig into a fortune in oilfield equipment rentals and he loved to gamble. Hensen would bet on anything, particularly against a Calgary man since he was from Edmonton, and the rivalry between the two cities was intense.

That's how the Million-Dollar Bet came about. Out of the blue one day Hensen challenged Alex to it; the loser to donate one million dollars to The Knowledge Park Foundation.

Harris was surprised when Alex accepted. It seemed so uncharacteristically flamboyant a gesture, although it was a publicity man's dream and the envy of every professional fund raiser in the country.

It was a best-of-three bet, like the Western Conference football finals, Hensen explained: drawing for straws first, then one toss of a silver dollar and finally, if need be, one cold deck cut of the cards. The Edmonton Petroleum Club had never seen such a turnout of members. Alex drew the longer straw. Hensen called tails and the zoom lenses of the TV cameras picked up the birchbark canoe on the reverse of the 1963 silver dollar. It had come down to the cards. Alex cut first and there was collective groan when he exposed the four of hearts. Without hesitation Hensen cut and turned up the three of clubs.

Hensen shook hands, then calmly leaned down, and from under the green baize table he hauled a scratched and battered black lunch pail, the one he had carried to work from

the day he quit school in Grade Eight, he explained. He opened the lid and took out a wad of one hundred $10,000 bills which he passed across the table to Mansell. Not to be outdone, Alex picked up his Stetson – thank God, not a new white 10-gallon one, thought Harris, watching on TV in Toronto, but the one he wore on the ranch. And from the inside of the sweat-stained hat band be pulled his cheque for one million dollars. If any man in Canada would match it, he announced, he would donate it to the foundation.

Two days later a 1954 Lincoln emerged from the driveway of a shuttered home in Winnipeg's Tuxedo district and proceeded at a leisurely pace towards the CBC television studios, where the chauffeur was dispatched to inform them his employer wished to "go on the news." This unorthodox and unheralded approach was not very successful until the chauffeur muttered: "She's got a million dollars in that old bag of hers, she says."

The first person to match Mansell's million, and blast him on air for limiting his challenge to "any *man* in Canada," proved to be Mrs. Emily Buchanan, whose obscurity hitherto was partly explained by her admission that she had not been outside her house in seventeen years and was thoroughly enjoying it.

Within a month there were seven members of the million-dollar club. But it was the eighty-four-year-old recluse of Tuxedo who aroused the greatest interest partly because she was a forthright lady, on every subject except the source of her income; and partly because of the strings she attached to her donation. Her stipulations were as reasonable as they were intriguing. Emily Buchanan wanted half her million dollars spent on the contents of the Native Indian Library and a quarter each on books and other material for the Library of Gaelic and the Bibliothèque Canadienne.

The Native Indian Library was the first to be completed and opened in Knowledge Park. It was a symbolic gesture to the first citizens of Canada and one which the newly elected prime minister delighted in. After due consultation, he in-

vited Emily Buchanan to open it. With him on her right and Indian leaders on her left, the indomitable Emily stood on the high and windy platform and explained what in deference to her late husband she had not admitted for half a century or more – that she was the grand-niece of Gabriel Dumont, Prince of the Plains and Louis Riel's general in the Métis Rebellion of 1885, or, to be more precise, of his Scottish Metisse wife, Madeleine Wakeley. Her admission was an anticlimax in a changed world. If a few Orangemen grew red in the face in odd pockets of Ontario, their huffing and puffing went unnoticed.

Among traditionalists and romantics, a point of controversy was the design of the Native Indian Library itself. It was a huge skeletal framework of exposed steel beams, "like an office block left by a bankrupt contractor," as one writer put it, in which were suspended, at related levels, four floating rectangular concrete libraries each surrounded by its own gallery. It had been designed, constructed, furnished and staffed entirely by Indians or Métis. Mohawk high-steel men from Caughnawaga had erected the giant jungle jim framework; Kwakiutls and Tsimshians with memories of West Coast lodges, or Iroquois working from long house drawings, had designed the interiors of the libraries. And at the least obstructive corner of the structure a glass-walled service column rose through the treetops.

The overall effect was of loneliness, pride, isolation and incompleteness. And that undoubtedly was what the young Indian leaders in their blue business suits or plaid bush jackets wanted it to express.

"So what's a lousy seven million dollars? Where's that gonna get you? It's just a drop in the bucket!"

Harris remembered the remark and the occasion, but not who had said it. Somebody standing beside him at the press club bar, someone who hadn't been listening to Allan Venn.

"Every positive response moves intent towards objective." Venn was right about that.

It was seed money. The money counted. The intent

counted more. That year – 1977, the year of the Million-Dollar Bet and Emily Buchanan's matching million – Canadians bought $83,000,000 in Knowledge Park common stocks. It was a series of positive responses.

Harris rubbed his hand gently over the ridge of Sanda's pelvis. No foothills there. From the prairie of her belly, the skin rose smoothly to the soft escarpment of her pelvis.

Fortis imaginatio generat casum. A strong imagination begets the event. Where had that come from? Harris wondered. Love and Latin! Not so improbable a combination. Amo, amas, amat. . . .

Fortis imaginatio generat casum. It was Joe Wilson, the erudite American businessman who spent twelve years developing the Xerox machine, who'd confounded some banker or prospective backer with it.

"You don't need a memory capsule today," said Sanda. "You've been thinking so hard I could hear the circuits clicking."

Harris did not answer. He was thinking about Joe Wilson and the Xerox dry copier. Without it, Knowledge Park would not have happened when it did. Nor would it, indeed, without William Stephenson and the wirephoto, or Alexander Baird, or Bell, or Marconi, or the unsung Reginald Fessenden, or Ted Rogers and the AC tube, or the boy from Mill Village, Nova Scotia, who invented the Creed teleprinter. The list was long and interwoven.

The R and D branch of KPA in the early years played a larger part than it was credited with, Harris thought. It was purposefully small, handing out research and development contracts to private Canadian firms around the country as a matter of policy. It was headed by a Canadian engineer largely responsible for NASA's lunar module and included several other Canadian scientists lured back from such work in the U.S.

One of their first objectives was the design of compact,

portable and improved equipment for KP microfilm teams, video units and film crews. One of their first successes was the development of a light source for underwater cinematography which would compensate for the natural filtering out of the reds in the colour spectrum.

Sanda turned on her side and reduced her voice to a whisper. A whisper, she had discovered, penetrated concentration much more effectively than the ordinary voice level.

"Is there any relationship between sex and memory?" she whispered. "Does sex stimulate it?"

Harris laughed. He was tempted to say: "Why don't you ask CIRA?" But she was teasing him, trying to provoke him. And lately he noticed more and more people were asking person-to-person questions. CIRA was at once too easy and too cold. Very valuable and eminently useful, but not warm, not witty, not quixotic.

Central Information Retrieval (Answers) was far from being omniscient. She was not even that dogmatic, being quite prepared to cross-reference or provide arguments and counter-proposals. CIRA could doubt. And that made her almost human. Anyhow, why was CIRA regarded as a woman?

"It's the relaxation afterwards that stimulates the memory," Harris said, "not love-making. Sex obliterates."

"I remember everything," said Sanda and blew in his ear.

"It's strange," said Harris, "that in Greek mythology wisdom, love and memory are not gods but goddesses; Minerva – no, she was Roman; Pallas Athene; Aphrodite and Mnemosyne."

"You're stalling," said Sanda. "I've never heard of Mnemosyne."

"She's not very well known," said Harris, "which is odd since she's the goddess of memory. And also she was the mother of the nine Muses."

"Who was the father?"

"Zeus," said Harris.

Sanda had stopped blowing in his ear. Instead her tongue

was curling and licking inside his ear; and since this zone had been his most erogenous for many years, he gave up and stopped remembering, for some time.

They went separate ways from Saucer Lake; Harris back to St. Ephrem de Paradis and Sanda to the Library of Burma. She could have spent the rest of the afternoon with him, for the official work week was 28 hours, and in her dual role as a calligrapher and Harris MacNeil's morning assistant she worked at least 50. Yet she wanted the quietness of her inclined desk and the soothing discipline of her art.

She was working on an illuminated volume of Burmese river songs which she herself had translated into English. Her pen strokes were as firm and flowing as they had ever been. She wanted solitude, time to think about her child, whose creation, she was certain, had begun.

Sanda was excited about the new studies in pre-natal cognition which were under way; as excited as most of her contemporaries. None of the freeze-dried experiments on humans had yet proved what happens after death. There was some evidence of nothingness, a void, a blank. But there was no conclusive evidence that suspension of consciousness and life was the same as death. The solution to the riddle of an after-life, when it came, might put an end to the lethally arrogant divisions which a few thousand years of transitional monotheism had inflicted on the earth. In the meantime, research had begun at the opposite end of life.

Could an unborn child think? And if so, what did it know? What level of consciousness existed in the womb? And at what point in fetal development did it begin? What were the components of instinctive behaviour?

Research was already in progress on groups of women volunteers in a number of medical and psychic research centres. Encephalograms of the fetus in the seventh and eighth months indicated more brain waves than immediately after birth.

There were the beginnings of evidence that Wordsworth's

poetic hunch in *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* might be right:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.

Sanda Nu's father would not have accepted any such possibility. Karma was for Hindus and not for any right-thinking Buddhist.

The volunteers, all of whom were upgraded by International Population Control to rate a child, underwent the probes happily, though their swelling bellies were dappled with monitors and some had surgical windows. Sanda had visited some of them at the medical centre of Universite Internationale de Taschereau.

Some had a sophisticated version of a pillow speaker attached to them. They were trying pre-natal teaching: the reiteration of one word through the wall of the womb, in the hope that the baby would utter it once it had achieved vocal dexterity; or on a more complex scale, broadcasting a musical composition to see if the unborn child retained it until he achieved sufficient manual dexterity to play the piano.

Sanda was not going to be a medical volunteer, but she intended to concentrate on thought-listening to her unborn child.

By the time Harris reached his study, Liam O'Brien had everything ready for him: the videotape cassettes were set for playback with the one o'clock world TV news, a special report from Confederation Island, the Digest of Positive Effect, giving the highlights of what had been accomplished the previous day in the Park, and the gossip column of odd, human and humorous items from KPA field units all over the world which he knew Harris enjoyed most of all.

Liam was a deceptively well-organized young man, a

musicologist by vocation and a business administrator by profession; an example of the new blend in human training, or education as they called it when Harris was young. He came from Coleraine on the river Bann and was too young to remember the last of the troubles or a time when Ireland was not all one. He was a flautist and a virtuoso of the tin whistle from which he could coax surprising sounds, as he could from any simple pipes. He had learned his music in Dublin and the villages of Eire, but he'd studied business management at the University of Western Ontario. He was married to a girl from a small Ontario town – Wingham, Harris thought it was – who was passionately attached to organ music. In a year Liam was going to leave Knowledge Park to introduce her to the soaring grandeur of pipe organs all over the West European Confederacy which so far she had only heard in reproduction.

Harris was constantly surprised at how much Liam knew. He was only twenty-four and life thus stretched ahead of him for another sixty years, probably longer. 1977! He was barely two the year that everything happened. The pivotal year, as Harris saw it; although some people argued that 1976, when the construction of the libraries began, was the decisive year in the history of Canada. It did not matter much, Harris thought, which year you chose.

However, it was the summer of '79 that saw the twelve core libraries simultaneously opened in an international ceremony which symbolized both the universal purpose of the Park and the electronic proximity of the global village.

Among the thousands assembled around Bill Lake and in the encircling Igloos of Minerva before dawn on August 8, 1979, there was not a single one toying with a ceremonial pair of scissors.

The libraries were opened at sunrise, 6.40 EST, by the heads of twelve nations speaking from their own countries by satellite television. The president of Egypt spoke from the site of the great library in Alexandria, the premier of Greece from the Acropolis in Athens, the Italian leader from the

Colosseum in Rome, the Spanish monarch from the Prado in Madrid, the Party secretary from the Leningrad Public Library, the prime minister from the reading room of the British Museum, the president of the fifth republic from the courtyard of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the chairman from a street bookstall in Peking, the president from the White House library, the chancellor from the University of Heidelberg, the Tanzanian head of state from a high school in Dar-es-Salaam and the president of India from the Taj Mahal.

As their voices echoed in turn across the water, a Canadian stepped forward to respond – a Canadian who had come from that country or whose forefathers had.

What the warden of Knowledge Park said that morning, what the prime minister said, or what Anne of Canada and Andre de Tadoussac said, each in their own first tongue, Harris no longer remembered clearly. He did remember the final speech.

The Originator left the crowd of distinguished visitors on the shore, took Trudy by the arm, stretched down his other hand to his son, Moyne, then barely four, and strolled out to the end of the boat dock. He waited a moment standing there in his heeled boots, his riding pants and his plaid shirt, open at the neck, sleeves rolled up over weathered brown forearms to his elbows; waited for the men with the microphones, caught unawares, to wade out beside the dock.

"Some of you must wonder why you are here beside this small lake at this early hour," he said. "I hope none of you wishes you were still in bed. It is a good hour to be by a lake. And there is a certain symbolism about the dawn. Yet I do not think that is why the warden of Knowledge Park chose this hour. I believe he wanted to remind us that, however proud we may be of what we have so far accomplished here, this is not the centre of the world; that while it is sunrise in St. Ephrem, it is lunch time in Paris, dinner time in Tashkent, and well past time for bed in Tokyo.

"Let me speak of myself for a moment before I have done.

In my life I have known much good fortune and great sadness; joy and despair. I doubt I have been happier than today. Few of us see our largest dreams come to pass. Fewer still see their dream become the dream of a nation, far less the dream of the civilized world. These things have been given to me. And I have nothing to give in return.

"Some people call me the Originator. It is not a name I would choose for myself. (I have managed to get by as Alexander Mansell for sixty-six years now.) Yet that is what I am. And all I am. And all I ever was. I pointed a direction; you focused. I dreamed; you did. I originated; you created."

The first data retrieval inquiry reached Floodwood River communications centre as the Originator finished speaking. It came from the University of Islamabad via Telesat Five. And it was a request for technical information on the cultivation and processing of spirulina, a nutritious but lowly form of quasi algae with a 68 percent protein content which the women of Chad had harvested naturally for hundreds of years. Simultaneously the Telex room, equipped with its initial bank of 400 teleprinters, received a request from Georgetown College in Kentucky for the full context of a humorous quotation from Stephen Leacock.

Harris saw Alex smile when this was announced. The timing was fortuitous, yet Alex was clearly pleased at this swift inquiry from the United States.

Once it became quite clear that Canada would go ahead and create this city of libraries among the trees, Americans had been extraordinarily generous toward it and enthusiastic about it. So many thousands of them volunteered to come North and help build it that it became a source of embarrassment to the government. Brakes had to be gently and diplomatically applied. Tens of thousands gave books, bequeathed private libraries, or sent films and photographs and recordings to Knowledge Park to be reproduced and the originals returned.

Foundations, institutions and individual Americans contributed funds to the Originator's Knowledge Park Founda-

tion. Universities, quick to appreciate how the Park might ultimately relieve them of the increasing financial burdens of library acquisitions, leased circuits to Floodwood River as soon as they could.

In an age of anxiety, pessimism and national self-doubt, Knowledge Park offered optimism, a reassuring technological inventiveness and a ray of immortality for Western civilization.

Congress, in an abrupt about-face, voted a quarter of a billion dollars for the construction of the U.S. Library in Knowledge Park; for a full-scale microform program to reproduce the collection of the Library of Congress; for research in laser tube technology; and for the Wisdom Program conceived by the president's advisers as a scheme to rechannel military and space technology into the international knowledge pool.

Much of this private and official enthusiasm was altruistic, yet there ran through it, perhaps inevitably, a determined vein of ideological competition. A library complex with a world-wide input – and output – could not hope to escape opposing views of perceived truth. Not at least in the early decades. To disseminate a version of history and current affairs without bias at all was at best a formidable task. It demanded an Olympian detachment from those who were not gods. One hundred Arnold Toynbees from as many divergent societies could not have accomplished it, had they been available. They were not.

America thus made haste. The U.S. Library was the first of the major libraries to be completed. It was built on a low plateau between the forks of the Riviere La Reine and Boischere Creek in the south-west quadrant of Knowledge Park, on the Ontario side of the provincial boundary. Russia chose a corresponding site on the Quebec side, whether from a desire to create both balance and distance or because of old attachments to French culture and civilization.

It was inevitable, if unoriginal, that the U.S. Library should rapidly be nicknamed the Lifesaver Building. It was

circular, with a hole in the middle. It had a low profile, a flat roof and a smooth, windowless exterior. In repose it looked as smooth, blank and uninspired as a candy mint. It came to life when it was switched on, for it was the first true living-wall structure of any moment in the world. Its exterior, three storeys high and two miles in circumference, was a mosaic of thousands of rear-projection movie screens on which could be projected a multitude of facets of American life, culture and history.

At the edge of the huge clearing in which the library stood, up against the first line of trees, was a ring of bleacher seats which moved very slowly around the perimeter. It took an hour to complete the circumference of the living wall. Behind the bleachers the U.S. Library loop of the elevated monorail system described a gentle spiral grade finally descending underground and ending beneath the centre of the inner circle.

From the subterranean terminus, visitors rose to the surface on a large glass-walled disc elevator. They stepped out into a garden of sound, separated by a maze of baffles into individual areas of song and music and spoken words.

The library itself concentrated on sounds and images. Since they shared a common language with Canada and the entire English-speaking world, Americans saw little need to fill their library with books already in the theme and subject libraries. There were banks and banks of microform storage units below ground level which could be projected with an ingenious flip-page reader. And there was a small library of historic books.

It was the U.S. library of sounds, the library of popular music, the newsreel library and the library of vernacular which severally intrigued so many visitors. In the library of vernacular it was possible to listen to every shade of regional dialect, every nuance of local usage, every era of slang. And there were sound effects corridors which matched street sounds, industrial noises, familiar and strange, rural patterns of sound and nostalgic calls to their corresponding images.

On the preview tour Arla whispered to Harris: "It's the human zoo! The staff will never survive it!"

It was antic indeed. But also dazzlingly inventive and very human. If it was one part Thoreau and Emerson, and one part Louis Armstrong and Damon Runyon, it was also one part Walt Disney and P.T. Barnum. And in many ways it set the pattern for the showcase aspects of Knowledge Park. The real guts of the Park were in Data One and Data Two, the 12 theme libraries of the Igloos of Minerva, and the 160 libraries devoted to individual branches of learning and science and the arts. The national libraries could afford to be less comprehensive and more illustrative.

Russia did not take such a seemingly light-hearted approach. The Library of the U.S.S.R., not completed until four years after the U.S. Library, was a monolithic rectangle of marble so long that the staff often rode the minirail to get from one end to the other, and one U.S. senator seriously suggested it was designed primarily as a landing runway for Soviet bombers. It was indeed long enough and strong enough. Yet its purpose was, in part, to symbolize the great stretch of the Soviet Union from the Baltic to the Sea of Okhotsk; and more prosaically to accommodate the literature and learning of not one language, but more than eighty.

A more valid criticism of the Soviet Library was that it took up too much space. Once it was clear that Knowledge Park was not a colossal folly in the frozen wilderness, competition was fierce among nations for the choicest and most advantageous sites.

All sites were free, first come first served. And within the 5,000 square miles of the Park there should have been no lack of space. Sites had been reserved for the dwelling towns and the subject libraries. And the pattern of the transit system did dictate to some extent the location of new national libraries. The KPA laid down as few rules as possible, preferring to remain flexible and pragmatic in its approach. Ideological blocs were discouraged; ethno-lingual groups, like the Celtic Cluster, sometimes encouraged.

The manoeuvring and scheming were nevertheless intense. A vast relief map, much like the famous Challenger map of British Columbia in the exhibition grounds at Vancouver, was built in Ottawa. Traversed in a similar way by a travelling gantry, it was soon filled with members of the diplomatic corps, leaders of ethnic groups in Canada and staff members of the Directorate of International Library Cooperation, gazing down on the terrain below. Delegations flew North in chartered bush planes with their architects and cultural attaches to scout the land.

Harris smiled at the recollection of these voluble, excited incursions. He was about to tell Liam O'Brien his favourite anecdote about the Flemish and Walloon delegations when he realized O'Brien had departed. It was already well into the cocktail hour – congregation, they now called it. There was no problem about getting a drink, but he might find it less easy to find a cribbage game now. And he had missed one yesterday.

Harris strolled out of his electronic study and rode the elevator down ten floors to the plaza.

Chapter Seven

Harris rose very early on Thursday morning, barely rippling the liqui-bed in his desire not to disturb Arla. She turned once in her sleep and flung out her right arm. It missed him. Instead of showering and dressing, he slipped on a thermal robe and went straight to his study.

The electronic study enclosed him comfortably. He sat with his back to the exterior wall, his desk with its control panel and print-out screen in front of him, the dumb waiter and suction tube in the corner to his right, his typewriter on his left so that he could look out at an angle through the air-wall of the French windows onto the morning terrace. The diffuse ball of the sun was barely visible through the sky canopy. It was 6:15 a.m.

The screens on the electronic wall were all blank and he made no move to switch any on. The electronic wall was always the interior wall. It enclosed the service well which housed all the gadgetry of the apartment: the circuits, cables, projectors, sound systems, plumbing, vacuum system, the ir-radiation cleaning cabinet, the slurry pipes.

He phoned the 24-hour kitchens and ordered breakfast: a large thermos jug of coffee, brioche, butter and some Bulgarian apricot jam. The Bulgarian had more almonds in it than any other apricot jam.

He shut off the air-wall and allowed the aroma of the early morning to penetrate the room, the faint tang of conifers in the scrubbed air, the scent of grasses and flowers rising from

the leisure grounds, the occasional whiff of bake ovens.

This was the most lucid time of day. Harris slipped a double carbon sheet into his typewriter, pressed the shift lock and typed two words:

PARADOX . . . PROXIMITY

He paused for a moment and then underneath he typed:

REAL

The paradox was this. If it was possible to create a telecommunications data retrieval system so sophisticated and efficient that images and sounds and printed words could be transmitted vast distances in great numbers with much fidelity in matters of seconds or micro-seconds, there would seem to be no need for anyone to come to the source of that information. If the mountain could come to Mahomet wherever he was, why would Mahomet go to the mountain?

This was the question to which, in the first years, there was no proven answer: the question reiterated by the faint-hearted, the skeptical and the scornful; the negators. They visualized an electronic answer machine in every scholar's library, forgetting that scholars like solitary confinement no more than convicts, and are indeed more gregarious than pipe-fitters. They were perpetuating well-established yet romantic myths. Writers curse their self-imposed solitudes and long for some convivial approximation of the Round Table at the Algonquin. Scientists seldom work in empty laboratories and welcome opportunities to meet fellow scientists. Perceptions come often from sparks struck by others. Knowledge rubs off like soot on a chimney sweep. And acquiring it is not only a matter of ingestion but also of absorption.

Some came to Knowledge Park giving the reason George Mallory gave for climbing Mount Everest: "Because it is there!" Some came out of curiosity. Once the community began to assemble, others were drawn not only by the

knowledge but also the knowledgeable; not only for the creations but also for the company of the creators.

Harris poured himself a second cup of hot coffee, balanced an almond-studded dollop of apricot jam on the last cone of the croissant and chewed thoughtfully upon it. After a time, he wrote:

What encouraged so many to come and to stay was the proximity engendered here; the real proximity. Not the false proximity of the mid-century metropolis with its striations of age and income and belief and expertise, its incomprehensible jargons, its lonely boxes. That was not real proximity so much as alienation in congestion. Not the cosy proximity of the nuclear family with its limit of two parents and its average of 2.4 children, acting out the neat life insurance company dream amid abrasive undercurrents. Not the neurotic proximity of the group therapy commune. Not the small proximity and limited horizons of the 18th-century village or the 19th-century town. Not the insular proximity of cloistered monks or primitive tribes, nor the barrack-room proximity of men in armies, nor yet the exclusive proximity of an elite. The proximity developed here in the International Zone is none of these.

It is more the proximity of passengers on an ocean liner never out of sight of shore, making frequent ports of call, always disembarking and taking aboard some new passengers. It is a new proximity, never quite achieved in city states or in Athens even in the golden age of Greece.

True proximity is perhaps only possible to achieve in communities purposefully designed to accommodate and encourage it, as the dwelling towns in the Park were from the start. It requires a community with opportunities for privacy and an impulse toward congregation; a community small enough for recognition yet not isolated either by the clannishness of similarity or fear of

attack, in which there are no absolutes of territorial ownership and no hierarchies of assured permanence.

Real proximity is best achieved when there is a broad human mix; a mosaic of individuality, age, race, sex and accomplishment.

More by accident and inclination than by outright design, Canada long ago chose the mosaic instead of the melting pot; an imperfect mosaic, to be sure, providing a tenuous harmony amid diversity, but capable of improvement in a way that a melting pot society is not. For you cannot unscramble an omelette into its constituent eggs.

The human achievement of Knowledge Park thus far, or so I see it, has been to create a true international proximity; to transpose the ideals of the Olympics from the foot runner, the figure skater and the discus thrower into the full realm of learning; to expand and enrich the mosaic, to sharpen its definition and at the same time increase its flexibility. It remains a mosaic, yet it now possesses the changing facets and the infinite variety of a slow-moving kaleidoscope.

This atmosphere of proximity is enhanced by the positive focus within the International Zone on a common goal; a goal which still allows individual interests, pursuits and purposes.

Horizons are kept wide by change and movement; by ensuring that one-fifth of each dwelling town's inhabitants are comers and goers, working visitors and strangers; and by scattering the staffs of national libraries through various dwelling towns to prevent the development of blocs and cliques.

The natural sciences know no political boundaries, except those which may be arbitrarily imposed upon them. Learning has its own community. Philosophy, science and the arts do indeed have their own polemics. Yet ultimately they are indifferent to nationality.

The paradox has been resolved, not perfectly but largely. No one coming to Knowledge Park in the last half of the nineties can seriously deny it.

Harris paused, assembling in his mind the next leg of his argument.

> Toward the end of the eighties, the Eventful Eighties, it was argued that the success of St. Ephrem de Paradis, Disson Hills and the other dwelling towns depended on the absolute control exercised within the Park by the KPA. Without putting an end to the private enterprise system, without the creation of a socialist state, the experiment would never work elsewhere in Canada. There was enough truth in this to make it plausible.
>
> The trend toward government intervention and regulation which began – when, back in 1914? – had not reversed itself. That much was true. The controlled capitalism of the 1970's would have appeared to the lumber barons and the railroad builders of the previous century as the most crimson socialism.
>
> Yet the controlled-environment condominium cities around Hudson Bay, at Fort Severn, Winisk, Ville Bourassa and Baie Deuxieme and others along the Mackenzie highway, were excellent examples of the partnership between public planning and private profit.

His attention was deflected by screen 3 which automatically came to life at 7:00 a.m. There were the familiar faces of Jennifer Halton and Peter Meyer presenting the first edition of *International Video News.* The top line news occupied the first ten minutes and then came the inter-continental news reports in time zone sequence east to west via satellite. Directly below the screen, through the plastic window, Harris could see the videotape cassette reels turning, recording the IVN news for playback. Harris seldom watched the whole 90 minutes of news and news features, but both he and Arla liked to catch the China segment because of Bronwen's presence in the capital of the People's Republic and the report from the West African Confederacy where Adam was based. Amalgamated Cable did not begin commercial broadcast news until 8:00 a.m. Nor did the CBC with the

domestic newscast. Harris prided himself on his ability to monitor three screens at once. He hadn't lost his touch!

Not that he would need it much longer. There were only two small screens aboard Originator II, one in the wheelhouse and a second in his cabin. And next month Yvon Cote would be sitting in this study. Cote was his successor on the KPA International Council, and this penthouse apartment, because of its extra equipment, its closed circuit conference systems, and its size, was reserved for international councillors. It went with the position. Harris did not know Cote well personally. Everyone knew *of* him. Yvon le Poisson, as everybody in Quebec called him, was the most famous aquanaut of all. He was thirty-eight, yet the marine biologist from Riviere du Loup had lived beneath the sea longer than any man or woman alive. His six months beneath the North Pole brought him his first real fame. The electronic corral he and his crew devised for fish breeding grounds brought him added acclaim. But seven years beneath the sea had taken its toll. And a knee crushed during an expedition to the Bering Sea aboard Pisces XII ended his underwater career. He could dive no more.

Harris was pleased it was Yvon Cote who was taking his place. He should make an excellent member of the IC. Alex had been amply justified in his insistence on designating one of the Igloos of Minerva as the Library of the Sea. Picard and Cousteau first demonstrated the Gallic predilection for squamous adventure in the deeps. McInnis, Hutchens and others had shown it could become equally a Canadian pursuit. And with a coastline only exceeded by the U.S.S.R., the Second Confederacy forged ahead in submarine exploration and science. Les Intrepides, Yvon's celebrated flotillas of girl divers, were unmatched even by the pearl-divers of Japan. And their prowess was not simply a reflection of Yvon le Poisson's bachelor charisma.

Perhaps Sanda should have waited, Harris thought. But he would soon be given his own morning and afternoon assistants, once Liam and Sanda completed the transitional instruction stage.

Harris faded all three screens and stood up to stretch his legs. It was time to squeeze a fresh grapefruit for Arla and make coffee. He had not yet decided what he would leave behind for Yvon. Harris rather wanted it to be one of Alizon's paintings. Arla was loathe to part with any of them. And it was she who would be remaining in the Park, although moving to a smaller apartment in Vernier, an attractive dwelling town close to the Baltic Group libraries.

Who started it, Harris was not sure, but it had become a custom of the Park for those moving out of an apartment to leave behind a "potlatch present." The custom hadn't reached the level of the West Coast Indian potlatch, in which the more you gave away the greater your status. It was intended more as a "warmer" investing the apartment with a trace of the personality of previous dwellers. People left a private object of some kind – a cut-glass bowl, an ornament, or a picture.

Yet it was true also that the pursuit of possessions was not what it had been thirty years ago. In the seventies, it was a lesson handed up rather than down, from son to father and daughter to mother. Yes, that was true, by and large, Harris reflected, although it was a writer a generation older than he, a humourist with a great eye for the gentler ironies of life, who had influenced Harris.

A packrat all his life, his old friend had at the age of seventy-two sold his house, given away his library, disposed of the mementoes of a rich and eventful life, the detritus of an inveterate string saver, and gone to live in an hotel suite. The freedom from possessions—and their reminders—was, he said, like the shedding of a topcoat after a long, hard winter. The vast relief of a weight suddenly lifted.

There was little enough for Harris to move. Two shelves of books, a small steel box of personal microfiles, half a dozen cans of film, the paintings, of course, his argillite totem poles, some of their collection of pressed glass goblets from which they both liked to drink, Arla's old pine prie-dieu, her bargain, and a few personal possessions, most of them gifts from the children.

Harris wondered whether Yvon Cote played cribbage. Maybe he should leave his soapstone crib board from Cape Dorset as the potlatch present?

He had decided to make bacon and mushrooms. The aroma was enough to wake Arla and she came in now to the kitchen. They ate in a companionable silence exchanging small thoughts. The people at the Sensitivity Research Laboratory at Frederickhouse estimated it would take at least two generations and possibly one hundred years to develop thought-listening sufficiently for a majority of the population to practise it effectively. It was limited at present to those who possessed a high degree of natural receptivity and human perspicacity. And it demanded rigorous training. You had to learn how to empty the mind quickly to open the channels. And to close the mind it was necessary to force the nervous system to throw a chemical block, like using a scrambler on a top-secret telephone. Thought-listening to strangers called for much concentration, even if you used an aural range expander. It was much easier to thought-listen if there was a strong affinity, a bond of affection, closeness or time.

The experiments at the Sensitivity Research Labs fascinated Harris from the start. They began with the smell of fear which dogs and other animals were readily able to detect, monitoring the glandular activity of human volunteers who were subjected to artificial fright. They moved on to the smell of anger. Now they were working on olfactory and touch factors in sexual attraction.

One of the more aggressive consumer organizations several years ago attributed the increase in sexual alienation and marriage breakdown to over-deodorization. The hundred percent "hygenized" woman, it was suggested, could not get her man. And vice versa. At this point the labs at Frederickhouse took up the subject on a scientific basis. Now they had extended it to why certain members of the opposite sex felt better to the touch than others.

Apart from scientific curiosity, the overall objectives of

SRL and other research establishments in the outer zone were to improve and expand the performance of the human senses.

Once the morning conference was over, Harris intended to go down to the lake. There were one or two chores at the cottage he wanted to get out of the way before he left. Arla had decided not to go with him after all. Instead he phoned Lud and suggested they meet there at noon. Ludovic and Millie Van Salant owned the cottage next door to them on Lightning Bay.

Despite an age difference of a dozen years, Lud was his closest friend. They played backgammon together, fished for small-mouth, occasionally still played men's doubles together and Harris crewed for him on The Flying Dutchman, the slowest yacht of her class on Lake Abitibi. Lud was senior typographic designer to Knowledge Park Press and recognized as the finest in his field since the death of Carl Dair.

There were several ways of reaching the south shore of Lake Abitibi, all of which involved skirting it either to the east or west. The eastern route was the most direct. But today Harris chose the western approach. When he told Sanda he would not need her after 10:15 he felt disquieted. She had betrayed no disappointment. Indeed why should she. And yet . . . she did close her thoughts. When she said, in that case, she might visit the Triangle, he suggested they go thus far together.

The Triangle, or EqT, as the chief planning engineer originally dubbed it, was the popular name for the three towns of Ansonville, Montrock and Iroquois Falls. In their new form and with the three dead-straight guided highways connecting them, they did form an equilateral triangle.

At this hour on a Thursday morning, the transit was crowded. Monorail cars entering the Park were filled with tourists. Working visitors were free to use the Park any day and at all hours. Sightseers were limited to Thursday, Friday or Saturday. Harris and Sanda had fellow passengers on their outbound car – KPYC youngsters returning to their

villages, KPA staff with appointments in Montrock or Iroquois Falls or others on their leisure days.

Their car flashed through the trees, stopping only once before it reached Bingle and the boundary of the Park. The single halt was in the main concourse of the Libraries of Leisure, the largest monorail station in the International Zone. Had there been time, Harris would have liked to stop for one last visit to the Library of Games. Cards were his favourite pastime, gambling his greatest weakness, board games, although he had never been much of a chess player, a source of constant delight.

When the Libraries of Leisure in the planning stage were a subject of controversy, he had unashamedly thrown all the influence he could muster into the fight. The objections were numerous. The Libraries of Leisure were planned in too concentrated a pattern, too close together. The Library of Sport was too grandiose and costly for the subject matter; the Library of Handicrafts too utilitarian. There was no need for separate libraries of philately and numismatics and angling, although there just might be for lepidoptery and gardening.

A sterner objection, as Harris well remembered, was that the Libraries of Leisure broke the rules, defying the ban on storing up artifacts and the exclusion of museums from the Park. For the architects had designed the Library of Sport with acres of playing fields, tracks and courts where the individual sports could be played and demonstrated. As for the Library of Games, it was designed with adjoining halls, card rooms and gaming tables for similar purposes.

Harris always described the victory he and his allies won as a triumph of Positive Focus over the negative factors of literal interpretation. Yet he recognized it might have been closer to the truth to describe it as a victory for the trivial over the high-minded, for the hedonists over the forces of sobriety.

Thank God they had won. For the last half of the Eventful Eighties was a time of tension, gloom and disaster; and some relaxation from it was more necessary than ever.

The whole decade *had* been eventful, at first in Canada and increasingly in other parts of the world. As the monorail gathered momentum again, Harris tried to sort out in his mind the sequence of significant events.

Well, May 1980, third reading of the Gift of People's Act in Ottawa and the sudden deluge upon Knowledge Park and the surrounding countryside of close on 120,000 highly qualified new citizens from a variety of nations. Opposition from the unions and from Quebec. July 1980, election of the first socialist separatist government of Quebec. September, that long drawn out constitutional conference on secession. April 1981, that was the National Referendum on the Secession of Quebec when the liberal government promised to resign if the referendum carried. The results of the referendum were far more conclusive than either the Gallup or the Regenstrief poll indicated. In the West the vote for separation ranged from 64 percent in Saskatchewan to 83 percent in British Columbia. Ontario was undecided, with something like 51 percent for the change. Only the Maritimes and Newfoundland had less than a majority.

June 1981, the first social democratic government of Canada and then, eight months later, the draft of the Second Confederation. The constitution of the new confederacy recognized that Quebec was not a province as other provinces, but a people. It accorded Quebec independence within a federation; the transfer of Labrador to Quebec in return for a corridor through the eastern townships to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; a joint senate and a consultative assembly, a common titular leadership in the persons of Andre de Tadoussac and Anne of Canada, the establishment of Knowledge Park as an International Zone, a common market, an open border and a portability agreement for pensions and social welfare plans. Minority rights were agreed upon and so were most of the shared cost programs.

As if this were not a sufficiently drastic transmogrification of the Canadian body politic in the previous 115 years, the new constitution embraced a proposal which not even the most neutral of nations, Switzerland and Sweden, had

undertaken. This was the reduction to zero of all conventional armed forces within the two confederate nations.

While the final draft of La Deuxieme Confederation was being hammered out during the summer of 1982 at Harrington Lake, the leaders of the four Atlantic provinces, feeling both betrayed and isolated, established the provisional government of the joint province of Acadia in Sackville. And the council of prairie ministers met in North Battleford to lay plans for the subsequent creation of the province of Assiniboia.

"Change is the only constant. . . . The first requirement is flexibility in the face of change. . . ." Echoes of the Recollection of R. Harris MacNeil.

Yet the caulking which kept Canada from coming apart at the seams and foundering that summer was provided by others. When the White House press secretary announced that the vice president's speech in New Orleans promising prompt recognition of the Quebec nation reflected U.S. policy, Canadien and Canadian drew closer together throughout the country. They added a new clause to the constitution agreeing that neither party would enter into a continental energy and water pact with the U.S. without the approval of the other.

The confederacy and the I.Z. settled down to a period of consolidation. As Harris recalled, 1983 was relatively quiet. That was the year of the Marmara Incident when units of the Soviet and the U.S. 6th Fleet steaming rapidly in opposite directions – one toward the Aegean and the latter toward the Bosporus – refused to give way and observe the rules of the sea:

> If to starboard red appear
> It is your duty to keep clear.
> Green to green, or red to red
> Perfect safety, go ahead.

It was fortunate that the ships sunk, holed and damaged

were almost equal in tonnage, number and extent. 1984 saw the unification of Ireland; the reopening of the Suez Canal by Israel and the signing of the Arctic Accord; the signing in Malmo of the non-aggression and mutual aid pacts between the U.S.S.R., the Canadian Confederacy and the Scandinavian Federation. It was that August, the first summer of the Great Drought, that two companies of U.S. Engineers occupied the Arrow Lakes Dam for three hours and opened the penstocks to allow additional water to flow down the Columbia. By November the urban guerilla warfare between National Guard units and the Afro-American Republic had begun.

It was two years later before the Treaty of Tampa ended the racial war in the U.S. In the meantime Phoenix became the capital of the U.S.; the Second Confederation instituted the quota system limiting American immigration to Canada at 160,000 a year; and Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire voted to secede from the union. Their entry strengthened the province of Acadia sufficiently to make it the most influential province of Canada.

It must have been in '86 that United Nations headquarters moved to Montreal.

When you toted it up, man, and of course woman, were remarkably resilient animals. If nothing else, the eventful years provided an opportunity for the Third World, as it was then called, to catch up. And Knowledge Park was responsible for a considerable part of that catching up in South America, Africa and South-East Asia.

After Hiroshima, it would have been hard, Harris thought, to get even money that forty-four years would elapse before the next nuclear device was exploded in anger. And then it was not so much anger as accident. The Three-Minute War of 1989 ended the Eventful Eighties with a disaster so needlessly terrible that it sobered up mankind, everyone hoped, forever.

Sanda Nu nudged Harris out of his reverie. They were at Montrock where both of them were getting off. She had

barely spoken a word throughout the entire journey. Yet she had learned something. Sanda was acclimatized to change. If you focused correctly, change was simply the passing landscape on a journey to a chosen destination. The destination was important but never final. There could be no terminus in a continuum.

What she had not fully appreciated before was the acceleration in the rate of change and how one man in one 20th century lifetime could encompass and absorb it and still come up lean and vigorous with an ERCC one-tenth of one percentage point above the fail mark and all those spermatozoa still wriggling optimistically through his semen.

Montrock was the headquarters of Knowledge Park Press. Twenty years ago it was a dot on the map, known only to those Canadians who lived in the area. Today it was the book publishing capital of the world, a one-industry town filled with editors, agents, publishers' reps, printers, papermakers, translators, with booksellers coming and going.

The backlist catalogue of original Laser Books contained 28,000 titles, in English alone, although not all of them had first been written in English. Most were translated into at least 25 other languages. The reprint catalogue was so fat it was issued in four volumes.

Complex licensing arrangements existed with virtually all the famous publishing houses throughout the world and with many of the smaller publishers. An adoption by the Press, the value of the imprint and the distribution system, were worth much to a publisher.

Relatively few of the books were printed or bound at Montrock. The major Canadian plants were at Port Alberni and Fredericton or Ste. Anne de Bellevue. There were others around the world in Milan and Utrecht, Edinburgh and Shanghai, as indeed there were offices and warehouses in a dozen sub-continental centres.

The automated warehouse at Ansonville, however, covered twenty-two acres. They could assemble a 20,000-volume library in Spanish, container it and ship it to Peru in the

course of a seven-hour working day. Ansonville also had the computer account centre. Their files contained cards not only for every KPP author, but all those whose works were in Data One and Data Two or the Park libraries. Retrieval usage and royalties were computed there and credited to accounts from there.

Writers called it Migraine Manor, suspecting that they were being machine-cheated by computers prone to errors which never favoured them but always the Park or the Press. The third plant in Ansonville belonged to Microcorp, the multi-national consortium which manufactured microform stock.

Residents of Iroquois Falls, many of them illustrators, designers and layout artists, made fun of friends who lived in Ansonville, which they regarded as an industrial town without a soul.

Harris liked the Triangle. Many people preferred Cochrane and Taschereau. They were the largest cities in the whole region outside the Park and as such they did have more amenities. The twin international universities, English and French, certainly made them more cosmopolitan, gave them a sparkle and a prestige not to be found elsewhere. Each had an opera house and a race track. There were more theatres, more focus centres and meditation houses. There were also many more hotels; too many for Harris' liking.

Cochrane and Taschereau were oddly ambivalent; at the same time seats of learning and good-time towns, great for a night out. At two o'clock in the morning the boulevards and squares were still thronged with people; some in from the satellite research towns, others visitors from afar, usually en-route to the Park.

They had a lot of panache, like Montreal in the old days, or San Francisco. Both had resident population limits of 250,000, but they were wide open to visitors.

Harris preferred Montrock or Iroquois Falls with their sense of community, their more leisurely pace, their antiquarian bookshops. Their one concession to the grandiose

was the booksellers, Douglas & DesRosiers, whose store above the Falls was so extensive that legend had it an old prospector with a thirst for the written word had gone in with a grubstake on Monday morning and not emerged until Saturday afternoon.

One of the distinctive and enriching features, not only of the three towns in the Triangle, Cochrane and Taschereau, La Sarre and Macamic, Gaffney and Nahma, was the continued presence in each community of some of the former inhabitants – the mining men, the guides and trappers, the farmers who cut cordwood, the haulers, the bush pilots; all those who unconsciously took the pretensions of mankind down to the ragged line of the sweat stain in a cap band.

Sanda left Harris to find the man with whom she wanted to discuss publication of her Burmese river songs, and Harris went to Lud's studio office having earlier called him on this change of plan.

Lud drove an LX-3 turbo-electric commuter car with a retractable roll bar and a red direction stripe on the hood. The LX-3 was manufactured in Thunder Bay; and although it cost $1,000 more than an ordinary short-range electri-car, he thought it was worth it. He drove the LX-3 on to the guided highway, lowered the shoes and relaxed for ten minutes until they reached Iroquois Falls, circled the town and drove off the eastbound ramp onto highway 73.

There were more and more industrial parks and dwelling villages now lying off 73. This was all private ownership land, subject to design and environmental control, of course, but otherwise under no restraints. They passed an old sawmill. Getting that whine down to acceptable decibel levels had been a chore; and soon afterwards they saw the Institute of Papermakers' new experimental station on the old 7th Concession road north to Painkiller Lake.

They were at Lightning Bay before one o'clock, perfect timing for a beer, a hunk of cheese and a couple of slices of frozen bread grilled in the high-intensity oven.

The chores were real enough and the two men did them.

The underlying purpose of the afternoon was the chance to talk. Harris characteristically had put it off. He wanted Lud's advice on his will and the eventual disposition of his estate. His old lawyer was dead, his relationship with his new lawyer was not close. And he wanted Lud to be his executor.

He did not care about the money. There was no vast amount. It had no meaning. And half of it would go in estate taxes to Knowledge Park. It was the property that he valued, the cottage here and the other cottage at Sointula, the Originator II lying at its moorings in Vancouver and all the bits and pieces, the memorabilia of a lifetime. They talked and Harris rummaged through his den, indulging in spurts of nostalgia and telling old anecdotes. Before the afternoon was over, he decided to fly to Toronto. He phoned and reserved a place on the 6:00 p.m. shuttle flight from La Sarre. Lud insisted on taking him across the lake in the inboard. They talked all the way over about what a hell of a lot of pleasure you could get out of retirement.

Chapter Eight

HARRIS fell into a dreamless doze on the flight south, waking to find the STOL locked into the ground control descent system of the Lake Ontario Airport. Out of the window he could see the island causeway and the hydrofoil ferry scudding out to meet them. He was reminded once again of the first hydrofoil ferry he had ever taken, the Aliscafo, which ran from Milazzo on the coast of Sicily out to the Aeolian isles, to Lipari and Vulcano with the famous black beach studded with lumps of white pumice.

Many of the passengers were staying at the Inn-on-the-Lake. It was the fashionable place now in the summer. Harris preferred the old Four Seasons downtown, across from the city hall and less than a block from the Toronto Press Club. Most of the delegates to the conference on the revision of the Universal Copyright Convention stayed in the hotel. It became so much like a second home to Harris, he had been staying there ever since.

Harris could remember by heart the wording of the copyright which began to appear in books, his own included, some time in the early seventies:

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It was impossible to enforce completely and the universities, the libraries, teachers and researchers were among the most flagrant violators. Knowledge Park, however, was far too massive and influential to circumvent or ignore the copyright even if they had wished to. They did not.

The solution was to hammer out an intricate new copyright code which provided for payments to publishers and authors based on usage of stored material and on reproduction in part of books, microforms and other publications. It was a formidable undertaking, Harris remembered only too well, yet the result was to give authors a far more equitable return on their labours.

Harris stood by the guard rail as the hydrofoil ferry wove in and out between the islands, his eyes on the skyline; the communications tower rising above everything else, the terraces of Metro Centre, the old black monoliths of the T-D Centre and the pale, squared skyscraper of Commerce Court. The banks hadn't been very happy when the government restricted loans to foreign-controlled corporations. They'd been as mad as hell.

When they docked at the mouth of the western gap, Harris found a boy with an open electri-cab. Why drive himself? He did not have far to go, but he enjoyed watching the sights of the metropolis. Unless Isobel had put Jenny to bed unexpectedly early, he would be in time to see all three grandchildren. This evening in particular he wanted to see them. They lived behind the old Kensington market in one of the painted houses which the Heritage Foundation saved from the high-rise developers.

The drive up Spadina from the lake shore was one Harris never failed to enjoy. It was the most beautiful avenue in Toronto, if not in all Canada – broad and leafy and superb, full of life and variety. The garment district had vanished; moved, like all manufacturers who depended on vans and trucks, out of the city core.

In its place at the lower end of the avenue from Front Street north to Queen was a residential district of terraced

town houses with groves of chestnut and plane trees sheltering the open-cut subway in the centre of the boulevard and the street gardens around each station. At Queen the galleries began, covering the sidewalks and shading the stores and cafés on each side of the avenue. And further north the terraces again, the official residence of the premier of Ontario at 440 Spadina, the homes of other government and opposition leaders, a leisurely 10-minute walk from Queen's Park.

Spadina Avenue always reminded him of Alizon; the time he had visited her at the art school in Venice and they sat in the shadows of the galleria (was that what it was in Italian?) drinking coffee with Abe Rognatik and looking out across the Piazza San Marco. He was a professor of architecture from UBC who was in Italy helping to prevent Venice sinking beneath the Adriatic Sea. Despite his efforts, Alizon seemed to have perpetually wet feet.

Now Toronto had a Venice of its own and an Italian mayor for that matter. When the population limit of 3,500,000 was established for Metro Toronto in 1984, neither their jurisdiction nor that of the conservation authority extended into the lake beyond Centre Island. There were now close to half a million people living on the new islands. And they had their own mayor and council.

But it was not Alizon who had been wise enough to buy and renovate one of the painted houses on Bellevue. It was footloose Adam. Adam who seldom lived in it.

That was what happened when one created Knowledge Park and transformed an already mobile society into a nation of comers and goers, searchers and recorders. If only McLuhan had possessed as much clarity as insight, one might have adjusted to a non-linear world both sooner and more successfully.

So here you were with one daughter a diplomat in Nanking, another living in Montevarchi, because the light there was so beautiful, and your only begotten son, so far, dodging around Africa neglecting his administrative duties because he much preferred shooting film.

There were times, Harris thought, when it seemed as if all the Canadians were somewhere else and everybody else was in Canada. And you were surrounded not by kith and kin but by enthusiastic Irish musicologists and Burmese calligraphers. Anthropologically speaking, that was supposed to be very healthy. And indeed perhaps it was.

Whether Adam was an exemplar of a new breed or a throwback to his journeyman printer grandfather was a moot point, Harris realized. He'd travelled enough himself when they were young. Perhaps Canadians have never really stopped being coureurs de bois or travelling salesmen, itinerant printers or wandering movie directors.

Jenny was still awake when he reached the house. She was sitting on the floor of the communications room practising her touch type exercises on a silent DSK keyboard and watching a Channel 72 program on the cutting and mounting of gems. She was fascinated by jewellery, a dress-up girl with a jugular instinct for coquetry. She was seven.

The dog was curled up beside her on the floor – an unkempt poodle who answered to the name of Poochie. Harris addressed Jenny in AntiBabel, to test her progress. She answered easily and correctly, then lapsed into English when she wanted to explain that Poochie had fleas. She did not know the AB for fleas.

His granddaughter belonged to an age group which was receiving a great deal of attention – he hoped not too much. Hers was the first group of four-year-olds to start their basic lessons in the universal language. Although she talked English at home most of the time, at school it was now treated as a foreign language. No, Harris thought, that was semantically incorrect; not a "foreign" language, a second language.

KPA had created a primer of stories and verses in AntiBabel, as well as simple dictionaries and solving books. The children watched a special all-AB channel. The new program covered the standard subjects taught at Early Learning Centres: listening, keyboard, eye training, reason and solving, manual dexterity and imagination 1. Only imagination

2 and languages were taught in the regional language. The aim was to create, by 2015, a world generation who were tolerably fluent, or certainly at home, in AntiBabel; and on this basis to build a new vernacular and a new literature, at least by 2050.

Jenny was in her fourth year and only halfway through school. The real test would come when this age group reached the choosing year in 2005. How many would choose to continue writing, talking and working in AB?

Some people still thought that twelve or thirteen was too early an age to choose a vocation. During his last year at Pauline Johnson P.S., Harris certainly had not known what his vocation would be; but that was nearly sixty years ago and things were very different then. School was a rigid twelve-year continuum, to be extended, if you were bright or fortunate, through university and beyond. Old man McFeeter, the principal, knew more about the public address system than the binary system and had never heard of Ivan Illych. Nor, to give him his due, had many other people.

Harris sat on the chair beside Jenny studying her face as she watched an emerald being cut on the wall screen. Illych had had the right reasons for destroying the educational system, but not the methods of re-creating it in its present form.

Learn to learn, learn to do, learn to know. The three-phase learning system, with a year separating each phase, was so well accepted as to have taken on an atmosphere of inevitability.

Yet there was a time, of course, when children of twelve did not have a sabbatical year in which to think about and explore their talents, interests or skill. And leap-frogging back a century there had been a time when fourteen-year-olds were apprenticed to a craft or a trade.

At her age, Jenny spent three hours a day in compulsory learn-to-learn instruction and a minimum of one hour at sports and fitness. She was free the rest of the day to do as she

wished: to play or to go for a walk, or as she was now doing, to learn by absorption.

Children were lucky today, Harris thought. History and geography had ceased to exist as formal subjects in school. Knowledge of the world and of the past was acquired over the years by absorption; through watching films and film loops, or videotape cassettes, and browsing through boxes in the resource room.

The principal exports of Chile, the vegetation of New South Wales and the mean annual rainfall in Malaysia, were no longer inflicted on anyone as irrelevant facts.

Jenny could read quite well. She could not write, either in script or longhand, and would never need to throughout her life. At the age of ten, when her hands were better developed, she could take writing as an optional arts subject. Most children did. It was an exciting form of self-expression and a change from the utilitarian keyboard they had been mastering for the previous six years. As Sanda Nu had done, some eventually made calligraphy one of their vocational subjects in Phase 2, or their work in later life.

If her choosing year came now, Jenny would undoubtedly have preferred to be a gem cutter or an apprentice jeweller. But she would not have to make those decisions until she was twelve and finished school.

That's what her brother, young Andy, was in now – his choosing year. And Richard, the eldest, was already at work on learn-to-do.

The 15-minute program on emeralds ended and the wall screen automatically faded to black. Harris and Jenny chatted for a few minutes. Jenny showed him her eye exercises and three headstands, the last of which succeeded with scarcely a wobble. When she had finished, Harris took a small ring out of his belt pouch.

"This is for you, Jenny," he said. "Because I am going away for a while. Do you know what the stones are?"

Jenny looked at the cluster of tiny green gems.

"Emeralds?" she said and covered herself quickly. "No, it's not emeralds. And it's not jade, is it? It's..." She paused, trying to think of some other green stones.

"They are peridots," said Harris. "You don't see them very often now. This is an old ring."

"Older than you?"

"Yes," said Harris. "It's a Victorian ring. Do you want to ask CIRA what peridots are?"

Jenny nodded. It was a thrill for her to be allowed to ask CIRA on her own. She had never done it, not even at Early Learning Centre. Her card would not work. She was just beginning to learn how to ask, how to read subject codes and the proper symbols for short form answers and full reports, in print or visual media.

But she knew her grandfather's engraved silver unicard activated a direct channel to CIRA. He put his unicard in the slot, by-passing Toronto local IR, and she gravely typed out the mineralogy code and the question.

Harris left her to wait for the print-out and went in search of his grandson. He did not want to disturb Isobel and anyhow he enjoyed the opportunity to talk to each of the children alone for a few minutes.

Richard was in his basement workshop, fine sanding a small wooden cabinet. It looked, Harris thought, very much like an instrument box, a sextant box, perhaps. He was unfortunately all too accurate. His unexpected visit to Toronto and his unannounced descent to the basement caught Richard off his guard in the final stages of making a retirement gift for his grandfather.

He had only two days left to polish it and screw on the small brass carrying handle and the latch. It was the first piece on which he had put his new skill as a cabinet-maker to the full test and Richard was pleased with it.

Richard was fifteen in September and had already been at work for more than a year. He worked every morning for a French polisher and spent at least two afternoons or evenings a week at the Continuous Learning Centre on Bathurst with

a class of cabinet-makers. There had been a time during his choosing year when he considered working in stone. He discovered marble because his best friend, Vincenzio, worked with it, and found it almost as alive as wood. In the end he chose wood, because you could not build a harpsichord of stone.

That was his goal, his personal PF – to make his own harpsichord. Music was his minor in Phase 2. He played the harpsichord and also fooled around on the piano.

When his year of service in the Knowledge Park Youth Corps was over, he wanted to work as a sound-mixer, a sound man at least. Although he did not want to travel. That was the trouble with his father. He was never around.

The job did not matter so much, in a way. It was determined to a considerable extent by controlled demand; by what skills were needed.

Phase 2 was the most important period of one's existence. Everybody knew that. What one learned to do between thirteen and seventeen, or fourteen and eighteen, provided the anchor, the boundaries and the fulfilment of one's life.

The 28-hour work week had changed many values. Work consumed only one-sixth of the hours in a week; sleep roughly one-third. That left 47 percent of one's life for eating and leisure, more if one flunked the ERCC tests and were retired at fifty or fifty-five.

Richard decided to try to lie about the small cabinet. It was risky because Harris was a canny thought-listener and Richard not very expert at closing off his mind.

"What do you think of it?" he said. "It's for Andy's old microscope. Of course, the grain won't come up well until I polish it. It's solid walnut!"

"It's very fine, a beautiful bit of craftsmanship, Richard," said Harris. "Congratulations. Walnut's not so easy to come by now, is it? A couple of hundred years ago, you know, there used to be good stands of black walnut west of here, particularly around Waterloo. The Germans and the Huguenot loyalists, the Quakers and Mennonites when they

came up from Pennsylvania and New England after 1776, looked for the black walnut trees because that's where they'd be sure to find good limestone soil for farming. They kept some, but they cleared most of the black walnut trees. Andy should be very proud to have it," he added, handing back the small cabinet unopened.

"I can only work on it when he's out of the house," Richard explained, elaborating on the lie. "He's down at the water beds now."

Andy loved to make things grow, not in the earth as much as in water. There were still so many challenges left in hydroponics and Andy was a solver. He loved puzzles and applied a dogged logic to working them out. His ultimate ambition was a research career in muskeg farming or algae harvesting. The need for more food was still very great. International Population Control had been fighting a rising curve in population for twelve years now. They had just registered their first overall decline. But it was from a peak figure of four and one-half billion people on earth.

All that didn't help Andy much in Phase 2. It was possible to carry on with a vocation and transform it into a career. It was not encouraged. It would rob him of that important second pursuit. One was sunk without a leisure vocation – a hobby, they used to call it, although Harris always hated the word.

"Has he chosen?" Harris asked.

"I don't think so," said Richard. "You should ask him about it, or talk to mother. He still plays a lot of chess. He'd like to build a human chess board with big squares all over Dennison Square, because Aunt Alizon told him there was one somewhere in Italy. That would be no good because if the city let him, once it was done it would be finished. The other day he was talking about working for climate control. He says he's invented, on paper, of course, a sky canopy that could be retracted easily during the summer. He has an idea for growing a maze out of hedges, like that one in England Henry VIII built, only much more difficult so that most

people could never get out of it – unless he helped them.

"The trouble is he has all these ideas, but I don't think you can take inventing in learn-to-do."

"He might be able to," said Harris. "He'd have to find an inventor to work for, or maybe a company that manufactured games."

"I think in the end," said Richard, "he'll work in one of the nurseries. He's always telling Isobel one day he'll grow her a bowl of blue roses."

Harris decided it was time to talk to Isobel. He congratulated Richard once again on his microscope cabinet and went upstairs. If she was still at her movieola, he would interrupt her. He wanted to get over to the Four Seasons before long, check in and keep his appointment with some old friends at the Press Club. They were going to play a friendly game of Red Dog and reminisce.

Isobel and his son led a strange life. They had never gone through a marriage ceremony, civil or religious, so far as Harris and Arla knew. But they were the registered parents of Richard, Andy and Jenny, and they had given each other the symbolic circles linked to the forks of their laser pins.

They met when they were on a KPA film crew in Sicily. Adam was then a cameraman and Isobel a script assistant. She was a film editor now and a good one. She had cut and edited every one of Adam's films for the past ten years, even when she was eight months gone with Jenny and could barely get close enough to the bench to work the splicer.

Adam and Isobel had not lived together permanently for more than two years in the past sixteen. Yet the arrangement apparently worked for both of them. Two or three times a year she took the daily KPA milk run to Dakar and met him somewhere in Africa. Half a dozen times a year Adam flew to Toronto to see the children and to go over the rough cut of a film or oversee the final mix. And occasionally they spent a few days together in Knowledge Park.

Whatever their separate lives were when they were apart, they still enjoyed a community of interests and attraction.

Harris' relationship with Isobel Smith was more wary and ambivalent than he would have preferred. She came from old loyalist stock, claiming direct descent from the founder of Virginia, and she had been born in one of those rambling old frame homes in Fredericton before the last of the elms was cut down.

Harris suspected Andy's desire to grow things stemmed from Isobel's stories of Fredericton before the Dutch elm disease took its toll. Well, it was a good legacy.

She had an editing room out at the Documentary Film Board studios beyond the Roy Thomson Memorial Stadium at Downsview and close to the York University campus. Three days a week Isobel caught the Spadina ex-urban line out to the DFB and the fourth day she worked at the house on Bellevue. She was the kind of woman who worked overtime without recording it – a small residual triumph for the protestant work ethic.

What bothered Harris, he occasionally admitted to himself, was that she knew he did the same.

Isobel was in the middle of editing a film on the relationship between the extended family in Zulu kraals of the 17th century and North American urban communes.

Harris remembered the first time Adam brought her to the cottage at Lightning Bay – a fresh-faced girl with short blond curls; and both of them in the pale-brown uniform of the KPA overseas teams. It was soon after that they settled together in a commune outside Iroquois Falls. In those days everyone was commuting into Knowledge Park except the headquarters staff at St. Ephrem de Paradis and the key people at Floodwood River.

Now Isobel was – what, thirty-eight? And she had an apprentice of her own, a girl of sixteen who lived with them in the painted house half the week and commuted home to Orillia on the rapido.

Orillia, the Sunshine Town! Stephen Leacock wouldn't recognize it today. The house was still there at Brewery Bay and the Leacock museum and, around the point, the writers'

colony Harris had helped nurse into being thirty years ago. That was before he'd ever heard of The Knowledge Park Proposal. It was still relatively quiet down by Lake Couchiching; still a good place for a penniless writer to hole up and work. Only they weren't so penniless anymore, most of them.

But Leacock's legendary Mariposa had blossomed from a bucolic town of 10,000 to a city of 150,000. It was a major electronics centre with a dozen big factories west of old highway 11 producing wall screens and print-out desk consoles for export. The Chinese community alone, most of them young refugees from the Three-Minute War, must have numbered 20,000. Orillia was on the radiant route north to Cochrane and thousands of American tourists bound for Knowledge Park chose to break their journey there, switching off the heated autoroute onto highway 12, to rest up at one of the big lodges along the shores of the two lakes. After the long identity check at the Canadian border, nobody wanted to drive further than Orillia. A good many of them stopped in Barrie or on the outskirts of Toronto where gas turbine cars could travel.

Harris sympathized with the Americans. The quota for U.S. immigrants was set at 100,000 a year; and some who had bought property in Canada years ago still could not get in, at least not as landed immigrants. Harris thought Canada could accommodate more than 60 million people; 75 million if the absorption program was handled properly. But it was true that the border patrols were plagued with jumpers and overstay tourists who could buy a counterfeit Canadian unicard for $1,000.

Isobel was speaking to him. And Harris hadn't been listening. What had she said? Adam was fine. But she didn't know when she would be seeing him next. He was supposed to fly to Yesterday sometime next month and she'd probably join him in the Park. She seemed unusually vague.

"I was just going up to change," Isobel said. "There's a party tonight at Ryerson for this year's film graduates. Do

you want to wait and see Andy, or come with me? They'd love to meet you."

"I'll share a buggy with you as far as the Four Seasons. There are some old friends I want to see at the club."

While Isobel took her shower and changed, Harris sat on the front porch watching the passers-by, listening to the muted sounds of the city. It was a shock to go from the quiet of Knowledge Park directly into a free traffic area. But there had been no private cars or trucks in downtown Toronto for fifteen years.

Montreal might have stolen a march, once again, by declaring the whole island a free port; just as they'd done when they snaffled Expo '67 and the '76 Olympics and the new UN headquarters. Harris still preferred the tranquillity and beauty of Toronto.

It had changed greatly since he and Arla moved North permanently in 1982, but not out of all recognition. And he regarded virtually all the changes as improvements. The biggest changes and the greatest improvements were out in Lake Ontario and along the waterfront. It had been such a dull, uninspiring and useless body of water back in the sixties. Now the miles of canals, the lagoons and the hundred islands attracted travellers from all over the world.

Some, it was true, flew directly to Smooth Rock Falls, since Knowledge Park was the primary destination. Others broke their journey in Montreal and took the express across Quebec to Taschereau. But millions landed each year at St. Catherine's International Airport and took the lakeshore monorail or the hydrofoil ferry into Toronto.

It usually took four days to "do" Toronto – one day to visit the islands and stroll through the Pleasure Gardens behind Ontario Place where the horticultural building was preserved as a delightful and solitary reminder of the bad old days and the CNE; one day to browse through the bookshops, art galleries and antique stores on Spadina Avenue and maybe rub shoulders with familiar television and film stars in the boulevard restaurants, to stroll through the

groves of academe across the old University of Toronto campus and shop in the elegant stores on Bloor or Hazelton.

It took another day to see the Riverdale student communes and hunt for bargains in the commune craft shops. And, if it was winter, to skate for a few miles in the evening under the thousands of tree lights on the artificial ice which covered the old riverbed of the Don, or the Humber. For both had long since been dammed to create conservation lakes.

And one final day under the sky canopy out at Longboat Place, the site of the '92 Olympics, touring the Percival Fitness Centre, watching the athletes training in Van Kiekebelt Arena, visiting the 400-metre Tanner Pool and the seven smaller pools at the Ryder aquatic centre, or taking in a ball game at the Roy Thomson Memorial Stadium. On the average day 125,000 men, women and children took some sort of exercise there. And that did not include spectators.

Isobel said goodnight to the family and joined Harris. He picked up his case and they strolled north toward College Street looking for a vacant buggy.

One of the great things about travelling these days, Harris considered, was that you needed the minimum of luggage: a spare jumpsuit, two or three disposable cellulose liners, a spare solenoid battery, a toothbrush and, if you wanted to play it safe, a razor, although every hotel room in the Western world had an electric razor in the sterilizer cabinet.

Harris always carried, in his 18-ounce case, a deck of cards, a folding cribbage board, a 4-ounce flask and a roll of dimes. But that was habit, the residue of his days as a journalist.

They did not find a buggy until they came to the battery station at the corner of Brunswick. Half a dozen buggies were there. Isobel picked the most fully charged, unplugged it and climbed into the driver's seat. They purred away eastward and jogged north through the U of T campus. Harris had scanned a book recently called *Back from Multiversity* by Hazen Percival, which examined the benefits accruing to the University of Toronto since it had consolidated itself on

a smaller base. With 20,000 students, most of whom were in the graduate or professional schools, U of T, he argued, had begun to resume the true function of a university.

U of T was now the fourth or fifth largest campus in the province instead of the largest as it had been a quarter of a century ago. The largest and most cosmopolitan was the Cochrane campus of the International University of the North. Ryerson Polytechnic was second. York was third. All those athletes made the difference. Harris was not certain whether Sheridan with all its potters and weavers, illuminators and embroiderers, welders and paper-makers, was fourth or fifth.

It mattered very little or not at all. What did matter was the resumption of a long-absent quietude and academic thinking space on the University of Toronto campus. The carrels crammed with nervous cattle had emptied and scholars no longer stood with their branding irons stamping B.A. or B.Sc. on all those quivering young flanks, and rumps and bewildered foreheads.

Isobel was giving him the Cooks' tour, he was well aware.

"You're not going to stay on that old tub all the time, are you Harris?" she asked. "It will be damp and dismal once it's winter. And Arla will miss you, I should think, after all these years."

"So will I," said Harris. "But you cannot hang around the edges when you've been at the centre. Arla understands that. She doesn't enjoy the Originator II. She wants the sun. If I can pick up a good crew, when winter comes I'll sail down to Zihuatenejo and meet her there. The libraries will get on without her and she has plenty of travel credits due."

"You're answering my questions, aren't you?" said Isobel as they plunged across the garish corridor of the Yonge Street Strip and began weaving through the human traffic overflowing from the Ryerson campus onto Gerrard Street.

"No," said Harris. "The answers are not the same for you. It's a fallacy. Change is stronger than similarity. I've discovered that this week. Whatever I pass on is experience, not

answers. The laser exists because of the accumulation of what was, but it can see nothing behind it."

Isobel laughed. "Come on, Harris!" she said. "If you turn it around, backwards is forwards. That's the whole idea of the Recollections. I read them often. Some of them are very helpful. I understand things I didn't understand before. They're so very personal and human."

"I haven't finished mine," Harris admitted. "I feel weighted down by the expectations that all these years I've been operating a still and that cached away in my head somewhere is a litre of pure wisdom. It's not true. All I've made is a little moonshine!"

"You've got a day to finish it," said Isobel.

Ryerson's campus now stretched all the way to Parliament Street and Teperman was beginning to wreck Regents Park institutional housing horrors, to provide more space for polytechnical buildings.

Isobel parked by the fountains at Parliament and Gerrard. "Are you sure you won't come in?" she asked.

Harris shook his head and moved into the driver's seat. He drove back through the courtyards, zig-zagging south to Sherbourne and westward. He cut across the pathway by the old Moss Park armories, which had been a gymnasium for years.

The world, or Canada, certainly had improved since then. Harris had only once watched from the gallery as the militia practised their drills down below. He thought then what a vain and futile echo it was of old wars and supposed glories.

He remembered even more clearly the evening the Minister of National Defence rose in the House to announce his own extinction. The government, he said, recognized that the land mass of Canada was indefensible even with three times the present strength of men and arms; and since Canada's commitment to NATO had now been fulfilled, the Canadian Armed Forces would be phased out over the next ten months and cease to exist as of December 31, 1983.

However, the 90,000 members of the armed forces would be largely absorbed into other protective agencies, if they

wished. Ten thousand troops would be permanently seconded to the UN police. Coastal Patrol would require 15,000 to man the ships, ice-breakers and rescue tugs, and fly the aircraft carrying out ecological protection of the continental shelf and the arctic archipelago, arbitration of fisheries and rescue operations. Canada would provide 5,000 men and the necessary aircraft and equipment to International Air Help for disaster and refugee relief. The strength of the RCMP would be increased by 3,000 men. And 2,000 officers and NCO's would be retrained as unit manager-guardians for KPA units on location outside Canada.

For Allan Venn, sitting beside Harris and the Originator in the public gallery of the House that afternoon, it was a particular triumph. Positive Focus had been campaigning for three years to outlaw the bullet in Canada. They had already succeeded in making it illegal to possess a hand gun, rifle or automatic weapon in any urban area with a population of more than 7,000. Residents of rural communities and wilderness areas were licensed to own and carry guns; and city hunters and sportsmen could own weapons which they could pick up at storage depots outside town.

The new legislation was the culmination of their dreams. It was not equally pleasing to everybody. The 72-point banner headline on the final edition of the *Ottawa Journal* read:

CANADA DEFENCELESS

It was true; as true as it had been since the decline of British power and the rise of America and Russia as super powers. Nevertheless, the Opposition railed at it. So did some veterans of World War II. "No other civilized country has had the temerity or the foolhardiness," wrote the editor of the *Journal* next day, "to disarm itself unilaterally and unequivocally – certainly not neutral Sweden nor little Switzerland."

And there were enough inflamed bigots about to suggest a sinister relationship between the prime minister's German ancestry and the proposed legislation.

It was as courageous a move as it was positive. There were anxious days a few years later when U.S. troops occupied Windsor and the Ontario bank of the Detroit river by force during the battle to wrest control of downtown Detroit from urban guerillas of the Afro-American Republic. But that too passed.

In immediate terms, the act to abolish the armed forces was as much a victory for the Originator as for Allan Venn and PF. Even with the cost of the new protection and aid agencies, it freed $600,000,000 a year in the national budget for other expenditures; more than half for Knowledge Park.

The buggy threaded its way slowly around the flower beds and benches on Queen Street, past the pink façade of the old City Hall and deposited Harris in the arrival bays at the Four Seasons. The street receptionist in her glass booth accepted his unicard and handed him his room key. Harris walked into the foyer and took the first elevator up to the 25th floor. The room stewardess arrived with a Scotch and soda one minute after he entered his old suite. She had four messages for him on her tray. She sat and read them to him while he stood at the window drinking his Scotch, and she took down his replies on her dictator.

"What's your vocation?" Harris asked.

"I'm a print-maker," the room stewardess said. "Serigraphs mostly, although I do some intaglio. And I'm lucky because I've got a small studio on Palmerston almost in the centre of the colony."

"My daughter Alizon is an artist," Harris said, "in the Italian sector of the WEC."

"I know," said the stewardess. "I have a print of one of her nudes. You must be proud of her."

"Yes," said Harris. "And you're happy here, living in Toronto, working at the hotel?"

"It's ideal," she said. "It's hard work being a print-maker. And I usually have to give three or four massages a shift. It's wonderful exercise for my hands."

Harris finished his drink. "I'm going over to the Press Club if any priority messages come in," he said.

"I could bring some of my prints over to the hotel about nine tomorrow morning, instead of you coming to the studio," she said.

"Thank you," said Harris. "You're a good thought-listener too. I'm glad you're happy."

Cotterell and Burke and Hazen Messenger were already at the Press Club when he arrived. They had all worked together on the old *Montreal Herald* in 1951-52, although Burke was on sports even then. Hazen Messenger was editor emeritus of the *Toronto Star* and still wrote an editorial now and then. Doug Cotterell was a club fixture and hadn't done much else for years except make his own lures and go fishing for muskey on the Upper French River. Doug was drinking rum, of course. Legend had it that he kept an emergency supply of 13 ounces inside his artificial leg. But Harris had been with him more than once when they were both very dry. And Doug had never resorted to his left leg! But why cast doubts on a myth? Burke and Hazen Messenger were both on Cognac. Harris decided to stick with Scotch. It was getting to be a long day.

They'd become friends in the first place because they were all from the West. They used to play Red Dog together in the Ticker Tape tavern just off Place d'Armes. And they laced their beer with tomato juice instead, using that damn salt shaker as all the Montrealers did. At first everyone laughed at them, but between them they'd taken a lot of money off the Easterners at Red Dog. And they still could.

"So they flunked you at last, you old bastard," Doug said. "Welcome to the club."

Harris took the cigar. The Press Club still allowed smoking in the card room. And if you knew Tony, he could usually find you cigarettes. They also had a wall safe filled with silver dollars. Harris hated playing with plastic chips and he disliked even more paying off or collecting on his unicard. He loved the feel of silver and the sight of Emanuel Hahn's

canoe with the two figures paddling away there on the back.

"What did they fail you on, Harris?" Burke asked. "Effective resilience? Or lack of continued capability in the sack?"

"Are we going to play or is this our night to remember Joe Miller's Joke Book?" said Harris.

By midnight there were seven of them in the game. And by 2:00 a.m. Harris had won $86. He had to carry half of it back in his bare hands.

It was two-thirty by the time Harris fell asleep at the Four Seasons Sheraton. He tried to fix his last waking thought in his mind because he was too tired to lean over and switch on his recorder. Who was it who said you could judge a civilization by its sewers? He could remember neither the author nor the exact quotation. And it was somehow important.

As her father fell into a fitful sleep, Alizon looked out of the car window and noticed they were only five kilometres from Orvieto. They would be in Rome in plenty of time, if Vincenzio didn't hit anything.

"Lente! Lente! You bloody idiot," she screamed. Alizon MacNeil preferred swearing at people in a language they didn't know. It was more fun. She wondered whether anyone yet had established a litany of good expletives in AntiBabel. She doubted it. How about "bavat"? It had a good clipped, explosive sound. Vincenzio reluctantly slowed the car to 100 kilometres an hour.

In Italy it was 8:30 a.m., Friday, June 30, 2000. Alizon was already missing her grand piano. This morning she rose even earlier than usual and played softly for half an hour with the terrace doors open. The moment she saw the sun rise over the rim of the hill, she sent great crashing chords through the household. The apprentices and students sleepily protested and groaned as usual. And as usual Alizon cursed them for not having "the courage of the early morning." She had a photographic eye and remembered the titles of books on her father's bookshelves which she had never read. That was why she was such an uncannily good memory painter.

Well, Peter would be looking after the apprentices now. And he would let them sleep. Peter was not coming.

Alizon turned and looked at Isola asleep in the back. Some of her friends laughed at Alizon for naming her daughter an island. But that was what she was – a small island in her life, a private and enchanted island. Isola was eleven. It was time she began to know her other heritage. She was three when she was last in Canada and remembered nothing of it at first-hand. She knew Zagreb, Vis and Dubrovnik because Peter took her there, but not Toronto, St. Ephrem or Lightning Bay. Of course she had Knowledge Park primers even in Montevarchi's limited early learning centre and she had seen dozens of films of Canada. But it was not the same.

Isola was so eager and excited that she had not slept for more than an hour the night before, which was why she was sleeping so soundly now. Alizon planned to stay at least until October and maybe all winter. She had to see her dealers in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver about the new show. There were galleries in Sackville and Taschereau which were interested too. And she wanted to see what the National Gallery had done with the last life drawing they had purchased.

She was determined that Isola should spend her last two years in school somewhere in Canada, even if they were separated. Most of the assemblies had been crated and shipped weeks ago from Livorno. If the container ship was on schedule she should be entering Hudson Bay now and due to dock at Rupert House at the beginning of next week. Alizon wanted to be there to unpack the assemblies herself. She was concerned about them because the assemblies were more delicate than ordinary paintings.

She had quite deliberately routed them through the principal Knowledge Park port instead of through Montreal or Toronto. That way the Library of Contemporary Art was likely to photograph more of them than if they were first exhibited and dispersed to private collectors. But indexing and filing them was going to be a problem.

Alizon was pleased with her assemblies, her talking pictures, despite the attacks made on them by two neo-traditionalist art critics in Rome when she first showed them. The paintings were box mounted and behind each canvas was housed a self-rewinding miniature tape deck with two six-centimetre speakers set in the sides of the frame. The sound-tracks didn't explain the paintings, as one critic had complained; they embellished them, providing an accompaniment of music, poetry, evocative sound effects or speech.

She had two of them – the ones for Arla and Harris – in the car with her. She had written the music for both of these, intending to record it directly on tape. But Peter had spent weeks and weeks making the drums and inserting the pins for two music boxes which would never be duplicated. It was his way, she knew, of making certain that she would return.

In Dar-es-Salaam it was 10:30 a.m. and the airport control tower had already passed on Pan-Africa's Tupilov T 448 to Khartoum. Adam MacNeil glanced casually out of the window. At 70,000 feet it was impossible to tell whether they were now over the Sudan, Egypt, Libya or the north-east corner of Chad. He could see tiny squares of irrigation lands and the geometric glisten of spirulina beds, but no sliver of silver which might be the Nile.

He closed his eyes. Beside him Ebude was talking very earnestly about the gutlessness of the "fade" as a cinematic device. He was probably right. MacNeil was too sapped at this moment to care. That was the trouble with living in Africa; the goddamn climate got to you. It burned you out too soon.

The old man was probably as brisk and fit and lecherous as ever. Well, that was a good genetic indicator. If he pulled out now, he might make it. This surprise family reunion which Bronwen had organized merely hastened his decision. He was not going back to Dar. Or anywhere else in Africa. And when his contract with the KPA ran out September 1,

he was not going to renew it – if it was offered to him.

It was his sixth contract. The whole of his life had been wrapped up with Knowledge Park. He was twelve the summer his parents spent so much time out at the Longview ranch; fourteen when he fell into Bill Lake trying to shoot the sod-turning ceremony for the Igloos of Minerva. He was sure he was going to drown but he kept the Super 8 above the surface. And at seventeen when he graduated from Jarvis Collegiate, he volunteered immediately for the KPYC. That was the year he worked as an assistant cameraman on his first professional film (he wasn't much more than a "gofer" really) – a film on the new Native Indian Library. By spending all three semesters on campus or on location out of the summer campus at Banff, he had emerged from the University of Calgary with a degree in cinematography by the time he was twenty.

It was in his twentieth summer in 1980, while he was waiting to spend a final year of study at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinematographiques in Paris, that Adam made the film by which he was still best known throughout the world.

There were two versions of it: the original *Pack Train* (1980), which ran two hours; and *The Legacy* (1986), a more tightly edited version with a new score, which ran seventy-eight minutes. For all the talk of its symbolism, it was a film of classic simplicity: an old father passing on to his young son what he had learned in his life against a background of nature.

Adam had been paying a farewell visit to the Mansell's before he drove East in his battered yellow Toyota. The Originator was no longer as active as he had been; nevertheless, he was preparing to head off into the mountains alone with his son. It was Trudy who suggested that Adam go with them. Moyne was only seven and she was afraid that if anything happened to Alex, her son would not have the strength to help him, or might become lost, or worse. The Originator unexpectedly agreed not only to let him come but also bring his equipment.

The film was an evocative record of the trip through the foothills and into the Livingstone range, the two riders and the train of four pack horses, the long talks when they made camp, the questions, the silences, the scenery.

The greatest lesson Adam had learned in the seminars given by visiting cameramen and documentary filmmakers was the art of self-obliteration; of becoming part of the woodwork, scaling down your own personality until you were little more than an eye, a hand and a bipod for the camera. For nine days he existed as an outrider, rarely talking, never eating until after they had eaten. By the end of the first day, even Moyne had accepted the idea of this game in which Adam wasn't there.

No one before or since had ever come as close with a camera to the essence of the Originator. Adam knew it. His excitement was tempered only by the one firm promise Alexander Mansell had extracted from him: the film must not be shown until after his death.

Adam told no one about it. He cut and edited the film himself that winter in Paris, the master secure in a Toronto vault. He had to wait five years before he could release it. Fortunately for so impatient and eager a man, life in the Knowledge Park Film Corporation in the eighties left little time to dwell on secret 16mm colour films. By the time he joined it, the KPFC was already regarded, at least by itself, as the elite outfit in the whole complex structure of the KPA. Film was the medium of the young and that was where the youngest and brightest adventurers were, those with the most esprit de corps.

There were scientists and scholars, librarians, roving bibliographers with the Search Branch of the International Library Co-operation division, writers, musical-arrangers and input assessors who wouldn't and didn't agree.

In the sum of human terms and over the long haul, the scientists and scholars were probably right. In the early years theirs was an input situation, with slow returns. The film corporation operated on output with quick returns. They

produced revenue. And at a time when it seemed as if Knowledge Park was a bottomless pit, a Trevi fountain from which no coin returned, this was a necessary fillip.

Their first task, they soon discovered, was to explain Canada to the world, whose trust and co-operation they needed in the creation of Knowledge Park. The world knew little about its triumphs and diversities, its five hundred years of positive, adventuresome and unbloody history; and what it did know was usually wrong: the dated products of the fervent imaginations of Gilbert Parker, Arthur Stringer, Robert Service and Ralph O'Connor and their lesser colleagues, versifiers and romantic roustabouts.

What happened was that in explaining it to others, Canadians finally explained it to themselves; and decades of facelessness, of petty stick figures in an awesome landscape vanished like the snows of April.

To Adam and even more so to most of the younger Canadians, the idea of a blurred and indistinct identity – a tenuous one – was oddly unreal.

How, they wondered, could a country which contained within it the North Magnetic Pole feel so strongly the enervating pull and ascendancy of the 42 states of the U.S.? Was it lack of technology which had made them hunker down near the border in such large numbers?

Now most of the world looked increasingly to the International Zone as the focus of life and the most stimulating environment in existence. And they regarded the remainder of Canada and Quebec with much of the same interest and admiration.

Hadn't the tribunes always wanted to return to Rome? Had not the Greek mathematicians and philosophers after the death of Alexander of Macedon wanted to enjoy the cultivated, cosmopolitan life of Alexandria?

That's what Adam MacNeil now wanted. He was forty and he wanted to go home. He wanted to go forward, but not go out again. In the past fifteen years, he had seldom

spent more than three months of any twelve in Canada. In the first five years when he was making the Family of Man films, there were few countries in the world he did not visit. It was while he was making a Family of Man movie on a Sicilian family in the olive groves behind Taormina that he met Isobel.

They made love the first time in the Teatro Graeco in Taormina where their whispers carried up into the empty moonlit amphitheatre Dionysius of Syracuse had built twenty-four centuries before.

Adam felt the pilot of the Pan-African SST begin his descent. They were now over the Gulf of Sidra. That must be Bengasi off to the right. In ten or fifteen minutes they would be over the Strait of Messina. If he moved to the other side of the plane, he might see Taormina and the switchback road down past the Teatro Graeco to the bay; and, if there were no cloud layers, thin wisps of smoke issuing from the crater of Mount Etna. That's where they made love the second time, because making love near the rim of a volcano struck them as appropriate to their passions – so much so that the discomfort was unnoticed by them.

Sixteen years later their conjugal bed still erupted, and this was only in part because of the infrequency with which they shared it. Adam rarely bothered with other women and, while it was certainly none of his business, he did not think Isobel often did with other men.

When he was a kid, sex had been a major preoccupation, he remembered. People talked constantly in the jargon of the day about being hung up or uptight about the "opposite sex."

The sexes were not opposite, of course, but complementary. And no species—no intelligent species, at least—faced with over-production, goes on over-producing. Ardent crusaders for women's lib. back in the seventies ascribed their inequality, their servitude, their role as objects, to some long-standing male conspiracy. As everyone now knew, it was

less that than a biological appendix to a long era of high infant mortality, short life expectancy, lack of mobility and fairly continuous large-scale killing.

The full equality, which the feminists won, was less a victory than an unwitting response to evolutionary sanity. His namesake, Adam recalled, had not thought about getting Eve with child until after she had sewn up the apron of leaves from the fig tree.

The Tupilov T 448 touched down on the runway at Leonardo da Vinci Airport. He hoped Alizon had arrived from Montevarchi. His sister was notoriously late. And the KPA Super Concorde took off in thirty minutes.

Adam carefully picked up the box containing his father's retirement present. He'd found it on the Coast of Madagascar, the Malagasy republic, in an old fisherman's house at Analalava. It was a superb carving of an Arab dhow with a hull of almost grainless ebony and a sail of ivory carved as thin as a silk scarf.

In three hours, three and a half by the time he changed planes, they'd be at Smooth Rock Falls! It would only be 9 a.m. in St. Ephrem de Paradis. They were in for a long day!

Her Excellency, Bronwen MacNeil, Canadian ambassador to the Chinese People's Republic, was already in Canada. She had taken this opportunity to make a side trip from Anchorage down to Fort St. John, Columbia, to visit the Canhab plant at Taylor Flats. It was properly a matter for the trade commissioner, she supposed, but Bronwen was impatient about protocol once she was on home territory.

The construction of pre-formed homes was second only to the knowledge industry in the Canadian economy. The export of fossil fuels had been banned for the past eight years and although pipeline technology and the whole range of pumping and recycling machinery were of great importance, the export of pre-formed homes topped them all in Asia and Africa. At least 4,000 Bigloos a week were shipped south from Taylor Flats to tidewater outside Vancouver, aboard PGE flatcars. They were shipped in halves, and all that was

needed at the point of destination was a heat weld along the centre seam.

There were, it was estimated, eighty million people living in pre-formed Canadian homes in all parts of the world. The plant in Acadia was now bigger than Taylor Flats and since it was only four miles outside St. John, there was no railhead cost.

There were still old hands lurking around External Affairs who did not approve of Bronwen's appointment as Canadian ambassador to China. And there were members of parliament who felt the same. (MP's did not have to pass an ERCC test.) None of them dared any longer attack her on the grounds of her womanhood; they did so instead on the basis of age. She was thirty-six.

Their attacks had been unavailing so far. The people of Asia, paradoxically, had for decades been much more ready to admire and follow women than had the leaders of the Western hemisphere. Sirimavo Bandaranaike led the way as the prime minister of ten million Ceylonese; Indira Ghandi ruled the second most populous nation on earth; while Canada had a solitary female among 264 male members of Parliament. Madame Sun Yat Sen influenced China for six decades after the death of her revolutionary spouse; the Soong sisters were as powerful as their husbands; and the wife of Mao Tse Tsung was as high as any man in the councils of China.

Yet still the Western hemisphere persevered in the myth that because their feet had never been bound nor their faces hidden behind the veil, their women were more equal, potent and free.

There were still occasional slights about her "over-identification." Despite the acceptance of the miscegenation policy on the official level, there were people in the diplomatic service and the Opposition who contended that involvement of any sort with a national precluded objectivity.

It was a danger. Both Bronwen and her husband knew that. Peng seldom left Shih Cha Chuang. There was too

much work to do at the Bethune International Peace Hospital. Eleven years after the Three-Minute War the need for plastic surgeons had not ended.

Bronwen had weighed it all carefully and for the first time she brought Man-Fei with her. He was four, yet he already showed evidence that he would have the long legs of a mountain man and the useful, square hands of his grandfather who spent a lifetime repairing breeches in the stonework of the Great Wall of China. She had not absolutely decided whether to leave Man-Fei in Canada or take him back with her to Nanking.

She planned to resign within two years, if the offer was still open, and stand for parliament in the riding of Coquitlam. In 2004 she would run for the leadership of the party. Stanley Boychuk thought she could make it. He had virtually said so when he flew in from Battleford last night. He offered her his official aircraft for the last hitch of her journey to Smooth Rock Falls. He planned to keep her company. After all, it was in Assiniboia that it had all started; and even if he hadn't known him that long, a farewell party for Harris MacNeil was something to attend.

As soon as she woke, Arla slipped off the liqui-bed and climbed into her sweat suit. She seldom missed her morning walk clear around the outside of the town. The leisure lands were particularly tranquil, the fountains were not playing and apart from a few cyclists on the perimeter track and one or two enthusiastic tennis players, there was no one much to disturb her. As she threaded her way through the gardens and the ornamental pools, she moved from shade into sunlight at the eastern gate.

Afterwards she walked across the square and stopped by the hub to talk to some of the young shippers she knew. Virtually all container freight moved in and out of Knowledge Park between 3:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. All the produce and merchandise arrived at this time and was sorted and delivered before most of the inhabitants were up. Apart from

the foremen, the shippers were all young Canadians doing their year of service in Knowledge Park.

They liked the job. It left them free to do as they wished most of the day and the evening. They worked quietly, almost conspiratorially, with only occasional bursts of laughter or low conversation as they neared the end of their five-hour shift.

Arla did not swim this morning. She went straight back to the apartment and worked out for 15 minutes on the morning terrace. Two or three times a month she treated herself to a massage and she had made an appointment for this morning. The masseur arrived promptly at eight.

Arla smiled a little ruefully at the recollection of how scared she had once been to visit a massage parlour in Toronto. She had missed so much then because of her idiotic fears. Now the only person in the world she was half afraid of was her youngest child.

Other people were so often disarmed by the Chinese poems Bronwen wrote and recited in such soft and impeccable mandarin. Arla wasn't. She enjoyed them, but she knew the steel-trap mind behind them, the deadly logic and the ambition. Look at the way Bronwen had organized this entire event tonight from – what what it, 12,000 miles away? Was it all done for her father, or for her? Arla was not sure. She had an uncomfortable feeling that no one remembered who Catherine the Great's mother was, or Queen Victoria's. As for Elizabeth I, her mother was notable largely for the slenderness of her neck and the way it was severed.

Arla hoped Harris had not stayed up too late with his cronies at the Press Club. It was true, he had plenty of time to relax once Sunday arrived. But in the meantime he was going to be busier than he expected. The courtyard at Yesterday was going to be so jammed with people tonight that some of them inevitably would fall into the canal. And also there was tomorrow.

She knew she was simply indulging herself. Arla had long since chosen her own point of focus, as Trudy Mansell had

done. She was pleased Trudy was coming. They were both very fond of her. And Harris would be delighted. She so seldom visited the Park anymore.

Trudy sat eating her breakfast in the club car at the back of the train. She did not like to look directly backwards. It was true, you could see the freight trains directly below moving at what seemed a snail's pace; but it made her dizzy. She liked to watch the towns vanishing, looming and dwindling as they passed. They had passed Ycliff, Savant Lake and Allan Water while she ate her scrambled eggs.

All three were now sizeable towns with controlled environment canopies and specialized industries. Trudy did not know for sure what they did in Ycliff. Was it underwater camera housings? She knew Allan Water manufactured work gloves, because she had a pair with the name stamped inside. Soon they would be coming up to Nakina and the big settling tanks where half the paper sludge from the International Zone was recycled into paper.

The first time Trudy rode the CN line this way with Alex, half these places had been nothing more than a section foreman's house, a siding and a handful of shacks. Now, whenever the legislature moved back to Toronto from their sessions at Queens Park North, there were grumbles about how southern Ontario towns were being neglected. But it was logical to canopy the northern communities first.

Moyne Mansell sat hunched in his seat opposite her, watching his mother. He was never quite certain how complete her serenity was. Back home at the old Kinsella ranch where she had been born, their life was so active and full it precluded too much introspection. Yet he knew that even after fifteen years she still worried about where and how his father had died. Moyne himself thought about the nature of stoicism. He understood why his father, being of sound mind but unsound body, had chosen to go off into the bush somewhere and die by himself in his own way. It absolved them from the lingering and studied trappings of death. Yet it was somehow incomplete; lacking in finality.

He hoped he had finally persuaded her to stay with Arla rather than fly up to Akimiski Island with him and wait for two weeks while Sansom and he paddled up the Kapishau River, crossed the height of land and descended the Attawapiskat.

He did not want to spend longer than necessary in Knowledge Park. Moyne admired his father's achievement too deeply to enjoy the reflected interest and curiosity taken in him, however well-meant. There was a visiting French geneticist on campus at Taschereau to whom he wanted to talk. As soon as he'd seen him he would leave.

They had now been cloning their best stallions at the Longview ranch laboratory for three years with only limited success.

Moyne's consuming interest was horses, or the whole family Equidae. He and the Gladstone boys at Stand-Off had embarked on a massive program of cross-breeding. The short-range objectives were to develop new breeds of horses, asses and mules, since the need for them was greater than ever in many parts of the world.

Most of the breeding was done at Longview. They had one of the few stallions and mares of Przewalski's Horses, the Mongolian wild horse, to survive the Three-Minute War, as well as a small herd of Grevy's Zebra.

They were working with other groups in Brazil and Argentina. Moyne would be flying to Buenos Aires in September to take three cross-bred yearling fillies to the estancia at Chivilcoy.

He loved the pampas of Argentina and, if it wasn't for the excitement of work on the Bucephalus Concept, and his mother, he would have moved there.

The idea of evolutionary reversion, of re-creating extinct species, certainly wasn't theirs. German zoologists had re-invented the wild horse of Europe, the Tarpan, by years of assiduous cross-breeding, more than a century after it became extinct. But not much practical work had been done on it.

Evolutionary reversion wasn't a term Moyne particularly liked. He remembered a chance item of information his

father had passed on to him when he was ten: Alexander the Great's famous charger had been a three-toed horse rather than a monodactyl with only vestigial second and fourth digits like all present-day members of the horse family.

Perhaps the Bucephalus Concept was a rather extravagant term. Certainly no one wanted to fill the skies again with pterodactyls. It was just a term.

Instead of getting off at Bingle and going directly to Yesterday, Trudy decided she would like to go on to La Sarre and take the overhead north to St. Ephrem de Paradis. She could feel the tears prick her eyes and turned her chair full around to face the window. The annual ceremony at Bill Lake was an ordeal through which she rarely put herself. If it had not been the last time Harris would read the Proposal, she would not have come this year.

The room stewardess arranged the six prints carefully around the suite, switching them until she thought they would appear to the best advantage. Then she went out and returned with his breakfast tray. She was no longer in uniform because she was not on duty and instead was wearing a print dress she had designed and made herself.

When she was satisfied, she leaned over and pushed her fingers down steadily on the pressure points behind his ears. Two of her friends were airline stewardesses and they were always discussing the relative merits of their work. She much preferred being a hotel room stewardess. It was more personal. Instead of 200 passengers, there were only five or ten guests to attend to and there was much more time to get to know them, especially if they stayed in the hotel for several days.

It was true she had to speak three languages and take a six-week course as a masseuse, which the airline girls did not need. But it was worth it. She had made a number of good friends among her guests and was only a few minutes walk from her studio.

Harris woke easily and clearly although for a few seconds

he did not recognize the girl. He remembered what he had been thinking about when he fell asleep and found himself still unable to recall who had written the bit about judging a civilization by its sewers. He took the tray she handed him and drank the coffee first.

He was delighted to find that he liked her work. After bringing her in, he would have bought one of the prints whatever they were like. It was much better, however, not to have to dissemble. There was one in particular of an old stone square in the centre of which stood a solitary chestnut tree. Under it stood a small boy reaching up to a branch almost within his grasp. He liked it. There was an intaglio print too, the indistinct shape of a man bent forward playing a flute, which Liam might enjoy.

The price of one was $120 and of the other, $90, the girl said. Harris accepted that. He took her unicard and placed it next to his in the credit slot of the transactor. He was about to punch up the total when he noticed the silver dollars in stacks on the dresser. She would enjoy having some, he knew, and counted out fifty. People didn't see much real cash these days.

Most people carried a few change tokens in tubes of fifths or fifties for making phone calls or buying newspapers. And there were small denomination IBC flexibills, the plastic notes which the International Bank of Canada issued; the gold maple leaf tens, the green fives and the red maple leaf one-dollar bills. Most transactions, nevertheless, were carried out by unicard through the computer clearing houses of the banks—payrolls, purchases, social insurance payments to the Department of Well-being, income tax deductions to the Department of Wealth, income of every kind and all bills.

It was highly efficient and as close to being foolproof as any system devised. It had overcome many of the old problems of personal debt burdens; and had succeeded in one of its primary aims, which was to break the increasing power of syndicate crime. But it was impersonal, there was no denying that.

Harris punched up the balance of $160 on the transactor while the girl poured coffee. The transactor was wired to the hotel cable board and from it to the clearing house. If he had no credit, it would glow red within thirty seconds.

Harris was not a particularly wealthy man. Adam, he imagined, had made more in royalties on his first film than Harris had on all his books. Harris tended to spend as he earned. Yet he had enough to see him through. And if he did not, the Department of Well-being would take over. They guaranteed annual income for those who had flunked their ERCC: the Canada Pension for contributors over sixty; Everycare for doctors and dentists and social advisers, for hypnotherapists, "shrinks" and focusers, without further payments. And a flat $1,000 for a wake whether he was returned organically to the earth, cremated or donated for organ transplants.

He felt too well this morning to dwell upon the latter. Hotels had improved greatly since his old travelling days as a magazine writer. The rates were higher, but there were no solitary breakfasts in rumpled rooms; not unless one wanted solitude.

The girl called to reserve a seat on the ten o'clock shuttle and phoned the house on Bellevue because he wanted at least to speak to Andy. There was no reply. She put through a picture phone to Sanda in his study. Sanda reminded him that Arla wanted to meet him at six o'clock in Yesterday.

The girl took his jumpsuit out of the soil cabinet, reserved a buggy and, as soon as he was ready, drove him out along the causeway to Runway Three. It was not often one had a KPA international councillor in one's hotel room and even less frequent that you sold him two prints! Halfway back along the causeway, the girl parked the buggy, slipped off her dress and dived into the lake in her liner. The water was perfect, just brisk enough because there were no multipipes close by. She swam quickly into the lagoon and back again, shook herself off and guided the buggy back into the city. She was exhilarated.

Of the forty passengers aboard the Cougar, Harris knew

about half. That wasn't so unusual, nor was the fact that a good many were writers he'd known on and off for years. The flow to and from the Park was always considerable. Even if they could do all their research by remote print-out, many of them preferred the congenial atmosphere around the libraries.

He dozed for fifteen minutes and when he surfaced they were over Cobalt. You could tell by the headframes. But he knew anyway, it was all so familiar. And all so changed. The further north they flew the more noticeable it was. All the towns east and west of Kirkland Lake that were supposed to be going nowhere: Swastika, Larder Lake, Montbeillard, Cadillac, Preissac. Nothing places that now hummed and thrived and burgeoned. They had tried to disperse the industry as much as possible, to print the sheets in Acadia and Columbia, locate the binderies in Wolfville and Moosomin, process film in Beausejour and manufacture cassette housings in Skowhegan, Acadia.

That they had done. But it was impossible to prevent satellite growth without an entirely controlled economy, which nobody yet wished for.

Harris was aware that his withdrawal from Knowledge Park had already begun some time previously. Each day he inched his focus around until he was viewing it for the first time in over a quarter of a century more from outside than from within.

He doubted whether he had ever believed, no matter how enthusiastic his copy had been, that so much could or would have happened in that time. As he was casting off his own mooring, it became clearer to him than ever before how much Canada had done the same, casting adrift first the imperial ties with Britain and later its dependence on the United States. Whoever said the 20th century belonged to Canada made an extravagant and precipitate claim. If it belonged more to one defined group of humans than to another, it was to those two products of popular revolution: the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Fortunately it now belonged to nobody, having ended.

What they had demonstrated in Canada, if anything, Harris believed, was the possibility of power without might and authority without arms. He thought it was better than owning a century.

Sanda unwrapped the print and looked for a time at the boy reaching up toward the chesnut tree. She turned the print over and saw that he had written on it: *If you wish to come to me, I shall be there. If you want me to come to you, I shall come.*

Harris spent the afternoon at his typewriter finishing his Recollection. The key to it, he had decided, was detritus. If you just kept on wearing it away, not adding to it or replenishing it, or even giving it a bit of a shine, you ended up with a slag heap instead of a world, like one of those old car dumps in a field outside town.

He resisted the impulse to check out who it was who had written, "You can judge a civilization by its sewers," and what the exact words were. It was too easy. One day he would remember. Just in case he didn't, he asked Liam O'Brien to get him a bottle of those memory capsules.

Arla had said 6:00 p.m. at Yesterday. It would be a farewell cocktail party of some sort with librarians, the various corporation heads and division chiefs, senior authority staff and some of the stream of visiting sages, scientists and writers. Since it was for him, he shouldn't be late.

He decided not to wear his dress jumpsuit. Instead he reached into the back of the closet and took out a black bag on a hanger. In it was an old pale-blue tropical suit, a blue button-down shirt and a dark-blue silk tie. It must be ten years, he thought, since he had last worn a tie.

He punched up 01011 and as he dressed watched the activity at the input control room of Floodwood River communications centre. This was the peak hour for the three hundred men and women in the big room. The Telesat

channels were humming as the daily video news and science reports were coming in from three of the four lunar settlements, the automated Marslab and more than half of major television transmission centres around the earth.

There were eighty channels into the input control room and Harris could see at a rough glance that more than fifty of the eighty screens and the videotape records below them were alive at this one moment. Within four hours, it would all be ingested, recorded, collated, and the highlights edited for information deposit and international broadcast news reports.

Harris walked out on the evening terrace and cut a rose for his buttonhole.

Arla was standing alone at the arrival bays when he reached Yesterday and they walked down together into the courtyard. It was evident that they were early for it was still almost empty. But Arla led him across a canal into a smaller walled courtyard where the family and a few old friends were gathered.

Bronwen had arranged it that way so that the children would not be lost in the throng of guests due to arrive at seven. Their youngest daughter, he noticed, was talking to Harvey Simpson who still ran his law practice in Calgary and exercised strong political influence in the old Alberta ridings of the Province of Assiniboia. Trudy Mansell was sitting with Claude Ladouceur, while Moyne and a small child who must, Harris decided, be Man-Fei, his last grandson, were playing bucking broncos.

Alizon and Isola – she was going to be the most beautiful of his grandchildren – were standing alone looking up at the cantilevered gardens on the other side of the river. Adam and Isobel were off in a corner, probably discussing how soon they could decently cut out and go up to their suite. They had already saddled Liam O'Brien and Sanda Nu with Jenny, Andy and Richard.

It was the first time their family had been assembled at

the same time in one place. "That handkerchief," said Arla stuffing it back into his breast pocket, "must have been there since the 1980's!"

The group converged and coalesced to greet them and five minutes later began to dissolve once more into smaller pools of conversation.

"Do you remember what I was reading the first time we met?" Trudy asked Harris.

"An obscure historical novel called *The Big Bend,* as I recall," said Harris.

"And now the bend has come full circle?"

"I thought we'd straightened it out," said Harris.

"I was thinking about you, Harris, not the Park. The Park will take care of itself from now on."

Harris agreed. It would change, but Knowledge Park would still be there when Richard and Isola and Man-Fei were in their seventies. The decline and fall of civilizations was not an immutable law.

Besides, Knowledge Park was already reproducing itself. Continental duplication of the main body of knowledge in the KPA libraries was already under way. There were replicas of Data Centre One and Two in silos in Klagenfurt, Tashkent and Valparaiso. A fourth was being sunk in the Kenya highlands.

Trudy was right, though. He had come full circle himself. The planners in Vienna at International Population Control headquarters would regard this family gathering as unduly prolific and unrepresentative. Three children, five grandchildren – that was an overpopulating progression.

The concept of family was now as outdated as those television series *The Forsyte Saga* and *Whiteoaks of Jalna* had been in their way thirty years ago.

Richard, Andy and Jenny, Isola and Man-Fei, lived in a world of wider and more fluid bonds than the single family concept had encompassed. Their future, Harris firmly believed, was more assured than Adam and Alizon and Bron-

wen's had been back in the seventies, or his and Arla's in the fifties.

The party had swelled. Moving among the crowds in the main courtyard, greeting old friends, Harris supposed there must be five hundred of them who had come either to say farewell or simply to enjoy the occasion.

He felt strangely withdrawn, as if he had already departed. He found Arla in the crowd at two minutes before midnight, and together they drank the traditional toast ushering in Canada Day 2000.

The guests showed little inclination to leave. Harris walked back to the small courtyard where the family had gathered earlier. They were going to have a family breakfast before the ceremonies took place at Bill Lake.

There was no need for him to rehearse the reading of the Proposal. He could have recited most of it by heart, standing there watching the moonlight play on the moving water of the Yesterday River. He murmured it to himself:

"The Proposal is quite simple. It is that Canada should begin to build the greatest library the world has ever known . . ."