

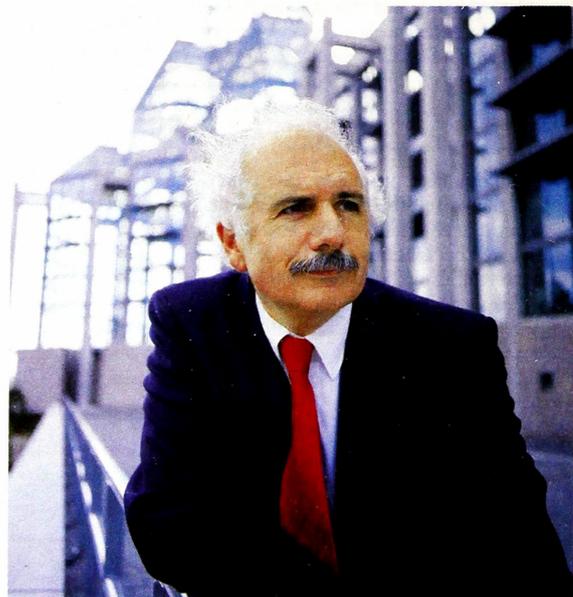
OPENING NOTES

Moshe Safdie challenges a contract, Richard Hatfield considers a job offer, and George Bush courts his cabinet

SHAKY FOUNDATIONS

Canadian architect Moshe Safdie is known for his unusual—and sometimes contentious—designs. Now the Boston-based creator of Montreal's Habitat housing complex, and Ottawa's National Gallery of Canada, is once again embroiled in controversy. Last October, Safdie, in partnership with Murray and Murray Architects of Ottawa, won a competition to design Ottawa's new city hall at a cost of \$67 million. But last month, the architects challenged a clause in their contract requiring them to pay consulting fees for such things as landscaping and lighting—at a cost of \$1.4 million. City officials say that they will vote on the matter on Jan. 4, but so far they have balked at altering the agreement. Meanwhile, residents of the tony neighborhood of New Edinburgh, next to the site, have complained that two proposed 12-storey towers will allow people to peek into their yards. Although architect Patrick Murray described those accusations as "a crock of nonsense," Safdie's latest project appears to be sitting on shaky foundations.

Safdie: once again embroiled in controversy

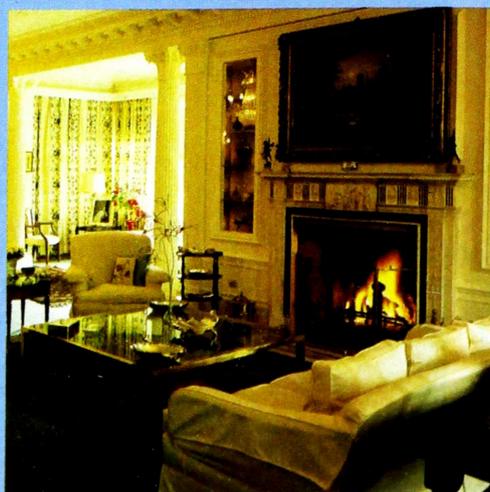


BRIAN WILLEY/MACLEANS

Accolades for a skilful diplomat

The one million Canadians who are of Italian descent have a new reason to be proud of their heritage. According to the British *Economist* magazine, Valerio Brigante Colonna Angelini, 63, Italy's ambassador to Canada, and his wife, Anna, 45, have used their diplomatic skills to make the Italian Embassy Canada's best. The London-based magazine rated such factors as the social splash made by each ambassador, and the physical appearance of embassy buildings. Italy excelled on both counts. The ambassador is housed in a Georgian-style mansion near the Quebec shore of the Ottawa River, surrounded by six acres of sloping gardens. And according to Gian Lorenzo Cornado, an embassy diplomat, the Colonnas "know

everybody" and host a dinner party "almost every evening." Other ambassadors take note: when in Ottawa, do as the Romans do.



The Colonnas' drawing room: social splash

A GUARDED TRANSITION

He is president until George Bush succeeds him on Jan. 20, but Ronald Reagan has begun his move to private life. Last week, he paid his first visit to his and wife, Nancy's, new offices, in the penthouse of the 34-storey Fox Plaza in west Los Angeles. The 13,000-square-foot penthouse will also include offices for the secret service agents assigned to protect the Reagans round-the-clock. Those guards will come in handy should life ever imitate art. In the 1988 movie *Die Hard*, the Fox was taken over by urban terrorists.

The hair of the dog lives on

For many dog owners, shed hair is simply the price of having a pet. But for Margaret MacLean, a housewife in Bedford, N.S., hairs off her 14-year-old male samoyed, Mishka, are a treasure. For 11 years, MacLean conscientiously saved the dog's hair and then commissioned weavers Vida Large and Ruth Wolf to weave two pounds of it into a floor-length coat for herself. According to MacLean, the finished product, which has the texture of angora and is dyed mauve, "is not something you would wear just every day." Only when you really feel like putting on the dog.



Gabereau; Hatfield: the former premier has made a mark as a CBC celebrity

FLIRTING WITH MEDIA FAME

Since New Brunswick Premier Richard Hatfield lost to Frank McKenna's Liberals in October, 1987, the 57-year-old former premier has made something of a mark as a CBC celebrity. Last Sept. 9, he discussed his new chili sauce recipe with CBC Radio *Morningside* host Peter Gzowski. Then, on Nov. 9, Hatfield lit up the small screens as a U.S. election commentator on CBC TV in Fredericton. And on Dec. 20, when he was a guest on CBC Radio's afternoon interview program *Gabereau*, host Vicki Gabereau invited him to fill

in for her on an upcoming day off. When Hatfield responded positively, Gabereau trilled, "I'll get them to draw up the contract right after this show." But Hatfield left the studio before she could firm up their deal. And last week, Gabereau told *Maclean's* that she has since been unable to contact him. Still, Gabereau said that she thinks the former premier may host her show some time in February or March. Clearly, it will be a while yet before Ed McMahon declares, "And now . . . heeeere's Richard!"

HIGH REWARDS FOR DEDICATED SERVICE

In picking people to work in his administration, president-elect George Bush seems to have adopted an unusual definition of the word "serve." An avid tennis player, Bush, 64, has named several of his doubles partners to key positions—including James Baker III as secretary of state, William Webster as director of the Central Intelligence Agency and, as economic adviser, Michael Boskin, who once played—and beat—the economic adviser to Bush's most recent off-court opponent, Michael Dukakis. Those close to Bush deny that a top-spin forehand is a prerequisite for a government appointment. But tennis pro John Gardiner, who is sponsoring this month's Senator's Cup in the capital, speculated that "there will be a lot of Washington people working on their game." No fault in that.

A price tag on Oscar

An Academy Award enriches any actor's star appeal. But a Hollywood bookstore owner has put a more tangible price



Brando: star appeal

on the golden figurines. Since last March, Malcolm Willits, 54, has sold five Oscars, including Marlon Brando's Best Actor Award for the 1954 film *On the Waterfront*—which Brando had given away—for \$15,600. And, on Jan. 3, Willits plans to sell the Best Set Decoration Oscar for the 1941 movie *How Green Was My Valley* for the same amount. The price of fame.



An expatriate laughs last

When Pierre Trudeau was re-elected for the third time in February, 1980, *Toronto Star* humor columnist Douglas Gamble decided to leave what he sarcastically described as Trudeau's "socialist paradise." Montreal-born Gamble quit and moved to Manhattan Beach, Calif., where he peddled one-liners to comedian Joan Rivers and President Ronald Reagan. But Gamble, 44, said that his most challenging assignment came in 1987, when Vice-President George Bush, who will become president on Jan. 20, hired Gamble to inject humor into Bush's speeches. Gamble appears to have succeeded. Indeed, after the Nov. 8 election, Bush speech writer Joshua Gilder ranked Gamble second only to Bush himself as deserving credit for Bush's victory. Gamble's reaction: "I'm glad to be part of a new era in Washington where some politicians are funny on purpose for a change."

Gamble: 'A new era in Washington'