

ALAN MILLS and JEAN CARIGNAN

Guitar, Gilbert Lacombe
Songs, Fiddle Tunes and
a Folktale from Canada
Folkways Records FG3532



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43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. R61-1840

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Songs, Fiddle Tunes and a Folk-Tale from Canada

with guitarist, Gilbert Lacombe

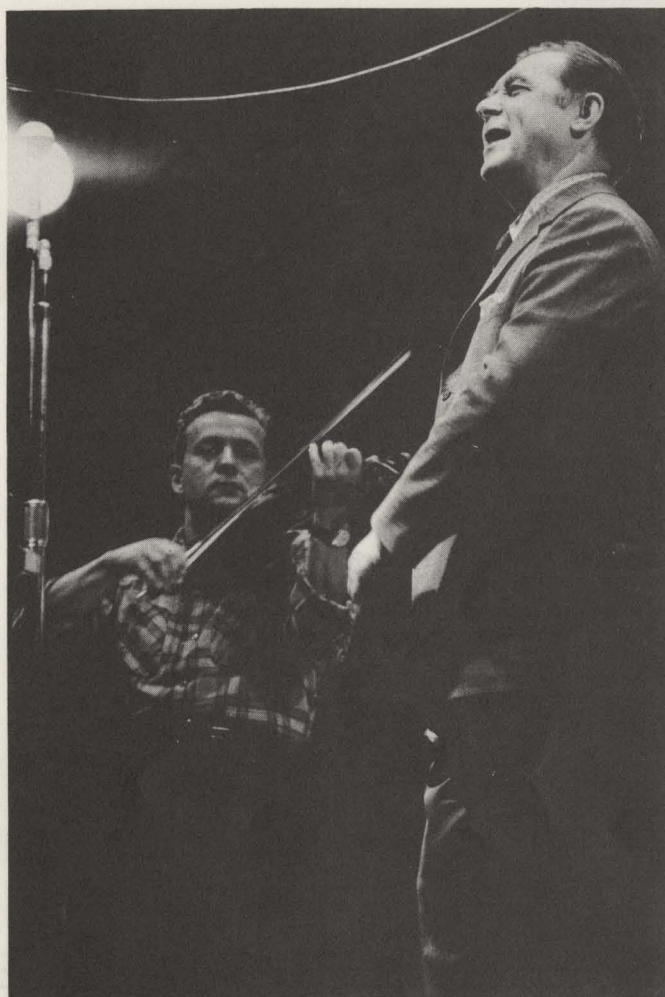
Canadian folk-singer Alan Mills and fellow-Canadian fiddler Jean (Johnny) Carignan here contribute an unusual collection of traditional folk songs and fiddle tunes, respectively, of their native land.

To these, Mills adds a bonus of three composed and/or "adapted" songs in the folk idiom and two stories which reveal his talents as an actor as well as a singer.

Two of the former songs are his own distinctive versions of "COD LIVER OIL" and "THE FOOLISH OLD MAN" and the third is his musical adaptation of some verses written by a Canadian businessman on the Republican election campaign of 1960, and called: "BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLICANS - 1960."

Of the two stories, one is his own dramatic narrative, "TI-JEAN AND THE DEVIL," told with a French-Canadian accent and in the folk-tale tradition of Quebec, with some incidental fiddling from Carignan as background, and the other is his amusing recollection of an old Nova Scotian traditional singer telling and singing an unusual version of the ancient British ballad, "LADY ISABEL."

Fiddler Carignan contributes two traditional reels, with foot-tapping, and a French-Canadian jig tune, and joins guitarist Gilbert Lacombe in accompanying Mills in about half the songs.



Both Mills and Carignan have been in increasing demand for University concerts, folk festivals and other dates in the United States and Canada ever since they introduced their lively Canadian material in a brief -- but sensational -- appearance at the 1960 Newport Folk Festival. Although they were on stage for only 15 minutes of the crowded final evening's program of that festival, their performance proved to be one of its highlights.

Notes on the Songs by Alan Mills

SIDE I, Band 1: LOTS OF FISH IN BONAIVIST' HARBOUR

A very popular Newfoundland party song, also known as "The Feller From Fortune".

There's lot of fish in Bonavist' Harbour,
Lots of fish right in around here,
Boys and girls are fishin' together,
Forty-five from Carbonear,

CHORUS:

Oh, catch-a-hold this one, catch-a-hold that one,
Swing around this one, swing around she,
Dance around this one, dance around that one,
Diddle-dum this one, diddle-dum dee.

Oh, Uncle George got up in the mornin',
He got up in a helluva tear,
He ripped the seat right out of his britches,
Now he's got ne'er pair to wear.

(CHORUS)

Oh, Sally is the pride of Cat Harbour,
Ain't been swung since 'way last year,
When she met the feller from Fortune,
What was down here fishin' last year.

(CHORUS)

Now, Sally goes to church every Sunday,
Not for to sing, nor for to hear,
But to see the feller from Fortune,
What was down here fishin' last year.

(CHORUS)

Now, Sally's got a bouncin' new baby,
Father said that he didn't care,
Cause he liked the feller from Fortune,
What was down here fishin' last year.

(CHORUS)

There's lots of fish in Bonavist' Harbour,
Lots of fish right in around here,
Swing yer partner, Jimmy Joe Jacobs,
I'll be home in the spring o' the year.

SIDE I, Band 2: COD LIVER OIL

This is my own adaptation of both the melody and the words (with an added verse) of an old music hall favorite of about a hundred years ago. The original song, with a somewhat different melody, was printed in several publications in the 1870's and later, and variants of the original are still sung today in Canada, notably in Newfoundland and Ontario.

1. I'm a young mar-ried man that is ti-red
(Cho): OH - DOC-TOR, OH DOC-TOR, OH DOCTOR

of life, Ten years I've been wed to a
DEAR JOHN, YOUR COD LIV-ER OIL IS SO

sick--e--ly wife; She does no-thin' all
PURE AND SO STRONG, I'M A--FRAID OF MY

day--- but sit down and cry, A----
LIFE I'LL GO DOWN TO THE SOIL, IF MY

pray-in' to God she'd get bet-ter or
WIFE DON'T STOP DRINKIN' YOUR COD LIV-ER

die! (CHO) (OH)
-----OIL....!

Now, an old friend of mine came to see me one day,
He said that my wife, she was pinin' away,
He afterwards told me that she would get strong
If I got her a bottle from Doctor, dear, John.

(CHORUS)

Well, I got her a bottle, 'twas just for to try,
And the way that she drank it, you'd think she was dry;
I got her another, it vanished the same,
And now she's got cod liver oil on the brain.

(CHORUS)

Now, my house it resembles a big doctor's shop,
'Tis filled up with bottles from bottom to top,
And when, in the mornin', the kettle does boil,
You'd swear it was singin' out: "cod liver oil!"

(CHORUS)

Now, come all you young fellows, where'er you may be,
I hope you will heed this fair warnin' from me,
From sickly women, I pray you recoil,
Or you'll end up a-swimmin' in cod liver oil!

(CHORUS)

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SIDE I, Band 3: REEL DU PECHEUR -- (Fisherman's Reel)

One of many "compositions" of the late Joseph Allard, who was one of French-Canada's outstanding "violoneux" (fiddlers) for more than half a century. Not being able to read or write music, he made up some fifty or sixty original reels and jiges "by ear", besides which he had a ready repertoire of several hundred other tunes he had learned orally from his father and grand-father, who were also traditional fiddlers without any formal music education.

"Joe" Allard lived most of his life in the Montreal suburb of Lachine, P.Q., where he died in 1947 at the ripe old age of 82. For many years he had an international reputation as Canada's best "violoneux".

Few people know more of Allard's talents, both as a traditional fiddler and a maker of tunes, than Jean Carignan, who had the good fortune to meet him some 20 years before his death, when he -- Carignan -- was still a boy, supporting his family through his earnings as a street fiddler.

The old "violoneux" was so impressed with young Carignan's playing that he more-or-less adopted him as a protege and taught him all he knew in the ensuing years.

Brought up in the same tradition as his old master, Jean learned his whole repertoire "by ear" and has never forgotten any of Allard's "pieces". To this day, he is the only fiddler I know who can play them.

SIDE I, Band 4: SHE'S LIKE THE SWALLOW

This tender love lament is one of the most beautiful songs of Newfoundland.

She's like the swallow that flies so high,
She's like the river that never runs dry,
She's like the sunshine on the lea-shore,
I love my love, but love is no more.

It's out in the garden this fair maid did go,
A-plucking the beautiful primrose,
The more she plucked, the more she pulled,
Until she got her apron full.

It's out of these roses she made a bed,
A stone, a pillow for her head,
She laid her down, no word she spoke,
Alas, for love, her heart was broke.

SIDE I, Band 5: SON VOILE QUI VOLAIT AU VENT
(Her Veil Blowing in the Wind)

The seemingly innocuous title of this very popular French-Canadian "answering" song is somewhat misleading, for the story it tells is of a young maid of fourteen who was snoozing beside a rosebush when a gust of wind blew up her skirt so that one could see her ribboned garters at the top of her stockings. And the song continues:

"Happy will be her lover, for he'll have the advantage of seeing that often. But don't misunderstand me, ladies. I mean, of course, the ribbon!"

C'était une jeune fille âgée de quatorze ans, (2)
Ell' alla se coucher (ah!) dessous un rosier blanc,
Son voil' par-ci, son voil' par-là,
Son voil' qui volait, qui volait,
Son voil' qui volait au vent!

Ell' alla se coucher (ah!) dessous un rosier blanc, (2)
Le vent soul'va sa robe, j'ai vu ses beaux bas blancs!
Son voil' par-ce...(Etc.)

Le vent soul'va sa robe, j'ai vu ses beaux bas blancs! (2)
Aussi sa jarritièr' rose, orné d'un p'tit ruban,
Son voil' par-ci...(Etc.)

Aussi sa jarr'tièr' rose, orné d'un p'tit ruban, (2)
Heureux sera celui(e) qui sera son amant!
Son voil' par-ci...(Etc.)

Heureux sera celui(e) qui sera son amant! (2)
Il aura l'avantage de voire ça souvent!
Son voil' par-ci...(Etc.)

Il aura l'avantage de voire ça souvent! (2)
C'est pour vous dire, mesdames, le noeud de son ruban!
Son voil' par-ci...(Etc.)

SIDE I, Band 6: LADY ISABEL

At least a dozen interesting versions of this ancient British traditional ballad have been collected in Canada, most of them by Dr. Helen Creighton of Nova Scotia. I'll never forget hearing one of "Dr. Creighton's best singers", the late Nathan Hatt, sing this and many other fine traditional ballads for me during a tour of Nova Scotia in 1954. A retired and ailing lumberjack in his eighties at that time, Mr. Hatt knew more than a hundred songs which he had learned by ear, and he had the faculty of dramatizing each song and making one feel that he had personally experienced or witnessed the stories they told.

I don't know of anyone who enjoyed singing a song, or telling its story, more than Nathan Hatt, though in his later years he had little voice left and usually prefaced the start of a song by apologizing for the

"frog in me t'roat", and he would swallow a pinch of salt to clear this disturbance.

Then off he'd start, first setting the scene or plot of the song and describing its main characters, and to make certain you followed the story as it evolved, he'd interrupt his own singing, from time to time, to explain or emphasize some point or other, or to inject a personal comment.

But the most striking thing about him was his love of the song and the obvious pleasure he got out of communicating that love to anyone interested in hearing him.

I've tried to record his "Lady Isabel" here as faithfully as I recall his singing -- and telling -- of its good story, and with the hope that it may communicate to others a small part of this very colorful character and the pleasure it gave me to hear him.

There was a Lord in Ambertown,
And he courted a lady gay,
And all he wanted of this pretty maid,
Was to take her sweet life away.

"Go get me some of your father's gold,
And some of your mother's fee,
And two of the best horses from your father's stall,
Where there stand thirty and three."

She got him some of her father's gold,
And some of her mother's fee,
And two of the best horses from her father's stall,
Where there stood thirty and three.

She mounted on the milk-white steed,
And he on the dapple grey,
And they rode till they came to the salt sea-shore,
Two hours before it was day.

"Light off, light off thy milk-white steed,
Light off, light off", said he,
"For it's six pretty maids I have drowned here,
And the seventh you shall be!"

"Take off, take off your silken clothes,
And give them here to me,
For methinks they are too rich and fine
For to rot in the salt, salt sea."

"Oh, if I must take off my silken clothes,
Then turn your face from me,
For 'Twould be a sin such a false villain
A naked woman to see.

The Lord, he laughed, as he turned about,
And he stood by a willow tree,
Then she threw her arms around his waist
And she pushed him into the sea.

"Lie there, lie there, you false-hearted man,
Lie there instead of me,
For it's six pretty maids you have drowned here,
Go keep them company!"

He rolled high and he rolled low,
Then to the maid he cried:
"Stretch forth your hand, my pretty little dear,
And I'll make you my bride."

"Lie there, lie there, you false-hearted man,
Lie there at the bottom of the sea,
For it's six pretty maids you have drowned here,
But the seventh has drowned thee!"

SIDE I, Band 7: JIGUE TENFANT -- (Tenfant's Jig)

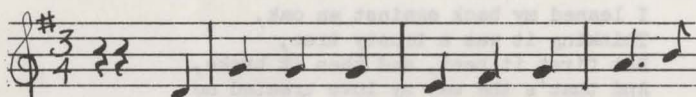
This is another of Joseph Allard's fiddle "pieces" and it gets its title from his father's rather unusual first name, "Tenfant", which is probably a corruption of "petit enfant" (sometimes abbreviated to "'tit-enfant"); or, perhaps, "ton enfant", which might have become "t'enfant" in abbreviated speech.

SIDE I, Band 8: THE FOOLISH OLD MAN

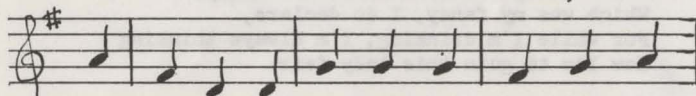
The story of an old man marrying a young maid, and being "found wanting", is the theme of many songs. This one is based on a song collected by Edith Fulton Fowke from a fine old traditional singer named O.J. Abbott, an Ontario counterpart of Nova Scotia's Nathan Hatt.

Half the verses given here, I confess, are my own. The rest, I adapted from Mr. Abbott's version, including a line which I used to make up the chorus. I've also altered Mr. Abbott's tune, somewhat.

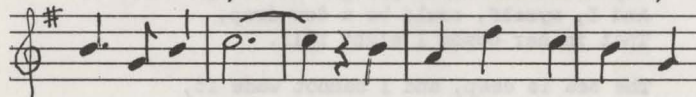
(With A Good Swing)



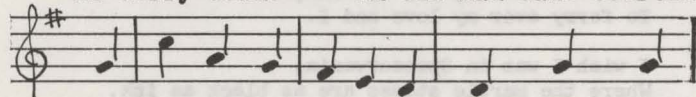
1. An old man came courtin' me, Fol-de-



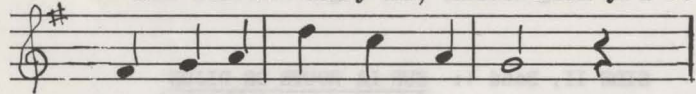
dol-doodle; an old man came courtin' me,



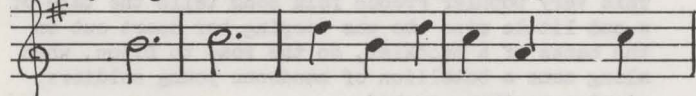
Hi-derry-down.--- An old man came courtin'



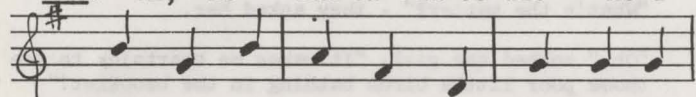
me all for to marry me; maids when you're



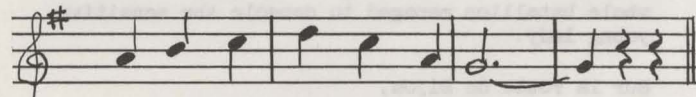
young never wed an old man!



Cho: Oh, he had no Fil-oo-dle - he'd



lost his Ding-doodle - 'Twas all in his



noodle, that foolish old man!

He said he was wealthy, Oh fol-de-dol-doodle,
He said he was wealthy, Oh hi-derry-down,
He said he was wealthy, and felt strong and healthy,
(Oh) maids, when you're young, never wed an old man.

(CHORUS)

He promised he'd give to me, Fol-de-dol-doodle,
He promised he'd give to me, Hi-derry-down,
He promised he'd give to me jewels and finery,
Maids, when you're young, never wed an old man.

(CHORUS)

Now, it's when we were married, Oh fol-de-dol-doodle,
It's when we were married, Oh hi-derry-down,
It's when we were married, I wished I had tarried,
(Oh) Maids, when you're young, never wed an old man.

(CHORUS)

The first night we went to bed, Fol-de-dol-doodle,
The first night we went to bed, Hi-derry-down,
The first night we went to bed, he lay's 'if he were
dead,
Maids, when you're young, never wed an old man.

(CHORUS)

As he lay there fast asleep, Fol-de-dol doodle,
As he lay there fast asleep, Hi-derry-down,
As he lay there fast asleep, out of bed I did
creep
Into the arms of a sporting young man.

(CHORUS)

Oh, how we did sport and play, Fol-de-dol-doodle,
Oh, how we did sport and play, Hi-derry-down,
Oh, how we did sport and play, until the break
of day,
Then I crept back to my lazy old man.

(CHORUS)

Oh, now all you brides to be, Fol-de-dol-doodle,
Oh, now all you brides to be, Hi-derry-down,
Oh, now all you brides to be, heed my advice to
thee:
Maids, when you're young, never wed an old man.

(CHORUS)

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SIDE I, Band 9: LA BASTRINGUE

A popular French-Canadian party song about another old man who was "found wanting", but in a somewhat different manner. All this old fellow wanted was to dance "Las Bastringue" with a young lady. But after a couple of turns, he found he wasn't quite up to the pace and tried to beg off by presuming his partner would get tired. And when this didn't work, he just had to give up.

Mademoiselle, voulez-vous danser La Bastringue,
Mademoiselle, voulez-vous danser,
La Bastringue est commencée.

Oui, Monsieur, je veux bien danser La Bastringue,
Oui, Monsieur, je veux bien danser
La Bastringue, si vous voulez.

Mademoiselle, il faut arrêter La Bastringue,
Mademoiselle, il faut arrêter,
Vous allez vous-fatiguer!

Non, Monsieur, j'aime trop danser La Bastringue,
Non, Monsieur, j'aime trop danser.
Je suis prêt' a r'commencer!

Mademoiselle, je n'peux plus danser La Bastringue,
Mademoiselle, je n'peux plus danser,
Car j'en ai des côrs aux pieds!

SIDE II, Band 1: THE KANGAROO

An unusual Nova Scotian variant of the well known
English folk song, "Carrion Crow". Collected by
Dr. Helen Creighton.

A kangaroo sat on an oak, To-me-inkum, kitty-kum,
ki-mo.
Watching a tailor mendin' his cloak, To-me-inkum
Etc.

CHORUS:
Kimaneero, kitty-kum-keero, kimaneero-kimo,
Ba-ba-ba-ba-billy-illy-inkum. Inkum-kitty-kum-kimo.

Bring me my arrow and my bow, To-me-inkum...Etc.
And I'll go shoot that kangaroo, To-me-inkum...Etc.

(CHORUS)

The tailor, he fired, but he missed his mark,
To-me-inkum...Etc.
And he shot his old sow right bang through the
heart...Etc.

(CHORUS)

Bring me some m'lasses in a spoon, To-me-inkum...Etc.
And I'll go heal that old sow's wound,...Etc.

(CHORUS)

But the old sow died and the bells did toll, To-me-
inkum...Etc.
And the little pigs prayed for the old sow's soul
...Etc.

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 2: CITADEL HILL

Another Nova Scotian favorite, also from the collection
of Dr. Helen Creighton. Citadel Hill is the site of an
old fort in the heart of Halifax.

One day in December, I'll never forget,
A charmin' young creature I happily met,
Her eyes shone like diamonds, she was dressed up to kill,
She went slippin' and trippin' down Citadel Hill,
And sing fol-de-rol, doodle-um, Fol-de-rol-doodle-um,
Fol-de-rol doodle-um, liddy-I-day

Says I, my fair creature, please do me excuse,
To take my arm, she did not refuse.
With her arm in mine, I sure felt a thrill,
And we made it all right down Citadel Hill
And sing fol-de-rol...Etc.

The very next mornin', to church we did go,
Which made people talk, as well you may know.
Said the priest, "Will you wed?" - Said I: "that we
will!"

And so we were buckled on Citadel Hill
And sing fol-de-rol...Etc.

So now we are married, and of children have three,
But me and the missus, we did not agree.
She called one Bridget, another one Bill,
But I call the eldest one "Citadel Hill"
And sing fol-de-rol...Etc.

Now, come all you young fellows, take warnin' by me,
If ever in need of a wife you may be,
I'll tell you the place where you'll get your fill
Just try slippin' and trippin' down Citadel Hill
And sing fol-de-rol...Etc.

SIDE II, Band 3: PEGGY GORDON

A very beautiful Canadian variant of the well known
British Ballad "Waly Waly", found in Nova Scotia by
Dr. Helen Creighton, with a rather surprising last
verse.

Oh, Peggy Gordon, you are my darling,
Come sit you down all on my knee,
And tell to me the very reason
Why I am slighted so by thee.

I'm deep in love, but I dare not show it,
My heart lies smothered all in my breast,
But it's not for you to let the whole world know it,
A troubled mind can know no rest.

I leaned my back against an oak,
Thinking it was a trusty tree,
But first it bent, and then it broke,
And that's the way my love treated me.

I leaned my head on a cask of brandy,
Which was my fancy, I do declare,
For while I'm drinking, I'm always thinking
How I'm to gain this lady fair.

I wish my love was one red rosey,
A-planted down near yon garden wall,
And I, myself, could be a dew-drop,
That in her bosom I might fall.

The sea is deep, and I cannot wade it,
And neither have I got wings to fly,
I wish I had a jolly boatman,
To ferry over my love and I.

I wish I was in Spencervania,
Where the marble stones are as black as ink,
Where the pretty little girls, they do adore me,
I'll sing no more till I get a drink!

SIDE II, Band 4: SUR LA ROUTE DE DIJON
(On the Road to Dijon)

This very popular French folk song tells the tale of
a sad little miss who was weeping her heart out on
the banks of a brooklet, on the road to Dijon, when
along came a battalion of handsome young soldiers,
singing as they marched.

"What's the matter?" - they asked her.

"Oh," sobbed the girl, "It makes me heartsick to see
those poor little birds bathing in the brooklet!"

And it seems -- according to the song -- that the
whole battalion managed to console the sensitive
young lady.

Sur la route de Dijon,
La belle digue-dig, la belle digue-don,
Il y'avait une fontaine,

Digue-don, digue-don-daine.
Il y'avait une fontaine, aux oiseaux, aux oiseaux!

Près d'elle un joli tendron,
La belle digun-dig', la belle digue-don,
Pleurait comme un' Madeleine,
Digue-don, digue-don-daine.
Pleurait comme un' Madeleine, aux oiseaux, aux-oiseaux!

Par là passe un batallion,
La belle digue-dig', la belle digue-don,
Qui chantait à perdre haleine,
Digue-don, digue-don-daine,
Qui chantait à perdre halaine, aux oiseaux, aux oiseaux!

Belle, comment vous-nomme-t-on?
La belle digue-dig', la belle digue-don,
On me nomme Marjolaine,
Digue-don, digue-don-daine.
On me nomme Marjolaine, aux oiseaux, aux oiseaux!

Marjolaine, qu'avez-vous donc?
La belle digue-dig', la belle digue-don.
Messieurs, j'ai beaucoup de peine,
Digue-don, digue-don-daine.
Messieurs, j'ai beaucoup de peine, aux oiseaux, aux
oiseaux!

Parait que tout l'batallion,
La belle digue'-dig', la belle-digue-don,
Consola la Marjolaine,
Digue-don, digue-don-daine,
Consola la Marjolaine, aux oiseaux, aux oiseaux!

SIDE II, Band 5: BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLICANS--1960
(Whitney Wood and Alan Mills)

Canadians, generally, have always been interested in American elections, although it's not often that this interest is manifested in satirical poetry, except, perhaps in the occasional college revue. However, the 1960 electoral race proved an exception, as Canadians followed the pre-election events and the voting, itself, with almost as much concern as their neighbors south of the border. The Republican campaign, particularly, inspired a Toronto businessman (a "dyed-in-the-wool" Conservative, by the way), to pen the following verses which he had printed and mailed to all his friends and acquaintances.

While the writer, who uses the pen name of "Whitney Wood" had no tune in mind when he wrote these verses, he very kindly gave me permission to fit his poem to that oft-borrowed Scottish favourite, "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean" (which it seems to fit admirably) and to add a chorus for general participation.

(With a Good Swing)

1. When the G. O. P. faithful did
gather - - - To give Richard Nixon the
nod, - - They seem'd to be all in a
lather - - - About Abraham Lincoln and
God! (Chor) And sing Tra--Lai Tra--Lai
About Abraham Lincoln and God! (Chor) (Optional)
Tra--Lai Tra (Lai-la-la-la) Lai About
(Optional) D.C.
Abraham Lincoln and God!

With delegates lined up for Nixon,
Like regular peas in a pod;
It seemed that they still were all fixin'
To vote Abraham Lincoln and God.

CHORUS:
And sing tra-la, tra-la,
To vote Abraham Lincoln and God.

Then they really toned up the mixture
With a Cabot from the home of the cod;
A mighty triumvirate fixture
With Abraham Lincoln and God.

CHORUS:
And sing tra-la, tra-la,
With Abraham Lincoln and God.

But this trio must set Nixon thinkin'
That there's somethin' gosh-awful odd:-
For they've sole claim to Cabot and Lincoln,
But how does God feel about God?

CHORUS:
And sing tra-la, tra-la,
But how does God feel about God?

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SIDE II, Band 6: LORD MACDONALD'S REEL

A medley of several favourite fiddle tunes that Jean Carignan learned from another old-time fiddler in the Gaspé region of Quebec.

SIDE II, Band 7: TI-JEAN AND THE DEVIL

This is a narrative told in the folk-tale tradition of Quebec, which boasts many old-time "raconteurs" (story-tellers), although this tale is told in English -- albeit with a French-Canadian accent -- and Jean Carignan's excellent fiddling is used to highlight the story.

SIDE II, Band 8: AH, SI MON MOINE VOULAIT DANSER!
(Oh, If My Monk Would Dance!)

A widely popular French-Canadian party song, in which a young lady tries to entice a monk to dance with her, offering such inducements as a "capuchon" (cowl), a "ceinturon" (sash), a "chapelet" (skull-cap) and a "psautier" (psalter), and she ends up by saying that if her monk hadn't taken a vow of poverty, "many other things would I give him."

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser! (2)
On capuchon je lui donnerais! (2)
Danse, mon moine, danse! Tu n'entends pas la danse!
Tu n'entends pas mon moulin, lon-la!
Tu n'entends pas mon moulin marcher!

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser! (2)
Un ceinturon je lui donnerais! (2)
Danse, mon moine...(Etc.)

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser! (2)
Un chapelet je lui donnerais! (2)
Danse, mon moine...(Etc.)

Ah, si mon moine voulait danser! (2)
Un beau psautier je lui donnerais! (2)
Danse, mon moine...(Etc.)

S'il n'avait fait voeu de pauvreté! (2)
Bien d'autres chos' je lui donnerais! (2)
Danse, mon moine...(Etc.)