The Klan in Canada

By Susan Jacoby

CALGARY, Alberta — An apparently thriving Ku Klux Klan has sprung up in this booming oil town on the Canadian prairie where nearly everyone except the Indians seems to be white, but it has hardly anyone to be against.

The Klan has more than 100 and less than 1,000 members. Calgary, a rapidly growing city of a half a million surrounded by rich soil and cattle country, would seem to provide fertile ground for odd political fringe groups.

It has one of the largest American expatriate colonies in the world. Between 30,000 and 60,000 Americans, many of them Texans lured by the prospect of profits in...
Imperial Wizard Tearlach Mac a’Phearson: “I am admittedly a racist, but not a bigot.”
the important Canadian oil fields, are living in the area. Non-WASP ethnic groups are becoming increasingly important in local politics, as they are in many other areas of Canada. Calgary has substantial numbers of Ukrainians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs and Germans. All are welcome in the Alberta Klan.

Mac a'Phearson acknowledges that the Klan's strong anticomunist—"I prefer to think of it as pro-religion"—position may be attractive to people who were born or have relatives in Eastern Europe.

The oil money, population growth and changing ethnic patterns all make for a fluid political situation. "Calgary has become a California suburb as far as attracting crackpots goes," says Mayor Rod Sykes. While both the American clique and the WASP establishment Calgarians are opposed to the Klan, though probably not because they disagree with its positions. In addition to being anticommunist, the Klan is also against the government of Liberal Party Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Mac a'Phearson says he plans to speak at political rallies in connection with the national elections scheduled this fall.

"Calgary was known far years as the deep South of Canada," Mayor Sykes said. "But we have unfashionable and fashionable bigotry, and the Klan isn't fashionable."