The future is now

“Canada has changed, continues to change, must always be prepared to change,” wrote this magazine’s editor in the February/March 1977 issue. David Maclellan’s words aptly sum up the national mood in the 1960s and 1970s. It was a period of lightning transformation, as our young nation turned 100.

These were decades of rapid scientific advancement. The magazine offered numerous features on space, radar and nuclear technology and on the export of Canadian engineering know-how to developing nations. When Canada became the third country in the world to enter the space age, with the launch of the Alouette-I satellite in 1962, it merited a cover story.

The magazine also put a spotlight on developments in Canadian universities, noting that “research points towards the future, not to the past.” It was a period of dramatic change on campuses: full-time undergraduate enrolment rose from 100,000 in 1960 to 300,000 in 1970.

There was perhaps no greater expression of our futuristic goals than Expo 67 in Montreal. Canada welcomed the world and received international acclaim for its avant-garde structures representing an increasingly modern and sophisticated society.

The magazine was also evolving. In 1973, The Royal Canadian Geographical Society hired its first professional journalist as editor. Among other changes, David Maclellan shortened the magazine’s title to Canadian Geographic in 1978, to reflect a more populist approach to geography.

As he noted, this was a tumultuous time, when “Canadians urgently need to understand their country and to find agreement about its ideals and aspirations.”

Mary Vincent