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**BUILDING  
THE  
CANADIAN NATION**





*I*N the course of this journey I have seen the old, settled parts of the Dominion which have a long history behind them, and I have seen the newer parts, of which the first settlement is still within the memory of living man. When I saw the broad plains, changed by the pioneers to the uses of man, and the mighty mountain ranges through which they cut their roads, I began to understand the qualities of the Canadian people.

For most of you, the present task must be the development of the heritage already secured by those who have gone before. Nevertheless, in this vast land, you have also still before you the rewards of pioneering and the prizes of exploration. Here, on the shores of the Pacific, I can realize the position which Canada occupies. Her Atlantic windows look to Europe, her Pacific windows to Asia and the Far East. As science reduces the barriers of space, this country will become a thoroughfare between two hemispheres. Some day the peoples of the world will come to realize that prosperity lies in co-operation, and not in conflict. With the dawn of that brighter day, I look to Canada playing an increasingly important part in furthering friendly relations between the East and the West. With the widening of her role of international interpretation will come corresponding benefits to mankind.

*From the address broadcast by His Majesty King George VI, to the Canadian people at Victoria on May 30, 1939.*

BUILDING  
THE  
CANADIAN NATION

*by*

GEORGE W. BROWN

Professor of History at the University of Toronto

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## FOREWORD

The panorama of Canada's history has many threads, but no simple, easily discerned pattern. Every province, every section, every community has its own history, deserving of careful and appreciative study. Nevertheless, the fact that Canada exists today is proof that there is a Canadian history which is greater than the sum of these particular histories. It is with this deep conviction that this book has been written. If it fulfils even in small degree the aspiration which lay behind it, its purpose will have been served.

Many people have contributed toward its preparation—some, indeed, without knowing it. Of these the chief are Canada's historians, who have produced in the past twenty years the greatest output of scholarly work in the history of Canadian historical writing. It is, in fact, not too much to say that in scores of books and articles they have rewritten Canadian history. No general book would be satisfactory which failed to incorporate the broad results of this research. I have not hesitated, therefore, to draw on it wherever possible, hoping that this expression of appreciation would compensate in part for the lack of particular acknowledgments which I should gladly have made had it been possible to include numerous footnotes in a book of this type.

To the following I wish to make special acknowledgment for reading parts of the manuscript and offering valuable suggestions: Professor D. G. Creighton of the University of Toronto; Principal V. L. Denton of the Provincial Normal School, Victoria, B.C.; Dr. C. W. Jefferys of Toronto; the Abbé A. Maheux of Laval University; Professor A. S. Morton of the University of Saskatchewan; Major C. P. Stacey; and Mr. R. G. Riddell of the University of Toronto, who gave assistance in many ways which it is impossible to indicate here. A particular debt also is owing to some twenty High School teachers who consented to use parts of the

book in an experimental form. From their classes, and from certain other High School students who shall be nameless but who exercised their prerogative without fear or favour, came a number of illuminating comments. To three High School teachers who contributed directly to the preparation of the book I am under special obligation: to Miss Mary Campbell who prepared the reading references with a special view to the interests of High School students; and to Mr. E. P. Ray and Miss Anna Wright.

Pains have been taken to obtain illustrations which are directly related to the textual material. Most generous assistance has been given in this connection by the Public Archives of Canada and in particular by Dr. James F. Kenney, of the Research and Publicity Department; by the Toronto Public Libraries; and by Mr. Clifford Wilson, editor of *The Beaver*. The articles and illustrations of the Canadian Geographical Journal, which already has a place in a great many school libraries, have been invaluable. Individual acknowledgments in these and other cases have been made throughout the book, and I trust that none has been inadvertently omitted since my inquiries have been met on every hand with unfailing courtesy.

I am pleased also to make the following acknowledgments here: to the National Gallery of Canada and Mrs. Clarence Gagnon for permission to use the picture "Village in the Laurentian Mountains"; to the Canadian National Railways for permission to use the painting by Fergus Kyle; to the Macmillan Company of Canada for the maps on page 368, which are taken from Professor Chester Martin's "*Dominion Lands*" Policy; to Dr. C. W. Jefferys and the Ryerson Press for the illustrations on pages 264 and 268.

Finally, I should like to record my appreciation of the co-operation received from the publishers who not only consented to the preparation of an experimental edition, but also spared no effort in meeting numerous other requests.

GEORGE W. BROWN

The University  
of Toronto

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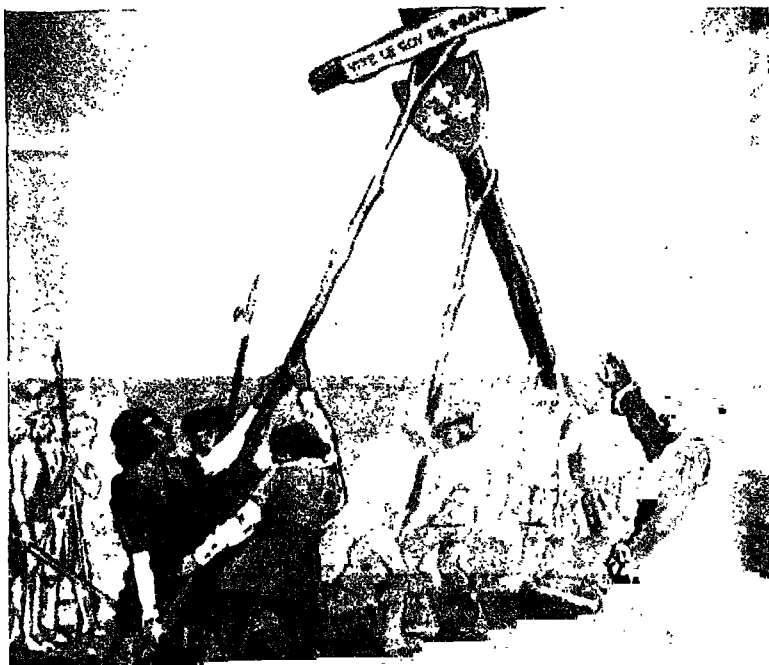
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**PART I**  
**Europe Discovers A New World**



*(from a painting by Charles W. Simpson, R.C.A.)*

Jacques Cartier on the shore of the New  
World.

# Part I

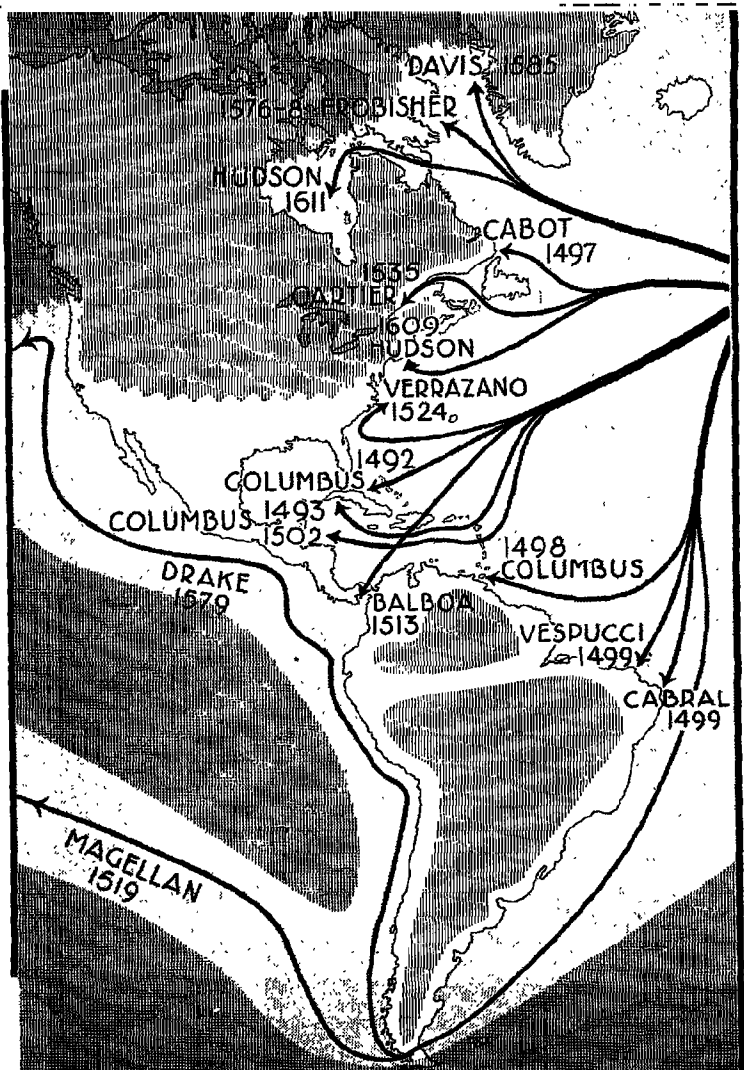
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## Europe Discovers A New World

With all our present knowledge of geography and peoples, it is not difficult for us to draw a map of the world as it was in the fifteenth century and mark on it the great centres of civilization at that time. What is not so easy to understand is how these regions could have developed for centuries, even thousands of years, knowing little or nothing of each other. But so it was. Europe, hugging the Mediterranean, was utterly unaware of America's Mayan and Aztec Empires, and equally ignorant of the ancient civilizations of China and India in the Far East. Europeans traded and fought with the Mohammedans of North Africa, and through Arab merchants received a trickle of spices, drugs, and other rare products; but what the sources of these precious articles were, they neither knew nor apparently cared. For almost a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe was too concerned with its own problems and conflicts to look far beyond its narrow limits.

Then, about the thirteenth century, many signs of change, very slight at first, began to appear: the Azores and Canaries were discovered; the Crusades encouraged commerce and a new interest in the East; the first daring travellers ventured across Asia, most famous of all Marco Polo, who by 1275 reached China and later returned to write of its marvels. Soon improvements in ships and navigation made possible longer and more dangerous voyages. Early in the fifteenth century, Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal undertook his long quest for a route around Africa. For thirty years his tiny vessels crept south along the coast, and when he died in 1460, the search for a sea route to the Far East was well begun.

There was, however, another possibility, a westward voyage around the globe. This path to the Orient's treasures lay open to any bold spirit who would face the Atlantic, and someone was certain to hazard its perils.



EUROPEANS DISCOVER AMERICA

## Chapter I

### America's Heroic Age of Maritime Exploration

ON the morning of Friday, August 3, 1492, three little ships, the largest only about 60 feet long, left the Spanish harbour of Palos. Commanded by Christopher Columbus they were embarked on one of the most famous voyages in history. Something of that voyage is known to us all—its weeks of fear, its suspense, its murmurings and threatened mutiny. But Columbus had set out to find the fabulously rich countries of the Far East, and he would not be turned aside. At last, on the evening of October 11, a light was seen and next morning Columbus landed with his crew on a little West Indian island, now known as Watling's Island but which he named San Salvador. America was, as we say, discovered.

**The Early "Discoveries" of America.** There had, of course, been earlier "discoveries", how many we do not know. In the Middle Ages European fishing vessels may sometimes have been driven across the Atlantic, for there were in medieval Europe vague stories of lands lying far to the west. Of one early "discovery" we can be sure, that of the Norsemen. In the ninth and tenth centuries these hardy adventurers from the Scandinavian Peninsula seemed to be driven to all points of the compass by an almost explosive force. They were the terror of Europe, making journeys and warlike raids into Russia, the Mediterranean, the British Isles, and France where to this day they have left their name in the province of Normandy. It is not surprising that they reached Iceland, where they made a permanent settlement in the tenth century,

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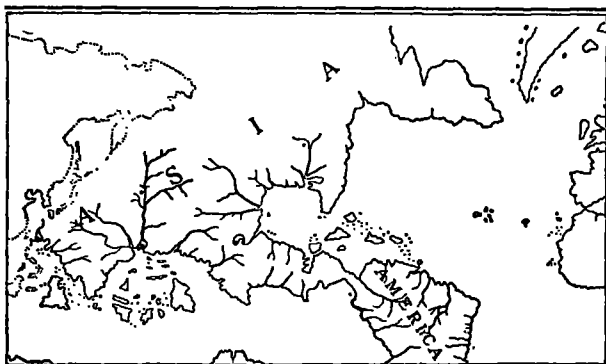
*The map on the opposite page shows points at which some of the sixteenth century explorers came into contact with the coast of North and South America. The arrows do not indicate actual routes of voyages, but they show how the explorers, in their desire to reach the Far East, kept trying to go around or through an obstacle that turned out to be two great continents. The shaded portions suggest the regions still unknown in 1610.*

and also Greenland. From Greenland it was an easy step to America. In the year 1000, according to a Norse tale or saga, Leif Eriksson was blown off his course, and found an unknown land to the west. Other voyages followed, and apparently Norsemen got as far south as the Gulf of St. Lawrence, perhaps even farther, but no permanent settlement was made. For reasons that we do not know, the Greenland settlement mysteriously disappeared in the thirteenth century, and so the curtain fell again between Europe and America. Only with the voyage of Columbus did Europe really discover the New World.

**First Steps in Mapping the New World.** Following his spectacular success of 1492, Columbus made three other voyages in which he reached the mainland of South and Central America, and outlined part of the coast. His search for the rich kingdoms of the Far East ended in failure and disappointment; but, although he did not live to realize it, he accomplished something far more important than he had set out to do. He began a record of maritime exploration which put America on the map of the world. In little more than a century, the whole coastline of both continents was made known except for the portions west of Hudson Bay and north of California. Spaniards, Portuguese, English, French, and Dutch all shared in what has been truly called America's heroic age of maritime exploration. The vessels were small, mere cockleshells according to our present standards, the seas uncharted, the dangers of currents, winds, and ice unknown. Of many of these daring voyages we have vivid descriptions especially in the records collected by the famous Elizabethan geographer, Richard Hakluyt. The story of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's death was recorded, for example, by his companions who weathered the violent storm which swamped Gilbert's frigate in 1583. "*The General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out to us, We are as near to heaven by sea as by land! Suddenly, our watch cried the General is cast away, for in that moment the frigate was devoured and swallowed up of the sea.*"

**Exploring the Approaches to Canada.** Among these voyages several have a special interest for Canada. First among the early explorers in Canadian waters were John Cabot and Jacques

Cartier. It was they who discovered Canada's eastern gateway, the gulf of St. Lawrence and the great river which flows into it. John Cabot, or Caboto, an Italian sea-captain like Columbus, had come to England hoping to obtain support for a voyage of discovery. He got only one small vessel, the *Mathew*, and eighteen men, but in 1497, with a letter of authority from King Henry VII, he set out across the Atlantic. He was at sea more than fifty days, and it is uncertain where he landed; probably it was on the northern extremity of Cape Breton Island. He believed that he had found a route to China, and his return to Bristol was greeted with intense excitement. Friends gathered around seeking his favour, and Henry, who never had a reputation for generosity, gave him £10. A second voyage was quickly organized for the next year, but we are not sure what parts of the mainland coast were touched. Two results of Cabot's voyages are important.



THE "NEW" WORLD

This drawing from a map of 1531 shows how vague were the ideas of America even forty years after Columbus had discovered the New World. America is here pictured as a peninsula attached to Asia. The dotted line gives the correct position of the coast of Asia.

He was the first to touch the American coast north of the Gulf of Mexico, and he established an English claim in that region. He was the first, also, to describe Newfoundland's teeming fishing banks. "That sea," he said, "is covered with fishes, which are



caught not only with the net but with baskets." Fishermen from Western Europe soon followed Cabot to the fishing banks, but they were not interested in exploration and for over thirty years after Cabot's voyage no other explorer visited the St. Lawrence region.

Cartier made his first voyage in 1534. He hoped to find precious metals and a route to the Far East or at least to claim new lands for his king. Going through the Strait of Belle Isle he explored the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and on July 24, 1534, planted a great cross on the shore of the Bay of Gaspé. He found the natives friendly and eager to trade and took two of them home to learn the French language.

On his second voyage, in 1535, Cartier sailed into the St. Lawrence itself and was thrilled by the sight of the river, the greatest, he said, that had ever been seen. At the spot where Quebec now stands he found the Indian village of Stadacona, and was welcomed by its chief Donnacona and his people. The Indians helped him to go up to Hochelaga, where Montreal stands today. There the people met him as if he were a god. He climbed the mountain, Mount Royal he named it, and looked out toward the west. He could see the rapids just above the island, the Lachine—the China—rapids, as they were later called, for it was many years before explorers gave up the idea that the river might lead by a short route to the Far East. Cartier stayed during the winter at Stadacona. It was a hard experience, and the party might all have perished with scurvy, which was a strange disease to them, had they not learned from the Indians how to make a medicine by boiling the leaves and bark of a certain kind of tree—probably white



Postage stamp issued to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Cartier's first voyage.

spruce. In eight days a whole tree was used up. "Had all the doctors of Louvain and Montpellier been there, with all the drugs of Alexandria," wrote Cartier, "they could not have done so much in a year as did this tree in eight days."

In spite of this experience Cartier undertook later to found a colony, the first attempted by France in the New World. With him was associated another Frenchman, Roberval. In May, 1541, Cartier set sail from France with five ships carrying food and supplies for two years. A short distance above Quebec a fort was built, but almost immediately trials and problems beset the little colony. Many of the party were utterly unsuited to pioneering. The Indians became hostile; and Roberval, who was delayed in



(Public Archives)

### COD FISHING AT NEWFOUNDLAND

This drawing from Moll's Map of the World is one of the earliest illustrations of the methods of the cod fishery. (A) the fishermen's clothing; (B) The line; (C) The manner of fishing; (D) Cleaning the fish; (E) Trough for cleaned fish; (F) Salt boxes; (G) The manner of carrying the fish; (H) Cleansing fish; (I) A press to extract oil from cod livers; (K) Cask for water and waste; (L) Cask to receive the oil; (M) Drying fish.

starting from France, only arrived in time to meet Cartier's ships as they were returning home. Roberval's party stayed for a time, but they too had to give up. Founding settlements was a far more serious problem than anyone realized. Indeed long after Cartier's time the same mistake of under-estimating difficulties was made over and over again in various parts of America. Cartier's fame rests on his explorations, not his attempt at colonization. In his three voyages he explored the Gulf of St. Lawrence; discovered and named the great river, Canada's later highway to the west; and, by no means least, left us a fine description of his work and all that he had seen. "Jacques Cartier embodied in himself what was highest in the spirit of his age. He shows us the daring of the adventurer with nothing of the dark cruelty by which such daring was often disfigured."<sup>2</sup>

No French settlement was made on the shores of Nova Scotia or the St. Lawrence for more than sixty years after Cartier's voyages, but the Gulf of St. Lawrence was by no means deserted. Fishermen from Spain, Portugal, France, and England continued to swarm to the fishing banks. The names of the men and of their little boats are unknown, but an English writer in 1578 said that over one hundred Spanish vessels and also many from other countries were coming each year. These fishermen began to trade for furs with Indians along the coast, and out of this trade there later developed the first successful settlements.

From Cabot and Cartier let us turn to another voyage which has a place in Canadian history because it was the first contact of British explorers with the Pacific coast. Sir Francis Drake was one of those Elizabethan sea-dogs who were not content to see Spain monopolize trade with the West Indies and Central America. In 1577 he sailed from Plymouth for South America, and after a most skilful piece of seamanship, managed to get through the dangerous passage around the Horn into the Pacific. He caught the Spaniards on the west coast of South America completely by surprise, captured a ship-load of booty, and, feeling that it would be too dangerous to sail back into the Atlantic, decided to finish his voyage by rounding the globe. As a beginning he sailed north-

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Leacock, in *The Mariner of St. Malo*.

ward to about the present site of San Francisco where he claimed the coast for his queen and named it New Albion. Drake's exploit stirred the imagination of all England. Far more than the voyages



(John Ross Robertson Collection)

#### HUDSON'S LAST SHIP, THE *Discovery*

This picture is based on detail supplied by the replica of Hudson's preceding ship, the *Half Moon*, in which he discovered the Hudson River, 1609.

of Cabot, it was a real beginning of England's interest in the New World.

One other approach to the continent has a place in Canada's history, that of Hudson Bay. In Elizabeth's reign there developed a keen interest in finding a route around the northern end of North America to the Far East, and so the search for the North West Passage began. Men then, and long afterwards, believed that

there must be a useable route in that part of the world. Frobisher and Davis, two of Elizabeth's great captains, began the search, but more important still was the voyage of Hudson, whose tragic story is famous in the history of this period. Hudson made several earlier explorations to various parts of the world, on one of which he discovered and ascended the river which bears his name. It was in 1610 that he found his way into Hudson Bay, sailed down its east coast, and wintered on the shore of James Bay in the heart of the present Canadian northland. In the next year he was treacherously abandoned by some of his crew who sailed back to England where they were brought to justice. Hudson was never seen again, and his exact fate is unknown, but he had found a northern gateway into the continent which was destined to play a stirring part in Canada's later history.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

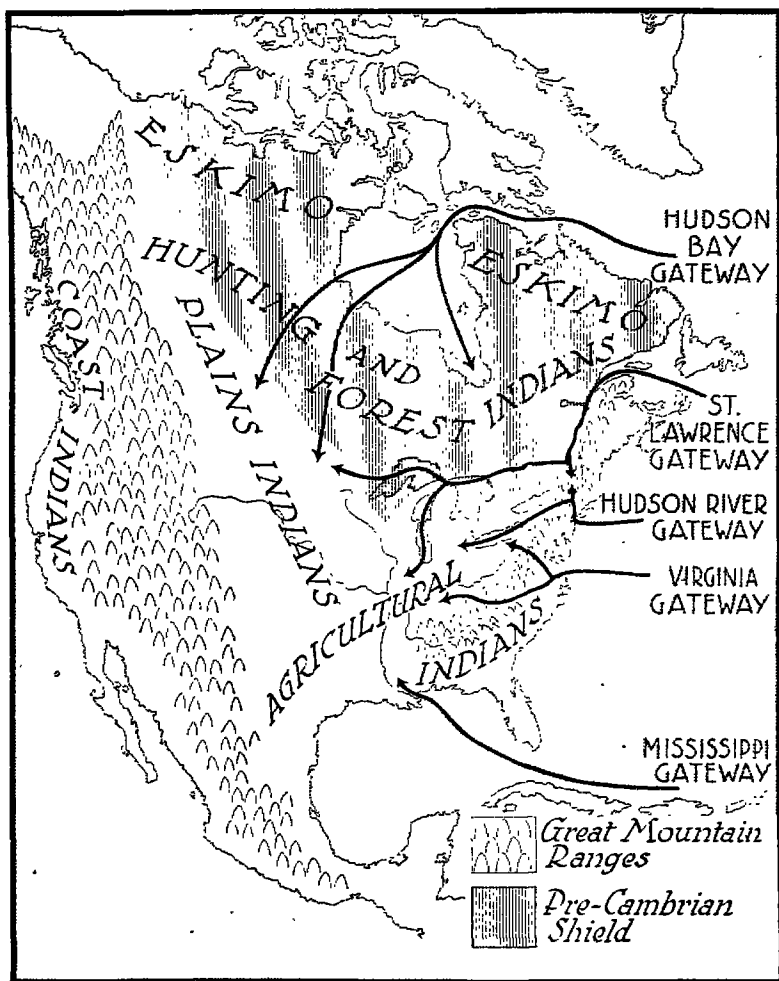
The most valuable reading references are the log books and journals of the explorers. These are difficult to procure, except in the larger libraries, but you will find selections from such material in the source book *Readings in Canadian history* by George W. Brown. In the "Chronicles of Canada" series, books by Stephen Leacock deal with this period. *The dawn of Canadian history* sets the stage for our study, *The mariner of St. Malo* is a biography of Cartier, and *Adventurers of the far north* includes an account of Hudson. If you like to read about history in story form, you will enjoy *Columbus sails* by C. Walter Hodges. Columbus's first voyage is there described by people who knew him. The material in Esther Averill's beautifully illustrated book, *The voyages of Jacques Cartier* is taken from original records. Hudson's fate is dramatized in two short plays, *Mutiny* from *Five plays for pioneers* by Harold Morland, and *Henry Hudson and other plays* by Merrill Denison.

## *Chapter II*

### North America and its Native Peoples

**W**HAT kind of new world was it that Columbus had discovered, and what could Europeans make of it? This was the question which the early explorers of America were really asking themselves even if they did not put it into so many words. At first America was an unwelcome mystery—a barrier lying across the road to the Far East, which the explorers wanted to get around or go through as speedily as possible. They had, of course, no idea how formidable the barrier really was. The voyage around the south end of South America was to prove long and very hazardous; that around the north end practicably impossible. To get through the continents was scarcely easier than to get around them. Even the first journey across the Isthmus of Panama, only forty-five miles, took the Spanish explorer Balboa eighteen days. Europeans were forced to conquer the Americas slowly, and in doing so they learned to make their homes in them.

**The Geography of North America.** In North America geography in many ways favoured European settlement, but did not make it easy. The climate along the east coast though similar to that of western Europe was sufficiently different to require many changes in the early settlers' ideas about houses and clothing. This was especially true as far north as the Gulf and River St. Lawrence. The climate of America also encouraged Europeans to bring over many grains, fruit trees, and vegetables on which they relied for food, but they had to do much experimenting to find what plants would flourish in the new environment. At the same time they found in America potatoes, Indian corn, and other useful plants which they had previously not known. They also brought animals. The North American Indians had no domestic animal but the dog. Horses, cattle, pigs and sheep were all brought from Europe in the early days of settlement.



### THE GEOGRAPHY AND INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA

*This map shows the important physical features of North America which provided both obstacles and gateways to explorers when they tried to make their way into the interior of the continent. A great barrier of mountainous or rocky country shut them off from the Central Plain. Gateways were found through which this Central Plain could be reached. Still greater mountains had to be crossed before later explorers reached the Pacific.*

*The map suggests also the chief types of Indians in North America. Each type was adapted in its habits of living to the region in which it lived. There were many tribal divisions within the large groups suggested here.*

Climate was not the only fact of American geography which provided both advantages and obstacles to European settlers. Along the eastern edge of the continent was a coastal plain stretching inland for a hundred miles or more. The Maritime Provinces of Canada are really the northern extension of this plain. The coastal plain's many rivers with their valleys were an aid to settlement, but its dense forests were certainly an obstacle to the pioneer. Behind this coastal plain a mountain barrier—the Alleghanies or Appalachian Barrier—stretched for hundreds of miles in a north-eastern, south-western direction. The mountainous country of northern New Brunswick and Gaspé Peninsula is the northern end of this Barrier.

Beyond this Barrier, and extending for hundreds of miles from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic circle, lies North America's Great Central Plain—an enormous area of forest, prairie, semi-desert, and tundra. It is drained by a network of river systems, three of them among the longest in the world, the Mackenzie, the Mississippi,



(R. C. A. F. photo)

This air picture gives an excellent idea of the lake and forest country of the Precambrian Shield. The international boundary has been marked on the picture which was taken at a point west of Lake Superior.



and the St. Lawrence whose Great Lakes are unique among the world's inland waterways. Rivalling in importance the size of these river systems is the fact that at many points they come so close together that explorers were able, by short portages, to pass easily from one river system to another, until they penetrated to all parts of the continent. The interior of no other continent offered equal opportunity for the rapid extension of trade and settlement.

Only a few routes led easily, however, to the Great Central Plain from the Atlantic seaboard. On the south is the gateway of the Mississippi. Farthest north lies Hudson Bay, frozen for half the year, but having the advantage of leading into the very heart of the northland, the continent's richest fur-bearing area. Around Hudson Bay, however, there stretches like an enormous horseshoe, another of the continent's barriers to settlement. Called by geologists the Precambrian Shield, it is a vast area of rocky country covered with forests and with a multitude of lakes and streams. Its importance in Canada's history would be hard to over-estimate. Abounding in minerals, it has become a source of great wealth during the last generation, but for over two centuries the trapper and fur trader ruled there supreme, and the very characteristics which made it a fur-trader's empire made it also an obstacle to the settler.

Emptying into the north Atlantic is the St. Lawrence River which also leads into the heart of the continent. In its lower stretches it is crowded between the Precambrian Shield and the Appalachian Barrier. Its valley was narrow and uninviting for the pioneer settler, but to the west it broadens out into the basin of the Great Lakes and the Central Plain. At the river's mouth lies the Gulf, with its rich fishing banks, and the island of Newfoundland which stretches out towards Europe only some 1600 miles by direct flight from the British Isles.

Finally, there are the routes through the Appalachian Barrier, among which the easiest is that by way of the Hudson River. North from it Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River lead directly to the St. Lawrence, and west from the Hudson the valley of the Mohawk opens a road to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. This Hudson gateway does not lie within Canada, but it has played a

great part in her history by rivalling the St. Lawrence River as a route from the Atlantic seaboard to the Great Lakes. Farther south, are passes which lead through the mountains to the Ohio valley or to the Mississippi. These mountain roads have not been so important in Canadian history as has the Hudson River, but at times they too have played a part.



THE HUDSON RIVER GATEWAY

This view on the Hudson River shows vividly how the river cuts a path through the highlands.

Far towards the west coast, lies the continent's greatest barrier, the Rocky Mountains. Not until the end of the eighteenth century did explorers from Canada and the United States succeed in crossing them. Before that time Spanish and English explorers had reached the west coast by sea, and Russian traders had crossed from Siberia to Alaska.

Before leaving this quick survey of North America, we cannot help wondering how the early explorers would have prophesied that the continent would be divided into countries and between peoples of various languages. They might have made many guesses. They might have predicted, for instance, that the region west of the Rockies would be one country, and that the rest of the continent would be divided into several, but surely they would scarcely have foretold what has actually happened. Two countries only occupy the continent north of the Gulf of Mexico, and the smaller of them

in population, Canada, seems in many ways to have been built in defiance of geography. Its far-flung provinces are separated into sections not only by distance but by formidable natural obstacles—the northern extension of the Appalachian barrier, the Precambrian Shield, and the Rockies.

To have built, in the face of these difficulties, a nation stretching over half a continent is one of the great achievements of modern history.

**North America's Native Peoples.** Let us turn for a moment to the native peoples of North America—the Indians, as we have come to call them. Next to geography, they were the most important influence affecting the white man's early efforts at settlement. It is now agreed that the ancestors of the Indians came from Asia by way of Bering Sea, but how many migrations there were, or how

long ago they took place, it is impossible to say with accuracy. When Columbus arrived the Indians must have been in America many centuries, for they had developed widely varied types of life and society. There were over three hundred Indian languages spoken in North America. Wherever they lived, the Indians showed remarkable ability to adapt themselves to the climate and nature of the country. They had no iron, few metal implements, and had to do all their work by hand labour, but with the means which they had at their disposal they showed great cleverness in making use of their resources.

The Indians may be divided into several important types



AWAITING THE SEAL'S RETURN

Eskimo at a blow hole in the ice. This picture, taken from a photograph, is excellent for the details of equipment and costume.

according to the ways in which they lived. Those throughout almost the whole of present day Canada lived by hunting and fishing. In the far north the Eskimos, who came originally from the same Asiatic stock as the Indians, had been forced to develop a very special kind of life suitable to a region with an extreme climate and almost no vegetation. South of the Eskimos, in the vast wooded region that stretched from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, were a great many tribes who also depended on hunting and fishing although their life in the forest was in many ways very different from that of the Eskimos. With their canoes and temporary shelters they moved from place to place in their hunting grounds and often lived from hand to mouth.

In the prairie region of present-day Saskatchewan and Alberta were tribes of hunting Indians of another type. They depended almost entirely on the buffalo. We know little about these Indians until the eighteenth century. By that time they had obtained horses, just how or when it is uncertain; but we do know that



PLAINS INDIANS HUNTING BUFFALO

(Public Archives)

This picture illustrates well the dependence of the Plains Indians on horses. The buffalo which roamed North America is more accurately named the bison.

horses were first brought to America by the Spaniards in the early sixteenth century, and from Mexico they spread northward. The coming of the horse revolutionized the life of the Plains Indians: it almost gave them wings, and enabled them to hunt the buffalo over great stretches of open country as they could never have done on foot.

On the Pacific coast the Indians seemed more fortunate than many of those in the interior because the climate was mild and



(Royal Ontario Museum)

#### CREE INDIANS ON THE MARCH

Note the travois for carrying loads; even the dog has one. This scene and those on pages 15 and 151 are from paintings by Paul Kane, who travelled in the West from 1845-8, and whose pictures are among our best sources of information for life in that region a century and more ago.

the abundance of fish gave them a sure supply of food. They depended on salmon in particular, and on crabs, clams, and other crustaceans. Some of them did deep-sea fishing, and even hunted whales in large dugout canoes made laboriously by hand from huge cedar logs.

From the Great Lakes to the northern part of South America, most of the Indians depended in part on agriculture. These agricultural Indians were also of several types, and were divided

into a very great number of tribes. Those in what is now the eastern half of the United States were semi-agricultural: they had pumpkins, squashes, beans, Indian corn, and in some places wild rice and other plants, which gave them a comparatively sure food supply. Their implements and utensils, such as stone axes, woven baskets, and clay or wooden vessels, were rude but often made with great ingenuity. The semi-agricultural Indians stretched north into



(Royal Ontario Museum)

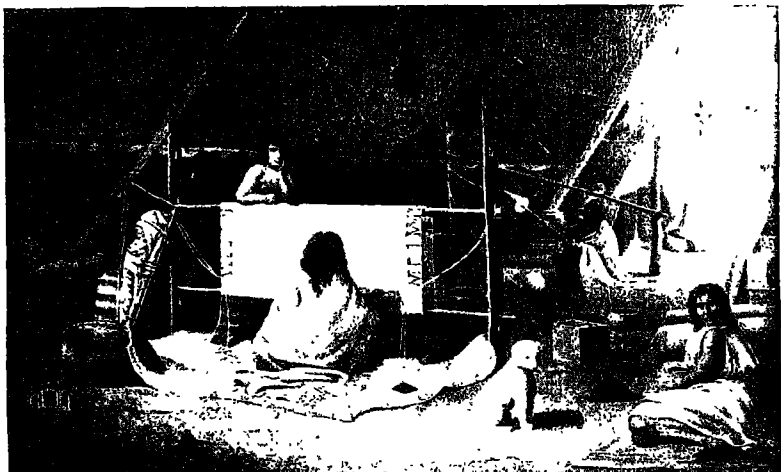
A West Coast Indian ceremonial mask and a fishing trap. Masks, like the one shown here which represents a beaver, were used in ceremonial dances.

present-day Ontario as far as Georgian Bay, and among them were tribes which became famous in Canadian history such as the Hurons, who lived around Lake Simcoe, and the Iroquois, who lived south of Lake Ontario. Their villages consisted of "long houses". The "long house" was made of a wood frame covered with bark, and was divided on each side into several cubicles, each occupied by a family, while down the centre ran a common passageway in which the fires were built.

In Mexico and Central America the agricultural Indians reached a level far beyond that of the semi-agricultural Indians. They must have taken many centuries in achieving it. They had no iron, few metal implements, and, astonishingly enough, never invented the wheel or wheeled vehicles. But they used a form of writing, invented a precise calendar, and had many accomplishments far above the level of most primitive peoples. The empires of the Mayas and the Aztecs have vanished, but imposing ruins

which have been uncovered in recent years give some idea of their cities and the life lived in them.

Even this brief sketch of the various types of Indians in North America will help us to understand more clearly the part played by them in the early history of exploration and settlement. From the Indians the fur trader and the pioneer learned innumerable lessons which made life in the New World easier: the use of many American plants, the woodlore of the guide; the habits of the fur-



(Royal Ontario Museum)

#### PACIFIC COAST INDIANS AT HOME

White dogs of the kind shown were kept for their hair out of which blankets were woven.

bearing animals; the pattern of waterway and forest paths that led through the continent; the value of the snowshoe in the deep snow of the forests; the secrets of the canoe so light that it could be portaged by one or two men, so strong that it could carry a heavy load through a dangerous rapid. We have seldom recognized the extent of the Indian's influence on the white man.

The contacts between the two races had, however, a less happy side. The coming of the white man was a violent shock to the Indian's way of living. The European brought his metal imple-

ments and utensils, his well-woven blankets, and many other objects which seem harmless enough; but they were so new, and so superior to anything the Indian had, that they seriously upset his habits of life, gave him new desires and ambitions, and threw him into fresh rivalries and bitter quarrels with his neighbours.



R.O.M.A. 93.

Group in the Royal Ontario Museum showing Iroquois Indians in front of a Long House. The figures are shown making fire, hollowing out a piece of wood by putting coals into it, basket weaving, pounding corn, tipping an arrow with flint.

Among much that was good the white man also brought influences that were injurious and destructive; new weapons especially the gun which added to the violence of Indian warfare, new diseases such as smallpox, new temptations such as liquor. Neither Indians nor white men in their first contacts realized all this, but in looking back we can understand something of the drama which was beginning to unfold when the Indians first met the European newcomers on the shores of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Since geography and history are closely connected, you may find chapters in your geography text that form a link with this one. If you can visit a museum, you may find exhibits illustrating the geography of Canada or the life of the Indians. Records left by explorers and missionaries are excellent sources of information about the Indian tribes. Some of the observations of Cartier, Champlain and the Jesuits are included in *Readings in Canadian history* by George W. Brown. The best reference book is *The Indians of Canada* by Diamond Jenness. Its illustrations are admirable. A smaller book is *The Indian tribes of Canada* by Eileen Jenness. Carl Sauer's *Man in nature*, a reliable and attractive book written for young people, includes tribes of the United States and Central America as well as those of Canada. The many illustrations tell a story in themselves. Paul Radin's *The story of the American Indian* also deals with this wider field, and Edwin Embree's *Indians of the Americas* discusses Central America and the United States. The first chapters of *The conspiracy of Pontiac* and the *Jesuits in North America* by Francis Parkman contain good accounts of the Indians. Do not be discouraged by the first few pages. *Great Indian chiefs* by Albert Britt and *Round the council fires* by Mary Weekes tell stories of famous Indian chiefs whom you will meet later in this history. *Before the white man came* by Mabel Burkholder is a collection of Indian legends. Charles Clay's *Swampy Cree legends* contains stories told by the tribes of northern Manitoba. Indian legends of the Pacific coast are to be found in *Legends of Vancouver* by Pauline Johnson. John Hampden in the little book *Red Indians, stories and legends* has collected a number of short accounts of Indian life and history from the works of noted writers. If you can find reproductions of any of Paul Kane's paintings of Indians, look at them closely. Some libraries will have Kane's book, *Wanderings of an artist*, which has good material on the Indians.

**PART II**

**The Founding of French Canada**



*(from a painting by Clarence A. Gagnon)*

A French-Canadian village in the Laurentians.

## Part II

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### The Founding of French Canada

At lower Granville in Nova Scotia stands a faithful reproduction of the first permanently constructed dwelling place built by Europeans in what is now Canada. It was, indeed, the first such dwelling place built in America north of the Spanish Empire. From this tiny beginning in 1605 at Port Royal on the edge of the continent, the French Empire spread until, a century later, it stretched through the Great Lakes and far west and south to the prairies and the Gulf of Mexico. Its early years were full of peril. Unfamiliar hazards of climate, vast distances, and warring Indians beset New France's handful of traders, missionaries, and pioneer families. But after these first trials, came a century of growth and expansion. Two of the world's greatest rivers beckoned the explorer; and, following these gleaming paths, French missionaries and voyageurs pushed their bark canoes on into the heart of the continent.

Meanwhile Britain had also made a beginning in America. Along the Atlantic coast were laid the foundations of the Thirteen Colonies, while northward around Newfoundland and in Hudson Bay, British fishermen and traders held their place in the struggle for fish and furs. So developed the conflict between Britain and France, which gradually unrolled its scenes like a great drama through the eastern half of the continent. Finally it left Britain as the only rival of Spain in North America. Through it all, however, the French villages and farmlands, hewn out of the forest, remained; and, in the end, they proved to be the permanent achievement of France in the New World.

## *DATES TO REMEMBER*

### PARTS I and II

- 1000 Leif Erikson reaches North America.
- 1492 Columbus discovers America.
- 1497-8 Cabot's voyages give England a claim to the North American coast.
- 1534-41 Cartier's explorations and the first attempt at French settlement.
- 1577-9 Drake's voyage around the world: North America's West Coast claimed for England.
- 1605 The French found Port Royal in Acadia.
- 1607 Virginia is established by the English.
- 1608 Quebec is founded by Champlain.
- 1609-10 Hudson discovers the Hudson River and Hudson Bay.
- 1615 The beginning of the Récollet mission.
- 1625 The arrival of the first Jesuits.
- 1627 New France is placed under the Company of One Hundred Associates.
- 1629-32 War between France and England.
- 1639 The Ursulines start a hospital and school.
- 1642 The founding of Montreal.
- 1648-9 The Iroquois destroy Huronia and begin to close in on New France.
- 1663 Royal Government is established in New France.
- 1665-72 Talon promotes settlement and industries.
- 1669 Laval starts a seminary at Quebec.
- 1670 The Hudson's Bay Company is founded.
- 1670... Explorers are sent from New France to claim territory: St. Lussou, Albanel, Marquette and Jolliet.
- 1673 Fort Cataraqui is built by Frontenac.
- 1682 La Salle follows the Mississippi to its mouth.
- 1689 War begins between France and England.
- 1690-2 Kelsey explores westward from Hudson Bay.
- 1699 Iberville founds a colony in Louisiana.
- 1713 The Treaty of Utrecht: Acadia and Newfoundland pass finally into the hands of the English. The French fortify Louisbourg.
- 1731-38 The explorations of La Vérendrye and his sons in the West.
- 1744-48 War between France and England.
- 1749 The founding of Halifax.
- 1755 The English capture Beauséjour: the Acadians are expelled.
- 1756-63 The Seven Years' War.
- 1758 The English capture Forts Duquesne, Frontenac and Louisbourg.
- 1759 Niagara, Ticonderoga, and Quebec fall to the English.
- 1760 Montreal surrenders.
- 1763 The Peace of Paris.

### *Chapter III*

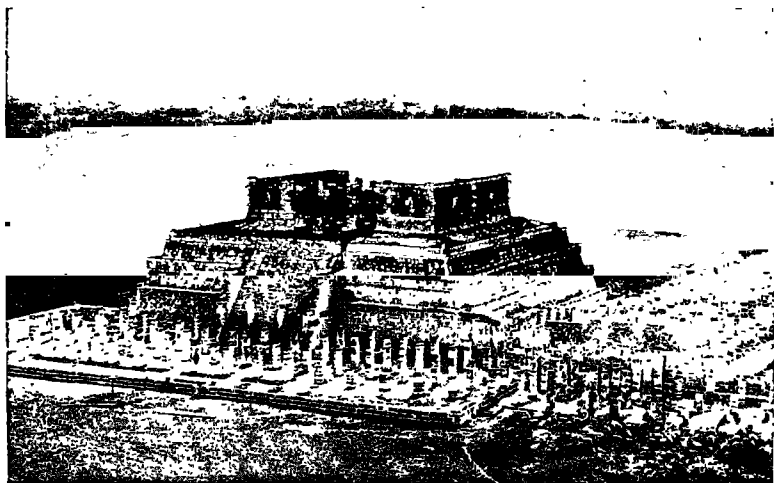
#### The French Begin to Make Homes in the New World

**T**HE First American Empires and Their Rivals. Spaniards and Portuguese were the first Europeans to make successful settlements in the New World. Immediately after Columbus's discovery they hastened to conclude an agreement shutting other Europeans out of America and the Far East. This seems to us an astonishing idea, but it was not perhaps so unreasonable at the end of the fifteenth century. The Pope gave it his approval, and, by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, Spain and Portugal drew a line north and south through the Atlantic. Spain was to have everything to the west of the line, Portugal everything to the east. Such claims could not be permanently enforced, but the agreement did have an effect on later history. The line, as it turned out, cut through South America, giving the eastern corner of the continent to Portugal. Today for this reason Brazil is basically Portuguese in language and culture, while the other countries of Central and South America are basically Spanish.

Spain made rapid progress in building her American empire. In the early years of the sixteenth century two famous Spanish warriors, Cortez and Pizarro, conquered the Aztec and Mayan empires of Mexico and Peru by a combination of reckless daring and methods of warfare new to the Indians. Cortez's sixteen horses were, for example, as great a surprise to the Indians as the first tanks were to the Germans in 1916. Settlement and exploration quickly followed these conquests. Gold was found in large quantities and ships loaded with treasure soon began to sail back to Spain to the great envy of other European countries. In the first half of the sixteenth century Spanish missionaries and traders pushed into the interior of Mexico, into the lower Mississippi valley, and across South America. A century before the British and French gained

a foothold in America the Spanish empire was firmly established. It lasted for three centuries, and from it no less than twenty American republics trace their origin.

The monopoly of Spain and Portugal in the Americas was bound to be challenged in time, but, except for voyages like that of Cartier and fishermen to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the British



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

The Warriors' Temple of the Mayas or the Temple of 1000 columns. One record states that it covered twenty acres.

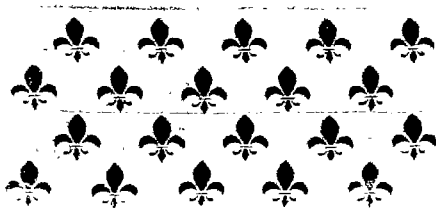
and French were not strong enough to challenge it effectively until the last decades of the sixteenth century. Then the Elizabethan sea-dogs, like Hawkins and Drake, made voyages of exploration and raids on the Spanish possessions. The turning-point—and it was a great turning-point in the history of Europe and America—came with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. After that, Spain and Portugal could no longer prevent other nations from sharing in the trade and settlement of the New World. But even then, the British, French, and Dutch had to turn to those parts of America in which Spain was not firmly established. They were two in particular—the West Indian islands, not all of which Spain

could defend, and the mainland of North America north of Florida. With these facts in mind we can see the later divisions of the American continents beginning dimly to take shape even at the opening of the seventeenth century.

England and France naturally wished to imitate Spain's success but even well-informed people in the sixteenth century had no idea how difficult the founding of colonies would be. They seemed to think that almost any group of settlers landed on the shore of America would prosper from the beginning. The truth was far different. Colonizing was a costly business. Money in large quantities was needed not only to transport settlers, but to supply them with food, clothing, and shelter, until they got a foothold. It was costly also in lives. Pioneering demands strength, determination, and initiative. It was no task for weaklings. Only the strong and adaptable could survive the hardships of life in strange new surroundings. Even the climate of Virginia was felt by the first settlers to be a harsh one. Besides financial support and suitable settlers, at least one other condition was necessary—the finding of some product which could be sold and transported to the mother country. Without such a product a colony had little chance of survival. Fur was the staple on which the first settlements within present day Canada were begun, but other products such as tobacco and sugar served the same purpose elsewhere in America. The first English efforts in colonization were almost as disappointing as that of Cartier and Roberval. In the 1580's the famous

Elizabethan gentleman adventurer Raleigh tried to found settlements first in Newfoundland, then in Virginia. Both failed miserably.

Early in the seventeenth century, however, France, England, and Holland were ready for more successful attempts. They now had people



The flag of Henry IV of France under which De Monts and Champlain took possession of Acadia in 1604.



who were willing to go to the New World and merchants who were eager to invest money in the fur trade or to obtain grants of land. Between 1603 and 1630 British, French, and Dutch all succeeded in establishing permanent settlements. This was a remarkable quarter-century of colonizing effort, and even the names of the chief colonies founded during this period—Port Royal and Quebec by the French; Virginia, Barbados, Plymouth, and Massachusetts by the English; New Amsterdam by the Dutch—give us some idea of its importance.

**The Beginnings of Acadia.** Port Royal was the first colony to be successfully established on the mainland north of the Spanish settlements, and its story, in one sense, marks the beginning of Canadian history. In 1603 a small group of French merchants, formed a company and obtained from the French king a monopoly



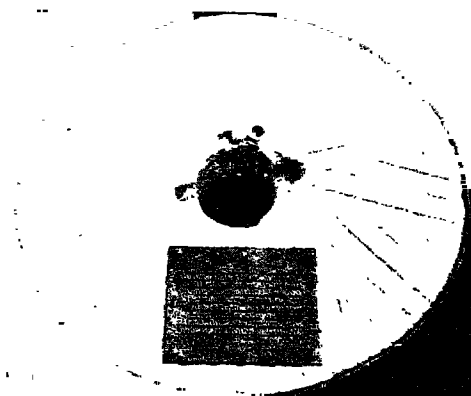
(National Parks photograph)

This faithful reproduction of the Port Royal "Habitation" was erected in 1939-40 on the original site at what is now Lower Granville, N.S.

of the fur trade in the region of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Most prominent among them were De Monts and Pontgravé, and associated with them as explorer and moving spirit was Samuel de Champlain. They had all previously made voyages to the Gulf and River St. Lawrence. In the early summer of 1604, their little vessels rounded the southern end of Nova Scotia, or Acadia as the French named it, and a site was chosen on an island at the mouth of the St. Croix River. The first winter was very difficult. Food, water, and shelter were hard to find, and scurvy, the dread disease which had attacked Cartier's men, made its appearance. In the spring the survivors moved across the Bay of Fundy to a better site, which they called Port Royal. A "Habitation" was built under Champlain's direction. Workmen were brought from France, a mill was put up, and gardens were planted with seeds and plants from the homeland.

The early years of Port Royal are full of interest. Here was grown the first Canadian grain ever sent to Europe: here was built the first dam; here was started the first Canadian mission to the Indians; here came Louis Hébert, an apothecary from Paris,

who was later to be the first farmer at Quebec. Canadian agriculture and medicine may perhaps, without too much exaggeration, be said to have begun with him. To help in passing the hard winter, Champlain organized "The Order of Good Cheer". Members took turns in obtaining and preparing food for the day. He whose turn it was wore a golden chain, and dinner was eaten with songs, stories and much



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

The stone from Poutrincourt's mill of 1610 at Port Royal. It is now set on the ramparts of Fort Anne, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, at the spot as nearly as can be located, where the first successful gardens were made in 1610.

ceremony. Port Royal was indeed more than a mere trading-post or fort. Its founders brought from Europe their ways of living and their habits of thought, and learned to adapt them to new conditions. Out of such a process, through three hundred years, a Canadian nation has been built. As we look back at the little settlement, it takes on a significance far greater than anyone who lived in it at the time could have imagined.

Acadia had a chequered history after the first pleasant years at Port Royal. In 1613 Port Royal was attacked and destroyed by a raiding party from Virginia. Twice during the next century Acadia passed into the hands of the English. In 1621 a Scottish nobleman started a short-lived settlement at Port Royal, and changed the name of Acadia to Nova Scotia, or New Scotland. But the French returned in 1632, and since then for over three hundred years the Acadian French have played a part in Canadian history.

**Champlain founds Quebec.** It was the search for furs which led to the founding of Quebec. Port Royal had behind it no great stretch of country, and the difficulty of expanding the trade there soon became clear to Champlain and his associates. The St. Lawrence with its many tributaries down which the Indians could bring their furs, beckoned to the trader. Already Tadoussac, at the mouth of the Saguenay, had become an important trading point. Further west, at the spot where Cartier had found the village of Stadacona, the river narrowed and the high rock of its north bank offered a magnificent site for a settlement and fort. There, in 1608, Champlain built another "Habitation" and laid the foundation of Canada's oldest city.

Until his death in 1635, the story of Quebec is the story of Champlain's courage,



This tercentenary stamp depicted the Habitation at Quebec as shown by Champlain's drawing.

resourcefulness, and unceasing devotion. Not the least of his difficulties was to obtain the support he needed from France. It was hard to find colonists who would brave the long voyage, the Canadian winters, and the dangers of life in a new land. Money was required to bring them out and to furnish them with supplies, and men with money to invest were more interested in the fur trade than in colonization. Champlain had to contend with quarrels among the men who were backing him, and the interest of the French king and his advisers was often uncertain. Constantly he was busy writing letters and appeals, or travelling across the Atlantic to urge that France should not miss the opportunity of gaining an empire, and in spite of all efforts Quebec grew with discouraging slowness. The French West Indies were beginning to attract many hundreds of settlers, but for years Quebec was nothing but a trading-post and fort.

Not until 1617 did the first true colonist, Louis Hébert, arrive at Quebec. He came to till the soil and brought his wife and children. With them a family and home were established for the first time in Canada. Already Champlain had begun a garden and had found that European plants such as cabbages, radishes, and lettuce would flourish. Quebec the trading post was giving promise of becoming a real colony.

In 1627, an event occurred which seemed to promise an end to Champlain's most pressing problems. Cardinal Richelieu, the king's chief minister and the most powerful man in France, had become interested in the struggling colony. With his encouragement a company was formed to take over not only the fur trade, but the responsibility of bringing out settlers. Trading companies were no new thing in the history of colonization. Port Royal had been founded by one; the British and Dutch were also using them. But this was to be unlike any previous French company: it was to include not only merchants but many of the highest nobles of the French court. By the king's charter, this Company of New France, or Company of One Hundred Associates as it has been called, was to govern the colony and to have the usual monopoly of the fur trade. In return it was pledged to send out large numbers of colonists and to support them for three years. The Company

promised that in fifteen years the colony would have four thousand people.

Quebec suffered a heavy misfortune at the beginning of the company's rule. In 1629 war broke out between France and England and the company's first fleet loaded with supplies was captured by English vessels as it sailed up the St. Lawrence. Quebec was in desperate need and indeed on the verge of starvation. When a small English fleet suddenly appeared and demanded the surrender of the fort, there was no alternative but to submit. When the war ended in 1632 and Quebec was restored to France, the colony was all but deserted. Madame Hébert and her children, who were still there to greet the first French vessels, had almost given up hope.

New France was, however, on the eve of a better day. Champlain, who had been carried off by the English, returned when peace was made, and for another three years he was the guiding spirit of the colony. In 1634 came the first expansion westward with the founding of Three Rivers. No more than a trading-post hanging on the edge of the wilderness, Three Rivers was still a promise for the future, and it has had an unbroken history ever since that time. Champlain could now see some result of his long efforts. Quebec at his death numbered scarcely one hundred people, but his success is not to be measured in these terms. More than anyone else, he had helped to solve the first hard problems of the pioneer settlers, and he is well called the Founder of French Canada.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Champlain's own writings give the best idea of his work. You will find selections in *Readings in Canadian history*. A good biography is *The founder of New France* by Charles Colby "Chronicles of Canada". The founding of Quebec and the attempt to murder Champlain are well described by Francis Parkman in Chapter IX, Part II of *Pioneers of France in the new world. For the glory of France* by Everett McNeil is an adventure story based on Champlain's experiences. In *Ruffles and rapiers*, Blodwen Davies tells the story of Champlain's romantic marriage. A one-act play on the same theme is *Helene of New France in One-Act Plays from Canadian History*, by Hilda Mary Hooke, and in *The Backwoodswoman*, Isabel Skelton describes the life of Marie Hébert, wife of Champlain's first colonist.

## *Chapter IV*

### **The Lure of the Great River**

**C**HAMPLAIN has still another claim to fame in Canadian history, that of explorer and fur trader. He was first drawn to the St. Lawrence by the fur trade, and during all his years at Quebec much of his activity centred around it, and around the mystery of the great river which led, he knew not where, far into the west. Perhaps, he thought, it might reveal the secret of the long-sought route to the western sea and China; perhaps on its banks might be found mines of gold and silver, such as the Spaniards had discovered.

**The St. Lawrence and Its Fur Trade.** On his first trip to the St. Lawrence in 1603, Champlain was fascinated by the reports which the Indians gave him of the interior. He went up to the site of Cartier's Hochelaga which had disappeared, and looked at the torrent of the Lachine rapids. Beyond them, he was told, lay great lakes and even a salt water sea not many weeks distant. He marvelled at the ease with which the Indians travelled in their canoes and the skill with which they made them, out of materials found at hand in the forest. What the horse was to the Arab or the camel to the desert traveller, the canoe was to the Indian. "With the canoes of the savages," said Champlain, "one may travel freely and quickly throughout the country, so that a man may see all that is to be seen, good and bad, within the space of a year or two." Champlain was a geographer by training, and his imagination was excited by the possibilities of the unknown land.

Certainly the new land would yield furs. Throughout its history furs were New France's greatest article of commerce, the one product which could be exported in any quantity and would always find a ready market. "The life-blood of New France", the fur trade has been called. Of all the fur-bearing animals the

beaver was the most important. In pursuit of him French traders finally went to the centre of the continent, and it is fitting that he should now have a place on Canada's coat of arms. Beavers were wonderfully suited to the needs of the trade. Their numbers were enormous; their habits and conspicuous houses made them easy to



Canada's first postage stamp issued in 1851 honoured the beaver. It was a three penny stamp, now quite rare.

trap, and their pelts were extremely useful. The heavy fur consisted of two layers—a coarse guard hair as much as two inches long, and a fine short under hair. The guard hair could be removed by scraping, and the pelt with the soft hair then made an excellent material for clothing much prized by the Indians. The soft hair could be used in felt making, and the de-

mand for pelts in France was also growing because beaver hats were coming into fashion.

When Champlain came to the St. Lawrence, furs were already being brought to the river from great distances, and intense rivalries over this profitable trade were rapidly springing up. Champlain was shortly to discover that he was caught in these rivalries, and it will help us to understand his position if we observe a few points about the Indians and geography of the St. Lawrence region.

North of the St. Lawrence were the Montagnais, the Algonkins, and similar tribes who lived solely by hunting and fishing. They quickly saw how profitable it would be for them to act as middle men between the French and the Indians still further north and west. South of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario lived the Iroquois, who had depended largely on agriculture, but who now

found that only by gathering furs were they able to buy the European goods and weapons which they so much wanted. "In truth, my brothers," an Indian remarked on one occasion, "the beaver does everything to perfection. He makes for us better



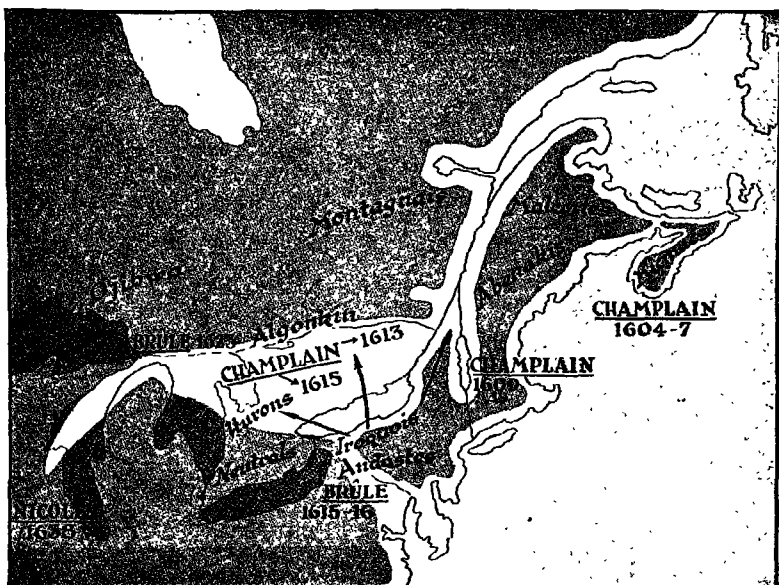
*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

#### BEAVERS AT WORK

This amusing drawing which appeared in 1711 carries the following explanation: "A view of ye industry of ye Beavers of Canada in making dams to stop ye course of a Rivulet, in order to form a great lake about which they build their habitations. To effect this they fell large trees with their teeth, in such a manner as to make them come cross ye rivulet, to lay ye foundations of ye dam; they make mortar, work up and finish ye whole with great order and wonderfull dexterity."

kettles, axes, swords, knives, and gives us drink and food without the trouble of cultivating the ground." The Iroquois had to have furs, and they, too, wished to be middle men. So developed the conflict with the tribes north of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario.





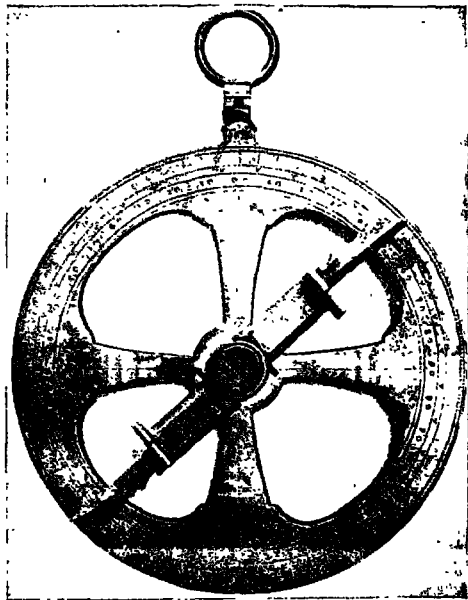
### PENETRATING THE INTERIOR

*In the quarter-century following the founding of Quebec Champlain and his followers began the exploration of the basin of the St. Lawrence and its Great Lakes. The unshaded portions on this map suggest the areas known by 1640. The three arrows show the general direction of the Iroquois thrusts across the route by which the Hurons and other tribes north of the Lakes brought furs to Quebec. The map also indicates, what may seem at first sight a curious fact, that Erie was the last of the Great Lakes to be discovered. See also the maps on pages 36 and 67, which illustrate the same point and suggest how a knowledge of the Great Lakes was gradually acquired.*

*The Indian names which are given are those of the chief tribes with whom the French first came into contact. The Algonkins, or Algonquins, were a tribe whose name was later used to describe all the hunting and fishing tribes speaking similar languages.*

**Champlain's Explorations and Indian Allies.** Champlain in his trade and explorations had to make friendships with Indian tribes, and it was natural that he should turn to those north of the St. Lawrence because the best fur country lay north and west rather than south. In 1609, just after Quebec was founded, Champlain was already beginning to ally himself with the northern Indians. In that year he made an exploration up the Richelieu River and into the lake which still bears his name. There, with his allies, he defeated a party of Iroquois by firing on them with his gun. The Iroquois were terrified. They had never before seen the deadly effects of the white man's weapons. But they were not long to remain unarmed. In the same year, 1609, Dutch traders began coming into the Hudson River following its discovery by Henry Hudson. The Dutch, too, wanted furs, and the Iroquois, living where they did, were the natural middle men through whom the Dutch could get furs from the west and north. They soon began to supply the Iroquois with guns to fight against the Indian allies of the French, and so we can see the beginnings of a conflict which was to continue bitterly for many years after Champlain's death.

Champlain was hindered in making explorations himself by the cares of the settlement at

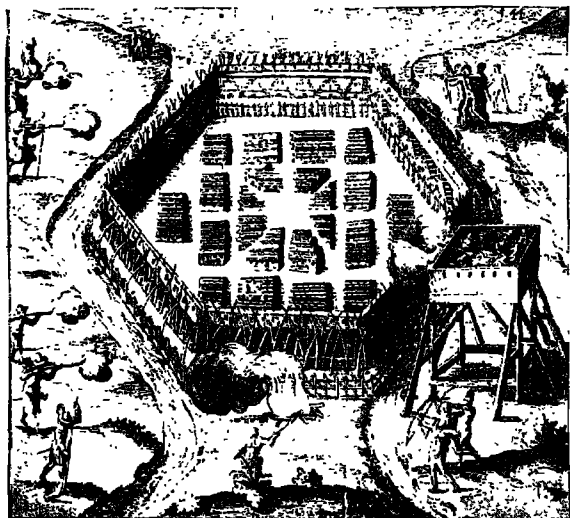


(Public Archives)

Champlain's astrolabe, dated 1603, lost in 1613 on his trip up the Ottawa, and recovered in 1867. The astrolabe was suspended by the ring when observations on the sun or stars were being made.

Quebec, but he began to send younger men to live with the Indians and learn their ways and languages. Etienne Brulé, a Quebec youth, was probably the first. Hundreds of French Canadians—*coureurs de bois*, runners of the woods, they came to be called—later followed Brulé's example. It was one of these young men, Vignau, who led Champlain to make his second important expedition, a trip up the Ottawa in 1613. Vignau said he had gone as far as the "northern sea" where he had seen the wreck of an English vessel. His story proved to be a lie invented to increase his own importance, but it caused Champlain with only two Indian paddlers to struggle up the Ottawa as far as Allumette Lake. Champlain himself carried "three arquebuses, an equal number of paddles, my cloak and some small articles" over a two-day portage, and the Indians whom he met told him he must have "fallen from the clouds" for they did not see how he could conquer such difficult trails.

Two years later, in 1615, Champlain undertook his greatest



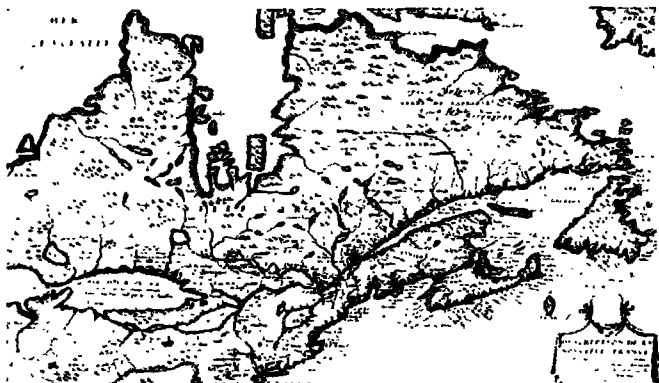
An early drawing of an attack on an Iroquois fort by Champlain and the Hurons. This too is obviously an imaginative drawing.

exploration. The Iroquois were already making serious raids north of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario, and preventing the Hurons and Algonkins from sending their furs down to Quebec, Champlain resolved to go to the Huron country with Brulé who had lived there, and to join the Hurons in an attack on the Iroquois. He made the long trip up the Ottawa, across the Mattawa River to Lake Nipissing, then down the French River to Georgian Bay, and so to a Huron village near Lake Simcoe. From here Brulé was sent to seek help from another tribe, the Andastes, who lived south of Lake Ontario near the Susquehanna River. Champlain and the Hurons were meanwhile to go directly toward the Iroquois country by way of the Bay of Quinte and across Lake Ontario. The plan, unfortunately, did not work very well. Champlain's party reached the Iroquois stronghold near Lake Oneida before Brulé and his Andastes arrived, but the Hurons were impatient to attack. After some hard fighting Champlain was wounded. The attack failed, and the party had to retire defeated. The Hurons insisted on Champlain going back to their villages, although the shortest road to Quebec would have been down the St. Lawrence. In the next year Champlain went home by the Ottawa route. He never made the voyage between Mount Royal and Lake Ontario.

Two years later Champlain heard Brulé's story. When he and his war-party of Andastes reached the Iroquois villages they found that Champlain and the Hurons had already retreated. So they returned home. Brulé then decided to explore the Susquehanna, and from the account which he gave to Champlain, it appears that he descended that river till he reached salt water at Chesapeake Bay. His route back through the country of the Andastes to the Huron villages is not perfectly clear. Probably he passed close to Niagara Falls although he did not mention them. It is a wonder he got back alive for he had several hair-breadth escapes, and altogether his journey was an astonishing exhibition of daring and determination.

After 1615 Champlain was unable to undertake further exploration, but the work went on. Brulé, a few years later, travelled along the north shore of Georgian Bay up the St. Mary's River

and perhaps into Lake Superior. At any rate, he described it and also Lake Huron, or the Sweet Water Sea, as it was called. Just about the time of Champlain's death another of his young men, Jean Nicolet, carried out his wishes by making a journey to Green Bay and up the Fox River. There Nicolet came close to one of the famous portages which in later years was to carry traders and missionaries over into the Mississippi. Nicolet was one of the



(Manoir Richelieu Collection)

This map of 1643 shows how inaccurate was knowledge of the region west of Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay.

most attractive of the *coureurs de bois*, a man of fine character and trusted by the Indians. He carried with him to Green Bay a beautiful ceremonial robe "of Chinese damask, all strewn with flowers and birds of many colours,"—rather an amusing costume for the depths of the American forests, but apparently he thought he might meet someone from the Far East.

After glancing at Champlain's many years of effort, what shall we say of his accomplishments as an explorer? It is true that at his death the Great Lakes were not yet clearly understood. Lake Erie had not yet been discovered. Large part of Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior were still unexplored. But Champlain had been the guiding spirit in those remarkable journeys which first put the Great Lakes region on the map. He himself had explored hun-

dreds of miles. His men had pointed the way to the Mississippi, and had found the St. Mary's River and Mackinaw Strait, which were later to be the cross-roads of the great fur-trading routes of the north and west. Nor must we forget Champlain's earlier explorations around the Acadian coast.

It was not, however, his travelling or sending men to live with



This stamp, which was issued as one of the series marking the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of Quebec, shows Champlain leaving on a trip of exploration.

the Indians that made Champlain a great explorer. His fame rests solidly on his writings. Year after year, with unwavering patience in the midst of his labours, he described the traders and merchants with whom he had to deal, the native tribes, their customs and manners of life, the country through which he passed, its plants, animals, soil,

lakes, and rivers. Today his writings are printed with an English translation in six large volumes and by a society which bears his name. They are, perhaps, his best monuments, for they are a unique and priceless record of the beginnings of French settlement and exploration. Not least they show us Champlain himself. The picture is singularly attractive, that of a man of solid character "without influence and without wealth, who set himself to found an empire and who in the end succeeded." We do not know just where Champlain was buried in Quebec, but if we did we might place above his grave one of his own sentences: "As for me, I labour always to prepare a way for those willing after me to follow it."

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

See the books suggested for chapter III.

## Chapter V

### For the Glory of God.

ONE of the greatest influences in the history of New France has not as yet been mentioned. It was that of the men and women who were inspired by religion to found churches, schools, and hospitals, and to endure the hardships and disappointments of the Indian missions.

**The Beginnings of Missions, Schools, and Hospitals.** Missions began with the earliest settlements. There were missionaries of the Jesuit Order at Port Royal, and in 1615 three Récollet brothers came to Quebec. A chapel and then a monastery, Notre Dame des Anges, were soon built, and gardens were begun with Champlain's encouragement in the hope that the Indians near Quebec might learn a more settled way of life. From Quebec missionaries went out to the Montagnais, the Micmacs of Acadia, the Abenaki in the St. John valley, and the Hurons. Father Le Caron, the leader of the Récollets, set off into the Huron country in 1615 even ahead of Champlain. Among his many labours he compiled the first dictionary of the Huron language, and he also has the distinction of performing the first marriage ceremony in Canada.

The Récollets at length saw that they were unequal to the task of Christianizing the Indians: the distances were too great, the tribes stretching far into the interior too numerous. So the Jesuits were invited to accept the challenge. The first Jesuits came to New France in 1625, among them Father Brébeuf, a man of huge frame and iron constitution. He had noble ancestry, and his martial bearing and unflinching courage might have carried him far in France. He chose rather to throw his high qualities into the Indian mission with unwavering determination until he met a martyr's death twenty-three years later at the hands of the Iroquois. Brébeuf tried a year among the Algonkins, and another

member of the Order went to the Montagnais, but their experiences were most disappointing. It seemed almost impossible to do anything with these wandering tribes who lived from hand to mouth in a condition of filth, and often of privation, almost beyond description. Brébeuf now turned, as Le Caron had done, to the Hurons. For three years he worked among them. Then Quebec was taken by the English in 1629 and until the French returned the work came to an end.

Already the missionary's difficulties had become abundantly clear. The hardships of Indian life were bad enough, the drudgery of the long journeys with scanty food, perhaps only some crushed corn, the unaccustomed toil of the portages where every Indian eye was on the white man to see if he did his full share or displayed the slightest sign of weakness. Worse than the toil were the mosquitoes. At least Le Caron thought so. "I confess that this is the worst martyrdom I suffered in this country; hunger, thirst, weariness, and fever are nothing to it. These little beasts not only persecute you all day but at night they get into your eyes and mouth, crawl under your clothes and stick their long stings through them and make such a noise that it distracts your attention and prevents you from saying your prayers." These physical hardships were, however, no worse than those of the fur trader or explorer. The missionary's real problem was to learn to understand the Indians. He found that they had many good qualities. They admired fair dealing and unselfishness, were brave, patient in suffering, and hospitable to their friends; but their ideas of right and wrong, of the life after death, of God and worship, were so different from those of Europeans that the missionary could find little common ground of understanding on which to begin his work. The Indian was attached to his superstitions, to his belief in magic, to his feasts and ceremonials which were often no better than wild orgies. "Christianity," said a Huron to a missionary, "is good for the French; we are another people with different customs." The Indian medicine man and sorcerer hated the missionary as a deadly rival, and lost no opportunity of blaming every misfortune on him. To bridge this great gulf between his own beliefs and those of the Indian was the missionary's hardest task. Learning the



Indian languages was only a beginning, and yet even that required years of patient study.

When the colony was handed back to France in 1632, the Jesuits returned, and in the next few years their work was expanded quite beyond anything that had been done before. The mission



(Public Archive.)

#### THE FIRST CONVENT OF THE URSULINES IN QUEBEC

This picture is from a painting of 1840 in the present Ursuline Convent which stands on the original site in Quebec chosen over three hundred years ago.

among the Hurons was revived, and at Quebec a school for Indian boys and a college for French boys were founded. Nor were the Jesuits left alone in their efforts. In 1639 a small group of women equally inspired to serve the needs of the colony landed in Quebec. They numbered seven in all, three sisters of the Ursuline Order, accompanied by a Madame de la Peltrie, who had offered to found a school for Indian girls, and three nuns sent to establish the first hospital. Their arrival was a notable event and without precedent in the life of the colony. Everyone

rushed down to meet the vessel as it approached the shore, the guns of the fortress were fired in salute, and there was great rejoicing.

Certainly there was much for these devoted women to do. At the very beginning they found an out-break of small-pox, and always there was sickness and hardship.



Marie de l'Incarnation

One among them, Marie de l'Incarnation, became famous in the history of French Canada. She had an intense spirit of devotion, but her piety was matched by her common sense. For thirty years she was the Superior of the Ursuline Order in Quebec, and her letters, a great number of which have been preserved and printed, give us a vivid picture of her. In them she sent appeals for help to France, gave shrewd opinions and described the people, the customs, dangers, and problems of life in seventeenth-century Quebec. The Ursulines still occupy in Quebec the site on which they were

established in the days of their first Mother Superior.

**The Founding of Montreal.** None of the religious enterprises in the early history of New France catches our interest more than does the founding of Montreal in 1642. Then, as today, it was clear that the island which lies at the junction of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa Rivers was the key to a vast inland navigation. Montreal was bound to be a centre of commerce; and yet, it owed its birth to religious zeal alone. The design for a mission at this perilous spot facing the Iroquois country began with several devout men in France. They collected money, formed an association, and found a leader, the *Sieur de Maisonneuve*, a veteran warrior who seemed to have the spirit of the early crusaders.

Maisonneuve and his party numbering some forty men and four women, were warned at Quebec to abandon their plan, but he declared that he would go on even "if every tree were an Iroquois." On May 8, 1642, in a pinnace, a barge, and two row-boats, they left Quebec, and ten days later reached the island of Montreal.



Paul de Chomedey Sieur de Maisonneuve, founder and first governor of Montreal.

Landing with songs they knelt on the shore; an altar was raised and a sermon preached. "The afternoon waned, the sun sank behind the western forest, and twilight came on. Fireflies were twinkling over the darkened meadow. They caught them, tied them with threads into shining festoons and hung them before the altar. Then they pitched their tents, lighted their bivouac fires, stationed their guards, and lay down to rest. Such was the birthnight of Montreal." So writes the historian Parkman, and then he adds, "Is this true history or a romance of Christian chivalry? It is both."

The beginnings of Montreal were feeble and full of peril, but its founders had a spirit that would not admit defeat. For twenty-two years Maisonneuve as governor was a tower of strength. Two women also hold a high place among Montreal's pioneers. In the first party of 1642 came Jeanne Mance. Her graceful manners and delicate constitution seemed better suited to a sheltered life in France than to the hazards of an Indian-infested forest. But she had determined to have a share in the Canadian mission and she would not be turned aside. Under her was founded the first hospital in Montreal, and to it she fearlessly devoted the rest of her life. A decade later came Marguerite Bourgeoys who founded the first school in Montreal. "Her portrait," wrote Parkman, "has come down to us; and her face is a mirror of frankness, loyalty

and womanly tenderness. Her qualities were those of good sense, conscientiousness, and a warm heart."

**Huronion.** Meanwhile, during these years, the Jesuits were putting every possible effort into the mission among the Hurons. After much experimenting they decided to make a centre at Saint

Marie, situated not far from the present town of Midland, Ontario. Here they built a fort with walls of stone surmounted by palisades, which enclosed a chapel whose furniture was an endless source of wonder to the Indians, a hospital, workshops, and lodgings for about sixty people. Along the nearby river were fields which yielded abundance of food. Fowls, pigs, and even cattle were brought to Saint Marie. How they were ever transported hundreds of miles from Quebec in birch bark canoes and over dozens of portages, it is hard to imagine. From Saint Marie the Jesuits went in pairs to eleven or twelve other



Marguerite Bourgeoys

mission stations, scattered through the Huron country; and to Saint Marie came the Indians in hundreds seeking food, hospitality, or healing. From Huronia the Jesuits hoped gradually to reach out to still more distant tribes.

Our great source of information, not only about Huronia, but about much that went on in Quebec, is the collection of writings known as the *Jesuit Relations*. Every missionary was required to write an account of his work, of the Indians, and of the country through which he passed. The Jesuits were trained to be careful observers. They wrote well and usually with great accuracy. It is little wonder, therefore, that the *Relations* aroused tremendous interest in France, where many of them were printed and widely

circulated. Today, collected and translated in an edition of seventy-three volumes, they are a mine of information, one of the most valuable sources of material to be found on the history of any colony in the New World.



(Courtesy of E. C. Woodley)

The Ursuline Convent which occupies the site of the home of Madame de la Peltrie.

The success of the Huron mission is difficult to judge. To win confidence and understanding was slow, up-hill work. Every misfortune suffered by the Indians brought criticism and opposition. "Before you came," said a Huron, "we were happy and prosperous. You are magicians. Your charms kill our corn and bring sickness and the Iroquois." Nevertheless, by 1645, there were signs of promise, and it seemed that the influence of the mission was spreading. To have built so much in a few years hundreds of miles inland from Quebec was no small accomplishment. Only one cloud, the Iroquois menace, hung black and forbidding on the horizon.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

In one volume, *The Jesuit relations*, Edna Kenton has collected many of the best of the missionaries' letters. *The Jesuit missions* by Thomas Marquis is the "Chronicles of Canada" volume. A novel, *The Champlain Road* by Franklin McDowell deals with the Iroquois attacks on the missions. In *Brébeuf and his brethren*, E. J. Pratt relates the heroic story in poetry. A one-act play in *Five plays for pioneers* by Harold Morland centres on the martyrdom of Father Jogues, and the poem *Père Lalemant* by Marjorie Pickthall gives a brief glimpse of the famous priest at his missionary work. The story of Marie de l'Incarnation is told in a Ryerson reader by Blodwen Davies, in *The Backwoodswoman* by Isabel Skelton, and in *Mère Marie of the Ursulines* by Agnes Repplier.

## *Chapter VI*

### The Iroquois Scourge

**T**HE Iroquois scourge—truly it was so. It brought New France to the verge of ruin while the little colony was still weak and ill prepared. In 1640 when the Iroquois attacks were growing more violent and numerous, New France had less than four hundred French inhabitants, with perhaps three hundred soldiers in addition. There were, after Montreal was established, only four centres—Quebec, Three Rivers, Montreal, and Huronia—and they were little more than missions or trading posts. Separated by hundreds of miles of wilderness, they lay along the great river like beads on a silver thread. Even with the help of Indian allies, the long line could not be constantly guarded everywhere and the colony was unable to deal the Iroquois a stunning blow in their own country.

**The Iroquois.** The Iroquois had at this time about two thousand warriors divided among five tribes. The Mohawks, furthest to the east and nearest to New France, were the fiercest warriors; the Senecas, furthest to the west, were the most numerous. The Oneidas, Onondagas, and Cayugas lay in the centre.<sup>1</sup> The tribes often made war and peace separately, but in times of crisis usually acted together, and this gave them a great advantage over neighbours like the Hurons who never seemed able to unite their forces effectively. The Iroquois were democratic in some ways, being led for example, by chiefs who owed their positions solely to their skill and courage in battle, their eloquence and dignity. Their attacks showed a daring, cunning, and determination which surpassed anything among their neighbours. In parties of ten to one

<sup>1</sup> The Tuscaroras joined the Iroquois league about 1715 and it was then known as the Six Nations.

hundred or more, they hovered around the French settlements or lay in ambush along the waterways waiting to surprise the heavily laden canoes which passed to and from Quebec with furs and supplies. "I had as lief be

# RELATION

DE CE

## QUI S'EST PASSE'

en la Mission des Peres de la Compagnie de Iesvs, aux Hurôs, & aux pais plus bas de la Nouvelle France, depuis l'Estdé de l'année 1649. jusques à l'Estdé de l'année 1650.

Enuoyée

AV R. P. CLAUDE DE LINGENDES  
Provincial de la Compagnie de Iesvs  
en la Province de France.

Par le R. P. PAUL RAGVENEAV, Supérieur des Missions de la Compagnie de Iesvs en la Nouvelle France.



A PARIS,

Chez { SERASTIEN CRANOISY,  
Imprimeur ordinaire du Roy,  
& de la Reyne Regente. } rue saint  
GABRIEL CRANOISY, } lacques,  
aux Cico- } gues.

M. DC. LI.

AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

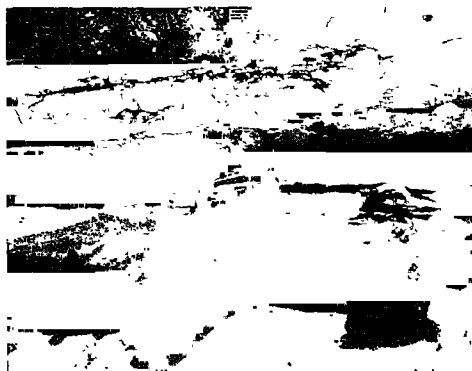
The title page of the Jesuit *Relation* for the fateful years of 1648 and 1649 as published in Paris in 1650.

utensils. Furs they must have, and furs they could get only by subduing their neighbours. At times they traded with the French as well as the Dutch, but far oftener they were driven by an urge to attack New France and its Indian allies.

beset by goblins as by the Iroquois", wrote one Jesuit, "the one are about as visible as the other." By 1640 also the Iroquois were obtaining from the Dutch far more guns and ammunition than the Hurons could obtain from the French. They had thrown away their bows, arrows, and wicker shields and were relying on speed, stealth, and the new weapons.

The Iroquois were, however, in a difficult position, and this goes far to explain their ferocious persistence. Their country lay between the Dutch on the Hudson and the French on the St. Lawrence. Like other Indians their way of life had been completely upset by the coming of the white man. Their existence now depended on getting the white man's weapons, blankets, and metal

**Montreal Beset, Huronia Destroyed.** Montreal stood directly in the Iroquois path. For years scarcely a month passed without the warning sound of the alarm bell. In 1642 twelve Huron canoes coming through the islands in the St. Lawrence were ambushed without warning. Many of the party were killed most cruelly, and Father Jogues, a Jesuit missionary was tortured and carried off as a captive. For weeks he lived in hourly expectation of death until by a lucky chance he escaped to a Dutch settlement, and



(Royal Ontario Museum)

The excavation and preservation of the ruins of Saint Marie were begun in 1940. Part of the stonework is here shown including in the foreground what is thought to have been the forge.

from there was sent back to France. It is no wonder that the Indian allies of the French feared to bring their furs to Quebec, and began to retreat into the safety of the forest. "Where eight years ago", wrote a Jesuit in 1644, "one would see a hundred wigwams one now sees scarcely five or six. In place of fleets of three or four hundred canoes, we see less than one-tenth of the number."

Peace came at times. Three years after this hair-breadth escape, Jogues, who had determined to return to the Iroquois even though it meant almost certain death, succeeded in persuading the Mohawks to make a treaty. A great council was held. Presents were exchanged, and long speeches were made with all the eloquence and grand gestures which the Indians loved on these occasions. "Onontio give ear", said an Iroquois orator, "I am the mouth of all my nation. When you listen to me you listen to all the Iroquois. There is no evil in my heart, my song is a song of peace. We have many war songs in our country, but we have thrown them all away." It was soon clear that the peace was only a truce. The conflict revived, and Jogues died a martyr's



death struck down by an Iroquois tomahawk. Among the early missionaries he was one of the greatest. He had lived among the Hurons, had gone beyond them to visit more distant tribes, and had even reached the shores of Lake Superior.

With redoubled fury the Iroquois now set themselves to destroy Huronia. Large war parties swarmed across the St. Lawrence and far up the Ottawa, cutting the route to Quebec. In 1648 came the first great disaster—a prophecy of the doom that was hanging over the whole Huron country. On July 4, Father



Among the interesting, though not most valuable, objects found at Saint Marie was this hen's eggshell, which has been called the oldest egg in America.

Daniel's church at St. Joseph was filled with worshippers when the Iroquois attacked without warning. St. Joseph was quite a large town according to Indian standards and well fortified by palisades, but a breach was quickly made in the wall and a general massacre began. Father Daniel was shot as he tried to rally the defenders. Soon St. Joseph and another fortified town near by were in flames, and the Iroquois left for home with

nearly seven hundred prisoners, many of whom they killed.

In the next year the ruin was completed. St. Ignace and St. Louis, two more palisaded towns near Saint Marie, were suddenly attacked in March before the snow was off the ground. They too were reduced to ashes with a frightful massacre, and Brébeuf with his companion, Lalemant, was tortured to death. The Hurons fought desperately, and so great were the Iroquois' losses that they turned home without attacking Saint Marie. The mission, however, could no longer be defended. Fifteen Huron towns were

soon deserted and Saint Marie had to be abandoned. Its valuables and buildings were burned. With them in an hour vanished the results of ten years' toil. "It was not without tears", wrote one of the missionaries, "that we left the country of our hopes and our hearts where our brethren had gloriously shed their blood." Several thousand fugitives gathered on an island in Georgian Bay hoping to make a fresh start, but in the spring the Iroquois appeared again. Safety lay only in flight. From this time the Hurons ceased to exist as a nation. A few hundred made their way to Quebec where land was given them for a village and where their descendants are still to be found. The others were scattered far and wide.

**New France Fights for its Life.** The destruction of Huronia was a shocking disaster for New France. The mission was lost, the fur trade almost wiped out, and the Iroquois were closing in on the colony itself. They seemed obsessed by a rage for conquest. In the next decade their war parties ranged far north of the St. Lawrence even to James Bay. No Indian encampment, however remote, seemed safe. Montreal and Three Rivers were menaced as never before. Quebec itself was beset. "Neither we, nor all of Canada, will be able to subsist another two years without aid," wrote Marie de l'Incarnation. "If this aid fails we shall have to die or return to France. If the enemy pursues his conquests and victories, there will be nothing further here for the French to do. Commerce will be unable to carry on; commerce no longer going on, there will be no vessels coming; vessels no longer coming, all the necessities of life will be lacking, such things as cloth, clothing, the larger part of our food supplies, as fats and flour which the garrison and the religious houses cannot do without. It is not that people do not work and do not produce food, but the country does not yield sufficient for our maintenance. If commerce fails as a result of the war, the Savages who stop here only to trade will disperse into the woods . . . and there will be . . . no longer anything for us to do, as we are here to attract them to the faith and to gain them for God . . ."

New France in the 1650's fought for its life. Grouped around their three fortified posts of Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montréal,

the people learned to cling to their soil. At the very end of the decade came an incident which in later years has stood as a symbol of the unflinching heroism of those dark days. Early in the spring of 1660 it was learned that a great force of Iroquois warriors was gathering against Montreal, several hundreds from the Richelieu River and a large party coming down the Ottawa. The Iroquois, it was said, hoped to destroy not only Montreal and Three Rivers



Bust of Dollard in the Archives of the Province of Quebec.

but also Quebec. Not far above Montreal on the Ottawa River are the Long Sault Rapids. Here behind a hastily constructed palisade Adam Dollard, with sixteen young companions, met a party of one hundred canoes coming from the north. For a week with the help of forty Indians they held them at bay. In this furious hand to hand encounter Dollard and his sixteen men lost their lives, but they did not die in vain for the Iroquois gave up their attack on New France and went home to their villages. Darkness is said to be deepest just before day-break. Dollard's sacrifice seems to have been almost a prophecy: for it came at one of New France's darkest moments, just when a new day was about to dawn.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

You will find the books listed at the end of the previous chapter useful for this one. The Iroquois confederacy is described in the first chapter of Francis Parkman's book *The conspiracy of Pontiac*, also in the chapter "The first modern league of nations" from Selwyn Griffin's *Open secrets*, and more fully in T. Wood Clarke's *The bloody Mohawk*. A vivid account of the Long Sault is to be found in chapter III of Francis Parkman's book *The old régime in Canada*, and a version in poetry, *Dollard, a tale in verse* by Nathaniel Benson. *The romance of Dollard* by Mary Catherwood, weaves a romantic love story about the hero.

## *Chapter VII*

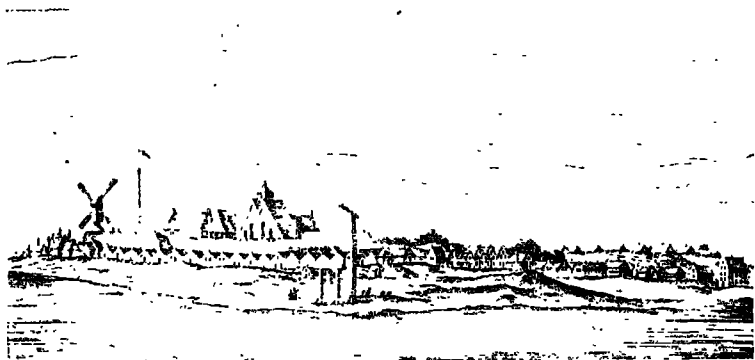
### Three Great Leaders

**W**HEN Dollard fought his battle against the Iroquois, more than fifty years had passed since the founding of Port Royal and Quebec. The French of Acadia and Canada had finally won a foothold in the soil by their own courage and determination, but their settlements were still pitifully weak. In Canada there were perhaps three thousand French in all; in Acadia scarcely one-tenth as many. For twenty years there had been war and bloodshed, and the government of France had given little either of protection or encouragement. The Company of One Hundred Associates, which had started with such bright hopes, had brought out only a small fraction of the settlers it had promised. Indeed it had promised more than it could possibly fulfil. Settlers were hard to find and only the strongest and most adventurous were suitable. Moreover, men who were interested in the fur trade did not want settlers, because they added little or nothing to the profits of the trader. Reasons for the slow growth of New France are, therefore, not difficult to find.

**The Beginning of Royal Government.** Fortunately a change was at hand, and it came none too soon. In 1664 the English captured the Dutch colony on the Hudson River, renaming it New York. This gave them a solid line of colonies on the Atlantic coast and also the Hudson River route which put them in control of the trade with the Iroquois. A few years later, as we shall see, the English established themselves on Hudson Bay, and until 1667 they held Acadia which they had taken a few years earlier. France was growing in wealth and power too, however, Louis XIV, probably the most ambitious in the long line of French kings, was just beginning a rule of over fifty years, and he had in Jean Colbert one of the ablest ministers who ever guided the affairs of the French empire. Colbert was determined to make the

colonies a real source of strength to the mother country, and to do this they were brought directly under the control of the king. In 1663, the rule of the Company of One Hundred Associates was ended, and Royal Government was begun.

Under the system of Royal Government, which lasted for ninety-seven years, the colony was ruled by a "Sovereign Council"<sup>1</sup> of



New Amsterdam, now New York, taken from a Dutch map of 1656.

officials appointed by the king and guided by his instructions. The French ideal of government was a despotic one, and almost every detail of the life of the colony was carefully regulated. The council controlled trade, fixed the prices at which goods should be bought and sold, told merchants what profits they should make, made rules for the encouragement of agriculture and industry, heard cases at law, punished offenders, and went into an endless variety of other matters big and little. It met every Monday morning at seven, and its ponderous volumes of minutes, over fifty of which have been preserved, show that its duties were taken very seriously indeed.

Three of the council's members, the governor, the intendant, and the bishop had a rank and influence far above that of the others. The governor was responsible in particular for defence and for negotiations with the Indian tribes. The intendant, who has

<sup>1</sup> After 1672 it was called the Superior Council.

sometimes been called the man of all work, was responsible for trade, industry, and the thousand and one other matters having to do with the internal life of the colony. The bishop was interested in the religious life of the colony, in the schools and hospitals which were enterprises of the church, and in the missions among the Indians. It was impossible to separate exactly the duties of these three important officials, and here lay the chief difficulty of the system. How, for example, could questions touching the Indian trade, the missions, and war and peace with the Indian tribes be separated? There were bound to be sharp differences of opinion, and the long table of the council chamber witnessed many a dramatic scene and violent argument.

What Royal Government would mean for the colony was soon shown in the most welcome way. In 1666, thirteen hundred men marched against the Mohawk villages determined to put an end to the Iroquois menace. No such force had ever before been assembled in Canada. It included six hundred seasoned troops, the Carignan-Salières Regiment sent to Canada under the Marquis de Tracy, an experienced and distinguished soldier. In scores of canoes and boats the expedition went up the Richelieu into Lake Champlain, and then through a hundred miles of forest it marched with its heavy burden of arms, ammunitions, and provisions. The feat was unprecedented, and the Mohawks fled in terror. Their villages were burned, and in the next year their messengers came to Quebec suing for peace.

**The Great Intendant.** To no one did New France owe more in the early days of Royal Government than to Jean Talon, the first and greatest of the colony's intendants. Talon had exactly the qualities needed for his post: unfailing industry and enthusiasm, much practical common sense, and a most fertile imagination in devising plans. From the moment of his arrival in 1665, he threw himself into his task with all his energy. He visited the homes of the people and studied the colony's problems. At his own cost, to encourage trade and ship building, he had a ship of one hundred and twenty tons built. He had horses and sheep brought from France; before this only one horse had been brought to the colony. To describe all his schemes and enterprises would

require a chapter and more to do them justice. He started a model farm, began the growing of hemp, encouraged cod-fishing in the St. Lawrence, sent men to hunt for minerals, began the making of potash from wood ashes, started a tannery, distributed looms for the encouragement of weaving. A few years after his arrival



TALON VISITING A FRENCH-CANADIAN HOME

Talon wrote, "I am now clothed from foot to head with homemade articles." Not all of Talon's plans were successful, but since his day the pioneer spirit of self-help has never died out in French Canada.

No part of Talon's work is more interesting, or has had greater influence, than his encouragement of settlement and immigration. In 1666 Canada's first census was prepared under Talon's own supervision. Besides soldiers, it shows a total of 3215 people, and a wide variety of occupations: three notaries, five surgeons, thirty tailors, three locksmiths and so forth. The original record of this first census has been preserved, and is a document of the greatest interest and value for the early history of Canada.

For both defence and prosperity the colony urgently needed

a larger population. A valuable addition came from the Carignan-Salières Regiment, some four hundred of whom were disbanded in Canada. Many of them settled along the Richelieu River where they were a bulwark against invasion. Talon, however, was determined to get more settlers from France. Colbert was persuaded to help, and for several years homeseekers were sent out in large numbers. Louis and his government gave generous assistance in land and supplies to get them settled in their new homes. Especially were wives needed, as there were more men than women in the colony. Ship-loads of marriageable young ladies, carefully chosen in France, were therefore sent out. Prospective husbands had to prove that they could support a wife, but even so, none of the newcomers had to wait long, and most of them were snapped up within a fortnight. As for young people growing up in the colony, early marriages were the almost invariable rule, and indeed the government insisted on them. Many girls were married at thirteen, and fathers so unfortunate as to have sons unmarried at twenty or daughters at sixteen were fined. It was indeed, as one writer has remarked, a matrimonial period. When Talon left Quebec for the last time in 1672, the scene was far different from that which had greeted him less than ten years before. The colony's population was now about seven thousand, more than double that in 1666, and its farms stretched for miles in an unbroken line along the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu.

Acadia, too, was entering on better days. It had received much less assistance than had Canada, but its settlements, although they numbered probably not more than five hundred people, were firmly rooted. Acadia's most attractive figure in these years was Nicolas Denys who had established settlements on Cape Breton Island and the nearby mainland coast. When he returned to France he took with him an exhibit of Cape Breton coal, and he spent his later years in writing a fine historical and descriptive work on Acadia, which is still an excellent source of information.

**New France's First Bishop.** New France's first and greatest bishop was François de Laval, a son of one of France's oldest families. Laval was an aristocratic figure, accustomed to command. No fatigue or discomfort was too much for him. Cana-



dians were amazed at his endurance as he travelled on snowshoes or by canoe to remote stations. To make the church the most powerful influence in the life of the colony was his aim, and he pursued it with unquestioned sincerity, but with an inflexible will that often aroused bitter opposition. The hottest and most famous cause of dispute between Laval and his fellow officials,



BISHOP LAVAL

was the selling of brandy to the Indians. Brandy was the cause of such frightful disorders that its sale to the Indians was prohibited in the early years of Royal Government, but traders argued that without brandy the fur trade could not be extended, or the Indians prevented from selling their furs to the English. Laval and his supporters denied that the brandy trade was essential to the defence and prosperity of the colony. It ruined the Indians, they declared, and was injurious in the long run even to the colony itself. "The Indian drunkard," wrote one observer, "does not

resist the drinking craze when brandy is at hand. But afterwards, when he sees himself naked and disarmed, his nose gnawed, his body maimed and bruised, he becomes mad with rage against those who caused him to fall into such a state." Only dragon's gall, said one Jesuit, would make ink black enough to describe the evils of the brandy traffic. One governor wrote also that the Indians would not necessarily go to the English if brandy were refused them: "The most sensible of them wish that brandy had never existed, because they ruin themselves in giving away their furs and even their clothes for drink." Laval was the centre of many disputes in the Sovereign Council, but in none had he a better case than in those over the brandy problem. We must not, however, give too much prominence to Laval's disputes: his permanent influence was largely in matters about which there was no quarrel. He encouraged the missions and hospitals; organized the work of his clergy with the greatest skill; and made a lasting contribution to education. The two seminaries which he founded, and to which he gave all that he had, were the origin of the present Laval University.

**The Fighting Governor.** The third great leader in the early days of Royal Government was Count Frontenac, who came as governor in the autumn of 1672<sup>2</sup> just before Talon left. Frontenac was undoubtedly the most colourful leader in the early history of New France, and with all his weaknesses perhaps her greatest governor. He was vain and extravagant and had a fiery temper



FRONTENAC'S SIGNATURE

fully matched by that of his clever and beautiful wife with whom he could not get along, and who was said to be a woman "without any large amount of feminine tenderness." But Frontenac had qualities which fully justified his appointment: shrewd judgment,

<sup>2</sup> Frontenac had two terms as governor of New France: 1672-82 and 1689-98. We have no authentic picture of Frontenac.

complete confidence in himself, boundless energy, and unswerving ambition to serve his king.

Frontenac loved decisive action, and within a few months of his arrival planned the bold stroke of building a fort at Cataraqui on Lake Ontario where Kingston now stands. A fort at this strategic spot would do much to keep peace with the Iroquois, to attract Indian traders, and to provide a base for western exploration. The expedition which swept up the river towards Cataraqui in the spring of 1673 made a truly impressive spectacle in the eyes of the admiring Indians. Four groups of canoes abreast in line



Old Windmill at Verchères. Such mills were often used for defence.

were followed by two flat boats armed with cannon and painted in bright colours. The flatboats and cannon had been dragged with tremendous labour past the rapids of the St. Lawrence. Then came Frontenac's canoe surrounded by a guard, and followed by another flotilla. In his negotiations Frontenac showed that he knew exactly how to deal with the Indians. Flanked by troops in showy uniforms Frontenac received in state more than sixty old and important chiefs, listened gravely to the Indian

orators, and himself made a great speech in the Indian manner with just the right mixture of firmness and diplomacy. "I insist," he said, "that you Iroquois, Algonquins, and other nations shall live henceforth as brothers." He warned them of his power, thanked them for their promises of friendship, and urged them to trade with the French. Meanwhile the building of the fort was being commenced by engineers and trained workmen in a way that astonished the Indians. The whole affair was a great success.

Unfortunately Frontenac's first term as governor was so marred by quarrels with his fellow officials that the whole colony was seriously affected, and finally the French government decided that he must be recalled. His successors were well meaning men, but utterly incapable of handling the Iroquois. After almost twenty years of peace the Indian war cloud again rose black on the horizon, and in 1689 the situation was made worse by the outbreak of war between France and England. In the same year Frontenac was hurriedly ordered back to Quebec and it was none too soon. Before he arrived the colony suffered the most terrible catastrophe in its history—an Iroquois attack on Lachine and the massacre of most of its inhabitants.

Frontenac was destined never to return to his native France. Until 1697, the year before he died, the war between England and France continued. In the colonies English and French both suffered in savage border raids. Every farm had to become a fort, and the gun could never be left out of the settler's reach. Symbol of the spirit of New France in these years, as Dollard had been a generation earlier, was the fourteen year old Madeline de Vercheres who held her father's home against an Iroquois attack until she and her garrison of five, two of them boys and one an old man of eighty, were rescued by a detachment of soldiers. The Canadian poet Drummond has described the scene in his poem, "Madeleine Verchères."

And when he beheld the maiden, the soldier of Carignan,  
And looked on the little garrison that fought the red Iroquois  
And held their own in the battle, for six long weary days,  
He stood for a moment speechless, and marvelled at woman's  
ways.

On Frontenac fell the heavy burden of directing military operations, planning alliances with the Indians, and keeping open the water routes to the west. In 1690 Quebec itself had to be defended against an English fleet. Sir William Phips sailed from Boston in the spring and took Port Royal. In the autumn he appeared before Quebec and demanded an immediate surrender. His messenger was led blindfold into the large room where the old governor was seated, surrounded by his fellow officials and

aides. Frontenac always loved dramatic scenes and without doubt he relished this one. In his haughtiest manner Frontenac defied Phips to do his worst. A bombardment followed, but Phips found that he was only wasting his ammunition and sailed for home. It was a striking contrast to the surrender which Champlain's starving little garrison had had to make in 1629.

Nothing better than this contrast can be found to illustrate the change which had come over New France. Farseeing, courageous, and devoted leadership was the secret of Royal Government's success in its early years, and to three men above all others was that leadership due—Talon, Laval, and Frontenac.



(Public Archives)

Medal struck in France to mark the successful defence of Quebec in 1690.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

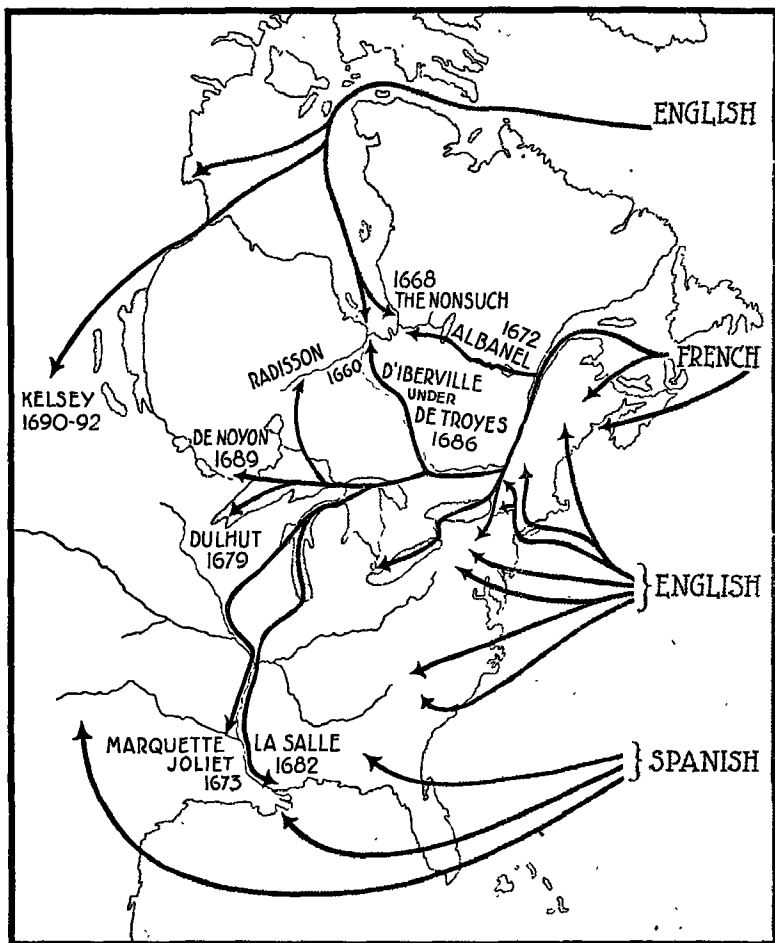
Tracy's expedition against the Iroquois is described in chapter XI of Francis Parkman's *The old régime in Canada*. There are biographies of Talon and Frontenac in two of the "Chronicles of Canada": *The great intendant* by Thomas Chapais, and *The fighting governor* by Charles Colby. The founding of Fort Frontenac is described in *Readings in Canadian history*, pp. 101-5. A royal council meeting, in which Frontenac and Laval quarrel, is dramatized in *A history of Canada* by James Bingay, page 114. "The legend of the silver box" in Blodwen Davies's book *Ruffles and rapiers* tells of Frontenac's wooing and of his unhappy marriage. Allan Dwight, in an exciting tale, *Drums in the forest*, follows the adventures of a French boy with the famous coureur de bois Nicholas Perrot. A boy captured from an English settlement in Maine and taken to Quebec in the time of Frontenac is the central figure in a well written story, *Sword of the wilderness* by Elizabeth Coatsworth.

## *Chapter VIII*

### Fur Traders and Missionaries Unroll the Map

**P**ERHAPS the greatest accomplishment during the years which Talon and Frontenac spent in New France has not, as yet, been noticed. It was the exploration of that enormous area lying between the Appalachian Barrier and the Mississippi River, and stretching from the Gulf of Mexico in the south to Hudson Bay in the north. Played out on a vast stage by hundreds of missionaries, traders, soldiers, and Indians, this exploration was a drama full of colour and adventure, greed and heroism, and the stakes were nothing less than the commerce and lands of almost half a continent. French, English and Spanish each had a part in this struggle for empire, but it was New France which took the lead.

**To Lake Superior and Beyond.** The story begins in the dark decade of the 1650's with the exploits of two of the most fearless *coureurs de bois* who ever set out from the colony—Radisson and Groseilliers. They had two aims—to go up the Ottawa past the Iroquois war parties and persuade the frightened western Indians to bring their furs down to Quebec, and secondly to get past Indians who had been acting as middle men to tribes farther inland who had not yet traded directly with white men. In this way they hoped to get furs more cheaply. They had great success with both these aims. First they went through Georgian Bay and Mackinac Strait into the triangle, as we may call it, which lies south of Lake Superior and north and west of Green Bay. We cannot be sure from Radisson's account just where they went, but they may even have got as far as the upper Mississippi. Radisson and Groseilliers had a natural gift for dealing with the Indians, and managed to persuade a large party of Indians to risk the



### UNROLLING THE MAP, 1650-1700

*In this half-century Europeans began to find their way deep into the interior of the continent and they discovered the great Mississippi valley. The points reached by some of the French explorers are indicated. The arrows show the direction of the English, French and Spanish thrusts towards the interior. The map makes clear how seeds were being planted which were to ripen into a conflict for control of the interior. It also suggests some of the most likely points of friction.*

return trip down the Ottawa. Bulwarks of beaver skins were built up in the canoes as a protection against the arrows and bullets of the Iroquois; and when the party got to Quebec with a cargo of furs such as had not been seen for years, they were, to quote Radisson's account, "saluted with the thundering of the guns and batteryes of the port, and of the 3 shippes that weare then att anchor." This was in 1657.

Strange as it may seem the governor at Quebec did not want them to return to the west, as it was felt that the wanderings of the *coureurs de bois* among the Indians should be discouraged.<sup>1</sup> Some months later, however, they stole out of Three Rivers. Getting past the Iroquois war parties near Montreal by paddling "from friday to tuesday without intermission", they made their way to Lake Superior where they found the Indians desperately anxious to trade "in the hope that we should give them a brasse ring, or an awle, or an needle." On the north side of Lake Superior they found that the furs were of the finest quality and from here they travelled in the direction of Hudson Bay. Again we cannot be sure how far they went. Certainly it was possible to go through Lake Nipigon to the Albany River which flows into James Bay. Radisson says, "We came to the seaside," but his account is very confused. In 1660 they returned to Quebec with a great cargo of furs and a flotilla of canoes that "did almost cover the whole River." The governor, however, would not forgive them for leaving Three Rivers without permission, and they decided to leave the colony and seek encouragement elsewhere.

They had, in fact, got a new idea about the fur trade which was to have results of very great importance. It was that the rich northern fur lands might be more easily reached through Hudson Bay than through the St. Lawrence. Ocean vessels could sail directly into the bay, the long journeys by canoe from Montreal would be unnecessary, and the Iroquois danger could be avoided. Very little was known of Hudson Bay. Some years after Hudson's death two English voyages had been made into it, but no use had ever been made of this northern entrance to the continent.

<sup>1</sup> The brandy traffic was one of the strongest reasons for the feeling against the *coureurs de bois*.



**Mr. Gooseberry, Mr. Radisson, and the Hudson's Bay Company.** Radisson and Groseilliers were willing to join forces with anyone who would help them test their theory, and after a series of adventures, too long even to be mentioned here, they reached London. It was a far cry from the miserable wigwams of the Lake Superior Indians to the court of the Merrie Monarch



(20th Century-Fox Production)

Mr. Gooseberry and Mr. Radisson, from the motion-picture "Hudson's Bay".

Charles II, but the two *coureurs de bois* from Three Rivers were apparently as much at home in one as the other. Charles's courtiers and the richest London merchants were excited by their tales of adventure, huge profits, and the possibility even of finding a route to China. Money was subscribed and an expedition fitted out, and in June 1668 two little ships sailed from Gravesend on a voyage which was to begin the long history of English commerce and rule in the Hudson Bay region. Only one, the *Nonsuch* which carried Groseilliers, or Mr. Gooseberry as the English called him, got through to the Bay but it met with great success. The

Indians had never before traded directly with white men and they sold northern beaver skins of the finest quality at absurdly low prices. When the *Nonsuch* returned to England with a full cargo it seemed as if a gold mine had been discovered, and eager investors quickly organized the Hudson's Bay Company, or to use its old and more picturesque title, "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay."

Prince Rupert, a cousin of the King, was the company's first head, and in his honour the company's vast domain came to be known as Rupert's Land. In 1670 a royal charter was obtained, the original copy of which is still carefully preserved. Covering five sheets of closely written parchment each thirty-one and one-half inches by twenty-five, it literally made the grant of an empire stretching over a quarter of the continent. By it the company was to have possession of the land, and complete control of trade and government in the Bay and in the whole area drained by rivers flowing into the Bay. It could control settlement, build forts, arm ships or soldiers, pass and enforce laws, and punish offenders. Its powers could scarcely have been more sweeping, and for two centuries a large part of what is now Canada was governed under the company's flag and charter. The company promised to carry on exploration, in particular the search for the North West Passage, and to present to the king as a token of allegiance if ever he should visit its domains the skins of "two elks and two black beavers".<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning the company built its posts at the mouths of the rivers emptying into Hudson and James Bays, and to these posts the Indians were encouraged to bring their furs. The company thus avoided the expense of long canoe journeys such as the French traders had to make from Montreal. Honourable dealing with the Indians and with its employees was also a point in the company's policy; nor did it forget to give good dinners and presents to influential friends in England as its records show—"Catt skin counterpanes", "beaver stockings for ye King", "golde in a faire embroidered purse." In London the company sold its

<sup>2</sup> The gift was made for the first time in 1939, when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Winnipeg.

furs by public auction,<sup>3</sup> and gradually these sales drew buyers from many countries. London was beginning its rise as the most important market for fine furs in Western Europe.

The entrance of the English into Hudson Bay was serious for New France. Furs from the north had been coming great distances down the tributaries of the St. Lawrence. Now they began to flow to the English company through the network of waterways lying between the St. Lawrence and James Bay. New France felt this competition severely. The trader was threatened with loss of his furs, the missionary with loss of his opportunity to influence the northern tribes. Moreover New York had just been taken from the Dutch, and English pressure was being felt both north and south.

**A New Chapter of French Exploration.** Talon, perhaps earlier than anyone else, saw that New France needed a bold policy of expansion. "I am no courtier," he wrote to Colbert, "and it is not to please the king or without reason that I say this portion of the French monarchy is going to become something great." At first Colbert was doubtful about encouraging efforts in the interior. He felt that farming settlements should be built up, and that the colony would be weakened if it scattered its population too far, and allowed large numbers of men to become *coureurs de bois*. Here was a conflict of interests which ran through the whole history of New France—the need of strengthening the settlements on the one hand, and on the other the pull of the waterways which drew missionaries and traders far into the continent. Whatever Colbert's doubts may have been at the beginning, they could not last. He and his ambitious young king were anxious to increase the dominion and power of France, and an empire lay waiting in the centre of the continent if only action were taken before the English began to move across the Alleghanies.

Talon decided, about 1670, to claim for his king the lands north and west which had not been claimed for other European monarchs. "I have sent resolute men," he wrote, "to explore farther than has ever been done in Canada. Everywhere they will take

<sup>3</sup> An interesting method of timing was adopted at these sales. A pin was stuck in a candle and bids were received until the flame burned below the pin.



possession of the country, erect posts bearing the king's arms, and draw up memoranda of these proceedings to serve as title deeds." One of these expeditions was that of Father Albanel up the Saguenay River. After an exceedingly difficult journey, with over two hundred portages, his party succeeded in getting over to the



PRINCE RUPERT

From a painting in oils, in the Public Archives of Canada.

Rupert River and thence down to James Bay, where they found the English already established. Father Albanel's journey did, however, succeed in drawing some of the Indian traders back to Quebec. Meanwhile Talon had turned his attention to a point of greater importance than the Saguenay. The waterways which join Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior, were the cross-roads of the upper lakes. Mackinac Strait was, as a Jesuit missionary wrote, "the key and the door for all the people of the south." The Carignan-Salières regiment by defeating the Iroquois had cleared the way to the west, and traders and missionaries were going to Green Bay, and even beyond it as Radisson had done a few years earlier. Talon felt the time had come to act

and in 1670 he sent a special emissary, St. Lussou, to Sault Sainte-Marie to claim the west. A crowd of Indians representing fourteen nations were gathered together. A large wooden cross and a post with a metal plate bearing the arms of France were planted in the ground, and St. Lussou, holding his sword in one hand and a piece of sod in the other, proclaimed French dominion over all the lands and tribes of the west. It must have been a strange sight, and one wonders what the puzzled Indians thought of it.

**The Mississippi and its Explorers.** With missionaries and traders going beyond Green Bay, the Mississippi was bound to be discovered. Coureurs de bois had apparently reached it before 1670, but its position and especially its course were unknown. Did it lead to the western sea and a route to China, or might it bring the French to gold mines in the south, such as the Spanish had found? To settle such questions an expedition was sent under the command of Marquette, a Jesuit missionary, who had already

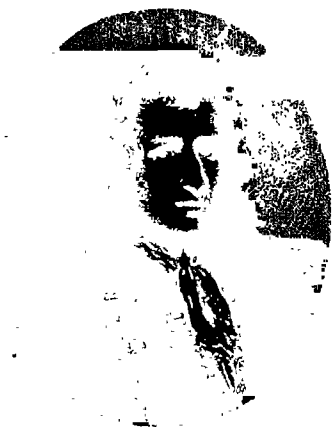


(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

A seventeenth century picture of a buffalo. Marquette was one of the first to mention the buffalo.

worked around Green Bay, and Jolliet a young trader who had journeyed widely in the Great Lakes region. He had, for instance, made the first recorded journey through Lake Erie by travelling from Lake Huron to Lake Ontario. They found, as explorers usually did, that the Indians who were trading with the French, tried to dissuade them from going to tribes which had not yet been visited by white men. In spite of threatened dangers such as "horrible monsters, which devoured men and canoes together", they set out from Green Bay in the spring of 1673. They were

soon over the portage leading to the Wisconsin River, and in a few days entered the Mississippi "with a joy," Marquette wrote, "that I cannot express." The broad river and peaceful villages of the Illinois Indians delighted them. They were tempted to turn west at the Missouri River, but decided to go on. Soon, however, they found traces of Spanish, and perhaps English, traders, for they met Indians equipped with guns. At a point just north of the mouth of the Arkansas River they decided to turn back. To go on and risk capture would have been worse than useless, since they had now travelled far enough south to settle the question which they had been sent to answer. "Beyond a doubt," Marquette wrote, "the Mississippi River discharges into the Florida or Mexican Gulf, and not to the east in Virginia or to the west in California."



LA SALLE

Another ten years passed before the Mississippi was traced to its mouth, and then the feat was accomplished by René-Robert

Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, the greatest of New France's explorers in the last half of the seventeenth century. La Salle was more than an explorer. He was a dreamer of dreams—dreams of organizing the fur trade on a vast scale and of building a French empire stretching from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico. But he was also a man of action, daring and capable of incredible toil. He had already explored an untried route to the west—that which led south of the lakes to the Ohio River, and had followed the Ohio a considerable distance although not to the Mississippi. Greater plans now attracted him. La Salle believed that furs could be carried much more cheaply by ships than by canoes and he planned to build one for Lake Ontario, one for the lake route from Niagara to Lake Michigan, and one

for the Mississippi. Forts for gathering furs could be placed at important points such as Cataraqui where Fort Frontenac was already being built, Niagara, and Mackinac Strait.

In these ambitious schemes La Salle found a strong ally in Frontenac. He also gained the ear of the king who put him in charge of Fort Frontenac, and gave him permission to explore to



(Little, Brown & Co.)

THE DEATH OF LA SALLE

the Gulf of Mexico and to build forts. By 1679 his plans were ready, and at Niagara the building of the first vessel ever to sail the upper lakes—the *Grifon* — was begun. After the greatest difficulty she was completed and launched with her five small guns, and sent on her way to Green Bay for a cargo of furs. La Salle needed them badly. His debts were mountain high, and he had jealous enemies at Quebec who were anxious to see him ruined. The *Grifon* reached Lake Michigan and started back with her precious cargo. She was never seen again, and in face of this loss the plans for other ships had to

be abandoned. La Salle was determined, however, to make his long intended exploration of the Mississippi. In January of 1682 he started, showing a typical indifference to hardship by setting off in mid-winter. The journey was made swiftly without serious incidents. "Advancing on," the record of the journey says, "we discovered the open sea, so that in the month of April, with all pos-



sible solemnity, we performed the ceremony of planting the cross and raising the arms of France." La Salle's successful trip now spurred him to hasten to France with the idea that the French should plant a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi before the Spaniards or English or Dutch could do so. In 1684 with four shiploads of settlers and supplies he set out for America, but the expedition missed the mouth of the Mississippi and landed farther west on the coast of present day Texas. A fort was built but the colony could not survive without help. To get it La Salle started to New France by land, and was murdered by some discontented followers on the way.

At first sight La Salle seems to have failed in most of what he planned to do. His haughty and stubborn temper made many enemies, and his schemes were too ambitious. But his dreams were to come true. Within twenty years of his death a French colony was planted at the mouth of the Mississippi, and a French empire was taking shape in the heart of the continent.

**Henry Kelsey Reaches the Prairies.** From Hudson Bay came only one notable exploration in the late seventeenth century, that of a Hudson's Bay Company employee, Henry Kelsey, in the years 1690-92. The Company had been relying on the Indians bringing their furs to the forts on the bay, but by 1690 many furs were going to French traders around Lake Superior. Kelsey, though scarcely more than a youth, was already an experienced traveller when he was sent into the interior to make friendly contacts with the Indians. He made his way up the Hayes River to the Saskatchewan, then on to the prairie lands. For two years he travelled alone among the Indians, aided only by a peace-pipe and such fire-arms and ammunition as he could carry. His writings do not make clear his exact course, but certainly he was the first explorer to see the Canadian prairie and to describe its people, plants, and animals. Kelsey's journal is almost as good as the "poetry", which he wrote for an introduction to it, is bad. The following is a fair sample of his verse:

Nor wilt thou me believe without yt thou had seen  
The Emynent Dangers that did often me attend.

For over two centuries Kelsey received little credit as an explorer, but in 1926 his papers were discovered, and he has now taken his rightful place among the hundreds of roving travellers who in the last half of the seventeenth century unrolled the map from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

*Readings in Canadian history* gives source material on this chapter. You will find there the terms of the Hudson's Bay Company's charter. Two books by Agnes Laut contain somewhat romantic accounts of this period: *Pathfinders of the west* and, in the "Chronicles of Canada", *The adventurers of England on Hudson Bay*. Stanley Vestal's *King of the fur traders* is as exciting as an adventure story, but is by no means free from inaccuracies. A good pamphlet is *A brief history of the Hudson's Bay Company*, issued by the company at a small charge. The first two chapters of *The honourable company* by Douglas MacKay tell of Radisson and Groseilliers and the founding of the company. *Canadian portraits* edited by R. G. Riddell, has a short biography of Charles Bayly, the first governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. There are Ryerson readers on Marquette, La Salle, and Radisson. A longer and more effectively written book is *Père Marquette* by Agnes Repplier. *LaSalle, explorer of our midland empire* by Flora Warren Seymour is quite reliable though written in the style of fiction. *Under western skies* by Arthur S. Morton has interesting short essays on the explorers. W. S. Wallace's *By Star and Compass* puts the achievements of some of the great pathfinders into story form.

## *Chapter IX*

### A Contest for a Continent

**B**Y the end of the seventeenth century North America was being divided among three empires, Spanish, English, and French, but nowhere were the boundaries between them clearly defined. Spain held Florida and Mexico, and her claims ran northward indefinitely up the Pacific. England had her colonies along the Atlantic seaboard with only a thin line of settlement. She also claimed the Hudson Bay region, and the coast of Newfoundland which was used by British fishermen. France held Acadia and Quebec and was spreading her dominion south of the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. With French, English and Spanish traders pushing farther and farther into the Indian country conflicts were bound to arise, and especially between the French and English who found themselves face to face in the eastern half of the continent.

**From Acadia to Hudson Bay—a Far-flung War.** A glance at the map will show where the French and English were most likely to clash. In the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Acadian region, they were in competition for the fisheries and for the fur trade of present day Maine and New Brunswick. Fishermen and traders from New England<sup>1</sup> were especially active there, and on the borderlands between Acadia and Maine the Abenaki Indians, allied with the French, were the chief bulwark against New England. Along the Lake Champlain route, in the Iroquois country of western New York, lay the second area of friction; the third was in the northland between the St. Lawrence and Hudson Bay. The war which broke out between England and France in 1689 was fought in all these regions, and it began a conflict which lasted far into the eighteenth century.

Fighting started in the Hudson Bay region even before war was declared. In 1686 an expedition was sent from New France up

<sup>1</sup> The four most northern British colonies, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, were known as the New England colonies.

the Ottawa-Abitibi route to attack the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. Every man in the expedition was a trained voyageur and had need to be, for the party started in winter and in three months by snow shoe and canoe covered six hundred miles "through



A French-Canadian soldier dressed for a winter campaign.

forests capable of frightening the most assured traveller" and on rivers "where in a frail bark canoe one fights for life amid whirlpools capable of swallowing great ships."<sup>2</sup> The real leader, though not the commander, was a young man, Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, who in the next twenty years became the most renowned warrior in French Canada. Iberville was the third son of Charles Le Moyne, who had settled just opposite Montreal in the darkest days of the Iroquois menace. He brought up his sons as young French gentlemen trained to arms in the French manner, but also

skilled in every secret of the forest and of Indian warfare. Iberville, the ablest of the sons became a midshipman in the French navy, and when he returned to Canada at the age of twenty-two, he started a career which in the next twenty years took him on a trail of adventures all the way from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico.

When the expedition of 1686 burst on the Hudson's Bay Com-

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the account of a Jesuit missionary who accompanied the expedition.

pany's posts it must have seemed like a bolt from the blue. To capture them by surprise was not very difficult, but this was only the beginning of Iberville's campaign. At one of the posts he captured an English vessel and, loading her with a rich cargo of furs, sailed back to Quebec. In the next ten years Hudson Bay was the scene of fighting on land and sea with forts and vessels



THE TAKING OF FORT NELSON

Later named York Fort, by Iberville who renamed it Fort Bourbon. It was recaptured by the English, taken again by Iberville in 1697, and finally was restored to the Hudson's Bay Company by the Treaty of Utrecht. Its location gave it a great importance in the fur trade of Hudson Bay.

changing hands as the contest swayed back and forth. Iberville had his most spectacular success in 1697 when with a single ship he defeated three, sinking one as large as his own and capturing another. At the age of thirty-six he had swept his enemies out of the Bay, and proven himself one of the most skilful commanders in the French navy.

Meanwhile the war had spread in both Acadia and New France. Phips's expedition to Quebec in 1690 and Frontenac's dramatic refusal to surrender had been one of the first events in the war, but most of the later fighting was along the borderland between

French and English settlements. For years, on both sides, frontier settlers lived in dread of stealthy raids and the Indian warwhoop, "Not long before the break of day, the enemy came in like a flood upon us," wrote a New England father who saw his two children killed by the Indians in 1703. There was little to choose between French and English in this savage fighting except that the French were often more effective as they had more trained woodsmen. Iberville himself took part in raids along the Lake Champlain route. In the Abenaki country the French had another leader scarcely less skilled in forest warfare, the Baron de Saint-Castin. Saint-Castin had come to Canada as an ensign with the Carignan-Salières Regiment. He had then gone to Acadia, roamed the woods, traded, and hunted with the Indians, was made a chief, and married a chief's daughter. So much was Saint-Castin feared by the authorities of Boston that on one occasion they tried to kidnap him, but the plot failed and they never succeeded in laying hands on him.

One important victory for the English came late in the war—the capture of Port Royal in 1710. Phips had taken it in 1690 before he went on to Quebec, but it had been handed back seven years later, by the Treaty of Ryswick. The peace lasted only four years, and when the war was renewed the New Englanders were determined that it be taken again as their fishing boats were constantly harassed by French privateers which used Port Royal as a harbour. In one year no less than thirty-five New England boats were destroyed. In 1710 a fleet sent out from England was joined by a force from Boston, and Port Royal was besieged. The issue was not long in doubt. The French fort had been neglected and never well garrisoned, and Acadia passed for the fifth and last time into English control. Henceforth Port Royal was known as Annapolis Royal.

In 1713 the war was at last brought to an end by the Treaty of Utrecht. Its principal terms are worth noting. France ceded Acadia to England, and gave up her claims to Hudson Bay and to Newfoundland. She still, however, retained valuable fishing rights in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and kept two important islands, Prince Edward Island, then known as Ile St. Jean, and Cape

Breton. The treaty is one of the most important in the history of America, because for the first time the English and French empires were roughly blocked out, but it had in it the seeds of future trouble since some of its terms were very indefinite. Whether the English colonies had rights beyond the Appalachian barrier was not decided, and the boundary of Acadia was settled by the vague provision that it was to run "according to its ancient limits."

**France and Britain Strengthen Their Empires.** In spite of her defeat, France retained by the Treaty of Utrecht far more than she had lost, and she still had a chance of realizing La Salle's dream of an empire extending to the Gulf of Mexico. One most important step in this direction had, in fact, been taken before the war ended, the founding of Louisiana at the mouth of the Mississippi. It was Iberville who carried this idea through, and who managed to get support for it in France. In the spring of 1699 his expedition set out across the Atlantic. With ships carrying sixty guns as well as settlers, food, sheep, pigs, cattle, poultry and other supplies, he was prepared for all emergencies. The French had come none too soon, for when they reached the Mississippi they found Spanish vessels on the coast.

Iberville clearly saw for France a great opportunity of building an empire which would stretch all the way from Louisiana to Quebec and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. "France," he wrote, "must occupy the banks of the Missouri and Mississippi as far as the Gulf. If France does not seize this part of America, the English colonists already considerable in Carolina will so thrive that in less than one hundred years they will be strong enough to seize all America." He urged that a chain of forts be built at strategic points such as the mouths of the rivers flowing into the Mississippi, and that from these forts and trading places the Indians should be drawn through the whole centre of the continent into friendship and commerce with the French. In this way the English colonies along the Atlantic coast might be encircled and hemmed in between the Appalachian Barrier and the Atlantic.

In the years following the Peace of Utrecht the French set themselves to develop this plan with real energy. All through the

Great Lakes region and south to the Gulf of Mexico new missions and posts were planted, and the older ones were strengthened. Fort Frontenac, Niagara, Detroit, and Michilimakinac stood at the key points along the Great Lakes. At Niagara stone fortifications were begun a few years after the Peace of Utrecht, because on it depended the control of the upper lakes. Today with its fine buildings and thick walls carefully preserved, Fort Niagara is a vivid reminder of the old French empire of the eighteenth century. Five years after the Peace of Utrecht New Orleans was founded



A VIEW OF LOUISBOURG IN 1731

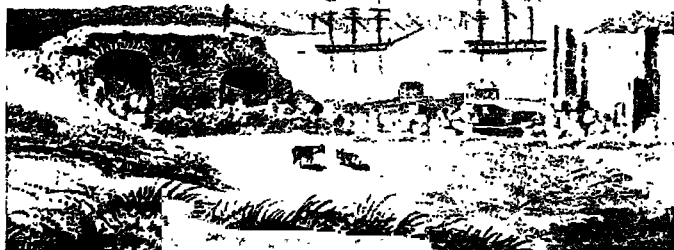
by a brother of Iberville at the mouth of the Mississippi.<sup>3</sup> In spite of its low lying position, "inflicted by snakes and alligators" as an early account said, it was soon to be the chief centre of Louisiana and the port for the trade of the river. Midway down the Mississippi valley, just opposite the mouth of the Missouri, lay Cahokia and Kaskaskia. Unlike the posts and missions they were real agricultural settlements with quiet farms and homes almost exactly like those of New France.

With the loss of Acadia in 1713 the St. Lawrence gateway had to be made secure, and this led to the building of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. Planned by the ablest French military

<sup>3</sup> Iberville's colony had been planted on the shore of the Gulf a short distance from the River.



engineers and rivalling Quebec in strength, it was outstanding even in an age of great stone fortresses. It cost over four million livres, and the French king is said to have asked if its streets were being paved with gold. It was not merely a fortress. By the middle of the century it had over four thousand people. Its fine harbour was a scene of activity, as many as one hundred and forty vessels coming to it annually, and it was a centre of privateering in time of war which made it a thorn in the side of New England's merchants and fishermen. Its public buildings, including a large hospital, were finer than anything to be found in the English



RUINS OF LOUISBOURG IN 1818

The site of Louisbourg has been made one of Canada's National Parks.

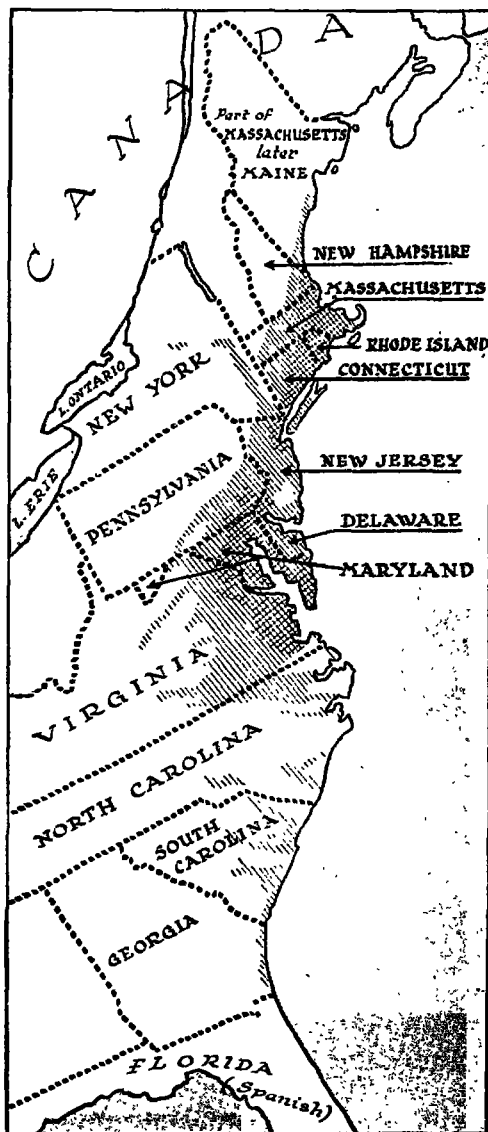
colonies. Louisbourg was never so strong as it appeared. Nevertheless it stood as an imposing illustration of the imagination and energy which built up France's North American empire in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The British colonies along the Atlantic coast were also thriving; but they were in many ways a sharp contrast to the French empire. Thirteen in number they stretched from Georgia in the south to Massachusetts and New Hampshire in the north. Their strength was in their solid settlements and in their trade to Europe and the West Indies. During the first half of the eighteenth century they grew rapidly in population, numbering by 1750 over a million and a half people when New France had scarcely more than fifty thousand. The government of the English colonies was very

### THE THIRTEEN COLONIES

The shaded portions show the settled areas in 1740, and indicate how settlements were stretching westward through the Mohawk valley in New York and through the mountains of Virginia.

The British claims to the boundary of Maine had an effect on the present Canadian boundary at that point. Britain claimed that this boundary followed the height of land and ran as far north as shown. Later, when the Thirteen Colonies became the United States, the early British claims were turned against Britain with the result that Maine extends northward like a wedge between the Maritime Provinces and Quebec.



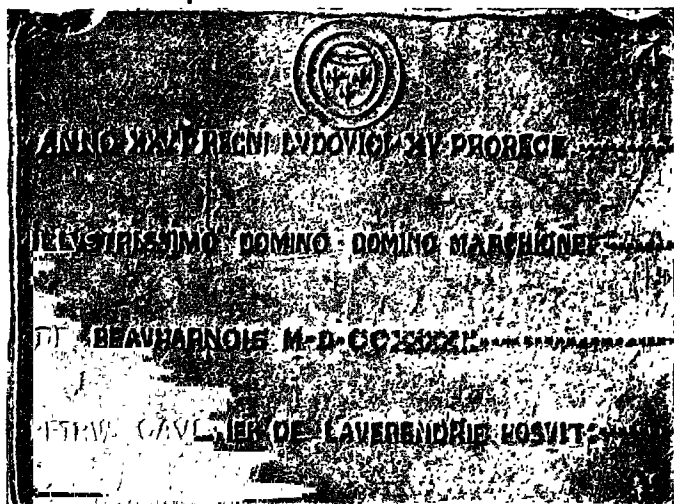
different from that of New France under Royal Government. Each colony had an elected assembly, and some control of its own affairs. Before the Treaty of Utrecht the English showed little interest in expanding west of the Alleghanies, but in the years following 1713 their traders crossed the mountains in larger numbers, and a conflict for the fur trade began to appear between French and English especially in the Ohio valley. By 1740 this conflict was growing serious. Each side had some advantages. The blankets and other manufactured goods of the English were cheaper and superior in quality, but the French seemed to understand the Indians better, and to win their confidence more easily. It is not surprising that the Indians feared the advance of the English settlements. "Go, see the posts our King has planted," said a French governor, "and you will see that you can still hunt under their very walls; the English on the contrary, are no sooner in possession of a place than the game is driven away. The forest falls as they advance, and the soil is laid bare so that you can scarce find shelter for the night." The English settlements, on their part, feared and resented the French aim of encirclement. By 1740 their population had grown so that they were beginning to feel crowded along the seacoast. From Virginia to New England they were ready to strike through the barrier which was hemming them in.

#### **Thrusting Westward From Lake Superior and Hudson Bay.**

English and French interests also came into conflict in the region lying west of Lake Superior. Here the French fur trade was expanded by La Vérendrye, one of New France's most famous explorers. La Vérendrye belonged to a fur-trading family of Three Rivers, and after fighting as a soldier in France he was given the right to carry on trade near Lake Superior where the French already had posts at Nipigon and Kaministiquia. He went west from Montreal in 1731, but soon found that he was competing for furs with the Hudson's Bay Company's posts on James Bay. This gave him the idea of pushing west of Lake Superior to more distant tribes who might be persuaded not to take their furs to Hudson Bay. He also heard Indian accounts of the route to the Western Sea, which had been sought since the days of Champlain

and which still seemed to retreat like a will-o'-the-wisp. La Vérendrye obtained from the French king a monopoly of the fur trade of the west, on condition that he would search for the Western Sea, and so he embarked on a series of labours and adventures, which did not end until his death almost twenty years later.

La Vérendrye's plan was to build posts at strategic points on the



Lead plate buried by La Vérendrye and found in 1913 at Pierre, South Dakota, on the west bank of the Missouri River.

waterways. The first, Fort St. Charles, he placed on Lake of the Woods and others were gradually built from that point west. Like La Salle he experienced difficulties and delays of the most annoying character. The long canoe route to Montreal made his expenses heavy: his debts piled up, and his creditors worked against him. He and his sons made, however, some extensive explorations to Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan River, and south and west to the upper Mississippi and beyond. In 1738 he visited the Mandan Indians in this upper Mississippi region. Having heard great tales about them he hoped to discover a civilized people, but

was disappointed to find only Indian villages of unusually large size and with extensive cultivated fields. Four years later, "resolved to perish rather than give up", he again set off to find the Western Sea. We cannot be sure from the account of his journey how far he went, but it is now generally agreed that he reached the Black Hills of Southern Dakota. Men still had no idea that the continent stretched on for hundreds of miles and that the Rocky Mountains blocked the way to the Pacific. La Vérendrye's last years were unhappy. He lost his fur-trading monopoly and had to give up his explorations. His accomplishment had been, however, a notable one. He widened the knowledge of the continent by his explorations, extended the Montreal fur trade far beyond Lake Superior, and was the first to establish French influence in what is now the Canadian west.

La Vérendrye's chain of posts was a serious menace to the Hudson's Bay Company, as they cut off furs which had been coming from far inland to the Bay. The chain was lengthened still further by traders who followed La Vérendrye. In 1749 a post was built at the present site of The Pas in northern Manitoba, and four years later another was placed a little further west on the Saskatchewan River. Some action was necessary to offset this competition, and in 1750 the Company sent inland Anthony Henday,<sup>4</sup> its first important representative since Kelsey had gone to the prairies sixty years before. Henday is said to have been a smuggler in his early days. Certainly he was a man of great boldness and energy. In a week less than a year he travelled more than two thousand miles from Fort York to the foothills of the Rockies. He visited the Blackfeet in present southern Alberta, trapped furs during the winter, and in the spring returned to the Bay. Everywhere he tried to induce the Indians to come to the Bay to trade, but with little success. Most of the Indians far inland preferred not to make so long a journey or to trade at the French posts which lay on the way.

In looking at the French and English empires in the first half of the eighteenth century, we cannot but be struck by the energy with

<sup>4</sup> The name has commonly been spelled Hendry, but a letter by the explorer himself is signed "Anthony Henday" (see A. S. Morton, *Under Western Skies*, page 84).

which they were expanding. From the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Saskatchewan River, from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, traders, missionaries, farmers and soldiers were leaving their marks indelibly on the landscape. A conflict of interests between the two empires was growing, and by the middle of the century was, at certain points, acute. Every signal pointed to stormy weather ahead.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

There are Ryerson readers on Iberville and LaVérendrye, and accounts of the latter in *Pathfinders of the great plains* by Lawrence J. Burpee "Chronicles of Canada", *French pathfinders in North America* by William Henry Johnson, and *Pathfinders of the west* by Agnes Laut. William Wood's *The great fortress* traces the history of Louisbourg.

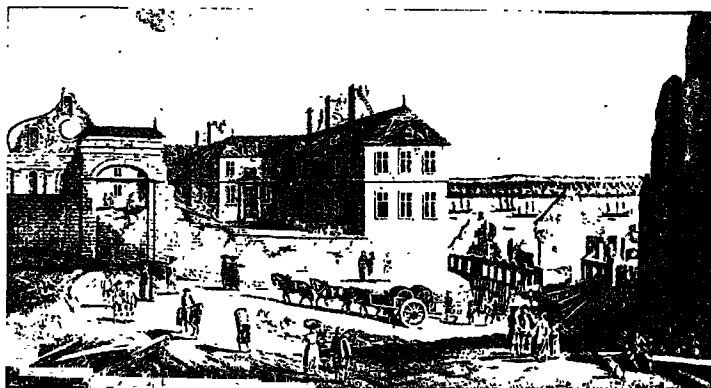
## *Chapter X*

### Homes and People

CANADA has always been a home of pioneers, a land of rich promise and challenging problems calling for all the courage and resourcefulness that true pioneers could bring to it. The first settlers carried from Europe much more than their few worldly possessions. They carried also their hopes, their habits and beliefs, and by hard experience they learned to adapt themselves to life in a strange new world. This process had been repeated many times in Canadian history, and out of it has grown the Canada we know today.

**The Settlements of New France.** New France of the eighteenth century shows clearly how this process was at work. The first hard years of Champlain, Talon and Frontenac were over, and ways of life truly Canadian were by now being firmly established. Let us look at New France as it was, for example, when Peter Kalm, a Swedish scientist, visited and described it in 1749. His first impression was not unlike that of the traveller who sails up the great river today, for along the shore he could see the white farm houses and little villages with their church spires gleaming in the sunlight. Quebec, then as now, was the delight of every visitor. Its magnificent towering rock dotted with guns dominated the river. A stone wall protected its landward side, and within this fortified line stood the governor's palace and other public buildings which would have done credit to a city of similar size in France. Most of its eight thousand people, its merchants, shopkeepers and artisans, lived, however, at the water's edge below the citadel. Except for Tadoussac which was of slight importance, Quebec was New France's only seaport. Ocean vessels did not venture above it, and practically every person and

every article which went to and from France passed through Quebec. In spite of the long ocean voyage of six or eight weeks, Quebec was therefore more closely in touch with France than any other part of the colony. Here was the garrison with its officers, here lived the governor and intendant with their officials, and the



A view in Quebec at the end of the French Régime.

bishop who directed the work of the church all the way from Louisbourg to New Orleans.

Quebec was a colourful and even a gay little city, with much ceremony on official occasions and bright uniforms which imitated in a small way the splendours of Versailles. From France came clothing, furniture, luxuries, and even the latest books for those of a more serious frame of mind. Kalm tells us that he found well informed people and much intelligent conversation. He thought the young ladies displayed too much fondness for dress, and he said that they "make their tongues go like a lark's wings"—but perhaps we should not take a scientist's opinions on such matters too seriously. At any rate we cannot doubt that the young ladies of Quebec were interesting, for a French observer wrote, "They have wit, delicacy, good voices and a great fondness for dancing. They are discreet, and not much given to flirting; but when they undertake to catch a lover it is not easy for him to escape."

Life in Quebec seemed in some ways like that in France, but



when a visitor went on up the river he soon realized that he was in the midst of a different world. Three Rivers with its hundred or so houses was still a struggling village. Here, however, was the colony's only iron industry, the St. Maurice forges, begun in 1737. It made cannon and mortars of various sizes, kettles and other



(*"Picturesque Canada"*)

#### THE ST. MAURICE FORGES

utensils, and iron stoves which were coming into use in the homes of the colony. Montreal, lying at the western end of New France's settlements and facing the vast wilderness of forests, lakes, and rivers, immediately struck the visitor as very different from Quebec. It had by the middle of the eighteenth century perhaps five thousand people. In its origin it had been a mission, and perhaps a fifth of the land within its walls was still set aside for churches, schools, and other religious organizations. But Montreal was also from the beginning the gateway to the west. It was the capital of the fur trade, and its streets swarmed each year with *coureurs de bois* and painted Indians in hundreds bent on selling their furs and,

even more perhaps, on taking part in wild revelries. Montreal presented a scene utterly unlike anything to be found in France. Here, certainly, the visitor felt that he was far from the Old World. Montreal was undeniably Canadian.

Beyond Montreal stretched the almost limitless forest, the

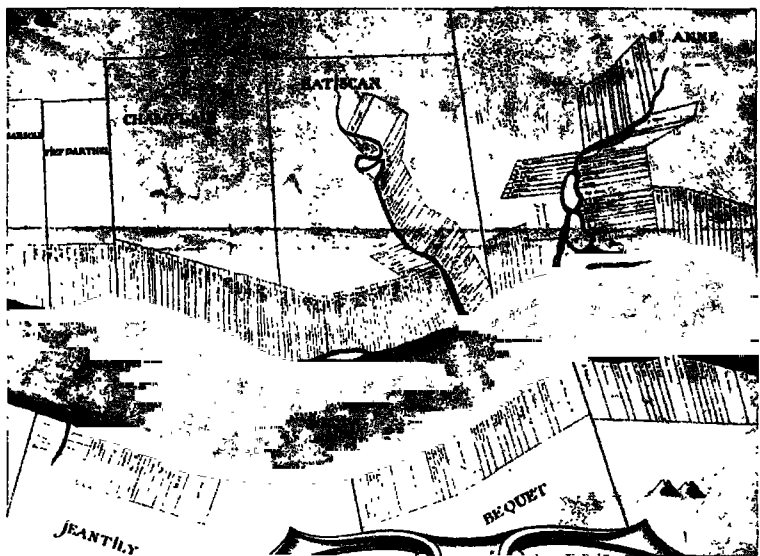


(R. C. A. F. photo)

This air photo of Verchères, the riverside village, gives an excellent idea of the way in which the farm houses are stretched in a line along the bank of the St. Lawrence.

empire of the trader and missionary. Its lure seemed irresistible. Hundreds of young men threaded their way each year into its dark shadows and across its sunlit waters. Their life was hard and dangerous. Countless portages, swirling rapids where every stroke of the paddle had to be sure and swift, long winters with their bitter cold and often their threat of starvation—these the voyageur took as a matter of course. From the Indians he learned every forest secret, and at some points he even improved on Indian ways of doing things. His clothing was a combination of French and Indian dress—the moccasin, the gaudy woven sash, the coon-skin or bright woollen cap. At the fur-trading posts there were the rude comforts of snugly constructed buildings, and often gardens to add to the food supply. The voyageurs had a good humour which was never far below the surface. With their rollicking

songs, their endless fund of stories, their gaily painted canoes, and their skill in forest life they were a type of Frenchman completely weaned away from the life of Europe. The settlements could ill afford to have so many young men leave the farms, but the government never quite knew what to do about it. At times the coureurs



(Public Archives)

Map of part of the St. Lawrence River near Three Rivers in 1709, showing farms.

de bois were forbidden with threats of severe penalties to go into the woods; at other times they were required to have licenses, but neither plan worked very well. New France could not get on without the fur trade, even if it seemed in some ways to weaken the colony, and the fascination of life in the forest proved stronger than any orders of the government.

Let us return to the heart of New France, the farms and villages on the shores of the St. Lawrence. The colony had a peculiar and interesting appearance, like that of a continuous village with a single street, the river. Scarcely anywhere was there more than

one strip of farms along the shore. From below Quebec and up to Montreal the little houses stood close together for a distance of two hundred miles along each bank.<sup>1</sup> Practically all travel was along the waterway—by canoes and batteaux in summer, by sleighs in winter along paths marked with pine trees set up in the ice. Not until the 1730's were roads completed, first along the north shore and then along the south, and it took four to five days of very uncomfortable travel to make the journey by carriage from Quebec to Montreal.

**The Seigniorial System.** The method of granting and holding land always has a tremendous influence in the life of the people. New France's "seigniorial system" was an imitation of the methods used in the mother country. By it the king granted land in rather large blocks to important land-holders known as seigniors, and they in turn made grants to the individual farmers who in New France came to be known as habitants. Louis Hébert was the first Canadian seignior. From the days of Talon seigniories became numerous, and by the middle of the eighteenth century nearly three hundred had been granted to officials, merchants, retired army officers, and other people of some importance. Seigniories were usually at least a dozen square miles in extent, some were as large as one hundred. The ceremony of granting a seignior was interesting. On bended knee before the governor at Quebec, the new seignior made an oath of loyalty to the king and promised obedience. He paid no money to the king, but he was expected to divide his seignior into farms, to procure settlers, and to have the land cleared. Some of the seigniors failed in their obligations but most of them did something and some did a great deal.

A famous seignior was that of Longueuil, granted near Montreal in 1657 to Charles Le Moyne, the father of Iberville. Le Moyne and his heirs did all they could to encourage the habitants. The manor house of Longueuil was almost like a French chateau, a great building of solid masonry with four imposing towers well suited for defence. In the eighteenth century its furnishings if not luxurious left nothing to be desired—thick wool carpets of Canadian

<sup>1</sup> The line of farms stretched also up the tributaries of the St. Lawrence and especially up the Richelieu.

make, hangings of lovely colours, dining room with an immense buffet reaching nearly to the ceiling, dishes of China or Marseilles ware, and silver cutlery.

The habitant did not buy his land from the seignior, but agreed to give certain payments and services for it each year. These were generally not burdensome—a small payment in money, a half



*(Can. Geog. Journal)*

French-Canadian house, 250 years old, on the Island of Orleans.

dozen chickens or some grain, a few days' work on the seignior's land, usually three a year, during which the seignior had to supply him with food and tools. He also had to have his grain ground at the seignior's mill, although some of the seigniors objected to building mills because it was said they often cost more than the amounts collected for grinding grain. Yearly in the autumn, the habitants came to the manor house to make their payments. This day was one of general merry-making for the whole community, of dancing, singing, and enjoying the hospitality of food and drink which custom required the seignior to supply.

**Government and Leaders in Seignior and Parish.** The relations of seignior and habitant were not always perfect, but on the whole the system worked smoothly. The seignior was honoured, no great gulf separated him from the habitants, often he worked on his land, and he lived much as the habitant did even if his house was finer. The habitants were neither slaves nor serfs.



THE OLD MANOR HOUSE OF LANAUDIÈRE

They did not hesitate to act and speak freely; and, if they were not satisfied, they could appeal to the intendant or his officials who on many occasions took steps to protect them against abuses.

New France had no self-government or elected assemblies as did the English colonies. France was governed by a despotic king, and New France was ruled in the same fashion by the orders of the governor and intendant. During the century of Royal Government thousands of these orders were issued, all the way from those which dealt with matters of the greatest importance, to those which required the habitant to drive his cattle up and down the road in the winter for the purpose of packing down the snow, or those which forbade children to slide down Quebec's steep streets in icy weather. But the habitant did not object to this form of government. He was used to it, he paid practically no taxes, and he was not oppressed as was the peasant in France in the eighteenth century. If he had a law suit—and the habitants had many of

them—he had it settled, unless it was an important matter, in the seignior's court. The seignior made something from the fines collected and often acted as judge himself, but the cost to the habitant was small. "In Canada," one writer remarked, "we do not pass through the clutches of advocates, the talons of attorneys and claws of clerks. Everyone here pleads his own cause." The seigniorial system was not perfect but on the whole it served New France well. In the days of Talon and Frontenac it played a great part in the defence of the colony, the seignior being usually the military leader and the manor house or mill often serving as a fort around which the people rallied.

The priest shared with the seignior the leadership of the local community. Usually each seigniory was also a parish, and the church was a centre not only for worship but for sociability and guidance. The priest was a counsellor to everyone. On Sunday morning after the service young and old gathered at the church door to exchange stories, to hear the news, or to listen to announcements read by the captain of militia. The captain of militia was an interesting and important figure in every community. A habitant, chosen by the government and approved by the people, he was highly respected and usually had everyone's confidence. He had also special marks of respect, an honoured seat in church and the right to wear a sword.

**The Habitant at Home.** The habitants had few luxuries but there was little if any poverty. A few acres of grain, some cows and chickens, maple sugar and syrup, fish and game, provided food in plenty. Every home had its spinning wheel and every farm a few sheep. Furs were cheap and the women were skilled in making clothes. The habitant was a handy man in building his home or making his few implements. In the first hard pioneering days the people had learned how to adapt themselves to the New World and to protect themselves against the hard winter, so that by the eighteenth century their Canadian ways of life were well established. The houses, with their thick walls and high pitched roofs which shed the snow easily, were admirably suited to the climate. Simple and well proportioned, the best of them were delightfully attractive in their own way. One is struck

indeed with the habitant's love of beauty and colour. His songs by dozens he had brought from France and he sang them everywhere—at the fireside, on the road, along the waterways to the swing of the paddle. The gaily coloured woven sashes and other pieces of clothing, the woven rugs and other simple home-made articles often showed a delightful and natural artistic quality. In



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

Interior of mill built during the French Régime showing heavy timbered construction.

one form of art, wood carving, New France excelled. The best carvers became famous in the colony. The church encouraged their work, and throughout Quebec there may still be seen many beautiful examples of their craft.

The habitant was cheery, high spirited and very fond of sociability. In summer there were many holidays, and in winter work was light. When the farms were inherited by several children, it was the practice as long as possible to divide them into strips each with a front on the river; thus, in time, the houses came to be very close together, which encouraged much visiting back and forth, with games, dancing, and story telling. The habitant had few ambitions but he enjoyed life. His interests centred around



his family and his church. He knew and thought little of the outside world. His home was in Canada and he loved the land on which he lived. This was his strength. The French empire in America was to come to an end, but when it passed away it still left the people of New France clinging securely to their homes on the shores of the great river.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

There is an abundance of interesting material on the life of French Canada. *The seigneurs of old Canada* by William Bennett Munro "Chronicles of Canada", gives a good picture of French life before the conquest. *Canada's romantic heritage* by Edward C. Woodley reviews the period and includes a wealth of story and legend. *Quebec of yesteryear* by Arthur Doughty is a series of stories based on old records. A beautifully written novel by Willa Cather, *Shadows on the rock*, carries one back to Quebec in the days of Laval and Frontenac. An older and longer novel, *The golden dog* by William Kirby describes the life of the city in the time of the intendant Bigot. In *A treasure ship of Old Quebec*, by E. H. Bennett, four modern young people, who search for the title to an estate, bring to light much of the history of the city. Non-fiction books are *Romantic Quebec* and *The storied streets of old Quebec* by Blodwen Davies, and *French Canada, pictures and stories* by Hazel Boswell. The amusing coloured illustrations in the last book imitate habitant hooked rugs. Little essays on typical characters and on articles in French homes are given in *Chez nous* by Adjutor Rivard and in *Other days, other ways* by Georges Bouchard. Though these two books deal with a more modern period, they describe customs which have changed little. The same may be said of the famous novel, *Maria Chapdelaine* by Louis Hémon, which gives a splendid picture of a pioneer family and its struggles with the land. The folklore of Quebec is to be found in *Legends of French Canada*, by Edward C. Woodley. *The flying canoe* and *The Beauport road* by J. E. LeRossignol contain stories old and new told by a travelling packman. The music of the habitant has been collected by J. Murray Gibson in *Canadian folk songs old and new*. In painting, the artists Cornelius Kreighoff and Clarence Gagnon give us glimpses of French Canada. Each is represented by a booklet in the *Canadian artists series*, containing small reproductions. You will frequently find their pictures on Christmas cards.

## *Chapter XI*

### *France Loses Her American Empire*

**I**N 1744 Britain and France came once more to blows in a struggle that touched four continents, lasted almost twenty years, and ended with the loss to France of her American empire. Since the Treaty of Utrecht the two empires had been growing not only in North America but in India and along the coast of Africa. Their interests clashed at all these points, but nowhere more than in America. Britain's Thirteen Colonies had been rapidly increasing in population, settlers in all the colonies were seeking land, traders were each year pushing more aggressively west of the mountains, and New England fishermen were sending their little boats to the fishing banks past the very guns of Louisbourg. Nor had the French empire been standing still; its network of forts and missions west of the mountains had spread from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico; its traders and missionaries had gained the friendship of scores of Indian tribes; and its key points such as Louisbourg, Quebec, and Niagara had been strengthened by stone fortifications.

The long conflict which began in 1744 consisted in fact of two wars, but the interval between them, from 1748 to 1756, was little more than an armed truce. Before peace was finally made in 1763 fleets and armies were called into action such as had never been seen anywhere up to that time.

**Louisbourg Captured and Restored.** One incident in the first war is worthy of mention, the capture of Louisbourg. New Englanders hated and feared the great fortress. Its presence encouraged the Indians along the Maine border to attack the New England settlements, and its privateers harassed the fishermen. Shortly after the outbreak of war in 1744 an army of about four thousand colonials was collected in Boston. A fleet came from England, and



the end of the first war to restore all places which they had taken from each other.

**An Uneasy Peace.** Nowhere was the eight years' truce of 1748-56 marked by more stirring or tragic events than in Nova Scotia. Each side was determined to strengthen its position and the British took the first step in 1749 by founding Halifax. Until that time little had been done since the Treaty of Utrecht to strengthen the English position in Acadia, and some bold step was needed to offset the power and influence of Louisbourg. The magnificent natural harbour where Halifax now stands offered an ideal site for a strong British base. In the summer of 1749 a fleet of vessels arrived from England carrying over two thousand five hundred people of all kinds from aristocrats to labourers. On a shore where not a square foot had been cleared, there were landed not only humble workmen but the wearers of cocked hats, fancy waistcoats, knee breeches, silver buckles, hoops and brocades. Immediately a prodigious digging, chopping, and hammering began and by the autumn a little town of some three hundred houses had been erected. From the beginning Halifax was a military and naval centre and, with its rise the English and French empires stood face to face in the Acadian region.

In 1750 the French built Fort Beauséjour on the isthmus which connects Nova Scotia with the mainland, and facing it the English built Fort Lawrence. There were at least two serious causes of friction in this region. The Abenaki and Micmac Indians who were under the influence of French missionaries and traders were a thorn in the side of the British, and the boundary line of Acadia, which had been left uncertain in the Treaty of Utrecht, had been a bone of contention for years. The English claimed that Acadia extended into present-day New Brunswick, the French that it included only the peninsula of Nova Scotia.

With both sides making feverish preparations, the Acadian French could hardly avoid being drawn into the struggle, even though they wished to take no part. For many years they had lived their own lives. The French government before the Treaty of Utrecht had largely neglected them while under British rule they did no military service, paid no taxes, and rarely saw an

English official. By the middle of the century their settlements in Nova Scotia had grown in population from about two hundred and fifty original immigrants to over eight thousand.<sup>1</sup> The Acadians were a care-free, pious, and self-reliant people, devoted to their religion and their homes, knowing little of the outside world and wishing only to be left alone. The British government had tried after 1713 to get them to take an oath of allegiance, but they steadily refused saying that they would be neutral if Britain and France went to war, and that they did not want to take the oath for fear that they would be asked to do military service. They came to be known as the neutral French, and matters drifted on in this way for thirty years. When war broke out in the 1740's, however, the situation became very difficult. The British feared that the Acadians might side with the French, and the New Englanders wanted something done about them lest the French with their strong fortress of Louisbourg might recapture the whole of Acadia. Nor were the French any more willing than the English to leave the Acadians alone. They were determined to stir up the Micmac Indians and the Acadians against the British, and they found in the Abbé Le Loutre a most daring and clever agent. Le Loutre as a missionary, had gained a powerful influence among both the Micmacs and the Acadians. At first he had been not unfriendly to the British, but when war broke out in 1744 he threw all his efforts into the aim of bringing the Acadians once more under French rule. He was almost equal to an army in himself. Beauséjour was built under his direction, and from this stronghold he did everything possible by threat and intrigue to force the Acadians to the French side.

Between French and English the Acadians were caught like pawns. The unhappy climax came just before war was renewed. In 1755 Beauséjour was captured and destroyed, and the governor of Nova Scotia with his council resolved to settle the Acadian problem once and for all by removing the Acadians from their homes and forcing them out of the colony. The plan was adopted without the knowledge of the British government. In

<sup>1</sup> About 1,000 more were scattered in Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island and in present New Brunswick.

New England it was likely to win approval since New Englanders had long been anxious to see French power destroyed at Louisbourg and in Acadia. From the military point of view the decision might be justified because the Acadians had stubbornly refused to take the oath of allegiance and the colony needed to be strengthened for the coming struggle against France, but it was a harsh



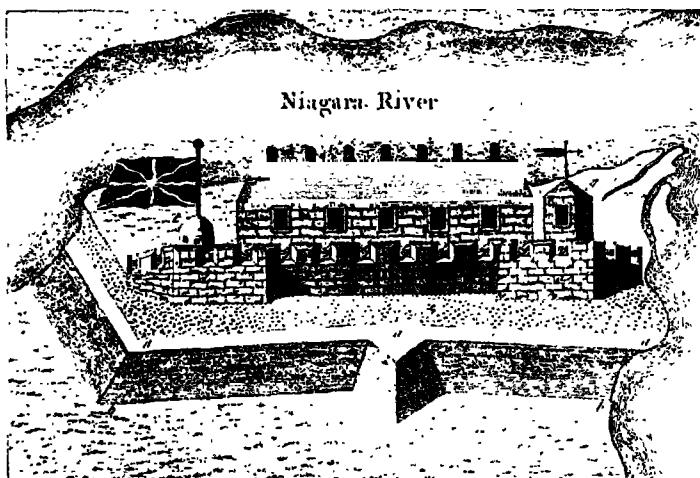
Postage stamp showing the memorial church and Evangeline statue built in memory of the Acadians at Grand Pré, Nova Scotia.

decision and has no other justification. The expulsion of the Acadians is the only such incident to mar the history of Canada. It is small in comparison with the cruelty which has driven millions of refugees from their homes in the twentieth century. None the less it is distressing. Perhaps, if it has had any good result, it has strengthened the deep

conviction which Canadians hold today that no quarrel between races or nations can be permanently settled by the inhuman treatment of helpless people.

The expulsion began suddenly in the summer of 1755. Troops were marched into the villages, and the people were summoned to hear without warning the order for their deportation. Ships had been prepared, and hundreds were forced on them with no attempt to distinguish between the loyal and the disloyal. Property was destroyed, families were divided. Altogether, before the deportations ended, several thousand were scattered in the Thirteen Colonies from Maine to Georgia as well as in England and France. Some in later years drifted back but many never returned. Between those who were deported and those who fled, the Acadians in Nova Scotia were reduced in a short time from about 8200 to about 1200.

Meanwhile both France and England were strengthening their positions elsewhere. Overlooking Lake Champlain and guarding the gateway from New York to Quebec, the French built the great stone stronghold of Ticonderoga. A few miles south of it the English built Fort William Henry. In the Ohio country there were scenes of even greater activity. English traders were pushing



(Public Archives)

Fort Niagara from a drawing in 1759 soon after its capture by the British.

into the Ohio country from New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The French became alarmed, and in 1753 sent an expedition of twenty-three large birchbark canoes to claim the valley of the Ohio. Lead plates were buried and the Indians were warned against trading with the English. A line of forts was begun stretching from Presqu'île on Lake Erie to Duquesne on the Ohio. Fort Duquesne, standing at the present site of Pittsburg blocked the route from Virginia to the Ohio. Here the French found and defeated a little force of Virginians under the command of George Washington who years later was to lead the American forces against the British during the American Revolution. Fort Duquesne was a menace which the British could not ignore, and in 1755—

the very year of the capture of Beauséjour and of the Acadian expulsion—an army of British regulars was sent against it under General Braddock. A road was cut through the forest with prodigious effort, but Braddock knew nothing of Indian warfare and when he neared Fort Duquesne he fell into an ambush carefully prepared by the French. His force was almost completely destroyed. England and France were now at war in all but name, and in 1756 the formal declaration was made beginning the final struggle which we know as the Seven Years' War.

**The Seven Years' War.** The French outdistanced the English in their early efforts. Almost their first step was to send to Canada a general of the highest quality, the Marquis de Montcalm. Montcalm has with justice been made a hero in Canadian history, for there was nothing mean or corrupt in him. He devoted France with supreme devotion against great odds and in the end laid down his life in her defence. His love of his family and his own home, his great abilities, his sense of honour towards his enemies as well as his friends, endear him to us as a soldier and a gentleman. Montcalm saw clearly from the beginning the nature and difficulty of his problem. Quebec was the heart, the citadel, of New France



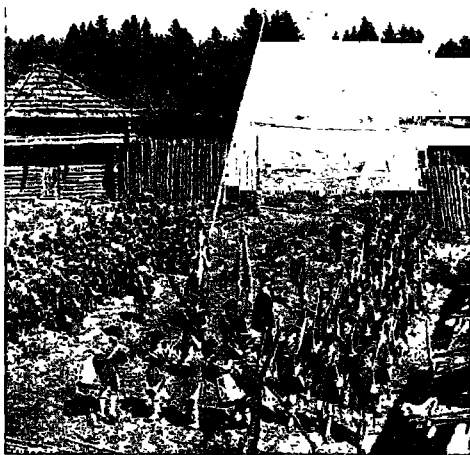
MONTCALM

and there the destiny of French power in America would be decided. The approaches to Quebec must be defended with every possible care—the gulf guarded by Louisbourg, the Champlain route guarded by Ticonderoga, and the route from the west guarded by the Ohio forts, Fort Niagara, and Fort Frontenac. In the first two years the war went well for Montcalm. At the very beginning he gained a notable success by capturing Oswego in a



brilliant campaign of less than a month. The slowness and difficulty of transporting men and guns by canoe, made this a remarkable achievement which shows Montcalm at his best. It gave him undisputed control of the whole region of the Great Lakes.

In the third year 1758, the tide began to turn, however. By this time the British were mobilizing their full strength, and in



Scene from the film "Northwest Passage", which depicted warfare along the Lake Champlain route. The famous colonial force of Rogers' Rangers is shown with a detachment of British regulars.

particular the power of the navy was showing its full effect. Britain's greatest war minister, the famous William Pitt the elder, was now in control, and he aroused the whole nation by his enthusiasm and leadership. Pitt had unerring judgment in choosing leaders, and he promoted young men of ability without fear or favour to posts of the highest importance. In 1758 Pitt's efforts began to show their results. In that year Duquesne and the other Ohio

forts fell, Fort Frontenac was taken, and the French had only Fort Niagara to guard the route through the Lakes. Montcalm did succeed in holding the Lake Champlain route. In a hard battle at Ticonderoga he defeated the finest British army which had ever been seen in America, an army whose flotilla of boats stretched for six miles along the waterway as it moved towards the French fort. But this victory did not offset a still more important British success—the capture of Louisbourg. With Louisbourg in their hands the British fleet and army were free to close in on Québec.

Montcalm at the beginning of 1759 knew well how desperate

was his position. Help from France was now cut off. His force of French regulars was well trained and devoted to him but it numbered only about four thousand. He still had Indian allies and French-Canadian troops, but they were untrained for the siege warfare which was soon to take place. The Indians were almost worse than useless. Montcalm never had liked their bar-



The British fort of Crown Point as constructed for the motion picture "Northwest Passage."

barous methods, and now they had to be fed and kept contented by presents. Food and supplies were running short. New France had never had much food to export, and between 1740 and 1760 there were eight crop failures which were made more serious because many men were withdrawn from the fields by military service. Montcalm, moreover, was not in complete control. The system of Royal Government which in many ways had served New France well was now showing its worst characteristics. The governor, Vaudreuil, was well intentioned and devoted to the Canadian people, but he was vain and jealous of Montcalm. He continually wrote to France condemning Montcalm's actions, and on various occasions he interfered in Montcalm's plans and reversed his orders as he had power to do. An even worse influence was the intendant, Bigot, a clever and in many ways efficient man, but the most dishonest rascal who ever disgraced the government of New France. He and his friends made enormous sums by cheating both government and people, and lived in waste and luxury when the colony

was suffering from lack of food. The prospect was dark in any case, but corruption, inefficiency, and jealousy at the very moment of crisis made it almost hopeless.



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

The British fleet on Lake Ontario in 1757. The flagship of the fleet, carrying 18 guns, is in the centre.

**The Siege of Quebec.** The fleet and army which sailed into the St. Lawrence in the spring of 1759 were the most formidable that had ever sailed into the great river—40 warships, 100 transports, 9000 picked British regulars, and 18,000 sailors. Admiral Saunders, one of Pitt's choices, was in command of the fleet. Forty-six years of age, he had already spent thirty-two years in the navy. The navigation of the fleet up the river completely surprised the French. They were so sure that certain dangerous channels were impassable for large vessels that they did not trouble to set up any shore batteries at narrow points. Small boats were put out ahead of the British ships like a screen to make soundings and prepare a chart. For a week in this way the fleet worked its way up stream without an accident. Vaudreuil said later that Saunders and his captains forced sixty ships of war where he had hardly dared to risk a vessel of one hundred tons, and Bigot said they made child's play of one of the most dangerous passages: "they passed by night as well as by day; they even passed several together tacking to windward." In these exploits we can see vividly what the command of the sea meant. During the campaign no less

than two hundred and seventy-seven vessels sailed up to Quebec without a single loss, and at all times the British army was fully supplied with food and equipment.

In command of the army was General James Wolfe. Still only

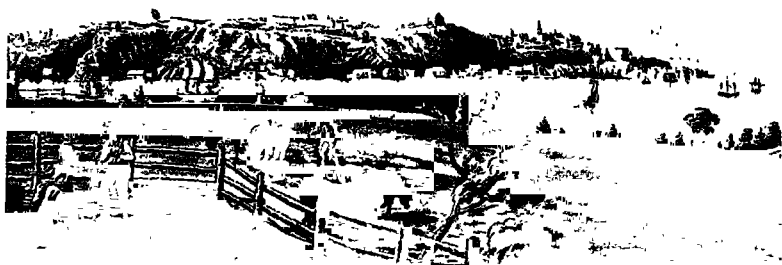
thirty years of age, he was Pitt's choice for the heaviest responsibility of the war. An officer at the age of fifteen, Wolfe was by now a seasoned campaigner with a brilliant record and in every way a worthy opponent of Montcalm. In spite of Montcalm's difficulties Wolfe's task was not easy. Other British armies captured Fort Niagara and Fort Ticonderoga in the summer of 1759; but, unless Wolfe could capture Quebec before winter came, the siege would have to be abandoned and the campaign would fail. Montcalm's position was one of magnificent strength. Below the citadel of Quebec the Beauport shore was fortified as far as Montmorency River which could be easily defended. Above Quebec a clifflike bank, which could



ADMIRAL SAUNDERS

be guarded by small forces, extended as far up the river as Saunders's ships could go, and along his whole line Montcalm kept ceaseless watch. "The night is dark," runs one of his letters. "It rains; our troops are in their tents, with clothes on, ready for an alarm; I in my boots; my horses saddled. In fact, this is my usual way."

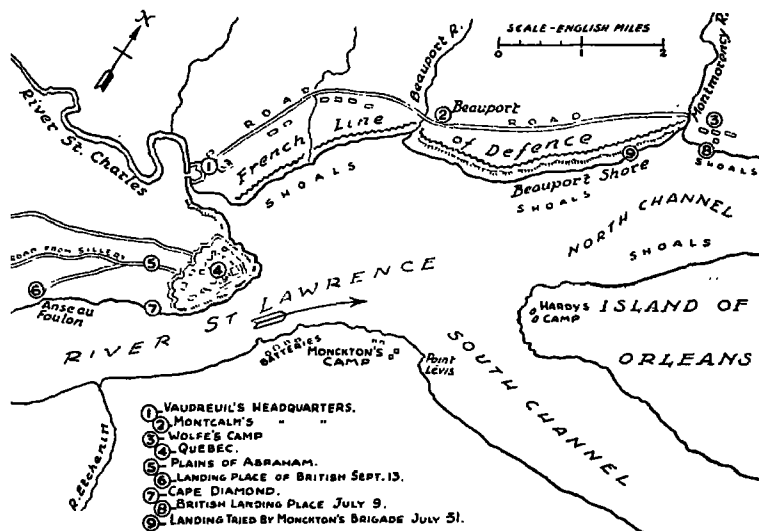
As the summer wore on, and the situation remained unchanged Wolfe's problem became more and more serious. He was sure that if he could bring Montcalm to a pitched battle he would win, but nowhere could a landing place be found in Montcalm's thirty-five miles of guarded shore line. Landings which were attempted, especially one on the Beauport shore, failed disastrously. Finally,



Quebec from the opposite side of the river showing the citadel. The Plains of Abraham were to the left of it.

early in September, Wolfe devised a desperate plan which might succeed brilliantly or fail dismally. A short distance above Quebec was a steep pathway, Le Foulon, which led up the cliff from the river. Wolfe, who was well informed by spies, knew that this spot was guarded by a worthless and cowardly officer, a friend of Bigot and Vaudreuil, and he planned a landing there for the night of September 13. He kept the plan a secret till the last moment from even his highest officers, but for three days and nights he had Saunders send ships up and down the river to harass and bewilder the French forces. Montcalm thought the attempted landing was likely to come on the Beauport shore, but he was afraid of Le Foulon and sent a force of regulars to guard it. Vaudreuil,

however, pooh-poohed the idea of a landing there as impossible, and ordered the regulars to be withdrawn leaving the vulnerable point to be watched by his worthless friend. Wolfe knew that on the night of the thirteenth the French were expecting some provision boats to make their way down along the river bank to Le Foulon. He took care to have them captured, and in their place



## THE SIEGE OF QUEBEC

a force in small boats under his own command rowed silently under cover of darkness towards the landing place. A sentry challenged but he was answered in French. The landing was reached. Wolfe's men scrambled to the top, overwhelmed the careless guard, and within a few minutes the road was in their possession. As the day broke Wolfe's men began swarming by hundreds across the river. By eight o'clock his army was drawn up in battle formation on the Plains of Abraham.

Montcalm, on learning of this disaster, which might never have occurred had his orders been carried out, summoned every available man in the hope of defeating Wolfe before his army was fully pre-

pared. By 9.30 his regiments were drawn up before the walls of Quebec with only a quarter mile separating the two armies. At the word of command Montcalm's force advanced in close formation, and on nearing the enemy stopped every twenty-five yards, in the eighteenth century fashion of fighting, to fire a volley. The British line under Wolfe's orders held its fire until only forty paces

separated the two forces, and then delivered a thunderous volley. The French wavered, then broke under the withering fire. The rout was complete. Quebec had fallen.



WEST'S DEATH OF WOLFE

Neither Montcalm nor Wolfe lived to see Quebec surrendered. Wolfe, fatally wounded at the beginning, died on the battle field: Mont-

calm a few hours later within the walls of the citadel. Today a single monument stands in Quebec in commemoration of them both, and as a symbol of the bond which now holds French and English united in a Canadian nation.

**The Last Campaign and the Peace of Paris.** The British garrison faced a hard winter in Quebec. Montreal had not yet fallen, and in the spring its French army marched on Quebec and defeated the British on almost the same spot where Montcalm had lost his battle. But it could not retake the city; in May a British fleet sailed up the river and there was no alternative but retreat. British forces soon closed in on Montreal and with its surrender the war came to an end.

What were the reasons for the defeat of France in America? To Pitt and his chosen commanders some credit must be given. In population New France was many times outnumbered by the British colonies, sixty thousand to over one and a half millions, but the British colonies were disunited and not even at the end

did they make their full weight felt. New France lacked, however, both population and resources to hold its vast empire against the rapidly expanding British colonies. France was beset by war in Europe and could send only limited supplies and forces to America. The system of government which gave power to men like Bigot and Vaudreuil was a serious cause of weakness in the time of crisis.

Sir

My reason for desiring the removal of your  
Company with me to Fort St. John's just yesterday, was  
to show you, as well as the destruction of the  
French, the situation of the Enemy & the places  
where I meant they should be attacked; as  
you are charged with that duty, I should be  
glad to give you all further light & assistance  
I can - the Place is called the Fort

Opening lines from Wolfe's last letter, written to one of his officers

These reasons, and possibly others, had a share of responsibility; and, finally, there was the decisive influence of British sea power which in the end throttled French effort at Louisbourg and Quebec.

The Peace of Paris, signed in 1763, formally brought the war to an end. To France were left only some West Indian islands, and the two small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon which were to serve as fishing bases in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Britain and Spain divided the continent between them with the Mississippi as a boundary line. Apparently France's American empire had ended in failure. In one sense, however, this was far from true. The great majority of New France's people chose to remain on their





THE CAPTURE OF QUEBEC FROM AN OLD PRINT

farms. For over a century they had defended their lands and made their homes in the New World. They were rooted in its soil, and they were destined to carry their traditions into the Canada of the future. Today we can see that, in one respect at least, the French empire in America achieved a lasting success.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Chapters VIII and X of *Readings in Canadian history* provide source material for this chapter. Life in Acadia, interrupted by war with Indians and English, forms the theme of the stories in *Red snow on Grand-Pré* by Archibald MacMechon, and *Stories of the land of Evangeline* by Grace McLeod Rogers. A well written historical account is *The Acadian exiles* by Arthur Doughty "Chronicles of Canada". Have you read Longfellow's poem *Evangeline*? It is not strictly accurate history, but you will find in it, for example, a charming picture of life in the Acadian village of Grand Pré.

William Wood has written a biography of Montcalm, *The passing of New France*, and one of Wolfe, *The winning of Canada*. Both are in the "Chronicles of Canada". Shorter biographies are to be found in the Ryerson readers. There are detailed descriptions of the captures of Louisbourg and Quebec in Francis Parkman's *A half-century of conflict*, chapters XIX and XXVII. The story, *The lady of the miniature* in Blodwen Davies's book *Ruffles and rapiers* tells of Wolfe's romance. One of the best stories written for boys and girls is *Flags over Quebec* by Virginia Watson. Other novels are *The Seats of the mighty* by Gilbert Parker, *The plains of Abraham* by Oliver Curwood, and *With Wolfe in Canada* by G. A. Henty. Kenneth Roberts's *Northwest Passage* tells of the exploits of Rogers's Rangers.

**PART III**

**British North America in a Changing Empire  
(1763 - 1800)**



(from a painting by Arthur Heming)

On the fringe of the Fur Traders' Empire.

## Part III

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### British North America in a Changing Empire

(1763-1800)

The Seven Years' War gave Britain undisputed control of the entire eastern half of North America, and seemed to bring her to the pinnacle of success. Her possessions were prosperous and expanding. The Thirteen Colonies enjoyed liberties and rights of self-government unknown in other Empires. They had gained the fur trade of New France, and could push their settlements westward across the Alleghanies without French opposition.

On the surface all seemed well, but urgent problems soon pressed for solution. In Canada, the French, fearful of losing their laws and religion, came into dispute with the English-speaking merchants newly arrived in quest of the fur trade. Far more serious for the Empire as a whole was Britain's quarrel with the Thirteen Colonies. Starting with the attempt to control their trade more strictly and then to tax them, it ended in the division of the Empire and the creation of the United States.

The American Revolution created also a new British North America. Thousands of Loyalists, determined to remain under the British flag, sought homes in Nova Scotia and Canada, altering the character of their populations and bringing about the organization of two new provinces. The Revolution changed, moreover, the direction of Canada's fur trade. Gradually it dwindled south of the boundary, and Montreal traders sought more and more the rich fur lands of the far North West. Organizing themselves into a company and pushing dauntlessly through forests and mountains, the Nor'Westers blazed their trails toward the Pacific. Others, too, were reaching the West Coast, however—Russians skirting Alaska, New Englanders rounding the Horn, and from England two of Britain's most famous navigators, Captains Cook and Vancouver. The North Pacific coast was placed on the map, and with it can be seen the first faint outline of a British North America stretching from sea to sea.

## *DATES TO REMEMBER*

### **PART III**

- 1758** The first elected assembly meets in Nova Scotia.
- 1763** Pontiac's rising.  
The Royal Proclamation regarding Britain's new acquisitions.
- 1765** The Stamp Act is passed by the British Parliament.
- 1768** Montreal merchants trade around Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan.
- 1769** Hearne follows Coppermine River to the Arctic.
- 1772** The beginning of Scottish immigration.
- 1774** The Hudson's Bay Company builds Fort Cumberland.  
The Quebec Act.
- 1775** The outbreak of the American Revolutionary War: the invasion of  
Canada.
- 1776** The Declaration of Independence.
- 1778** Cook explores the west coast of North America.
- 1783** The Treaty of Versailles.  
The beginning of Loyalist immigration.  
Canadian fur traders push north to Athabasca.
- 1784** The North West Company in process of organization
- 1788** The English and Spanish clash at Nootka.
- 1789** Revolution begins in France.  
Mackenzie follows the Mackenzie River to the Arctic.
- 1790** Spain's claims to the West coast are limited.
- 1791** The Canada Act: Quebec is divided into two provinces.
- 1792** Vancouver charts the North West coast.  
Simcoe invites settlers from the United States.
- 1793** Mackenzie crosses the Rockies to the Pacific.
- 1794** Jay's Treaty: the British withdraw from forts in the United States.

## *Chapter XII*

### Problems of Empire

**T**HE Peace of Paris left Britain with an American empire stretching from the West Indies to the Arctic circle. Full of wonderful possibilities, it also had problems far more baffling than any one at the moment suspected. The colonies differed all the way from Virginia which had been in the empire over one hundred and fifty years and whose white population was drawn almost entirely from the British Isles, to Quebec which had just entered the empire with a population entirely French. To frame a policy that would suit the needs of every colony was difficult indeed.

**A New Era in Nova Scotia.** Nova Scotia's chief need was a larger population. Halifax at first had grown quickly. Immigrants had come from the British Isles and several hundred had even arrived from Europe—German, Swiss, and French Protestants, poverty stricken but full of determination. Little settlements sprang up on the coast, Lunenburg, for instance, the home port of Nova Scotia's most famous fishing fleet. Then the Seven Years' War stopped immigration and the population of the province fell. Halifax declined from about 6000 to about 1300. It was clear that something must be done, and Nova Scotia really had much to offer to settlers—good land, timber for ship building, a coast line with excellent harbours, and not least the rich Acadian farm lands of the Minas Basin, unhappily emptied of their people and ready for occupation.

Before the Seven Years' War was ended Governor Lawrence issued an invitation offering free lands to settlers. He aimed it specially at New England, where much of the best land was already taken up, and hundreds were ready to emigrate in search of new

homes. New Englanders were excellent settlers familiar with all the problems of pioneer life. Lawrence's invitation was most successful, and by 1770 the population was more than doubled, having risen to a total of seventeen or eighteen thousand. This immigration of the 1760's was an important chapter in Nova Scotia's history, since, for the first time, it firmly established her English-speaking settle-



HALIFAX IN 1764

ments. The province now had an interesting mixture of people: many had come from England, Scotland, and northern Ireland; some from France, Germany, and Switzerland; and there were still perhaps 2000 Acadians in the colony. But the majority, probably two-thirds, were from New England, and the relations of Nova Scotia with New England since that time have always been intimate. Everywhere the new settlements were close to the coast-line. Roads were few and bad because travel by water was easy. Nova Scotia looked out to the sea. It was her highway, and as the years passed it was to become more and more the basis of her prosperity.

One other important event occurred during these years in Nova Scotia—the meeting in 1758 of the first elected assembly. Elected assemblies were the rule in the Thirteen Colonies, where people valued them as a sign of the freedom enjoyed in the British Empire, and naturally a demand for an assembly arose in Nova Scotia. Governor Lawrence and his supporters opposed it, however, on the ground that assemblies had been very troublesome in some of the Thirteen Colonies and that the step would be unwise in time of war. In spite of Lawrence's arguments the British government decided that the citizens of Nova Scotia should have the same privileges as those in other British colonies, and Lawrence was finally ordered to have an assembly elected. The assembly

of 1758 is a landmark in Canada's history. It was the first to be called together in any Canadian province.

### **Problems of the Fur Trade and Government in Quebec.**

Quebec, the new colony in the empire was far more perplexing than Nova Scotia. How

were the sixty thousand French Canadians to be ruled? What about an assembly? What should be done with the Indians and fur trade of the West? These problems, difficult enough in any case, were now complicated by the arrival in Quebec and Montreal of a new element in the population, English-speaking merchants from the British Isles and the Thirteen Colonies. The first of them came with the British armies—bringing food and other supplies. A number stayed when the Seven Years' War ended, and others followed. Canada was in need of many articles and in 1760 a message was sent from Montreal



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

### **A SCENE ON THE WATERFRONT OF EARLY HALIFAX**

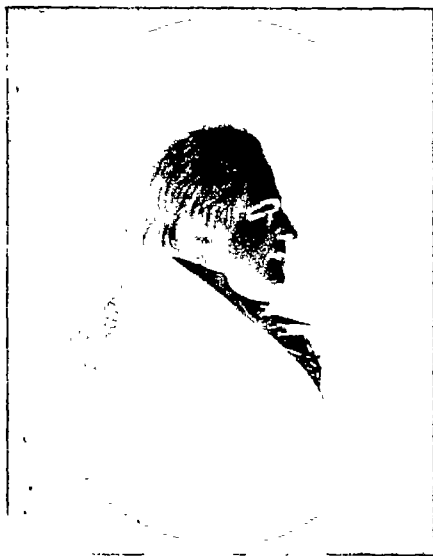
to the governors of Massachusetts and New York asking them to invite traders "to transport themselves hither and to Quebec with quantities of molasses, salt, wines, teas, sugars, and all kinds of grocery as likewise sheep and everything else that may occur to them to be useful."



Among the arrivals from the Thirteen Colonies was Alexander Henry, the first English-speaking trader to get into the fur trade west of Montreal. In 1761 on his first trip up the Ottawa Henry was warned to turn back because the Indians were so hostile to the English, but he disguised himself as a Canadian voyageur and

pushed on. At Michilimackinac he was received in council by about sixty Indians, each with a tomahawk in one hand and a scalping-knife in the other. He had a terrifying experience. They told him that they would trade with him but that they still loved the French and hated the English. The French king, they declared, had fallen asleep, but he would soon awake and when he did he would utterly destroy the English.

The Indians were in a far more dangerous mood than anyone realized. For months all through the



(John Ross Robertson Collection)

ALEXANDER HENRY

west there were mysterious meetings, war dances, and dark counsellings, and at last in 1763 just two years after Henry's first trip to Michilimackinac the storm broke in the most widespread and terrible Indian war of the century. The rising had in fact been planned by a master mind. Pontiac, a chief of the Ottawas and perhaps the greatest Indian warrior in the history of the continent, had in a supreme degree the qualities most admired by the Indians—fierce courage, cunning, and fiery eloquence. He arranged that all the posts where British garrisons were stationed should be surprised without warning, and within a few weeks every fort west of Niagara had fallen except Detroit which was saved only after a hard

siege. Henry was at Michilimackinac when the storm broke and he tells in his book what happened there. The Indians planned a game of lacrosse for the fourth of June, the king's birthday. It was a holiday and the gates of the fort were open. Suddenly the ball was thrown towards the fort and the Indians in a swarm rushed through the



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

#### AN INDIAN GAME OF LACROSSE

gates. Within a few minutes every soldier and English trader on whom they could lay their hands was killed. Henry was out of sight at the moment and only managed to escape because he was lucky enough to be hidden in the garret of a French-Canadian fur-trader's house. The worst of Pontiac's rising was over within a few months, but the losses were appalling and the British government realized that it must have a new policy to control the Indians and the trade of the west. In the autumn the new policy was announced in a famous document known as the Proclamation of 1763.

Before describing it we must turn again to Quebec because the Proclamation dealt with the colony itself as well as with the west and the fur trade. A difficult situation was developing there between the French and the newly arrived English-speaking settlers. The recent arrivals, who were only a few hundred in number,

naturally wanted the province to be governed like the other British colonies. They wanted an elected assembly, English laws for carrying on business, and English practices like trial by jury. The French on the other hand were fearful of these demands. They had been promised after the conquest that, if they remained peaceably in their homes, they would not be disturbed, and that they would have freedom to worship in their own way. They did not want changes such as English laws or an assembly. In England at that time, moreover, Roman Catholics were not allowed to sit in parliament, or to hold public office. If the English rule was applied in the province of Quebec an assembly would be controlled by the few hundred English-speaking settlers, and this would be unfair to the sixty thousand French Canadians.

Governor Murray, the colony's first governor after the conquest, was sure that the French Canadians, if wisely treated would become loyal British subjects. "Could they be indulged with a few privileges which the laws of England deny the Roman Catholics at home," he wrote, they "would soon become the most faithful and most useful set of men in this American Empire." It was by no means easy, however, to decide what form of government Quebec should have. To please both French and English seemed impossible. Here, in fact, we can see the beginning of a long and thorny problem—the finding of a system of government which would be fair to both French and English, and would encourage them to work together for the common good. No such problem is easily solved, and the history of Canada since 1763 shows how true this is; but, in spite of difficulties and prejudices, French and English have lived together until today it is recognized that the spirit of co-operation between them is essential to the Dominion's strength and unity.

**The Proclamation of 1763 and the Quebec Act of 1774.** The Proclamation of 1763 dealt both with the west and the government of Quebec. (i) The provision made for the west was very unexpected and unwelcome to the Canadian merchants. The province of Quebec was given a boundary which extended very little beyond the Ottawa River. At the same time a line, called the Proclamation Line, was drawn along the Appalachian Barrier,

and settlers were forbidden to go west of it. The entire area west of the Proclamation Line and the colony of Quebec was reserved for the Indians and the fur trade, and traders could go into it only if they received a license from the governor of some colony. This arrangement was intended to prevent trouble with the Indians, but it displeased the Canadian fur traders who wanted Canada to extend west as New France had done, and it equally displeased colonies like Pennsylvania and Virginia because settlers from them were already beginning to push westward over the mountains. (ii) The provisions with regard to the government of Quebec were indefinite and not very satisfactory to anyone. An elected assembly was promised "as soon as the circumstances would admit thereof," and the laws of the province were to be made "as near as may be agreeable to the laws of England." The Proclamation said that immigration should be encouraged from the Thirteen Colonies, and evidently the aim was to increase the English-speaking population before giving the province an assembly like other British colonies. The English-speaking merchants were displeased because changes in government and laws were not made immediately. The French-Canadians were displeased because changes, which they did not want, were promised.

The Proclamation of 1763 solved neither the problem of the west nor the problem of governing Canada, and a new policy was soon needed. Of all those both in Canada and England who had a part in working it out, no one was more important than Sir Guy Carleton. He was made governor of the colony in 1766, and for twenty-two of the next thirty years he held that post. Few governors have had so powerful an influence. Carleton had been one of Wolfe's most trusted officers at Quebec. He was all his life a military man, and this helps to explain his ideas about the problems of the colony. He sympathized with the merchants in their desire to have the western fur trade put under their control, but he was opposed to their demand for an assembly. He did not believe that English-speaking immigrants would come to the province in large numbers. "Barring a catastrophe shocking to think of," he wrote, "this country must to the end of time be peopled by the Canadian race, who already have taken such firm

root and got to so great a height, that any new stock transplanted would be totally hid and imperceptible among them, except the towns of Quebec and Montreal." Like Murray he believed that the colony could be made a stronghold of British power by winning the confidence of the French Canadians, and he was sure that this would be accomplished if everything possible were done to please the seigniors and clergy. In 1770 Carleton went to England

to urge his views, and four years later the Proclamation of 1763 was replaced by an Act of the British parliament, which proved to be one of the most important measures in Canadian history.

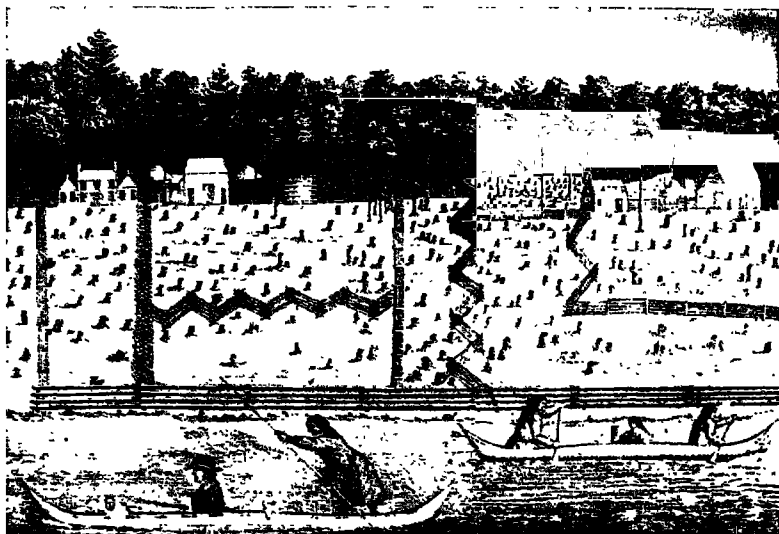
The Quebec Act of 1774 touched almost every point that had created difficulty since the conquest. (i) The boundaries of the province were greatly extended to take in Labrador on the east, and the whole region of the Great Lakes as far west as the Mississippi and as far south as the Ohio. (ii) An assembly was denied; the colony was to be ruled by a governor and a council

appointed by the king, which in reality meant chosen by the governor. (iii) With regard to religion the French Canadian's right to freedom of worship was confirmed, the difficulties about Roman Catholics holding public offices were removed, and payment of the tithe or tax to support their church was made compulsory for Roman Catholics as it had been before the conquest. (iv) The colony was to have a combination of French and English laws: English laws for criminal matters, because it was argued that the English criminal law was milder; French laws for civil matters, that is matters having to do with private rights, property, and so forth.



Sir Guy Carleton, later Lord Dorchester, governor of Canada, 1766-78, and 1786-96.

Was the Quebec Act a wise measure? On that point there have been many and varied arguments, and even yet there is wide difference of opinion. One immediate result was to please both seigniors and clergy who got all they had hoped for in the clauses on government and religion. To make their loyalty sure was one of Carleton's main aims and in this the act succeeded. But the



A PIONEER FARM

The rail fences and style of buildings show influences from the Thirteen Colonies. The picture was evidently drawn to show the types of buildings and fences rather than to represent a particular farm.

habitants were less pleased, and especially by the fact that the tithe was imposed again by law. Carleton to his disappointment soon found that he had been mistaken in thinking they had no wills of their own and would follow their leaders without question. The results in the Thirteen Colonies were also unexpected. Enemies of the British government seized on the act as a topic of propaganda, and aroused great resentment by attacking the extension of Quebec's boundary, the refusal of an assembly, and the favours granted to seigniors and clergy.

The permanent effects of the Quebec Act were hardly less important than its immediate results. More perhaps than anything else, it reconciled French Canadians to British rule. Some writers have argued, that a better understanding between French and English would have developed if the colony had been given a system of English laws only, and that this could have been done without taking from French Canadians their freedom of religion or their language and customs. However this may be, there can be no doubt as to the importance of the act. It generously recognized the desires of the French Canadians, and it was based on a belief that in return they would give their loyalty to the empire of which they were now citizens.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Chapter XI of *Readings in Canadian history* has source material for this chapter. Francis Parkman gives one of the finest accounts of the events at Detroit and Michilimackinac in *The conspiracy of Pontiac*, Vol. I, chapters XI-XVII. A good story is *Black rain* by Merritt Parmalee Allen. The hero is a younger brother of Major Gladwyn, commander of Port Detroit, during the Indian rising. *The father of British Canada* by William Wood is a biography of Carleton "Chronicles of Canada". There is a brief account in the Ryerson readers, *Lord Dorchester*, by A. L. Burt.

## *Chapter XIII*

### Britain's American Empire Divided

**T**HE problems of Quebec were not the only ones which appeared in Britain's American empire after the Seven Years' War. During these same years there was brewing in the Thirteen Colonies a storm so serious that it finally broke into revolution, a revolution which shook the empire to its foundations, and which proved to be one of the great events in the history of the modern world. The interesting questions in history are often those which have no simple and easy answers, and certainly this is true of the American Revolution. What were its causes? Why did not Quebec, Nova Scotia, and the British West Indian islands join in it, and what far-reaching effects did it have?

**The Causes of the American Revolution.** It used to be argued that the Revolution was caused by the tyranny of the British government in the years following the Seven Years' War. This simple explanation is no longer acceptable. Historians now recognize that the British colonies were the freest in the world, and that their people had rights and liberties, such as elected assemblies and trial by jury, which were enjoyed in no other empire. But if the British government was not guilty of tyranny it was guilty, as we shall see, of a failure to understand the real difficulties of the situation. The empire had just come through the most costly and dangerous struggle in its history, and it needed statesmanship of the highest order to face its post-war difficulties.

Unfortunately, the 1760's were a decade of weak and divided leadership in England, and the government displayed a bungling stupidity which invited disaster no less surely than tyranny would have done.



One of the chief causes of the Revolution is found in the problems which faced the empire with the return of peace in 1763. The Seven Years' War had revealed serious weaknesses, especially in regard to trade and defence. The laws of parliament regulating trade had been broken in the colonies even by trading with the enemy, and the burden of defence had been very unequally shared: some colonies had given generous assistance, while in others the assemblies had done little if anything. To cure these defects it seemed reasonable, even to many people in the colonies, that some reorganization should take place. The most efficient arrangement would be to have the central government of the empire in London handle those matters which concerned all the colonies such as foreign trade, defence and war, the west and the Indians, while the assemblies in America controlled matters of purely local concern. This had, in fact, been done in the past to some extent, but there was much room for improvement. Unfortunately the British government did not work out its plans carefully or make them clear to American leaders with the result that misunderstanding and resentment arose.

The government's first step was the Proclamation of 1763. Pontiac's rising had just swept over the west, and the plan of forbidding settlers to go beyond the Alleghanies seemed wise at the moment. Nevertheless many important colonial land holders like George Washington were seriously disturbed by the Proclamation Line which hemmed the Thirteen Colonies in, and threatened to block their growth.

The British government followed the Proclamation by two other steps which brought a serious crisis. The first was the decision to enforce the laws of parliament controlling the trade of the empire, the Navigation Acts as they were called. Smuggling had been rampant, but to enforce the laws without giving the colonies more freedom in their trade would be a severe blow at their prosperity and was bound to cause trouble. The second step was the proposal of a new plan for defence by which large garrisons would be stationed in America to control the Indians and the west. Britain was to pay two-thirds of the cost, the colonies only one-third. To raise the necessary money the famous Stamp Act of 1765 was

passed, and by it for the first time a direct tax was levied on the colonies by parliament. The Act brought a storm of argument and rioting. The colonists protested against the "rights of Englishmen" being taken from them, and raised the cry so familiar in English history, "No taxation without representation." Pitt, whose genius had saved the empire in the Seven Years' War,



Mob attempting to force a Stamp Act officer to resign.

warned parliament in the most solemn terms against threatening the liberty of the colonies. "I rejoice" he declared, "that America has resisted. Three millions of people, so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest." The British government bowed to the storm and the Stamp Act was repealed after a year, but it was followed by taxes on tea, glass, and painters' colours. These too aroused opposition and then like the Stamp Act were repealed in 1770, except for the tax on tea which was foolishly kept in order to show that parliament had the right to levy such taxes. Thus the British government in its attempts to reorganize the empire had succeeded by 1770 only in creating ill-



*British Possessions in 1763*



*Boundary of Settlement by the Proclamation of 1763*



*Province of Quebec by the Quebec Act 1774*



*The Peace Treaty of 1783*

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA, 1763-1783  
(Description on opposite page)

will and a fear that colonial liberties and rights of self-government were in danger.

Two causes of the Revolution have been suggested—the difficulty of reorganizing a vast and complex empire after the Seven Years' War and the mistakes in judgment of the British government. A third must be added, the feelings of strength and sturdy independence which had resulted from over a century of growth. The Thirteen Colonies were no longer in their infancy. Their people numbered over two million and many of them had never seen England. The colonies were American in their spirit and in their ways of living. Moreover, the French menace was removed after 1763 and the colonies no longer felt dependent on England's aid. This did not mean, however, that they wished for independence. The great majority of the colonists were loyal, even after the Stamp Act. They were proud of the empire and its liberties and this loyalty was the empire's strength. To destroy it was to invite disaster. Edmund Burke, that great member of parliament, understood this, but few in England were willing to listen to him. "My hold of the colonies," he declared, "is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But freedom they can have from none but you. Deny them this freedom and you break that sole bond which must preserve the unity of the empire."

In the years following the Stamp Act a small minority of radicals began to work for independence. They watched for every opportunity of stirring up trouble, and their great chance came in 1774. In that year the British government gave the East India Company a monopoly of exporting tea to America. Tea, because it had

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#### BRITISH NORTH AMERICA, 1763-1783

*Within twenty years, 1763-1783, there were crowded four boundary settlements which have an important place in Canadian history. The first and fourth were caused by wars, the Seven Years' War (Map 1) and the American Revolution (Map 4). The other two resulted from attempts made by the British government to solve the difficult problems of Canada and the control of the western country with its fur trade and its war-like Indian tribes.*

been taxed, was a delicate subject in the colonies and this action was widely resented, especially by the colonial merchants, many of whom now lost their trade in tea. The radicals immediately seized the opportunity of making a crisis. In Boston a group of them dressed as Indians, boarded the tea ships and threw the cargoes into the harbour. This was the famous Boston tea party. When the British government closed Boston harbour until the tea should be paid for, and took other repressive measures,<sup>1</sup> a flame of opposition spread from one end of the Thirteen Colonies to the other. Men were already arming, and early in 1775 the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord near Boston when a force of British red coats, sent to look for hidden arms, was attacked. Soon General Gage and his British army were hemmed in at Boston, and in June a battle in which Gage was defeated was fought at Bunker Hill. Even yet there was time for compromise, but tempers were hot and neither side would go far enough to win a peaceful settlement. A Continental Congress with representatives from all the colonies had already been called together at Philadelphia, and during the autumn and winter of 1775-6 extreme opinions rapidly gained ground in it. Finally, on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was issued. The breach was complete.

**The American Revolution and the Attitude of Nova Scotia and Quebec.** The American Revolution was in reality a civil war. In England many were so opposed to the government's policy that they openly wished for the Revolution's success. In America the whole population was torn with conflicting loyalties. John Adams, one of the American leaders, later said that in 1776 probably not more than one-third of the people favoured war against England, that another third opposed it, and that the remainder were uncertain. With opinion so divided, the harshest measures were used against those who remained loyal to Britain. Thousands, especially in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, were persecuted, stripped of their property, and driven from

<sup>1</sup> These Acts were called in the Thirteen Colonies the "Intolerable Acts." The Quebec Act, being passed at the same time, thus got into bad company and was denounced as violently as the rest.

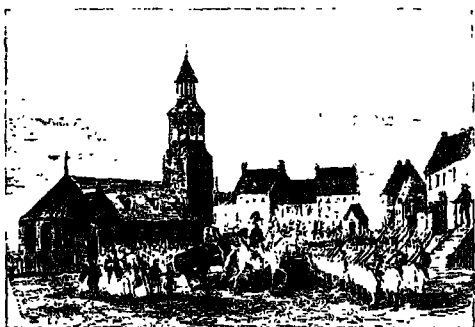
their homes. Family feuds are proverbially bitter and the quarrel of Britain and her colonies was no exception. It left a train of misunderstandings which lasted for over a century. Only in the light of history has it been realized that there was some right on both sides, and that at bottom both had a love of freedom which some day would be a bond of friendship between them.

Nowhere was the Revolution watched more anxiously than in Nova Scotia and the province of Quebec. Were they to join in it or would they remain loyal to the empire? Of Nova Scotia's settlers a large majority were from New England, and naturally many of them sympathized with the Revolution. The feeling was, however, never strong enough to cause an open outbreak. The settlements were scattered, and most of the people probably wished to be left alone, like those of Yarmouth who made the following statement: "We do all of us profess to be true Friends and Loyal Subjects to George our King. We were almost all of us born in New England, we have Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in that Country. Divided between natural affection to our nearest relations, and good Faith and Friendship to our King and Country, we want to know, if it may be permitted at this time to live in a peaceable state, as we look on that to be the only situation in which we with our wives and children, can be in any tolerable degree safe." In Halifax feeling was overwhelmingly against the Revolution. Halifax was a naval and military base, and it prospered by the money which the British government spent there. The merchants felt they would be injured, not benefited, if trade with Britain was broken off. Smuggling to and from New England went on during the war, and Nova Scotian vessels had many adventures in outwitting privateers and naval vessels, but the aim of this smuggling was to make money rather than to help the Revolution. American privateers made some surprise attacks along the coast, but the rebelling colonies could not send an army to Nova Scotia. They lacked a navy and had neither men nor arms to spare. Without such aid a successful rising was impossible in Nova Scotia, even if a larger number had favoured the attempt.

The situation in the province of Quebec was very different. The leaders in the Thirteen Colonies feared that from Quebec an attack

would be launched against them, and they were most anxious to win it over as the fourteenth colony. Governor Carleton had only about 800 regular troops scattered in small garrisons from Quebec to Michilimackinac. Moreover, his support in the colony was very uncertain. The merchants were displeased by the Quebec Act except for the clause which had extended the boundary, and the habitants were very doubtful. In the spring of 1775, immediately after the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, a small group of Americans took Ticonderoga which was garrisoned by only a few sleepy British soldiers. The Lake Champlain route was thus left unguarded, and soon an American army was moving on Montreal. Carleton rushed up from Quebec but saw that Montreal

was too weak to be defended, and only escaped being captured himself by going down the St. Lawrence again in a rowboat with muffled oars. By the autumn of 1775 only Quebec was left to offer resistance to the American invaders.



(Public Archives)

Governor Carleton reviewing his troops in the Place d'Armes at Montreal in 1775.

Their task was, however, not easy, and they did not get the help which they expected in

the colony. The merchants, even though they disliked the Quebec Act, did not want to throw away their market for furs in England, and the habitants, while they disappointed Carleton, did not rush to support the invaders. Bishop Briand staunchly supported Carleton. "The singular kindness," he told his fellow French Canadians, "and the gentleness with which we have been governed on the part of His Most Gracious Majesty King George III; the recent favours which he has bestowed upon us in permitting us the usage of our laws, the free exercise of our religion, and allowing us to participate in all the privileges and advantages of British subjects, are sufficient

without doubt to arouse your zeal to support the crown of Great Britain." The Americans hurt their cause by offering paper money, which the French Canadians believed worthless, or by seizing supplies without paying for them at all. The small American army which, after taking Montreal, marched on Quebec in the autumn of 1775 was therefore in a most difficult situation, even though Carleton's garrison was desperately weak. On the night of December 31 in a blinding snow storm the Americans made their one hard assault. When this failed it is a wonder that the

*Toutes Persones qui refusera de le recevoir au Coin,  
& sans aucun Décompte, sera Consideré comme  
Ennemi des Colonies unies, et traité comme tel.  
Donné sous notre signature & le Sceau  
de nos Armes au Quartier general ce 1<sup>er</sup> Mars 1776.*



*Bened. Arnold  
Brig<sup>er</sup> General and  
Commander in Chief  
of the Army for India*

Order in French by General Arnold of the American army requiring  
Canadians to accept American money.

siege continued. Short of supplies and with small-pox raging in their ranks, the invaders hung on till spring. When a British fleet sailed up the river in May they had no alternative but retreat.

No other invasion was attempted by the Americans. In 1777 the British took the offensive. An army under General Burgoyne was sent from Quebec by the Lake Champlain route. Another British army was to move north from New York, but when it failed to do so Burgoyne was forced to surrender at Saratoga. Saratoga was a turning point. It encouraged France to declare war on Britain, and so brought the Americans help when they were sorely in need of it. France's entry into the war aroused



British fears again about the province of Quebec, but the fears proved groundless. Even though the French and Americans were allies, neither wished the other to get Quebec; both preferred that Britain should keep it. Thus, curiously enough, the French-American alliance was one of the things which helped to keep Quebec British. As things turned out, therefore, the question of whether Canada would become the fourteenth colony in the Revolution had been settled as early as 1775, when the invasion failed.

The failure of the American invasion, British sea power, Carleton's leadership, the attitude of the merchants and French Canadians, all played a part in keeping Quebec British, and it should be remembered also that Quebec's interests were in many ways different from those of the Thirteen Colonies. The centre of her life was the St. Lawrence, and through it her trade and defence were tied to Britain even more than to her neighbours on the Atlantic coast.

**The End of the Revolution and the Making of Peace.** In 1781 the defeat of the British army at Yorktown ended the campaigns of the Revolution. By this time Britain had almost every country in Europe against her, and only the navy's command of the sea prevented complete disaster. The news of Yorktown brought also a change in the British government. The friends of the Thirteen Colonies gained control and insisted on peace. The result was the Treaty of Versailles of 1783 which recognized the new United States of America, gave it the western country from the Alleghanies to the Mississippi, and drew the boundary line from the Atlantic coast to the Lake of the Woods which has remained with few changes to the present day. To some these boundaries seemed needlessly generous. The French government was astonished, and not very well pleased that the United States received so much, but the British government was determined that friendship and good will should be restored. It was no fault of the treaty that these generous intentions were later often forgotten.

Two points with regard to the boundary deserve special mention. The first was that present-day Maine was allowed to run like a great wedge so far north that it almost broke the connection between Quebec and Nova Scotia. The one land route between them—

that of the Temiscouata portage—was seriously menaced. This northward extension of Maine has had a serious effect on the later development of Canada.

The other point was much more discussed at the time. The Canadian merchants were bitterly disappointed that the boundary did not run south to the Ohio as it had done in the Quebec Act. They were threatened with the loss of their trade south of the Lakes; and, to add to their alarm, the important "Western Posts"—Niagara, Detroit, Michilimackinac—lay on the American side. Protests against the new boundary were immediately sent to England, and for ten years the merchants had hopes that the line would be changed. The British government gave them some encouragement, also, by continuing to hold the Western Posts after 1783. In the Ohio country the tribes were all friendly to the British, and hostile to the Americans because they feared that the expanding American settlements would take away their hunting grounds. So there was created a very dangerous situation, which could easily have led to an explosion.

Meanwhile other problems were looming up, in particular a question with regard to the boundary near the Atlantic coast. According to the treaty of 1783, the line was to run up the St. Croix River, but Britain claimed one river as the St. Croix, the United States another. Thus, ten years after their treaty of peace, Britain and the United States found themselves again facing the possibility of war. Fortunately wise counsels prevailed, and in 1794 a settlement was made in Jay's Treaty, so named after John Jay, the American representative in the negotiation. By it Britain agreed to give up the Western Posts, and the boundary dispute was left to a commission which later upheld the British claim. The agreement to accept the decision of the commission, whatever it might be, was a most unusual one at that time, and was a proof of the desire of both governments to preserve peace.

Jay's Treaty was, however, more than a settlement of the problems of the moment. By removing difficulties which had hung fire since 1783, it marked, in a way, the end of the American Revolution, and its fine example of peaceful negotiation makes it a milestone in the relations of Britain, Canada, and the United States.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

There are a great many novels dealing with this period. As you read, remember that novelists often take liberties with historical events, and that we read their books not to get an accurate historical account but rather to get a vivid picture of the life of the period. Ralph Connor in *The rebel loyalist* and James Boyd in *Drums* tell good stories, the first from a British and the second from an American point of view. Kenneth Roberts in *Arundel* describes Benedict Arnold's amazing march and the attack on Quebec. In *Rabble in arms*, a less effective novel, he follows the retreat and the later campaigns. There is a great deal of information about uniforms, equipment and campaigning. In *The Virginians*, William Makepeace Thackeray tells of the Esmond family from the Seven Years' War to the Revolution. This is a fine novel, but not one to be read quickly. A charming story of three loyalist ladies who remained in the United States after the Revolution is *A toast to the king* by Elizabeth Coatsworth. The biography of Richard John Uniacke in R. G. Riddell's collection of *Canadian portraits* tells how a man who joined the revolutionary forces in an attack on Nova Scotia later came to be Advocate-General of that province.

## *Chapter XIV*

### New Homes for the Loyalists

ONE result of the American Revolution has been so important in Canadian history that it must be given a chapter to itself. Of all those in the Thirteen Colonies who opposed the Revolution, no less than eighty to one hundred thousand fled, or were driven, from their homes. They were scattered on both sides of the Atlantic, in the British Isles, the British West Indies, Nova Scotia, and the province of Quebec. The Loyalists who settled in Nova Scotia and Quebec came mostly from the northern colonies—from Boston where the Revolution began, from New York which was held throughout the war by the British army, and from Pennsylvania where Loyalist sentiment was strong and widespread. Nova Scotia and Quebec, between them, received a number variously estimated at from thirty-four to forty thousand. Such a migration was foreseen by no one at the beginning of the Revolution. It is not too much to say that it changed the course of Canadian history.

**The Loyalists in Nova Scotia.** At the beginning of the Revolution, when the British army left Boston for Halifax, about a thousand Loyalists got aboard the transports. "All is uproar and confusion," ran a description of this hurried exit, "carts, trucks, wheelbarrows, handbarrows, coaches, chaises, all driving as if the very devil was after them." During the war years, small parties continued to go to Nova Scotia, but the largest migration took place from New York just after the peace of 1783. New York and the surrounding country had become a great rallying point for Loyalists, who had lost their property or suffered persecution, and thousands were anxious to leave the country if they could find homes elsewhere under the British flag. Sir Guy Carleton was the British commander at New York in 1783, and no part of his long career was more honourable than his services to these

homeless people. He refused to remove his army from New York until he had provided for all who wished to leave. Many, especially those who had friends or money in England, sailed across the Atlantic, but for thousands of others Nova Scotia seemed the most attractive possibility. Small parties went to spy out the



(from a painting by Sandham)

#### LANDING OF THE LOYALISTS

came to Nova Scotia. If we remember that at the beginning of the Revolution, Nova Scotia had less than 20,000 people, we can understand what a change this migration made in the colony within a few months. Settlements sprang up overnight at widely scattered points. About three thousand Loyalists went to Cape Breton Island, a few, perhaps three hundred, to Prince Edward Island,

promised land and returned with glowing accounts. The St. John River, for example, was reported to have an excellent harbour at its mouth and abundance of fertile soil which "produces crops of all kinds with little labour, and vegetables in the greatest perfection, parsnips of great length, etc." So in 1783 the flood towards Nova Scotia began—seven thousand in the first fleet. Through the summer and autumn vessels plied back and forth, and several hundred wretched refugees were so unfortunate as to be landed in the middle of the following winter with scarcely any protection against the cold.

Altogether at least 30,000 perhaps even 35,000,

but the great majority went to various points on the coast of the Nova Scotian peninsula, and to the St. John River.

The British government gave help in the emergency: half pay to officers of Loyalist regiments, free land for everyone, and also lumber, food, clothing, and other necessities to tide people over until they could support themselves. Misery and suffering were unavoidable, however. No story of pioneer courage in Canada's history is more stirring than that of the early Loyalist settlements. "Nothing but wilderness before our eyes, the women and children did not refrain from tears," wrote one of the exiles; and the grandmother of Sir Leonard Tilley, who eighty years later was one of the fathers of Confederation, used to tell her descendants, "I climbed to the top of Chipman's Hill and watched the sails disappearing in the distance, and such a feeling of loneliness came over me that, although I had not shed a tear through all the war, I sat down on the damp moss with my baby in my lap and cried." Many of the Loyalists had left the security and comfort of long established communities. For them the hardships of the first months were doubly distressing, but they often showed the very qualities of initiative and leadership which the new settlements most needed.

**The Loyalists Along the St. Lawrence.** In what is now Ontario the story was in some ways different. Most of the Loyalists who settled north of the St. Lawrence came not by sea but across the border by land from Vermont, western New York and western Pennsylvania. In western New York the division of opinion had been very violent, and fighting was bitter throughout the war. Colonel John Butler, who like many Loyalists had close relatives fighting on the other side, organized a famous frontier regiment, Butler's Rangers. Most powerful among these western Loyalist leaders was Sir John Johnson, whose father Sir William had settled in the Mohawk valley over thirty years before the Revolution. Sir William had gained an unrivalled influence over the Six Nations Indians, and he had also attracted hundreds of settlers to the Mohawk valley, many of them from the Highlands of Scotland. His great home, "Johnson Hall", was almost like the centre of a feudal kingdom, and when war came he rallied to

the British cause the Six Nations, his Highlanders and his other settlers.

During the Revolution groups of Loyalists began to move towards Quebec by way of Lake Champlain or to cross the border at Niagara. The big rush came, however, with the peace. In



CATARAQUI, NOW KINGSTON, IN 1783

the winter of 1783-4 there were nearly seven thousand refugees in the province of Quebec, destitute of almost everything, food, clothing and shelter, as well as land. Fortunately Quebec had at the moment a governor, General Haldimand, who spared no effort. Born in Switzerland, Haldimand spent a life-time in the British army, and his services to the Loyalists have given him a well deserved place among the makers of Canada. A few Loyalists went to Gaspé and some to Cape Breton, but the great majority were settled on the St. Lawrence above Montreal. Surveyors were sent ahead, and fourteen townships laid out, nine in the vicinity of present-day Cornwall (first called Johnstown) and five around the Bay of Quinte. 1784 was memorable as the year of the great settlement. Thousands of refugees, men, women and children were brought with their supplies up the river in batteaux—no small task, especially at the rapids. A simple but wise plan had been adopted of placing the settlers in townships by religious and military groups, so that friends and people of similar kinds would be together. Sir John Johnson was put in charge, and to make

sure that everyone would be fairly treated, lots were drawn for land, the humble sharing equally with the more important. Meanwhile another, though smaller Loyalist settlement, was growing around Niagara. Colonel John Butler with many of his Rangers formed the nucleus, and soon refugees from western New York and Pennsylvania followed them across the Niagara River.



A FIRST SETTLEMENT

Most of the Loyalists along the St. Lawrence and at Niagara had lived in pioneer settlements and were not unprepared for difficulties. Governor Haldimand also worked valiantly to supply food, clothing, tools, seeds, and even some saw mills and grist mills. Nevertheless the first years were hard, especially 1788, long remembered as "the hungry year." A crop failure in the previous year brought threat of famine, and leeks, buds of trees, and even leaves were ground up for food. With hard work, however, conditions improved, and by 1790 the foundations of settlement in the present province of Ontario had been firmly laid.

**Two New Provinces.** One result of the Loyalist migration was the establishment of two new provinces. The first was New Bruns-





*(Public Archives)*

#### UNITED EMPIRE LOYALIST BANNER

wick.<sup>1</sup> No less than ten thousand Loyalists came to the St. John valley in 1783. The confusion in settling so many destitute people at once may be imagined. Halifax, the capital, was far away, travelling was slow, and the settlers were extremely annoyed with

<sup>1</sup> Prince Edward Island, called Isle St. John until 1796, had been put under a governor of its own in 1769.

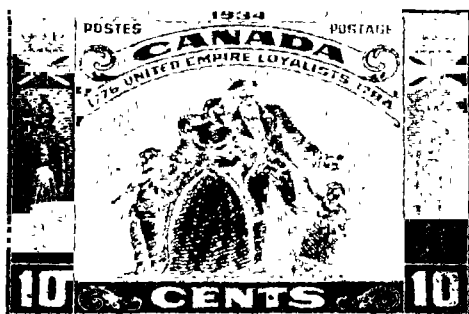
what they felt were the governor's carelessness and neglect. Among the leaders who demanded the creation of a new province the most prominent was Edward Winslow. Born in Massachusetts and educated at Harvard, Winslow during the Revolution had held a high rank in the British army in America. His letters, which have been preserved and printed, give a vivid description of the beginnings of New Brunswick. "I have seen," he wrote, "a vast collection of valuable men,—men respectable for their conduct, with their families and the little remains of their property—unattended to, and ungoverned. To save these from distress, to soothe and comfort them, is truly a noble duty. By Heaven we will be the envy of the American States." Winslow and his associates appealed to the British government, and so successfully that in 1784 Nova Scotia was divided, and New Brunswick was established as a separate colony with its own governor and assembly. Every important leader and the overwhelming majority of the people were Loyalists, and New Brunswick from the beginning considered itself to be *the* Loyalist province. Cape Breton was also separated at this time from Nova Scotia and given a governor, though not an assembly, of its own. Sydney, a newly established Loyalist town, became its capital.

The second province established as a result of the Loyalist migration was Upper Canada. The Loyalists who settled along the St. Lawrence naturally objected to the terms of the Quebec Act. They did not like the seignorial system of holding land or French civil law, and they wanted an elected assembly such as they had been accustomed to in the Thirteen Colonies. To meet their wishes the province of Quebec was divided into two, Upper and Lower Canada, with the Ottawa River as a boundary, and in 1791 an Act for their government was passed by the British parliament. Under this Canada Act, or Constitutional Act as it has been called, each province was given an elected assembly. Upper Canada was to have an English system of laws and English methods of holding land.<sup>2</sup> Also in Upper Canada, lands equal in value to one-seventh of the lands granted to individuals were to be set aside for

<sup>2</sup> That is land was to be granted by the government, or the crown as we say, to individuals who might then sell or rent it as they pleased. This is the freehold system.

the support of a "Protestant clergy"—a provision which later caused much friction. In Lower Canada, the Canada Act brought little change except the establishment of an assembly. This, however, was a development of real importance, marking as it did the beginning of parliamentary government in Quebec.

**The Loyalist Influence.** For many reasons, the coming of the Loyalists was an event of great significance in the history of British North America. Merely by adding to the population it caused changes all the way from Halifax to Niagara. New settlements sprang quickly into existence, not least among them the strong



Postage stamp issued to mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the coming of the Loyalists.

settlements west of Montreal on lands which had never previously been occupied except by Indians. Two new provinces were created, and after 1791 there were four elected assemblies where before there had been only one. But the effect of the Loyalist immigration went far beyond these things which can easily be measured. The

Loyalists brought with them qualities and ideas which were toughened by hard experience. No country could have asked for pioneers more likely to succeed. They had a strong loyalty to the British flag, and at the same time a determination to enjoy the liberties and rights of self-government to which they had been accustomed. The variety of people among them is one of the things which interests us most,—English, Scottish, Irish and Dutch families, representing districts in the Thirteen Colonies all the way from New England to western Pennsylvania. Most of them were humble and obscure people, many were from well educated and prominent families. Among them were soldiers and army officers, who brought a sense of discipline and organization. Others were

men and women of force and experience whose influence could be seen everywhere in the life of their pioneer communities. Many of their descendants have shown the same high qualities of leadership, and it is no wonder that the Loyalist tradition has left in Canada an indelible impression.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Chapter XIII of *Readings in Canadian history* contains source material on the problem of loyalist settlement. W. S. Wallace in *The United Empire Loyalists* "Chronicles of Canada" gives a complete review of the Loyalists' position during and after the Revolution. A well written chapter in Isabel Skelton's *The backwoodswoman* describes the routes taken by the Loyalists in their journey to Canada, and the hardships of the journey. In parts of Ontario there are settlements of Mohawk Indians whose forefathers came to Canada with their leader Joseph Brant and the Johnson family, whose great estates on the Mohawk River had been confiscated. *The Trail of the king's men* by Mabel Dunham is a good story dealing with the Johnsons. Joseph Brant is the subject of *The war chief of the Six Nations* by William Wood in the "Chronicles of Canada", and of a Ryerson reader. In *The bloody Mohawk*, T. Wood Clarke describes very fully the part played by the Johnson family in history, from Sir William's exploits in the Seven Years' War to the raids made from Canada during the Revolution by Johnston's Greens and Butler's Rangers. A useful little book is *Pioneer life among the loyalists* by W. S. Herrington. Some of the selections from D. J. Dickie's book *In pioneer days* give information about settlements. Edwin C. Guillet's large volume *Early life in Upper Canada* is valuable for reference.

## Chapter XV

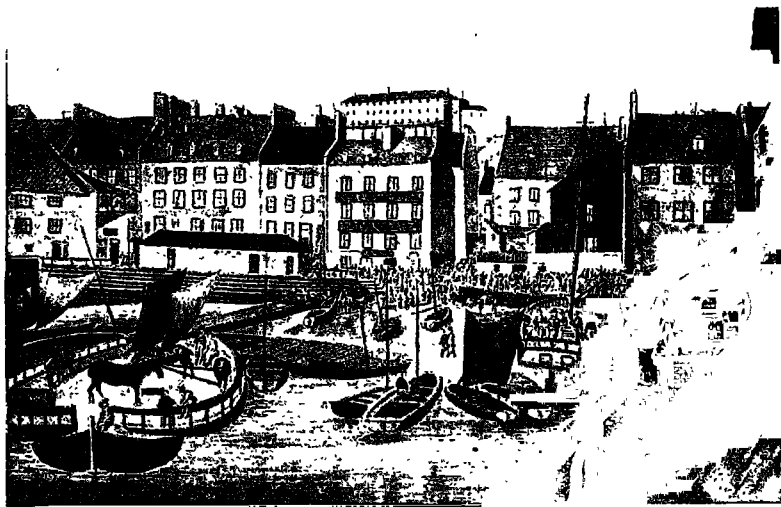
### Fur Barons of the West

WHEN Alexander Henry made his first journey up the Ottawa in 1763—the journey which nearly cost him his life<sup>1</sup>—he began a new chapter in the long history of Canada's fur trade. The merchants, who like Henry came to Canada at the end of the Seven Years' War, saw a ready-made chance to win their fortunes. Through the St. Lawrence and its tributaries, they could draw their furs from a vast region as far south and west as the Ohio and Mississippi, and even from beyond Lake Superior where La Vérendrye had pointed the way. In the west ready to serve them, were hundreds of French-Canadian canoemen who knew every waterway and portage and every secret of dealing with the Indians. With manufactured goods from England which were cheaper and better than the French had ever had, the new merchants of Montreal had a golden opportunity. They were not slow to seize it. Within twenty years they organized the trade far beyond its former limits, and some of them lived to see it expanded north and west even to the Arctic circle and the shores of the Pacific.

**The First Nor'Westers.** These original "Nor'Westers", to use the name which they proudly gave themselves, were a famous lot in their day. Only a few can even be mentioned here: Alexander Henry from Albany; Benjamin, Joseph and Thomas Frobisher, who came from Yorkshire, the last two of whom were among the first to push the trade as far as the Saskatchewan; Peter Pond from Connecticut, the first to trade and winter successfully as far north as Lake Athabasca; James McGill, whose fortune founded McGill University; Simon McTavish, perhaps the cleverest business man of them all. There were many others whose names were scarcely less known. "Macs" were common in the list—for among the

<sup>1</sup> See page 116.

"Nor'Westers" none were so numerous as the Highland Scots. Altogether—Yankees, French Canadians, English, and Scots—they were as hardy a group of adventurers as ever set out to found a commercial empire.



(Public Archives)

Montreal waterfront in the days of the Fur Barons.

The commercial empire which they finally gained lay in what is today the Canadian west. During the French period Detroit and Michilimackinac had been the chief centres of trade west of Montreal, but the Montreal traders soon realized, as La Vérendrye had done, that the richest fur country lay beyond Lake Superior. This north-west trade was stopped during the Seven Years' War, but after 1766 it began again, and by 1774 sixty canoes a year were going west from Lake Superior. Then came the American Revolution bringing results which no one could have foreseen. When the boundary line was run through the Lakes in 1783, the Montreal merchants felt that their trade at Detroit and Michilimackinac was doomed. They now turned their main efforts more

and more towards the north west, and within a few years the older trade around Detroit and Michilimackinac was far outstripped by that beyond Lake Superior.

**The Western Canoeway and its Voyageurs.** The expansion to the north west brought new problems, however. As the trade



(Public Archives)

VOYAGEURS PORTAGING

was pushed inland, the difficulty of carrying heavy cargoes by canoe over enormous distances was steadily increased. How were great loads of furs and manufactured goods to be moved back and forth quickly and safely, and how was food to be supplied to canoemen who could not take time to hunt and fish by the way? These were the problems which faced men like the Frobisher brothers when they got as far as Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan, and the solution which they worked out was one of the Nor'Westers' greatest achievements. Within twenty years they developed a system of transportation which was, in its time, no less a marvel of speed and efficiency than the railways and airlines spanning Canada today.

To get a picture of this trans-Canada canoeway, as it may well be called, we cannot do better than follow the Nor'Westers' canoes as they started up the Ottawa every spring in brigades of from

four to twenty or even thirty. With flags flying, feathers waving in voyageurs' caps and paddles flashing to the rhythm of songs, they made a gay picture. These were the large Montreal canoes, *les canots du maître*, which went as far as Michilimackinac or Grand Portage on Lake Superior. Thirty-five to forty feet long and with crews of a dozen or more, they could carry four or even five tons when loaded and balanced with the greatest skill. Such a burden is astonishing for a craft that weighed only a few hundred pounds, that could be carried over the roughest portages, and that was at the same time strong enough to be driven through swiftly running water. No boat or raft ever invented could have suited the special requirements of the fur trade so perfectly as did the birch bark canoe. The voyageur never tired of singing its virtues.

My canoe's of bark, light as a feather  
That is stripped from silvery birch;  
And the seams with roots sewn together,  
The paddles white made of birch.

At the westernmost point of Montreal Island stood the little church of St. Anne, and here the voyageurs paused for a moment before plunging into their long and hazardous journey. "This church," wrote Peter Pond in his Connecticut dialect, "is dedicated to St. Ann who Protects all Voigers. Heare is a small Box with a Hole in the top for ye Reception of a Little Money for the Hole [holy] father or to say a small Mass for those Who Put a small Sum in the Box. Scars a Voiger but stops hear and Puts in his mite."

Up the Ottawa the brigade paddled steadily for twelve or fourteen hours each day. Usually only two meals a day were eaten, breakfast and supper. Sometimes the voyageurs were lucky enough to get a bit of fish or game, but for regular fare they depended on what they could carry with them. Food was, in fact, so important a problem that a special word must be given it. It had to be something which would keep for days or even weeks (the tin can had not yet been invented!); it had to be light and small in bulk, since every pound and every square inch in the canoe was at a



premium; and it had to be nourishing enough to sustain the hardest labour. Not many articles of food could meet these rigid requirements but the north-west merchants found four which suited admirably, and which they gathered at certain points in large quantities ready for the brigades going back and forth. From



(Can. Geog. Journal)

#### TRACKING ALONG THE EDGE OF A RIVER

Montreal to Michilimackinac dried peas were the staple. A quart per man was put into the pot that was slung over every camp fire, and into the thick soup there usually went also a bit of pork or bacon. The voyageurs who wintered in the far west beyond Lake Superior — the real Nor'Westers as they considered themselves — used a great deal of fish but they scorned such delicacies as pork. Pork-eaters — *man-geurs de lard* — they called the canoemen who journeyed from Montreal to Grand Portage. At Michilimackinac supplies of corn, which the nearby Indians grew in quantities, were gathered for the brigades going on to Grand Portage. Farther west around Rainy Lake there was wild rice which was also a good article of diet, but the great stand-by west of Lake Superior was pemmican. Pemmican was dried buffalo meat, pounded fine, to which hot grease was added, and the whole was formed in a mold in a bag of buffalo skin. It would keep for months and was very nourishing, although one observer suggested that a newcomer

From Montreal to Michilimackinac dried peas were the staple. A quart per man was put into the pot that was slung over every camp fire, and into the thick soup there usually went also a bit of pork or bacon. The voyageurs who wintered in the far west beyond Lake Superior — the real Nor'Westers as they considered themselves — used a great deal of fish but they scorned such delicacies as pork. Pork-eaters — *man-geurs de lard* — they called the canoemen who journeyed from Montreal to Grand Portage. At Michilimackinac supplies of corn, which the nearby Indians grew in quantities, were gathered for the brigades going on to Grand Portage. Farther west around Rainy Lake there was wild rice which was also a good article of diet, but the great stand-by west of Lake Superior was pemmican. Pemmican was dried buffalo meat, pounded fine, to which hot grease was added, and the whole was formed in a mold in a bag of buffalo skin. It would keep for months and was very nourishing, although one observer suggested that a newcomer

should not ask too many questions about it. "Pemmican," he wrote, "is supposed by the benighted world outside to consist only of pounded meat and grease; an egregious error; for, from experience on the subject, I am authorized to state that hair, sticks, bark, spruce leaves, stones, sand, etc., enter into its composition, often quite largely." Peas, corn, and pemmican were literally the fuel of the canoeway, and the practice of gathering supplies of them for the brigades was as important as the organization of gasoline supplies for an airline.

Michilimackinac and Grand Portage were the two chief stopping points on the way to the north-west, and of these Grand Portage became the more important. There, in June and July, the western brigades exchanged their furs for the manufactured goods brought from Montreal. The canoes used west of Grand Portage were smaller than the Montreal canoes, and the canoemen and traders who stayed west of Grand Portage were called "winterers". No one who had not at some time been a winterer was considered a real Nor'Wester. During the short time spent by the brigades at Grand Portage, there was a scene of business dealings and revelries which made it the most interesting fur-trading centre in the history of the continent. There, merchants from Montreal met the "wintering" partners from the north-west. There, hundreds of canoemen enjoyed their brief respite in a boisterous and hilarious way. There, new contracts were signed by "wintering" canoemen who wished to return to Montreal, or by Montreal canoemen who wished to become winterers.

The success of the canoeway depended on the excellence of the French-Canadian canoeman. Their endurance and skill were proverbial. Small men were favoured as voyageurs, since their short legs did not take too much precious space in the canoe, but size was no indication of the voyageur's strength. He could paddle tirelessly weeks on end, for twelve, fifteen or even eighteen hours a day, and over rocky portage trails he carried at a dog trot from two to four bundles of merchandise each weighing ninety pounds. Each portage was a scene of bustle and activity which, as one observer wrote, "none can picture to themselves but such as have seen it. The goods are unloaded and conveyed across, while

the canoe is carried by the stern and bowsmen. As soon as they have reached the end of the portage, it is launched and reloaded without any loss of time. An obstruction of one hundred yards does not detain them more than twenty minutes."



(*"Picturesque Canada"*)

#### AT THE PORTAGE

now I have not a spare shirt to my back, nor a penny to buy one. Yet, were I young again, I would willingly spend another half-century in the same field of enjoyment. There is no life so happy as a voyageur's life; none so independent; no place where a man enjoys so much variety and freedom as in the Indian country. Huzza! Huzza! *pour le pays sauvage!*" We must not forget the voyageur's songs. Wherever he went he sang, around the campfire, in the canoe,

The voyageur's life was hard, but he loved it and took tremendous pride in his strength and skill. "I have now," said an old voyageur, "been forty-two years in this country. For twenty-four I was a light canoe-man.<sup>2</sup> No portage was too long for me. Fifty songs a day were nothing to me. I could carry, paddle, walk, and sing with any man I ever saw. No water, no weather, ever stopped the paddle or the song. Five hundred pounds, twice told, have passed through my hands; although

<sup>2</sup> The light canoes were those used west of Grand Portage. They were smaller than the Montreal canoes. The voyageurs who wintered in the north-west had to be as expert in travelling by sled, dog-team and snowshoe during the winter as they were by canoe in summer.

or along the forest trails to encourage his dogs. "Of such use is singing, in enabling the men to work eighteen or nineteen hours a day (at a pinch)," said one writer, "that a good singer has additional pay." Another, in describing a voyageur's song, wrote,



*(from the painting by Paul Kane, in the Royal Ontario Museum)*

#### ENCAMPMENT OF FUR TRADERS AND INDIANS ON WINNIPEG RIVER

"Mr. M . . . sang it as only the lone voyageur can do. His practised voice enabled him to give us the various swells and falls of sounds upon the waters, driven about by the winds, dispersed or softened in the wide expanses, or brought close again to the ear by neighbouring rocks. He finished, as is usual with the piercing Indian shriek." The true Nor'Wester's spirit was self-confident, buoyant, even rollicking, and in nothing did he show it more than in his singing.

**Rivalry With the Hudson's Bay Company.** Just after 1768<sup>3</sup> the Montreal merchants began to push up into the Lake Winnipeg and Saskatchewan River country. Among the first were the Frobisher brothers who got the idea of organizing supplies of pemmican for the western canoe-brigades. The Montreal merchants began then as La Vérendrye had done, to build posts on the rivers flowing to Hudson Bay so that the Indians would be intercepted on their way to the Hudson's Bay Company's posts. The

<sup>3</sup> In 1768 the British government changed the regulations for the western trade so that Montreal traders could go into Rupert's Land, where the Hudson's Bay Company had previously had a monopoly.

Company soon saw the danger. It had not, as has often been stated, been "sleeping by the Bay". It had relied on the Indians bringing their furs to the Bay, but it had also sent men inland to keep in touch with the Indians and to explore the country. In the twenty years following Henday's trip to the Blackfeet, about sixty journeys into the interior were made by employees of the Company. The arrival of Montreal traders in the north-west forced the Company, however, to change its policy. These "Pedlars", as the Hudson's Bay men called them, brought their goods to the Indian villages and built posts near the Indians, who naturally preferred to avoid the long journey to the Bay. The Hudson's Bay Company was forced, therefore, to begin building inland posts itself.

The first inland post, Cumberland House, was built in 1774 on the Saskatchewan River west of present day The Pas, and on the site of La Vérendrye's Fort Paskoyac. This step was the result of an exploration made by Matthew Cocking in 1772. Cocking was sent by the company to gather information about the Pedlars, and he was alarmed by the competition from Montreal. "It surprises me," he wrote, "to perceive what a warm side the natives hath to the French-Canadians."

Samuel Hearne, one of the great explorers of Canada, was the man sent to choose a site and build the first inland post. He had already made an extremely difficult exploration in 1769, when he was sent from Fort Prince of Wales on Hudson Bay to cross the barren grounds north and west towards the Arctic. He was instructed to take possession of rivers flowing into the Arctic, and to investigate stories of copper mines. Although he found no minerals of value, he explored to the mouth of the Coppermine River, and later wrote an account of his hazardous journey which ranks among our best books on northern exploration. In it he described the tundra region of the far north, and the life of the Indians who depended on musk-ox and caribou. Hearne did well in his journey of 1774. Cumberland House became an important centre of trade. Its establishment was followed by the building of other inland posts, and competition with the Montreal traders soon turned into a very hot rivalry.

**The Founding of the North West Company.** During their first years in the north-west the Montreal traders competed among themselves. This resulted, however, in serious losses, and the leading merchants discovered that if they were to succeed against the Hudson's Bay Company they would have to co-operate. They had a long and expensive journey by canoe from Montreal, while

## IF YOU WILL COME AND DANCE WITH ME



Sketch by Arthur Lesmer

1. If you will come and dance with me, if you will come and  
dance with me. A feathered cap I'll give to thee A  
feathered cap I'll give to thee. **CHORUS** Come my lad a..  
dancing So far into the night. Our feet must trip light..  
ly, Lon la' We will forget time is a flight. 2.

(Hudson's Bay Co.)

## A VOYAGEUR SONG

Many of the voyageur songs were not work or paddling songs. Here is a good example of the dance songs that were popular at the trading posts.

the Company could send ocean-going ships to its forts on Hudson Bay and from those points the journey to its inland posts was comparatively short. The handicap of the Montreal traders became heavier as they penetrated farther north and west into the greatest fur-bearing region of all—the Athabasca country toward which Peter Pond led the way. Only co-operation could overcome this handicap, and so the North West Company was formed by the leading fur traders of Montreal. They united on the understanding that profits would be shared according to the amount each put in. Those traders who stayed west of Lake Superior were called “wintering” partners, and each year at Grand Portage they met the Montreal partners to discuss the affairs of the company. 1784 may be taken as the date of the founding of

the company,<sup>4</sup> although before that year there had been a number of temporary agreements between individual merchants.

For several reasons the formation of the North West Company is a notable event. It made possible the extension of the Montreal trade into the far north-west; and, as a result, the competition with the Hudson's Bay Company sharply increased. It also brought a great stimulus to exploration, for the Company's men soon pushed north and west to the Arctic and the Pacific. Finally, it is important in the history of Canadian business. The North West Company was the first Canadian joint stock company. For over thirty years its success was remarkable, and its founders are truly called the fur barons of the West.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Chapter XIV of *Readings in Canadian history* contains selections from the fur traders' own writings. You will find there also some of the voyageurs' songs; others are included in *Canadian folk songs, old and new* by J. Murray Gibbon. All phases of the voyageur's life are described in an attractive and reliable book, *The voyageur* by Grace Lee Nute. Two novels by Charles Clay, *Young Voyageur* and *Fur trade apprentice* describe the adventures of a boy learning the trade under the Frobisher brothers. R. M. Ballantyne's *The young fur traders* and *Ungava* give accurate pictures of trading methods in the Hudson's Bay Company, since the author himself served an apprenticeship with the company. The first chapters of Philip Godsell's *Red hunters of the snows* review the history of the fur trade. Hearne is dealt with in *Adventurers of the far north* by Agnes Laut "Chronicles of Canada". There is a good account of Hearne in *North America* by Sir John Keltie and Samuel Gilmour.

<sup>4</sup> In 1787 the agreement was enlarged to include practically all the important merchants trading to the North West.

## *Chapter XVI*

### **Britain and Her Rivals on the Pacific Coast**

**W**HILE Nor'Westers and Hudson's Bay men were forcing their way relentlessly westward, developments of great importance were taking place in the Pacific. In the last years of the eighteenth century British traders and explorers encircled the globe, and the meeting place of those who came west across the Rockies with those who came east across the Pacific was on the coast of present-day British Columbia. Britain was not, however, the only European country interested in the Pacific. Russia and Spain were her rivals, and the history of Canada's west coast is, therefore, from its beginning connected with events of world-wide significance.

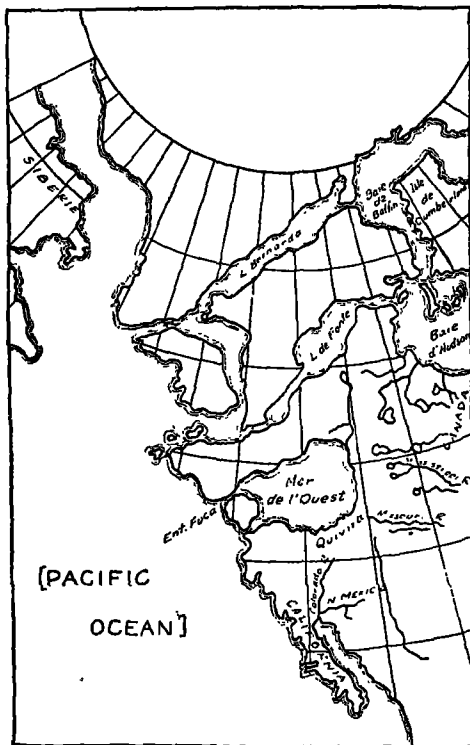
Until near the end of the eighteenth century, the Pacific was little more than a vast mystery to Europeans. The British East India Company traded by way of the Cape of Good Hope with some ports in China; Russian traders from across Siberia had explored the American west coast as far north as California. Actually, however, the huge disk of the Pacific was scarcely known to Europeans except for a few spots around the edge. Russia led the way in the north Pacific by sending Vitus Bering, a Dane, in 1725 to find the eastern limits of Siberia. Bering spent over fifteen years and lost his life in this hazardous task, but he accomplished a good deal. He proved that Asia and America were separated by a narrow strait, he discovered the Aleutian Islands, and reached the coast of Alaska. Bering also revealed rich possibilities in the North Pacific fur trade. Some wretched survivors of his crew carried sea-otter skins back to Asia, and found an eager demand for them among Chinese merchants. The sea-otter became a magnet on North America's Pacific Coast, just as the beaver had been on the Atlantic. Russian traders pursued the sea-otter



through the Aleutian Islands, and by the middle of the eighteenth century were establishing their posts along the coast of Alaska.

**Captain Cook and the North-West Coast.** British effort in the North Pacific began a quarter century later with a voyage by

Captain James Cook, one of the most famous leaders in the whole history of maritime exploration. Starting as a poor boy with little schooling, Cook became, by sheer ability and high qualities of character, one of the greatest figures in England of his day. He was more than a sea-captain. Like a true scientist he worked at every problem which confronted him. His victory over scurvy was a triumph which he achieved by carefully observing his men and regulating their food during his voyages. The scurvy was so serious, before means of preventing it were discovered, that voyages as long as those across the Pacific were extremely dangerous. Cook became



(Courtesy of Professor A. S. Morton.)

An eighteenth century idea of the west coast of North America. This drawing based on a map of 1752 shows how firmly the idea of a North West Passage was still held.

an astronomer, and contributed to the science of navigation by studying the movements of the stars. He was with Admiral Saunders at Quebec in 1759, and did much of the work of charting the St. Lawrence which enabled Saunders's fleet to find its way up

the river. After the war he was put in charge of mapping the coast of Newfoundland; and later made a voyage to the Pacific ocean where he explored the coast of Australia and New Zealand, and many of the southern Pacific islands.

In 1776 with two small vessels, the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, Cook started towards the North Pacific on the last of his great voyages of exploration. In spite of Bering's work the north Pacific remained largely unknown; and men still believed that a route connecting Atlantic and Pacific might be found around or through the northern part of North America. From the days of Queen Elizabeth, Frobisher, Davis and others had tried to discover the North West Passage from the Atlantic side, and Cook was now asked to settle the question of its existence by exploring the coastline of the North Pacific.



CAPTAIN JAMES COOK

Cook first sighted the west coast of North America in March, 1778, almost exactly two centuries after Drake's famous voyage. His landfall was just south of present day British Columbia. A sixteenth century pilot, Juan de Fuca, had stated that there was a passage in that vicinity. Cook was on the look-out for it, but was driven out to sea by a storm and failed to find the strait which now bears Fuca's name. He did, however, discover and name Cape Flattery which lies at the Strait's entrance. Sailing north along the west coast of Vancouver Island, he stopped at the harbour now known as Nootka, and then continued along the coast, looking for a passage leading eastward through the continent. Far up the coast of Alaska, he explored the deep inlet which bears his name, but it too disappointed him. He even went beyond Bering Strait till he was stopped by a wall of ice about twelve feet high that stretched as far as he could see. He was now convinced, and later

he was proven correct, that there was no passage far enough south of the Arctic circle to be of any value. Cook's last exploration was, therefore, in one respect a disappointment, but it opened the North Pacific as no one had done before, and his magnificent account of the expedition, when it was printed, aroused keen interest in Europe and America.

Cook's voyage had one result which had been quite unforeseen.



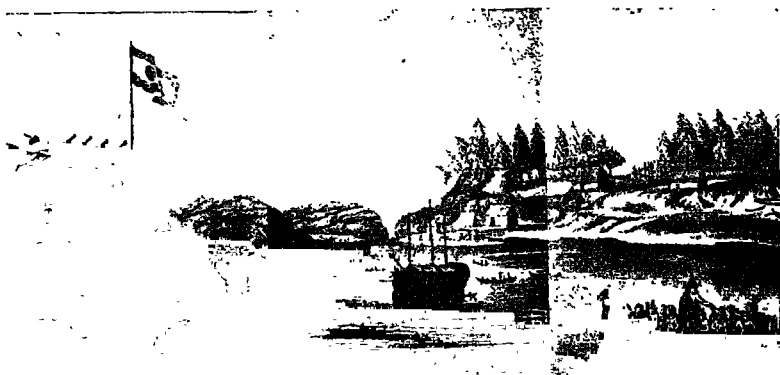
CAPTAIN COOK'S SHIPS IN NOOTKA SOUND

At Nootka, his men started a lively trade with the Indians who swarmed out in gaily painted canoes to meet the ships. In exchange for buttons, beads and baubles of all kinds, and especially for iron objects which the Indians wanted more than anything else, hundreds of beautiful sea-otter skins were obtained. On their way back to England, Cook's vessel<sup>1</sup> stopped at Canton, China, and there the sailors found a market far beyond their expectations. Prices as high as \$120 in our money were obtained for the choicest pelts. So excited were the sailors that it is said they were on the verge of mutiny in their desire to return and make their fortunes.

**The Maritime Fur Trade and the Challenge to Spain.** News of what seemed an opportunity to gain fabulous wealth soon got about, and adventurers from China, India and Europe hurried to the north-west coast. The first, Captain James Hanna, sailed from

<sup>1</sup> Cook himself met a tragic death at the hands of the natives of the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands.

China in 1785 in the *Sea-Otter*, and with him began the short but hectic history of the north-west maritime fur trade. The trade lasted only some forty years, because the sea-otters were hunted so ruthlessly that they became almost extinct. Profits were quickly reduced when the Canton market became over-loaded with pelts, and the Indians added to the traders' difficulties by demanding higher prices. Bitter competition produced violent quarrels between traders and Indians, and the trade soon presented a sorry picture.



THE SPANISH FORT AT NOOTKA

It had far-reaching results in its first years, however. In 1788, ships from Boston entered the trade and immediately took a prominent part. The interest of the United States in the Pacific coast and in China began with these voyages, and also as a result of them the United States laid claim to the Columbia River. Robert Gray was its discoverer. Others had searched for it, because a large river was believed to empty in that vicinity, but the mouth lay behind a sand-bar and a cape,—appropriately named Cape Disappointment.

Out of the maritime fur trade came, also, the challenge to Spain's claims of monopoly on the American west coast. Spain had maintained these claims since she and Portugal had divided the New World between them in 1494, but the progress of settlement north from Mexico had been slow. San Francisco, for

example, was founded in 1774 only two years before Cook began his last voyage. In the next five years several Spanish voyages of exploration were made as far as Vancouver island. Spain had not been aroused by Russia's entrance into Alaska, but when the maritime fur traders followed in Cooke's wake she became alarmed.

In 1788 Captain John Meares, one of the earliest and most aggressive English maritime traders erected a building at Nootka, and built the thirty-ton schooner *North-West America*, the first vessel launched on the British Columbia coast. Meares's apparent intention to make a permanent establishment moved the Spaniards to speedy action. In the following spring, a proud ship with twenty cannon and the Spanish colours flying in the breeze suddenly appeared at Nootka. The commander, Don Joseph Martinez, seized the English vessels, and erected fortifications. When Meares, who was in charge of his affairs at Macao, heard the news, he hastened to England and laid his case before the government. His story aroused hot indignation, and the government immediately determined to force Spain to a settlement. Such was the origin of the so-called Nootka affair.

Spain was in no position to go to war in defence of her claims. France, who might have supported her, was at the moment weakened by the beginning of the French Revolution. When England insisted on it, Spain restored Meares's property; and more important, she also agreed that British subjects should have rights of trade and settlement north of the thirty-eighth parallel of latitude. Thus, in 1790, Spain modified those exclusive claims to the American Pacific coast which she had maintained for almost three centuries.

England's interest in the American north-west coast was now thoroughly aroused, and the government resolved to send a carefully prepared expedition commanded by Captain George Vancouver. Vancouver was one of the young men whom Cook had trained on his voyages. He had many of the great navigator's qualities, such as painstaking patience and a scientific interest in charting and map making. Like Cook he inspired his men with a spirit of devotion to duty, and in his dealings with the Indians he showed a fine attitude of fairness and understanding.

**Captain George Vancouver on the West Coast.** Vancouver was instructed to make a careful exploration and map of the coast, and to meet a Spanish representative at Nootka so that the agreement with Spain would be put into effect. On arriving at Nootka in 1792, Vancouver found that the Spanish representative Don Quadra was a very pleasant gentleman. The two struck up a



CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER

lively friendship and entertained each other for days. In fact, as one writer remarks, whenever Quadra was present a good dinner was never far away. Maquinna, an important Indian chief at Nootka, was usually with them, and according to the record conducted himself at table with perfect manners. Quadra and Vancouver, however, could not agree about the terms of the agreement between England and Spain. Quadra insisted that only the land on which Meares's building had stood was to be given up, and

a messenger had to be sent to Europe before Vancouver's much wider claims were admitted.

Vancouver's greatest achievement was the charting of the coast which he had been ordered to undertake. Through bad weather and many other difficulties, he worked at it steadily for two years. His method was to anchor his ships, and send his men in small boats to make a careful chart of the bays and inlets. He journeyed around Vancouver Island, and surveyed the mainland coast from San Francisco to Alaska. Among the inlets explored was the magnificent harbour beside which the city of Vancouver now stands. At some points Spanish or fur-traders' ships had preceded him, but no one had attempted a real survey. On returning to England, Vancouver published a full account of the exploration with his maps in a remarkable work, which has been well described as "an eternal monument to his memory."

From the beginning of Cook's voyage in 1776 to the end of Vancouver's exploration only eighteen years had elapsed, but they were years filled with significant developments. The coast of British Columbia had been revealed to the world, and a vigorous trade begun. Spain's monopoly was ended; and in its place,



Scene near Cook's Inlet, from one of the plates in Vancouver's *Voyages*.

four nations now had their claims—Spain in the south, Russia in the north, and between them Britain and the United States. America's Pacific coast had been brought into the stream of world affairs.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Selections from the explorers' journals are in chapter XV of *Readings in Canadian history*. *Pioneers of the Pacific coast* by Agnes Laut is the "Chronicles of Canada" book on this period. There are Ryerson readers on Cook and Vancouver, and good short accounts of both in C. Hamer-Jackson's *Discoverers and explorers*. An interesting short life of Cook is that by John Lang in Nelson's "Hall of Heroes" series. Parts of F. W. Howay's *Builders of the west*, and D. J. Dickie's *The Canadian west* deal with this period.

## *Chapter XVII*

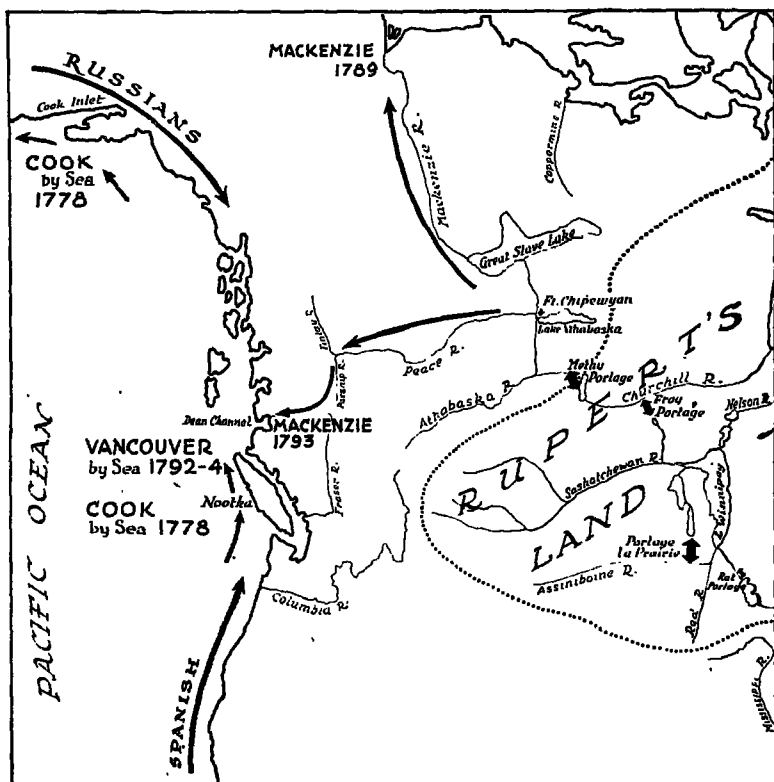
### British North America at the End of the Eighteenth Century

**H**AVE you ever watched a great building in course of construction? At first, as it rises above its foundations, you can hardly imagine what it will be like. Then at a certain point you suddenly realize that the outline is beginning to appear. In your mind's eye at that moment you are getting the first glimpse of its form—a form which will become more and more distinct as the days pass, until at last it stands sharply outlined against the sky. In many ways nations in their growth are like buildings, and it is interesting to ask at what point in Canadian history we get the first glimpses which suggest Canada as we know it today. Several good answers might be given, but the one which this chapter puts forward is the last decade in the eighteenth century.

There were at the beginning of that decade three events which, taken together, have a real significance for Canada as a whole. In 1791 the Canada Act, by establishing Upper and Lower Canada, completed the creation of what are now Canada's five eastern provinces. In the same year Vancouver was sent from England to begin his survey of the coast which today forms Canada's western boundary; and in 1793, while Vancouver was still at work, east and west were joined by the first journey of exploration ever made across the Rockies to the Pacific. In these events, happening so close together, we have our first suggestion of a British North America stretching from sea to sea. Its form is still indistinct. Settlements are no more than a thin and broken line extending west only to the Great Lakes, and in the far north large areas are not yet even explored. Nevertheless, the 1790's give us a real prophecy of a British North America which will span the continent, and in due time will merge into the nation of our own day.



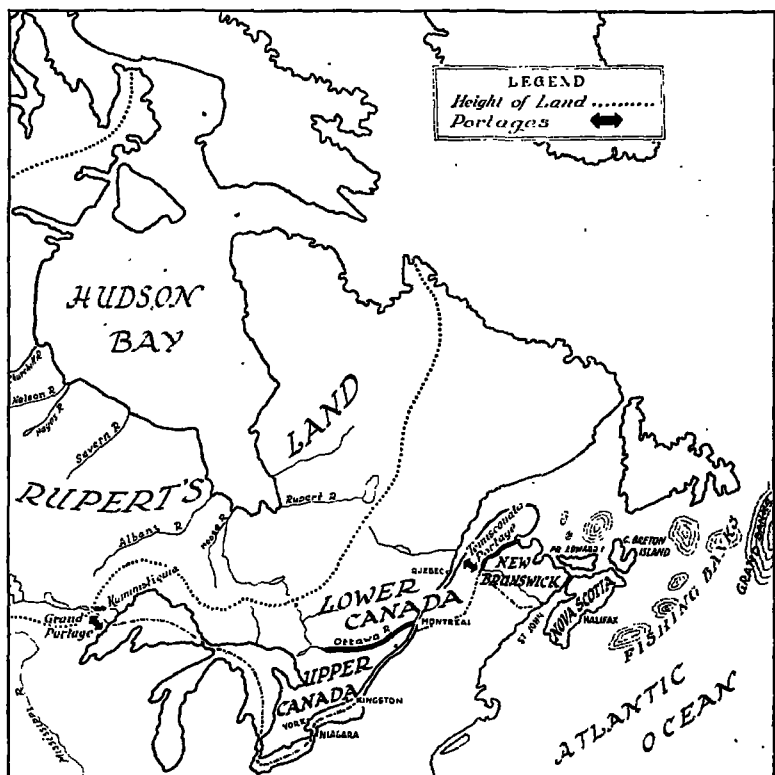
**A Bird's Eye View—The Maritime Provinces.** Let us take a bird's eye view of British North America from Atlantic to Pacific in this last decade of the eighteenth century, and first let us look at the Maritime Provinces. At that time the industries of fishing, lumbering, ship-building and commerce on the high seas, which later made the Maritime Provinces famous, were just entering on a period of rapid growth. Near at hand lay the fishing banks,



BRITISH NORTH AMERICA AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY

*By 1800 the structure of a British North America extending from coast to coast was faintly suggested. In the East, settlements were firmly established in what are now Canada's five eastern provinces. In the West, a net-work of fur*

which had attracted fishermen since before the days of Cartier, and the people of the Maritime provinces were taking full advantage of this great asset. "Hundreds of men, owners of small farms, are absent in the summer at deep-sea fishing," wrote an observer in 1795. Their wives and families tilled the farms, and when the boats came in everyone helped in handling the fish—most of which were spread out on wooden frames or on rocks to dry in



traders' routes had been put on the map, and the first journeys of exploration had been made to the Arctic and the Pacific. The map gives the principal waterways and portages which made it possible for fur traders to range over the vast area of the West. On the Pacific Coast exploration and trade had brought by 1800 the beginnings of a rivalry among four nations.

the sun. Fishing was done much as at present, except that gasoline engines have now come in to replace or supplement sails. Inshore fishing, that is fishing within five miles or so of the shore, was done with small boats, but deep-sea fishing on the great banks was



LUNENBURG FISHING FLEET.

DRYING FISH AT LUNENBURG.

carried on by schooners which were absent for many weeks. Each schooner carried several dories—flattish-bottomed small boats easily handled by one or two men—and on the banks the dories fished near the mother ship, in what has been called the hen and chickens style. The abundance of fish struck every visitor. “The mouths of the rivers and all along the coast,” wrote Patrick Campbell who toured New Brunswick in 1791, “abound

with almost all the varieties of fish in the sea; and as for Lobsters and Oysters, they are so numerous as to become a nuisance."

Good timber near the coast encouraged ship-building. "There is as much oak in Upper Canada, and as much black birch in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick," wrote Patrick Campbell, "as would supply all the dock yards in Europe with ship timber, for one hundred years, if not forever." New Englanders had brought their knowledge of ship-building to Nova Scotia even before the American Revolution, but the 1790's saw a great increase in the number of vessels built, and by the end of the century "Bluenose" craft began to acquire a recognized place at sea.

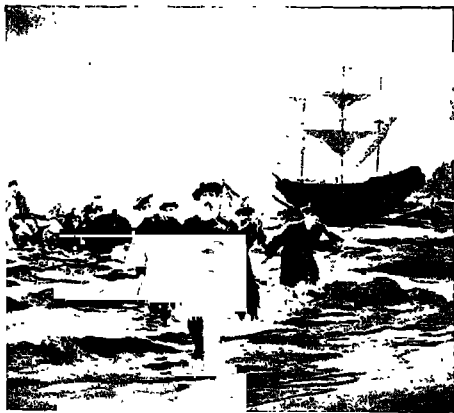
Commerce rose with fishing and ship-building. England and the British West Indies were excellent markets for fish and timber the very products which the Maritime Provinces had in abundance. After the American Revolution, vessels from the United States lost the right to trade with the British West Indies,<sup>1</sup> and this stimulated the trade and shipping of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The West Indies needed fish, flour and pork for their slaves, and lumber for hogsheads and buildings. England also wanted large quantities of lumber, and New Brunswick became noted as a source of supply, especially for ship-building timber. Magnificent masts and spars in almost any number were available at Saint John. Patrick Campbell mentions one "extraordinary stick" as he called it, measuring thirty-two inches square and one hundred and twenty feet long. Bluenose vessels were often sold in England, cargo and all, at the end of the first voyage across the Atlantic. "Many large vessels," says a description of Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1803, "have been built there within the last three years laden with lumber and sold in the United Kingdom. Several are now in progress. The present year at least fifty vessels will be laden for foreign voyages from that district. Some smaller vessels

<sup>1</sup> For fifty years after the American Revolution the closing of British West Indian ports to vessels from the United States was an endless cause of argument between the United States, Britain, and the colonies. At some times the regulation was not strictly enforced. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Canadas naturally wanted United States vessels excluded from the British West Indies. The islands opposed this as they needed more, in the way of provisions especially, than the Maritime Provinces could supply.

proceed with fish, oil, lumber, provisions, cattle and livestock to the West Indies." Thus in the 1790's a commerce was beginning which a few decades later made Bluenose clippers known the world over.

Settlements in the Maritime Provinces were still almost entirely near the coast or along river valleys, such as the St. John and

Miramichi. Among the settlers there was one important group, the Scots, whose arrival has not been specially mentioned. About 1772 conditions of great hardship in the Scottish Highlands started an emigration which lasted about fifty years. Thousands of sturdy Highlanders came to the Maritime Provinces, to Upper Canada, and a few years later to the Red River valley,<sup>2</sup> and their



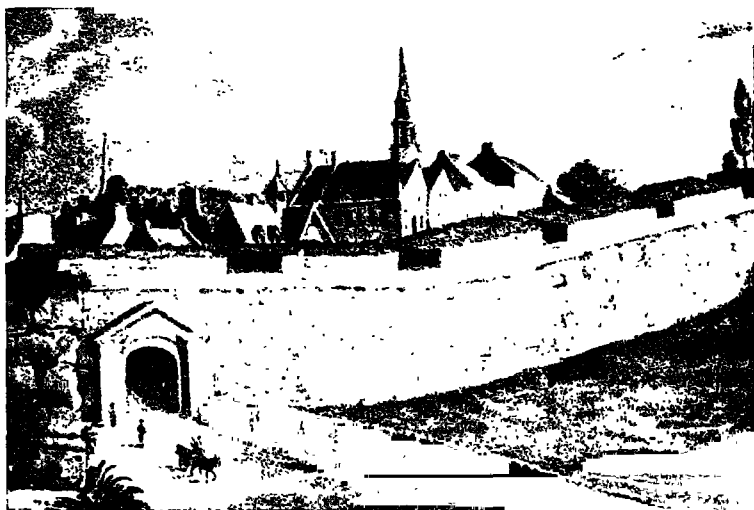
Scottish immigrants landing from the *Hector* at Pictou in 1773.

descendants are now to be found in all parts of the Dominion. In the Maritime Provinces they settled on the north shore of Nova Scotia, along the Miramichi River in New Brunswick, in Cape Breton, and in Prince Edward Island where the *Alexander* brought a shipload as early as 1772. The pioneers in this Scottish migration had an extremely difficult time. They had few friends, were desperately poor, and were coming to a land whose ways of life were unfamiliar. But they had a determination which would not be denied. The incident of the *Hector*, whose passengers on reaching Pictou in 1773 jumped into the water and waded ashore led by a piper, is a symbol of their unconquerable spirit.

**The Barrier Between the Maritime Provinces and the Canadas.** Between the Maritime Provinces and the Canadas was

<sup>2</sup> See chapter 22.

thrust the northern extension of the Appalachian Barrier with its tangle of hills, and forest. Travel through it was so difficult that few attempted even the best route, that of the Temiscouata Portage. This lay up the St. John and Madawaska Rivers to Lake Temiscouata and then over the thirty-six mile portage to Rivière



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

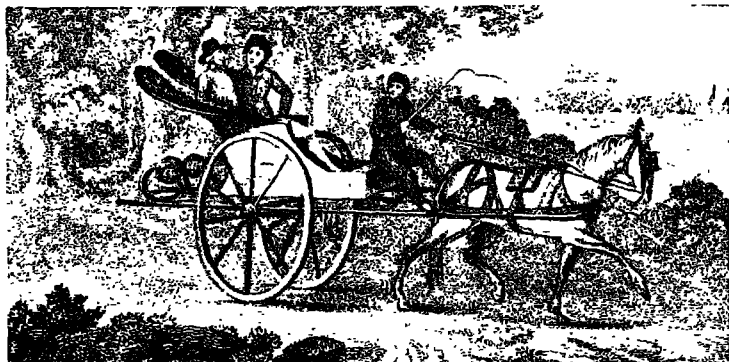
A part of the wall at Quebec. St. John's Gate built in 1791  
is shown at the left.

du Loup. Patrick Campbell made the trip with a guide in 1792, and a hard time he had of it. The Temiscouata Portage took him three days. The Maritime Provinces and the Canadas were, in fact, so separated that they had almost nothing in common except their loyalty to the British flag. Their trade was naturally with the British Isles, the West Indies, or the United States rather than with each other. Only the coming of the railway half a century later made union in British North America a possibility.

**Lower and Upper Canada.** Lower Canada in the 1790's looked at first sight much as it had fifty years earlier,<sup>3</sup> except that its white farm houses along the river banks

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 10.

lay closer together,—as many as twelve or sixteen in a mile, one traveller says. Roads were now more numerous and the main ones along the St. Lawrence were quite good. A regular service had now been established and the traveller could go quite quickly between Quebec and Montreal from one posthouse to another by calèche in summer or cariole in winter. Water was, however, still the favourite means of travel.



CANADIAN CALÈCHE

This drawing appeared in a book by Isaac Weld who travelled through Upper and Lower Canada in the 1790's. A calèche was described by one writer as "a gig upon grasshopper springs with a seat for two passengers; the driver occupies the site of the dashboard with his feet on the shafts and in close proximity to the horse with which he maintains a confidential conversation throughout the journey."

The Canadas, like the Maritime Provinces, were changing, however, and nothing showed this more clearly than the new commerce along the river. Montreal still drew its golden stream of furs from beyond Lake Superior, but on the St. Lawrence were beginning to appear lumber rafts, and bateaux loaded with barrels of wheat, flour, potash,<sup>4</sup> and other products from the new settlements up the river. During the next few decades Quebec became a great centre for ship-building and the timber trade, and already there could be

<sup>4</sup> Ashes, or potash made from ashes, was one of the first products which the pioneer who was clearing land and burning trees, had to sell. Potash was used in England in large quantities for soap making and other purposes.

seen signs of these growing industries. Quebec was still the colony's sea port, but a traveller tells us that he was astonished to find ships of four hundred tons at Montreal, in spite of the immense difficulty of getting them up against the current.

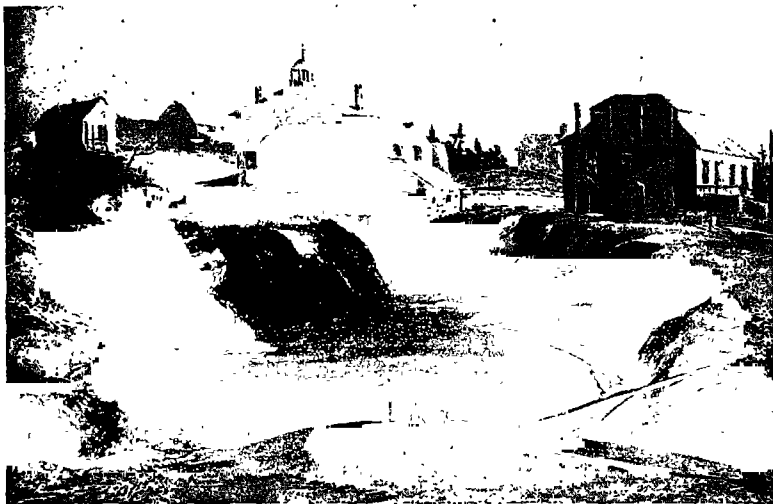
The most lively signs of growth were those in Upper Canada where a stream of immigrants was rapidly adding to the original Loyalist settlements. Among the newcomers, as in the Maritime Provinces, were many from the Scottish Highlands. Five hundred Highlanders came as early as 1786, almost all of them settling in the eastern part of the province in the counties of Glengarry and Stormont. By the end of the century almost every Highland clan was represented in this district. Settlers also came in large numbers from the United States. Many were Loyalists in sentiment, but others came chiefly to seek good land. Colonel John Graves Simcoe, the first governor of Upper Canada, who arrived in 1792, was strongly in favour of this new immigration. He saw that the fur trade was declining and he believed that the province might become, as he put it, "a granary for England." Kingston, he wrote on visiting it a second time, had "improved beyond my expectations; many stores for merchandize and wharfs had been built and new ones were in contemplation. I also found the language of the merchants very much altered—The Fur Trade seemed no longer the principal object of their attention: They look forward to the produce of their country as the true source of their Wealth." Simcoe believed that many land seekers in the United States would prefer to live under the British flag, and in 1792, he issued a proclamation<sup>5</sup> inviting settlers to cross the border. Large numbers came, and a similar proclamation by the governor of Lower Canada brought settlers into the "Eastern Townships" which lie south and east of Montreal. This movement of land seekers from the United States, often called the post-Loyalist settlement, continued strongly until about 1810.

One of the most interesting of the post-Loyalist settlements was

<sup>5</sup> Simcoe in this respect reminds us of Governor Lawrence of Nova Scotia whose policy brought so many New Englanders into Nova Scotia in the 1760's. At the end of Simcoe's term in 1795 Upper Canada had a population of about 25,000.



made on the Ottawa River just at the end of the century. In 1800 Philemon Wright came from Massachusetts and, going sixty miles beyond any settlement on the river, reached the site of the present city of Hull. Here, just opposite what is now the Dominion's capital, he "climbed to the tops of one hundred or more trees



(Public Archives)

Philemon Wright's mill about twenty years after he came to the Ottawa.

to view the situation of the country." What he saw pleased him, and in the next year he returned with thirty settlers, who brought their goods on sleighs drawn by horses and oxen over the ice. Wright's arrival marked the real beginning of settlement in the Ottawa valley.

Upper Canada was still, of course, in the first stage of pioneer development. Niagara,<sup>6</sup> Simcoe's first capital, was barely more than an outpost in the forest, and when the capital was moved to York in 1793, a town had to be built. Four years later York had only a dozen blocks. "There is no church, schoolhouse, nor in fact any of the ordinary signs of civilisation," wrote one observer.

<sup>6</sup> Niagara, now Niagara-on-the-Lake, was named Newark for a time. York was re-named Toronto in 1834.

"There is no inn, and those travellers who have no friends to go to, fetch a tent and live there while they remain." It was a day of small beginnings. Nevertheless foundations were being laid. Simcoe's first assembly at Niagara in 1792 was, for instance, a small affair, even though it was opened with scarlet and gold uniforms and all the pomp Simcoe could muster,—but it marked the establishment of parliamentary government in a new frontier province.



BARRACKS AT YORK IN 1804

Upper Canada's greatest problem was transportation. It alone of the British North American colonies had no seaport, and yet its prosperity was bound to depend on exports and imports which had to be transported across the ocean. The St. Lawrence was a noble gateway, but unfortunately it was obstructed by rapids between Lake Ontario and Montreal. About the end of the century timber rafts, carrying often several hundred barrels of flour, grain, pork, or potash, began going down the river. They were steered by oars and helped along, when possible, by sails. It was a dangerous business guiding them through the rapids, and losses were heavy. The imports were goods of light weight and small bulk; but, even so, the transportation of them up the St. Lawrence was very difficult and expensive. They were carried mostly by bateau. The bateau was a flattish-bottomed boat from thirty to

forty feet long with straight sides about four feet high. It could be rowed or sailed, or in coming up through rapids<sup>7</sup> could be pushed by poles or towed from shore by a rope. Some idea of Upper Canada's imports in the 1790's, and of their cost may be gained from an advertisement published by a merchant in York in 1799: "Teas, Hyson, 19s. per lb.; Souchong, 14s.; Bohea, 8s.; sugar, best loaf, 3s. 9d. per lb.; lump, 3s. 6d.; raisins, 3s.; figs, 3s.; salt, six dollars per barrel, or 12s. per bushel." Most pioneers, we can be sure, could afford very few of these items.

Shipping on Lakes Ontario and Erie was growing and by 1800 small merchant vessels, schooners and sloops were becoming a common sight. Kingston was the chief military and naval centre and the British government maintained a shipyard there. Road building had begun. Governor Simcoe started the surveying and construction of roads running north and west from York, and by the end of the century even stage coaches were being introduced near important points such as Niagara. People did not use the new highways for pleasure, however, if we believe a long-suffering traveller who wrote to the *Niagara Herald* in 1801: "I have lately had the misfortune to ride on the roads of this district, and esteem my escape from broken neck, legs and arms more miraculous than that of the survivors of the remarkable battle of the Devil's Hole." Upper Canada was still an isolated pioneer province, but its settlements and commerce were everywhere showing signs of the growth which was to mark the next few decades.

**The North West: Mackenzie Reaches the Pacific.** Events very different but no less important were taking place in the western half of British North America. When Peter Pond reached Lake Athabasca,<sup>8</sup> he found that it was the centre of a richer fur country than any other yet discovered, but the distance from Montreal was so great that the expense of transportation was tremendous. Pond wondered about the waterways north and west of Lake Athabasca. Did one of them lead to the Pacific by a route that would be cheaper and easier? It was a tantalizing question.

<sup>7</sup> One little canal and lock only large enough to hold one bateau were built in 1779-83 by the Royal Engineers at the rapids known as the Cascades.

<sup>8</sup> See page 144. Lake Athabasca was over 1800 miles by canoe from Grand Portage.

In 1787 there came to the Company's post of Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca a young Scotsman, Alexander Mackenzie, who by making two remarkable journeys of exploration within the next seven years was to answer the questions which had floated through Pond's mind. Mackenzie was a born leader who inspired confidence and devotion, and like all the great explorers he never turned aside from his purpose whatever the hardships or dangers might be. He had read about Cook's exploration, and thought perhaps the river which Cook had found flowing into Cook's Inlet might be connected with that which flowed north from Lake Athabasca. He decided to settle the question himself;<sup>9</sup> and, without consulting the partners of the North West Company, he set out on June 3, 1789, with three canoes, four French-Canadian paddlers, and a few Indians including two women. They crossed Great Slave Lake through broken ice and spring gales, and paddled down the river which now bears Mackenzie's name. Mackenzie soon realized that the river flowed into the Arctic and not into the Pacific. He named it River Disappointment, but resolved to go to its mouth and on July 12 reached the ocean. By September 12, he was back at Fort Chipewyan having travelled 3000 miles in 102 days and having put on the map one of the continent's greatest rivers.

One more possibility of a route to the Pacific still lay open—the Peace River, we call it—and Mackenzie resolved to explore it as soon as possible. After most careful preparations, including a trip



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ALEXANDER MACKENZIE

<sup>9</sup> The problem was very similar to that of Marquette and Jolliet when they set out to find whether the Mississippi flowed into the Pacific or the Gulf of Mexico.

to England to get better instruments for map-making, he was ready in the spring of 1793 for the first attempt to find a route across the Rockies. In a twenty-five foot birch-bark canoe with three thousand pounds of baggage, the party of ten men started on May 9 from a small post which Mackenzie had established on Peace River two hundred and fifty miles west of Lake Athabasca. To do justice to this remarkable journey in a few words is impossible. The difficulty of finding the route, danger from hostile Indians, the toil of portages make a story as thrilling as any in the history of American exploration. At one point Mackenzie and his men had to carry the canoe up rocky cliffs hundreds of feet high and cut a path through the forest for ten miles. With narrow escapes and "unexpressible toil", as Mackenzie put it, the party got to the head waters of the Fraser River. After descending a short distance they were fortunately warned not to risk the dangers of the lower Fraser, and Mackenzie decided to attempt the rest of the trip by land. Starting west up the Blackwater valley on a gruelling march, they finally got down to the Bella Coola River, and after fifteen days reached the salt water of an inlet. Three days paddling took them still farther toward the open sea into Dean's Channel where hostile Indians forced Mackenzie to turn back. Before doing so, he stopped, in spite of threats, for three days to determine his position, and with a mixture of vermilion and grease wrote the following words now chiselled in the stone of the same spot:

*Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land,  
the twenty-second of July,  
one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three.*

Vancouver's boats had been at the same point only seven weeks earlier. The journey had taken seventy-two days, and in thirty-three more Mackenzie was back at his post on the Peace River.

Mackenzie must have been disappointed by his failure to find an easy route to the Pacific. We, however, can see the real significance of his journey. He was the first explorer to penetrate the Rocky Mountain barrier. His book, published in 1801, was

read throughout the English-speaking world; and, within a few years, traders and explorers following his example were making their way across the mountains to the Pacific Coast.<sup>11</sup>

Mackenzie's historic journey was, indeed, a forecast of the expansion of British North America from sea to sea. It is true that at the end of the eighteenth century there was only a broken and narrow line of settlements extending no farther west than Upper Canada, and that beyond Upper Canada lay only a vast wilderness of unsettled lands. As yet there was no suggestion of a united country spanning the continent. Nevertheless from Atlantic to Pacific there were signs of growth and promise: Bluenose schooners on the fishing banks, bateaux and rafts on the St. Lawrence, the sound of the lumberman's axe and the ship-builder's hammer, pioneer clearings cutting their little notches in the forest, fur traders' posts and canoe routes reaching out towards the Arctic and the Pacific. These beginnings were to grow into something greater, and Mackenzie himself must have thought so when he stood on the shore of the long-sought Western sea and painted on the rock the words "from Canada." In this incident we catch a fleeting prophecy of the developments which in later years were to bind into one nation the farflung parts of British North America.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

References for this period are Herbert Heaton's short book *A history of trade and commerce*, chapter VIII, and Mary Q. Innis's longer volume *An economic history of Canada*. The two Dickie books, *How Canada grew up* and *Pioneer life* have some material on this section. No one has told us more about Upper Canada in the years immediately following 1791 than Mrs. Simcoe, wife of the first governor. Most libraries have copies of her diary, illustrated with her own sketches. Captain Marryat's *The settlers in Canada* is a story, written in rather an old-fashioned style, about an English family settling near Kingston in 1794. For information about pioneer life good books are *Pioneer days in Ontario* by Lorne Henry and Gilbert Paterson; E. C. Guillet's small books, *Pioneer life*, *Pioneer settlements*, *Pioneer social life*, and his large volume *Early life in Upper Canada*. His *Pioneer arts and crafts* has a good

<sup>11</sup> This is described in chapter 22.

chapter on the many uses of wood. William Wood in *All afloat* "Chronicles of Canada" describes the building of a wooden ship and the rise of shipbuilding in Nova Scotia. Mackenzie's explorations are best described in his own *Voyages*. Among numerous short accounts, one of the best is that in Stephen Leacock's *Adventurers of the far north* "Chronicles of Canada". *Readings in Canadian history* gives a part of Mackenzie's account of his trip to the Pacific.

**PART IV**

**A Half-Century of Pioneer Expansion  
1800-1850**





*(from a painting by Charles Sheldm)*

## The Arrival of the Selkirk Pioneers

## Part IV

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### A Half-Century of Pioneer Expansion

(1800-1850)

The nineteenth century opened with war in Europe and gathering clouds in America. Not until 1815 was the menace of Napoleon conquered and peace restored on both sides of the Atlantic. Already, however, an era of pioneer expansion had begun in British North America. With the return of peace a new wave of immigration flowed in. Homeseekers by thousands came from the British Isles, and the thin line of farm lands along the rivers bit steadily farther back into the forest. New staples of commerce, grain and timber, rose in volume. Quebec and the ports of the Maritime Provinces tingled with fresh activity. Roads, canals, and, above all, steamboats revolutionized trade and travel. Subtler changes also were in the making. In England and Europe a new spirit of democracy was rising, and in the frontier lands of America its growth was hastened. Through schools, newspapers, and in many other ways, it spread invisibly but surely.

Meanwhile, in the West the fur traders' empire was reaching a new height. To Red River from Scotland came the first true agricultural settlers; but their number was small and the fur trade remained supreme. For a time it was torn by violent rivalry; but in 1821 the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies joined forces, and peace under one rule prevailed from Labrador to the Pacific.

In Canada and the Maritime Provinces, growth brought political strife. The small ruling groups, who held control, feared and opposed the new democracy. Bitter conflict turned in Canada even to rebellion. But the Empire was changing. In the colonies and in Britain, far-seeing leaders were convinced that the Empire would not be weakened if the ruling colonial groups lost their power. They trusted that, with growing self-government in the colonies, loyalty would be strengthened. So the fight for Responsible Government was won, and the faith of those who believed in it was justified.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### PART IV

- 1805** Nelson wins the Battle of Trafalgar.  
The United States resents the "right of search."
- 1806** France attempts to cut off England's trade with Europe.
- 1808** The timber trade with England begins.  
Fraser explores the Fraser River.
- 1809** First steamboat, the *Accommodation*, built in Canada.
- 1811** First Selkirk settlers come to Red River.
- 1812-14** War with the United States ending with the Treaty of Ghent.
- 1814** Thompson completes the first map of the north west.
- 1815** The Treaty of Vienna ends the Napoleonic War.  
The Great Migration from the British Isles begins.
- 1817** The Rush-Bagot Agreement.
- 1818** The Convention with the United States about the Atlantic fisheries.  
Robert Gourlay demands reform in Upper Canada.
- 1819** Arctic exploration renewed.
- 1821** Union of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies.  
Opening of the Lachine Canal begins the canal building era in Canada.
- 1822** Strife begins over government in Lower Canada.
- 1825** The opening of the Erie Canal in the United States.
- 1832** The Great Reform Bill in England.
- 1833** The *Royal William* crosses the Atlantic.
- 1834-7** First successes of the reform movement in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.
- 1837** Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada.
- 1838** Durham's mission to Canada.
- 1840** Cunard begins regular trans-Atlantic steam service.
- 1841** The union of Upper and Lower Canada.
- 1842** New Brunswick-Maine boundary settled by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.
- 1844** Egerton Ryerson begins reform of education in Canada West.
- 1846** Letter of Earl Grey, the colonial secretary, authorizing Responsible Government.  
England adopts Free Trade.  
Oregon boundary dispute is settled.
- 1848** Responsible Government is won in Nova Scotia.  
The first St. Lawrence deepening scheme is completed.
- 1849** The repeal of the Navigation Acts.  
Rebellion Losses Bill and Responsible Government crisis in Canada.  
Signs of change in the fur traders' empire: Victoria founded and Vancouver Island granted to the Hudson's Bay Company for a colony; trade allowed from Red River to the United States.

## *Chapter XVIII*

### War and Peace with the United States

CANADA'S boundary is one of the longest in the world—over three thousand miles—but it is shared with only one neighbour. Throughout its entire length, it is unfortified. Not a single hostile gun points across it, and people move back and forth in normal times with more freedom than between any two countries in the world. The boundary is, in fact, more than a dividing line. It has become a symbol of mutual understanding and good will. No worthwhile achievement is won or preserved easily, and if the people of Canada and the United States are to appreciate the true significance of the unfortified boundary they must know something of the history which lies behind it.

**The Causes of the War of 1812.** In the long history of Canada's relations with the United States since the American Revolution there is only one war, the War of 1812. Its causes were partly in North America and partly in events taking place in Europe. In the first years of the nineteenth century Britain was fighting for her life against Napoleon. By 1805 Napoleon was master of almost all Europe except Russia, and in 1807 Russia too made an alliance with him. Britain thus faced a desperate situation. Only the command of the sea, made sure by Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar, saved her. The people of the United States watched Britain's struggle with mixed feelings. Some sympathized with her fight against the great dictator. Others were indifferent or friendly toward France, because France had helped the Thirteen Colonies to win their independence.

Unfortunately the United States had sharp differences with Britain which did not arise with France. Old animosities still lingered on from the American Revolution, and in addition there were difficulties at sea. The United States wished to remain

neutral and to have "freedom of the seas" which meant the right to send ships and goods to European countries without interference. Britain, on the other hand, was determined to use her sea power



THE UNFORTIFIED BOUNDARY

A trail along the international boundary, Waterton and Glacier Parks. Inset, a boundary marker.

to blockade Europe and to prevent supplies from reaching Napoleon. She insisted on the "right of search," that is, the right to search American ships for goods which would aid Napoleon, and for British sailors who were serving on American merchantmen. This caused great resentment in the United States especially after 1805, but it is an interesting fact that New England, whose ocean trade was large, was less anxious for trouble with Britain than other parts of the United States.<sup>1</sup> New Englanders realized that, if war broke out, their harbours would be blockaded by the British navy, and their overseas

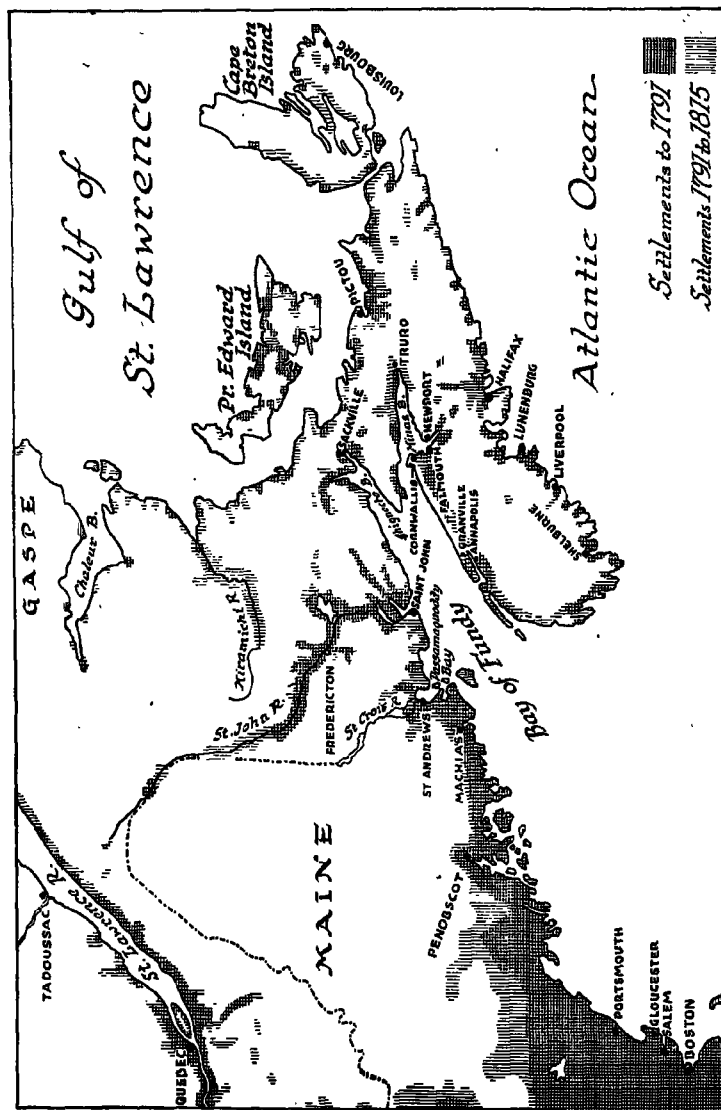
trade which was especially profitable on account of the war would be ruined.

The troubles at sea finally caused the United States to declare

<sup>1</sup> President Jefferson tried to put an end to the troubles at sea by having a law passed forbidding American vessels to leave their harbours or American goods to be exported. This angered New England and started a tremendous smuggling of goods into Nova Scotia and Canada, which for a time greatly increased the trade of Montreal, Quebec, and Halifax.

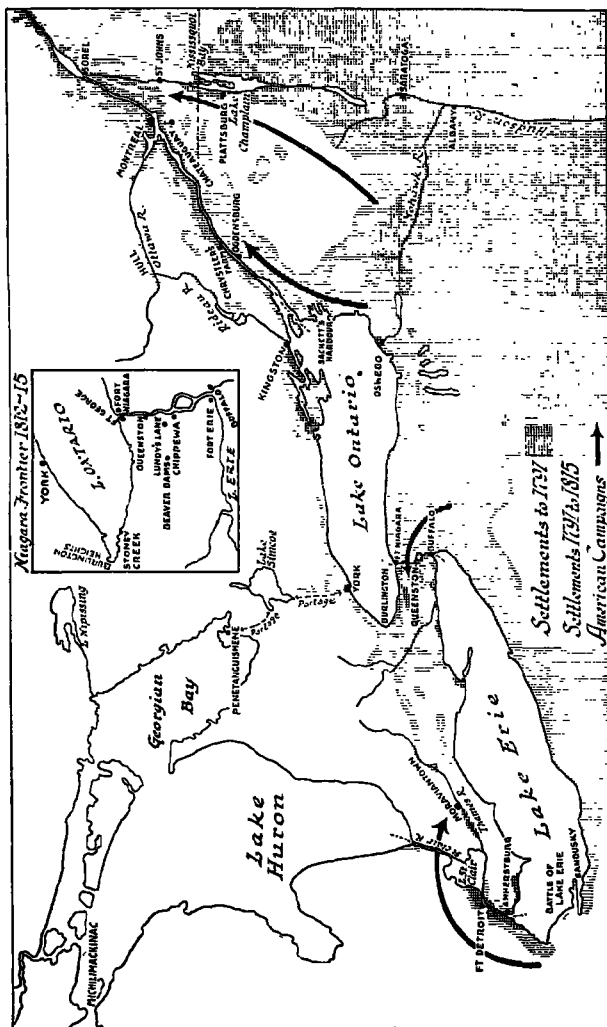
war on Britain in 1812, but probably there would have been no war had there not meanwhile been other causes of ill will. Anti-British feeling was especially strong in the new western states which by 1810 were clamouring for war. In these states Indians and settlers had been in a state of war for years, and the settlers firmly believed that the British government was helping the Indians by giving them arms and stirring them up to make trouble. For this reason, and also because Upper Canada had good unsettled lands, the west was strongly in favour of a war to conquer Canada. Moreover, it was thought that, with Britain's hands full in Europe, such a conquest would be easy. One American leader said, "We can take Canada without soldiers. We have only to send officers into the Provinces, and the people will rally round our standard." Another prophesied, "The acquisition of Canada as far as the neighbourhood of Quebec will be a mere matter of marching."

The Americans expected a speedy conquest for several reasons. The border was long; it could be easily crossed at several points; and it was defended only by a few forts with small British garrisons, a few small warships on the lakes, and a thin line of settlements. Moreover, the Americans were sure that an invasion would be welcomed by many in Canada. For twenty years, since about 1791, thousands of American settlers had been crossing the border. How rapidly the American line of settlement had been pushing north and west in these years the map shows, and Upper Canada lay right in its path. At many points, especially along the St. Lawrence and in the Eastern Townships, people moved back and forth with little regard for the boundary line. People on the American side sent their wheat or lumber or potash to Montreal as it was the most convenient market. Churches, mills and stores near the boundary were used by people from both countries. Clergymen or doctors in the border areas performed their duties on both sides of the line. Of all the British North American provinces, Upper Canada was most affected by the influx of American land seekers. By 1812 it was estimated that eight out of ten people in the province were American by birth or descent, and only about one-fourth of these were Loyalists. The Americans hoped for a



BRITISH NORTH AMERICA 1791-1815, FROM QUEBEC TO CAPE BRETON

*This map indicates both the extension of settlement and the distribution of settlement in the Maritime Provinces between 1790 and 1815. It suggests in a striking way how the sea influenced the life of the region. Settlements everywhere cling to the coastline or follow the rivers.*



### BRITISH NORTH AMERICA 1791-1815, FROM QUEBEC TO LAKE HURON

This map gives the setting for the War of 1812, indicates the principal battles, and shows the direction of the American campaigns. The extent and distribution of settlement as shown on both sides of the boundary line is an important consideration. On the Canadian side settlement was stretched in a thin line along the boundary which lay open to attack at several points. On the American side the interesting point is the rapid extension of settlement west and north after 1790. Upper Canada especially lay in the path of this expansion. It received many American settlers, and was the particular object of the American attempts at conquest.



good deal of help in Canada; and it is, on the whole, surprising that, when war came, they received so little.

**A Far-flung War by Sea and Land.** The War of 1812 has been called a "sprawling" war, because it touched points<sup>2</sup> as widely separated as Halifax, Washington, New Orleans, and the Columbia River on the Pacific coast. Its most important events were, however, in two areas: along the Atlantic coast where the war was entirely a naval one, and along the boundary of Upper and Lower Canada.

Along the Atlantic coast Britain won the naval war although she lost most of the battles.<sup>3</sup> The reason for this curious result was that the ships of the small American navy were often larger and better manned than those of the British, and when two vessels met in a duel the American usually won. The British fleet, however, was so strong and well organized that it blockaded the coast of the United States throughout the war and strangled American commerce especially toward the end. As in the American Revolution, the United States was not strong enough on the sea to attempt an invasion of the Maritime Provinces. Halifax played a part of great importance as the chief base for the British fleet on the Atlantic coast, but the most interesting role of the Maritime Provinces was in privateering. Governments at that time made a practice of giving private individuals the right to arm vessels and capture merchant ships of the enemy. Privateering was an exciting and often profitable business, since one or two rich prizes would make a fortune for owner and crew. Maritime Province ship-owners, like their New England cousins on the opposite side, had done privateering during the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution. In 1812 they began it again with great zest and on a larger scale. More than two hundred prizes were captured by Maritime Province privateers during the War of 1812

<sup>2</sup> Washington was successfully attacked by a British naval force in 1814 and several of its public buildings were burned. A British force sent to New Orleans was beaten in January, 1815. The battle took place fifteen days after the treaty ending the war had been signed. In 1813, Astoria, an American fur-trading post at the mouth of the Columbia River was threatened with capture and was turned over to the North West Company by its owners.

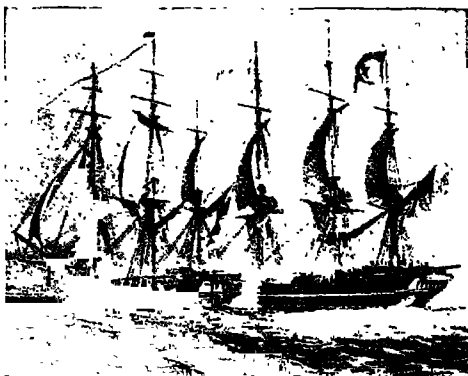
<sup>3</sup> A notable exception was the victory of the *Shannon* over the *Chesapeake* in 1813. The *Chesapeake* was captured and towed into Saint John's harbour.

and one small schooner, the *Liverpool Packet*, took no fewer than fifty.

Along the border of Upper and Lower Canada the war was one of pitched battles, but even more it was one of movement over great distances by both land and water. The United States was able to take the offensive at this point, and the two provinces had to guard a very long boundary line. In this war of defence Canada was saved by the united efforts of its own people and of the soldiers and sailors sent from Britain. In Lower Canada, French and English stood together against the invaders, and even in Upper Canada, with its thousands of recently-arrived settlers, there was less sympathy with the United States than might have been expected.

The Canadian militia regiments fought remarkably well during the war, and it is interesting to note that they were joined by the 104th New Brunswick Regiment which in winter in 1813 marched on snow-shoes over the long and difficult Temiscouata portage route from Fredericton. Canadian militia could not, however, have withstood the much stronger forces of the invaders alone. The tide was turned by fighting forces and supplies from Britain. At the beginning about four thousand British soldiers were scattered in garrisons at various points. By the end of the war about twenty-five thousand had been brought to Canada along with enormous quantities of ammunition, guns, and other equipment.

The problem of transportation was vital. The long water route up the St. Lawrence had to be kept open, and this was all the



THE *Shannon* AND THE *Chesapeake*

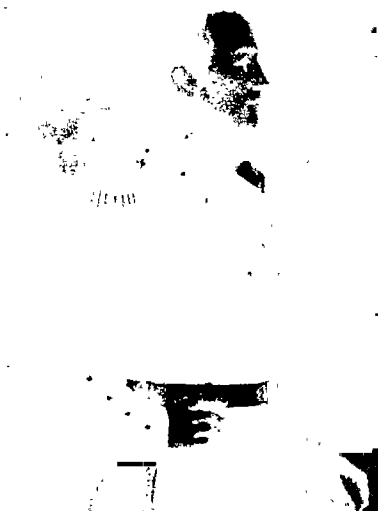
The victory of the British ship *Shannon* over the *Chesapeake* on June 1, 1813, was a notable exception to the naval duels of the war.

more difficult because it was broken by the rapids above Montreal and by the Falls at Niagara. Supplies and men had to be portaged around these obstacles, and ships had to be built and armed on both Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Upper Canada would have fallen if Montreal had been captured or if the American forces

had gained control of the river between Lake Ontario and Montreal. Instead of concentrating on this aim and making one powerful attack by the old Lake Champlain route, the United States made the mistake of scattering its efforts along the frontier all the way westward to Detroit.

The war began very favourably. Fortunately Upper Canada, had, as governor and commander of its forces, probably the ablest soldier to take part in the war, General Sir Isaac Brock. Brock was a gallant officer, quick in decision, bold in action. He had studied every detail of Upper Canada's defences, and made his prepara-

tions with the greatest care. Instead of adopting a cautious defensive policy, as ninety-nine generals out of a hundred would have done with his limited forces, Brock took the offensive. The result was two successes, which gave the Canadians confidence at the beginning when it was most needed. The first was the surprise and capture of Michilimackinac by a small force of soldiers assisted by North West Company traders and Indians. The fort fell almost without a blow. The capture of Michilimackinac made the loyalty of the Indians sure, and meant that the whole region of the Upper Lakes remained under British control



(John Ross Robertson Collection)

SIR ISAAC BROCK

throughout the war. Meanwhile Brock himself struck a blow. Leaving his defences carefully prepared along the Niagara River, he made a swift campaign against Detroit. The American general at Detroit had crossed into Upper Canada with a proclamation inviting the people to throw off British rule. To his surprise he received a cool welcome, and had to fall back. Brock closed in on Detroit, forced it to surrender by a brilliant piece of tactics, and then hurried back to the Niagara frontier.



AIR PHOTO OF QUEENSTON HEIGHTS

Showing Brock's Monument in the foreground.

In October an American force which crossed the river and gained a foothold on Queenston Heights was hurled back, but Brock himself was killed. He died, leading a charge of his men up the Heights. In spite of this serious loss, 1812 ended with the line of the St. Lawrence unbroken from Montreal to Michilimackinac. Years later, the people of Upper Canada erected on the Heights overlooking the scene of his death an imposing monument that might recall to later generations their debt to Sir Isaac Brock.

1813 was a critical year, with one real American success. On Lake Erie, by dint of great effort, an American fleet of nine vessels

was built. Lack of supplies forced the British fleet of six vessels to risk a battle, and it was completely defeated. American control of Lake Erie made the position of the British force at Detroit impossible, and it retreated along the Thames River pursued by an American army. It was overtaken and defeated at Moraviantown with the loss, unfortunately, of that staunch British ally, the famous Indian chief, Tecumseh. American control of Lake Erie also broke the line of supplies to Michilimackinac, and forced the British to use the long portage route from York to Georgian Bay. The story of the *Nancy*, which kept the line open from the mouth of the Nottawasaga River to Michilimackinac is one of the most interesting in the whole record of the war.<sup>4</sup>

Except on Lake Erie, the Americans were unable to win any decisive success in 1813. Their fleet on Lake Ontario captured York, the provincial capital, but was unable to gain full control of the lake. On the Niagara frontier there was hard fighting, but the invading force was beaten at the battles of Stoney Creek and Beaver Dams, and at the end of the year the American Fort Niagara was captured by a daring night surprise. It was at Beaver Dams that Laura Secord risked her life in carrying a message through the American lines to the British commander. Her name, like that of Madeline de Verchères in Lower Canada, became in later years a symbol of the spirit with which the people of Upper Canada stood firm in defence of their homes. The American forces which moved against Montreal fared no better than those on the Niagara frontier. One crossed the St. Lawrence below Lake Ontario, and was beaten at Chrystler's Farm. The other, which came by the Lake Champlain route, was beaten at Chateauguay just south of Montreal. In this battle French-Canadian troops under their leader Salaberry played a leading part.

The battles of 1814 were no more decisive than those of 1813. Britain was able by this time to send out a large force of British regulars, and an invasion into the United States by Lake Champlain was attempted. The general in command bungled it badly, however, and it was a miserable failure. On the Niagara frontier

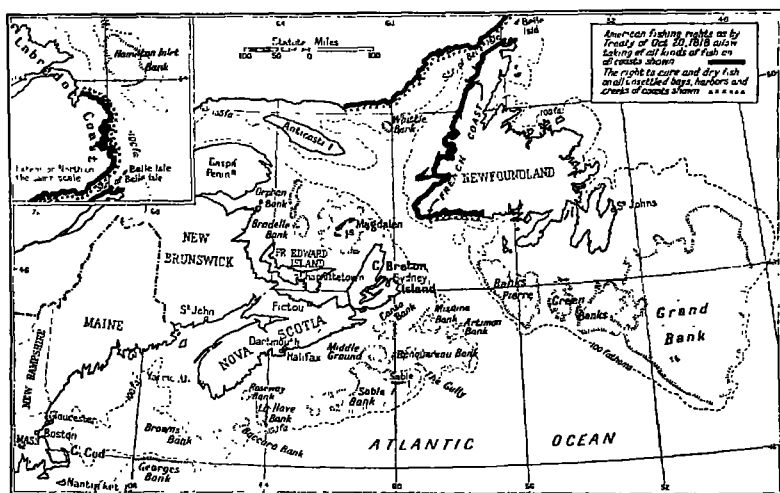
<sup>4</sup> It is well told in C. H. J. Snider, *The Story of the NANCY and other Eighteen-Twelvers*.

there was again very heavy fighting, especially at Lundy's Lane where victory was claimed by both sides although the British were left in possession of the field. In many ways the most interesting and important struggle during 1814 was the ship-building race on Lake Ontario. Late in 1814 the British gained command of the lake, by launching at Kingston shipyards the largest warship ever built on fresh water, the *St. Lawrence*. She had three decks of guns, and was larger than Nelson's *Victory*. A small army of ship-wrights and joiners was brought from England to build her, and all her equipment—guns, canvas, anchors and so forth—were hauled up to Kingston with tremendous labour. The *St. Lawrence* never fired a gun. She was scarcely more than completed when the war came to an end. Before the news of peace arrived, however, both sides were at work on still larger vessels. Nothing better illustrates the importance of waterways in the War of 1812 than the ship-building race on Lake Ontario.

**A Notable Chapter in Peace Making.** The war was ended by the Treaty of Ghent which was signed late in 1814. By it the boundary as drawn in 1783 was left unchanged, although changes had been demanded on both sides. Canadian fur traders had hoped ever since 1783 that the line would be moved south of the lakes, and in 1812 many Americans had demanded that it be wiped out altogether. Later generations have confirmed the wisdom of the line through the Lakes, as did the Treaty of Ghent. The treaty also took a step toward lasting peace: it provided, as Jay's Treaty had done, that certain disputed points along the boundary line should be settled by peaceful negotiation. The chief of these were the boundary west of Lake of the Woods, and the line between Maine and New Brunswick which was a more difficult problem and was not settled until 1842.

The Treaty of Ghent was, however, only the first in a series of peaceful settlements, which were completed within the next four years. Taken together they form one of the most important chapters in the whole history of Canada's relations with the United States. In 1818, as a result of negotiations started at Ghent, the 49th parallel of latitude was chosen as the boundary from Lake

of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. The United States wished the line to be continued to the Pacific, but the British, in order to protect the fur trade of the North West Company, wanted the Columbia River to be the boundary.<sup>5</sup> A compromise was made by deciding that Britain and the United States should both hold the "Oregon" region as it was called, and this joint occupation lasted for over twenty-five years until 1846. With the extension of the boundary west from Lake of the Woods, we see a British



(Yale University Press)

### THE AGREEMENT OF 1818 WITH REGARD TO THE FISHERIES

The heavy black line shows parts of the coast on which American vessels were allowed full fishing rights.

North America which bears a striking resemblance on the map to Canada as we know it today.

A second agreement had to do with the inshore fisheries of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Maritime Province fishermen claimed that the War of 1812 had ended for American boats the privilege of fishing near the shores of the British provinces which they had

<sup>5</sup> The North West Company, following Mackenzie's exploration, had already extended its trade to the Pacific Coast. See chapter 22.

enjoyed since the Treaty of 1783. After 1815, American boats were ordered away and a serious situation arose. In 1818 it was agreed, however, that American fishermen might use, and fish along, certain parts of the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador. Although this did not settle the fisheries question permanently, it proved to be a satisfactory solution for a number of years.

The Rush-Bagot agreement<sup>6</sup> of 1817 was the most surprising of all the settlements, made after the War of 1812, but it has proven to be the most lasting. The government of the United States proposed at the end of the war that all the war vessels on the lakes should be disarmed, not only to avoid unnecessary expense but also, as it said, "to diminish the chances of collision and prevent any feelings of jealousy." After much discussion this proposal was accepted, with the understanding that each country should have only one small vessel on Lake Champlain, one on Lake Ontario, and two on the upper lakes. Each vessel was limited to one gun. In this agreement we find the real beginning of disarmament along the boundary. Complete disarmament did not come, it is true, until near the end of the century. Both sides built some land fortifications after the War of 1812, and the agreement itself was threatened with cancellation a couple of times within the next sixty years. It continued to stand, however, and still does even though modified to meet new conditions. In 1940 it was altered by mutual consent so that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence could be used in building war vessels or in making any other preparations necessary to defend the two countries against a common enemy. After more than a century and a quarter, Canada and the United States can now look back on the Rush-Bagot agreement as a landmark in their long record of peaceful relations.

The War of 1812 left a deep impression on British North America. With the help of Britain the colonies had weathered a heavy storm. In Lower Canada, French and English had united in a common defence, which was not forgotten even though later years brought quarrels and misunderstanding. In Upper Canada the three year struggle against invasion became a cherished mem-

<sup>6</sup> Rush was the acting secretary of State and Bagot was the British ambassador in Washington. Bagot later, 1842-3, served as governor of Canada.



ory. Loyalty to the British Empire was strengthened, and at the same time there was planted in the soil of British North America a new patriotism which was to become in later years a part of Canada's historic tradition.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

The "Chronicles of Canada" series includes William Wood's *The war with the United States*. There is an article on Brock in Macdonald's *Canadian portraits* and Brock is the central figure in *Paths of glory*, one of *Three plays for patriots* by Nathaniel Benson. There are Ryerson readers on Brock and Tecumseh. Other books on the great Indian leader are *Tecumseh* by Ethel T. Raymond "Chronicles of Canada", and *The Story of Tecumseh* by Norman S. Gurd. A novel of dignity and charm is *The loon feather* by Iola Fuller which tells of the life of Tecumseh's daughter, spent chiefly on the island of Michilimackinac. *The runner* by Ralph Connor is the story of a boy from Niagara who acts as a messenger for Brock. In *American Patty* by Adele E. Thompson, the heroine is a girl whose family came to Canada from the United States before the war. The difficulties created by their loyalty to the country of their birth form the theme of the book. *The story of the Nancy and other Eighteen-Twelvers* and *Under the Red Jack* by Charles H. J. Snider, and Archibald MacMechan's *Old Province Tales* tell of naval warfare from the Canadian point of view.

## *Chapter XIX*

### **A Wave of Migration from Overseas**

**T**HE story of immigration runs through Canadian history for over three hundred years. It is an epic of courage and determination in which the real heroes were the hundreds of thousands of humble and obscure men and women who faced hazards by land and sea in the hope that they would find better homes and a fuller life for themselves and their children. In some periods the flow of immigration has been small, but at other times it has come in waves which have left a deep and permanent impression. Several of these waves we have already noticed, such as that from France in days of Talon, the Scots after 1770, and the Loyalists at the end of the American Revolution.

**The Great Migration and its Causes.** Another great wave of immigration, which left its indelible mark on British North America, began after 1815. Coming from the British Isles like that of the Scots, it was far greater in volume—a real outpouring of people—and represented all parts of the islands. Part of this Great Migration, as it has been called, went to Australia and New Zealand, but by far the larger part came to North America, to the British provinces and the United States. Land was the lure which drew settlers across the sea and North America had millions of unoccupied acres. North America was also nearer to the British Isles than Australia, the expense of the journey was far less, and emigrants felt they were not going so far from the home land. Between 1815 and 1850 not less than 800,000 people came to British North America. No previous immigration had approached this in size, and we can realize something of what it meant if we remember that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the provinces had altogether a population not much over 400,000.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The best figures we have are for 1806, and they are not exact: Nova Scotia, 65,000; New Brunswick, 35,000; Prince Edward Island, 9676; Cape Breton, 2513; Lower Canada, 250,000; Upper Canada, 70,718; total, 432,907.

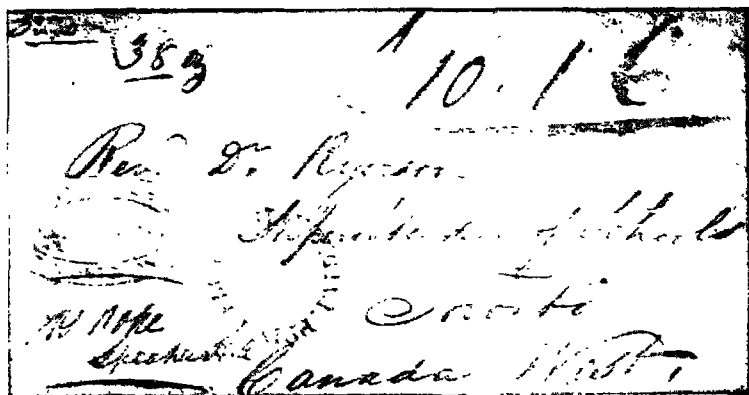
So great a movement of people must have important causes, and among the chief of these was the return of peace in 1815. War discourages emigration, and for most of the previous forty years Britain had been at war, first with the Thirteen Colonies, then with France and Napoleon and the United States. Following the long period of war, conditions changed: unemployment and hardship swept through Europe and the British Isles, and masses of miserable people began to look overseas for relief. The population of the British Isles had also risen sharply, and once more it was argued that the islands were overcrowded. Unemployment and discontent were, however, not the only causes of emigration. Commerce increased greatly after 1815, and by the 1830's and '40's communications were improving rapidly. Ships crossing the Atlantic became larger and much more numerous. Newspapers increased tremendously in this period, as did the amount of mail sent back and forth,<sup>2</sup> and this exchange of news encouraged many to follow relatives or friends who had already emigrated. Individuals and companies, with lands to sell in the colonies, also played a part by sending agents to the British Isles and arousing interest through advertisements and descriptions of opportunities in the New World. The causes of the Great Migration touched, in fact, almost every important aspect of the life of the period.

**The Emigrants and Their Hazards.** Emigrants from Britain were both assisted and voluntary. The assisted immigrants were those who received help from the British government or from charitable organizations. Thousands of poverty-stricken people were aided, and numerous schemes were put forward, some of them good, many of them quite impractical. Unfortunately the well-meaning framers of these schemes often failed completely to understand the difficulties of pioneer settlement. Had they learned something from earlier efforts at colonization they might not have fallen into the mistake of thinking that anyone landed in America was sure to succeed. Far more numerous than the assisted immigrants were the voluntary ones, that is those who had means to

<sup>2</sup> The introduction of postage stamps greatly reduced the cost of sending letters and enormously increased the mails. Before that time, the receiver, not the sender, paid for the letter.

look after themselves. They included representatives of every class—artisans, labourers, farmers, army officers retired on half pay, doctors, lawyers, ministers, and others. All had one thing in common, a hope and belief that the new world offered a chance of advancement and security for themselves and their children.

Emigration was a great adventure for any individual or family. It usually meant life-long separation from loved ones, friends, and familiar scenes; and at the end of the voyage there were all the



(John Ross Robertson Collection)

Before the era of penny postage. A package, addressed as shown and weighing 38 ounces, was sent by Joseph Pope, speaker of the Prince Edward Island Assembly, 1843-50, to Toronto. At that time, a letter weighing up to half an ounce would cost 33 pence for the journey from Halifax to Toronto—1205 miles, according to the routes used then. According to William Smith, former secretary of the Post Office Department, the parcel from Charlottetown should have been charged £12 8s instead of the £10 1/6 shown in the illustration.

hazards and uncertainties of life in a strange land. The ocean voyage was itself a dangerous venture. To its length<sup>3</sup> was added terrible overcrowding of vessels. When emigration was heavy, every old tub which crossed the ocean was loaded to the limit of its capacity. The timber trade from the colonies grew very rapidly in these years; and the owners of timber vessels, who often had no

<sup>3</sup> Steamships began to cross the ocean in the 1840's (see next chapter), but they were so few at the beginning that they can be left out of consideration in describing immigration between 1815 and 1850.

cargo for the trip from England, were anxious to make money by filling them with emigrants. These vessels were usually entirely unsuitable for passengers. People were crammed below deck, sometimes scores in a single room with temporary wooden bunks, like shelves, which only allowed each person space to lie down. Conditions were bad enough in fine weather; but in bad weather, when everyone was cooped up for days at a time, the misery was extreme.



*(Illustrated London News)*

#### DEPARTURE OF EMIGRANTS FROM WATERLOO DOCKS, LIVERPOOL

Captains were supposed to supply water and bread, but many did not do even what the law required. Passengers were expected to provide most of their own food, and not infrequently they brought too little. Refrigeration and tinned foods were, of course, unknown. Disease often broke out on crowded vessels, and conditions became so bad that descriptions of immigrant ships written at the time now seem almost unbelievable. Scarcely a voyage was completed without deaths, and they often mounted to dozens especially among the children. Mrs. Jameson, an English woman who wrote about Upper Canada, tells us for example of one immigrant who saw the bodies of fifty-three of his fellow passengers



### THE SHANTY IN THE BUSH

The top picture shows a pioneer settlement in the bush. The second picture shows the same place after fifteen years of settlement, and the last picture the same place after thirty years of settlement.

thrown "one after t'other" into the sea. Added to all these hazards, were shipwrecks, of which, as the *Montreal Gazette* said in 1834, there was "a melancholy catalogue". No wonder the immigrant when he stepped ashore was thankful to feel solid ground under his feet again.

Large numbers of immigrants arrived in good health and quite able to look after themselves, but thousands were sick and destitute.



Fredericton in 1834, showing a fashionable turnout on a winter afternoon.

They created most difficult problems. Organizations were formed by individuals, churches, and provincial governments, to help new arrivals until they found land and were settled. New Brunswick's government led the way by forming emigrant aid societies in the 1820's under the direction of Sir Howard Douglas, the governor. On two occasions disease among immigrants had most tragic results. The first was in 1832, when immigration was heavier than in any previous year—over 66,000. Cholera broke out on the immigrant ships and in a few weeks the epidemic spread from the seaports through the colonies. Over 1500 died in Quebec alone. "York", one writer said, "became one general hospital . . . It is computed that one-fourth of the adults of this town were attacked, and that one-twelfth of the whole population died." Medical science and

regulations for protecting public health were at that time quite incapable of dealing with this terrible epidemic. The second occasion was in 1847<sup>4</sup> when the failure of the potato crop in Ireland threatened the whole island with starvation. Tens of thousands of destitute people crowded the boats, and no less than 90,000 of them reached British North America. They created a prodigious problem. Ship fever, as it was called, broke out, and spread in a few weeks even to remote settlements, causing thousands of deaths.

**New Settlements.** We must not, however, over-emphasize problems and difficulties. In general the immigration between 1815 and 1850 brought great advantages. Population and trade were increased, and pioneer settlements rapidly expanded especially in New Brunswick and Upper Canada. Naturally settlements followed the waterways. In New Brunswick they spread far up the St. John and other rivers, as well as along the south shore of the Bay of Chaleur. In Canada many immigrants went to the Eastern Townships and up the Ottawa River. From there they spread along the Rideau River toward Kingston. The north shore of Lake Ontario was filled in, and important settlements were made around Peterborough in the Rice Lake region and north of York around Lake Simcoe. Other lines of settlement in Upper Canada extended along the north shore of Lake Erie, along the valley of the Thames River and farther north in the district between Lake Ontario and Lake Huron.

There were three land companies which had an important part in this story of settlement: the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Land Company, the British American Land Company whose lands were in the Eastern Townships, and the Canada Company whose lands were in Upper Canada. They obtained large grants of land on the understanding that they bring out settlers and assist them in establishing themselves. The Canada Company, the first to be established, was chartered in 1826 through the efforts of John Galt, a well-known writer of novels and biographies, who had visited Upper Canada to investigate opportunities for settlers. Galt became enthusiastic over what he saw, and on his return to England

<sup>4</sup> The total immigration to British North America in 1847 was over 109,000—which was much the largest of any year before 1850.



the Canada Company was organized with a capital of one million pounds. By 1830 it obtained over 2,400,000 acres in various parts of Upper Canada, its largest block of land, known as the Huron Tract, extending from the vicinity of present-day Guelph to Lake Huron. The company paid the government a low price for its land

on condition that it not only brings out settlers but spend large sums in making roads and other public improvements. Galt was a man of great energy; and, although he was connected with the company and remained in Upper Canada only about three years, he had a large share in opening up the Huron Tract. Townsites were chosen at Guelph and at Goderich on Lake Huron, and a road between them was commenced under the direction of "Tiger" Dunlop,<sup>5</sup> a gigantic man who was for many years a prominent figure in the western part of Upper Canada.



JOHN GALT, FROM A CARTOON

The companies are, however, only a part of the story of immigration in these years. Scores of little pioneer communities were established in the Maritime Provinces and in the Canadas, each of them with its own interesting local history. In many cases individuals played a prominent part. Peter Robinson, for instance, the son of a New Brunswick Loyalist family which had moved to Upper Canada, brought over two thousand immigrants from Ireland in 1825; and, after the journey up the St. Lawrence in bateaux, got them settled in five townships north of Lake Ontario. Probably

<sup>5</sup> Dunlop got his nickname because he had lived, and shot tigers, in India.

the most important individual promoter of settlement was Colonel Thomas Talbot who gave up the command of a British regiment to settle in 1803 on the north shore of Lake Erie. Ten years earlier Talbot had been on the staff of Governor Simcoe of Upper Canada, and it is said that while journeying along Lake Erie he had stopped at one point and declared, "Here will I roost, and



GUELPH, UPPER CANADA. IN 1831

*(Public Archives)*

will soon make the forest tremble under the wings of the flock I will invite, by my warblings around me." Whatever the truth of the story, Talbot returned and spent fifty years in his pioneer community. During that time he directed the settlement of no less than half a million acres, and did much to open up his lands by roads. In 1812 Talbot had around him a mere score of settlers; by 1837 his domain had no less than 50,000. Talbot was a picturesque character, and many amusing stories are told about him. His views were strong: his language unmistakable. He wanted, he said, none but "sound British subjects." The new settler often got a harsh reception from the gruff old colonel; and,

until the first duties of clearing land were performed, he obtained no other record of his purchase than the writing of his name in pencil on Talbot's map.

**The Pioneer Family.** The immigrant, who had finished his long journey and chosen his land, had only begun his task. Fields had to be cleared, a cabin built, animals and fowls obtained, food and clothing provided for himself and his family. Only through patience and endurance were backwoods settlements slowly transformed. Thirty acres were about as much as the average settler could clear in his first three years: no wonder, as Mrs. Jameson remarked, the settler regarded trees as his natural enemy. He could hope for little improvement until his fields were rid of them. Hard work had its reward, however, and the pioneer had the satisfaction of seeing his home grow under his hand.

"We've got a tidy place, the saints be praised—  
As nice a farm as ever brogan trod—  
A hundred acres—us as never owned  
Land big enough to make a lark a sod."

The pioneer family had to depend largely on its own efforts for food, clothing, utensils and furniture. Money was scarce and perseverance and ingenuity had to take its place. The pioneer's home was rough but it was not necessarily lacking in beauty. Tables, chairs, cradles, churns, rakes and other home-made articles often had a simple beauty of design and workmanship entirely suited to their surroundings. "The settler's log shanty, with its rude handmade furniture, its hearth of fieldstones, and its magnificent fire, was a natural link between the people and the new world they were making their own." On the pioneer mother fell the chief burden of planning for the household. She was the homemaker, and to no one did the pioneer community owe more. In the endless round of spinning, weaving, and a hundred other labours, she was doing more than merely provide for a household. She was helping to lay the foundations of a nation.

**Results of the Great Migration.** Every pioneer community passed in a few years through the first stages of development. Mills soon began to appear on the streams, and busy little towns and

villages sprang up. A single stream, if it had good water power, might have several grist and saw mills, a woollen mill, a carding mill, and a tannery, all within a few hundred yards. Every village had its blacksmith shop, and the blacksmith was a craftsman who turned his hand to the fashioning of a hundred articles. Living in an age of rapid transportation, it is hard for us to understand how nearly self-sufficient the local community had to be a century or



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

#### COBOURG, UPPER CANADA, ABOUT 1840

The building in the centre was the newly completed Upper Canada Academy, later Victoria University. This was at the time the finest public building in the province.

more ago. The store-keeper was an important figure in every village. He was a kind of banker, as well as a merchant, for he often lent money or goods. Much of the pioneer merchant's trade was carried on by barter, because he had to take the settler's grain, ashes, salt meat or other products in return for his goods.

Hundreds of towns in Canada's five eastern provinces had their origin in the period between 1815 and 1850. Each had its peculiarities, but in their growth they all followed much the same pattern. "Several saw and grist mills, a distillery, fulling

mill, two principal inns besides smaller ones, a number of good stores, a government school house, which also serves as a church, till one more suitable should be built,"—so ran the description of a town in Upper Canada in 1832. Seven years earlier it had had one mill, and one inhabitant, the mill owner.

To describe all the results of the Great Migration would be difficult indeed. Some are not easily measured, such as increased contacts with Britain through letters, books, newspapers, and the travelling of individuals back and forth. More obvious is the growth in population. By 1851 it was more than 2,300,000 or over three and a half times what it had been in 1815. Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island were affected least: Upper and Lower Canada most. The rapid change in population was undoubtedly one reason for the political troubles of the Canadas between 1830 and 1837.<sup>6</sup> The chief effect in Lower Canada was to increase the proportion of English-speaking people, and this made relations between French and English more difficult. Of all the provinces Upper Canada was affected most. To Loyalists, and land seekers who had come before 1812 from the United States, were now added an even larger number from the British Isles. Upper Canada's population became a complex mixture of groups.

The rapid growth in population brought an increase and change in trade—bateaux and rafts, timber and wheat, replaced the birch-bark canoes and furs of earlier days. From Halifax to Lake Huron, settled areas were continuous by 1850 except in the rough and difficult country between the St. John valley and Quebec. Even in Upper Canada, the youngest of the provinces, the lumberman and farmer dominated the scene. The era of the fur trade was at last ended in the eastern half of British North America.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

In Isabel Skelton's *The backwoodswoman*, chapter V describes very vividly the emigrant ships and the hardships of the voyage to North America. The most complete survey of this subject is Edwin C. Guillet's *The great migration*. Do not try to read the whole book, but select the chapters whose titles appeal

<sup>6</sup> These are described in chapter 23.

to you Letters, diaries, and other records left by emigrants and travellers are our best sources of information about ways of living. Four such books are *Roughing it in the bush* by Susanna Moodie, *The backwoods of Canada* by Catharine Parr Traill, *Winter studies and summer rambles in Canada* by Anna Jameson, and *Early days in Upper Canada* edited by W. A. Langton. All are easy to read Mrs. Jameson's book includes an account of a visit to Colonel Talbot's settlement, pages 158 to 180. There are Ryerson readers on Talbot and on the Canada Company. The books by Edwin C. Guillet and D. J. Dickie referred to in chapter XVII are useful. *The golden Highlander* by Theodore Goodridge Roberts is an amusing tale of a Highland settlement in New Brunswick about 1820. In Patrick Slater's *The yellow briar* the narrator recalls in charming fashion, the memories of his youth in York and Mono township, Ontario Your own community may also have interesting material from local records.

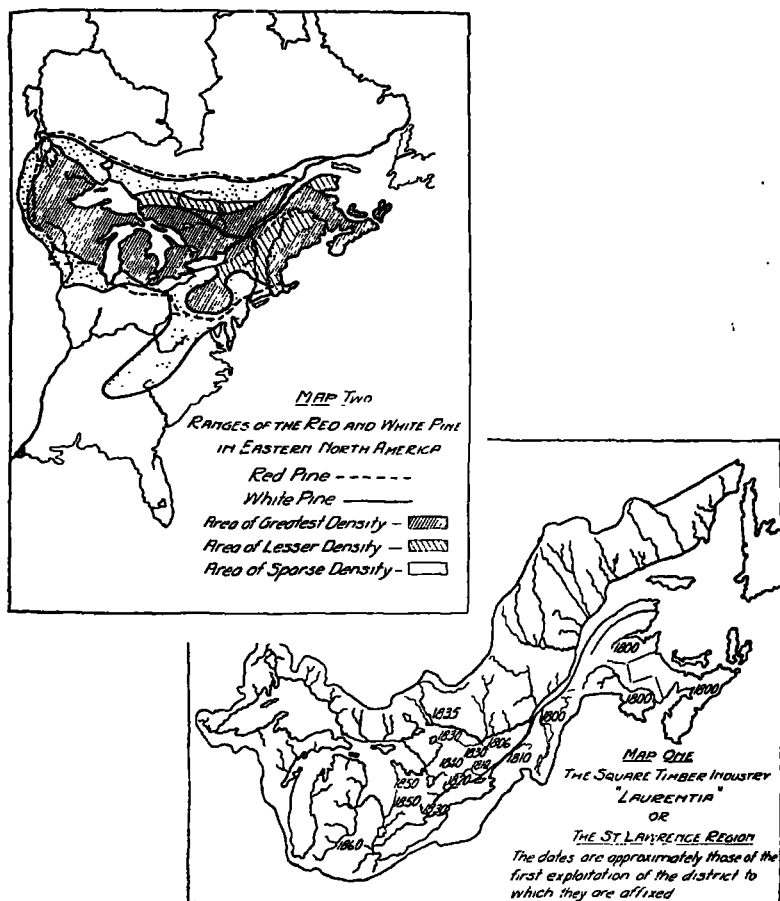
## Chapter XX

### Wheat, Timber, Canals, and Steam

EVERY generation has its changes in trade and transportation, but at times these changes are so striking that we say they are revolutionary. Such a period in the British North American colonies was that between 1815 and the middle of the nineteenth century. The fur-trading era had ended. Products of farm and forest rose in volume by leaps and bounds. Commerce and ship building increased enormously and the introduction of canals and steamboats brought a revolution in transportation which was just as great as that made by the motor car and aeroplane a century later.

**Ocean Commerce and the New "Staples".** In Nova Scotia, the most rapid expansion was in ship building and ocean commerce, but fishing, farming, lumbering, ship building and commerce went together in the province by the sea, and the Bluenose farmer was able to take part in them all. He was the handiest man in the world, said one observer with pardonable exaggeration; he "was commonly credited with raising the potatoes for his cargo, felling and sawing the lumber for it, building his own schooner in his spare moments, and finally sailing her down to the West Indies where he turned merchant and disposed of his wares." Bluenose schooners and brigs became well known in the ports of the West Indies, the British Isles and the United States, and soon they were reaching out even farther into the deep-sea carrying trade. In 1826 the brig *Trusty* after a year's absence returned to Halifax with a valuable cargo from Calcutta and Madras. Her voyage was a prophecy: forty and fifty years later Bluenose clippers were sailing the Seven Seas and proudly holding their own with the best in the world.

In New Brunswick and the Canadas the new commerce centred around a few "staples", that is, articles which could be produced and exported in large quantities. Timber and wheat were the



(Courtesy of Professor A. R. M. Lower)

Maps showing the range of Red and White Pine and the approximate dates at which cutting was begun in various parts of British North America.

chief staples—the backbone of the commerce which replaced the fur trade—and to them were added other grains. Flour grew in volume as mills increased. Ashes and potash, however, declined after 1825 because by then the pioneer farmer could sell his trees for lumber instead of burning them. England, above all, was the



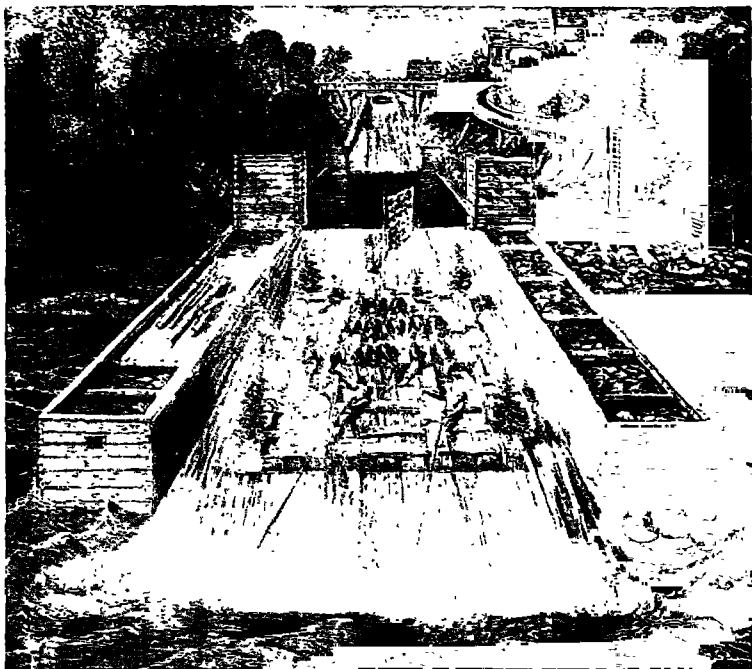
market to which the colonies looked,<sup>1</sup> and she encouraged them not only by taking great quantities of their staples but also by giving them a "preference", i.e., timber, wheat, and flour from the colonies were allowed to enter the British Isles at a lower rate of duty than from other countries. The preference was given to encourage Empire trade and shipping, and the colonies believed it was one of the chief supports on which their prosperity depended.

**The Square-Timber Trade.** Timber far outranked British North America's other staples in importance. Before the age of steel, the world was built on wood, and Britain was utterly unable to supply the timber she needed. She required great quantities, and not least for the navy where wood was as essential as oil is today. In the eighteenth century she depended chiefly on the Baltic countries and the Thirteen Colonies, but after the American Revolution both these sources of supply lay outside her empire. It was Napoleon who showed her the danger of this situation, and to him British North America owed the first real stimulus of its timber trade. In 1807 with Europe in his power, Napoleon tried to bring Britain to her knees by forbidding European countries to trade with her. Faced with a serious emergency she turned to her American colonies. In 1808 a large fleet of timber ships—the first of many such annual fleets—came to Quebec and Saint John, and from that time the rapid expansion of the timber trade began. It was shortly after this that the British government gave its "preference" to British North American timber.

Timber was exported in various forms, but square timber, that is logs hewn by axes, dominated the trade. Red and white pine were the great trees of the square timber industry. These noble trees supplied, in countless thousands, logs of forty or even seventy feet in length and two or three feet in thickness. The best range of red and white pine was in the region of British North America, where the whole country was threaded by waterways on which the timber could be easily floated to ocean ports. Rafting timber

<sup>1</sup> They also looked to the British West Indies, but they had difficulty in competing with the United States which was nearer to the islands. Nova Scotia was the only British North American colony whose trade with the West Indies was of much importance.

down the rivers was an art in itself. On the St. Lawrence the timber rafts had to be large enough and strong enough to run the rapids. They were usually about 60 feet wide and 200 to 300 feet long. The large square timbers were bound by saplings of birch or hazel, and the whole raft was woven together so skilfully



The Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, descending the Ottawa timber slides in 1860.

that even the force of the roughest water was unable to break it. The raft was guided downstream by oars, and was helped along by sails when the wind was favourable. Running the rapids on a timber raft was a thrilling experience, with waves rolling high, timbers grinding, rocks missed by a hair's breadth; and oarsmen working frantically at the word of command.

On the Ottawa the method of rafting was different. The timbers

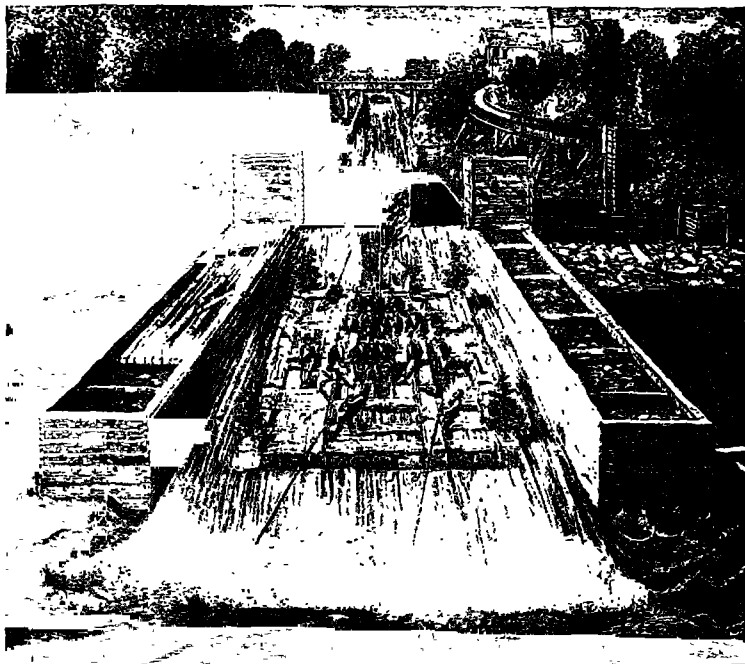
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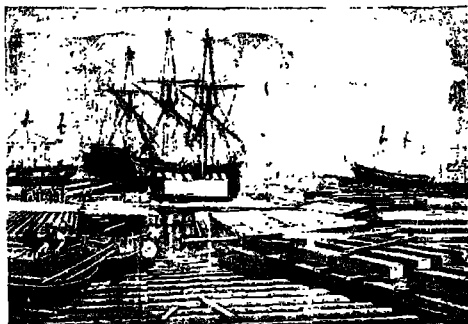


The Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, descending the Ottawa timber slides in 1860.

that even the force of the roughest water was unable to break it. The raft was guided downstream by oars, and was helped along by sails when the wind was favourable. Running the rapids on a timber raft was a thrilling experience, with waves rolling high, timbers grinding, rocks missed by a hair's breadth; and oarsmen working frantically at the word of command.

On the Ottawa the method of rafting was different. The timbers

were put together in "cribs", or small rafts rather loosely held within a framework of logs. They were less strongly built than the St. Lawrence rafts, but were suitable to the Ottawa and easily handled. In smooth water several of them could be attached much like the cars of a train. Philemon Wright, the founder of Hull, ran the first timber raft down the Ottawa to Quebec in 1806, and it was his



*(Illustrated London News)*

#### LOADING SQUARE TIMBER AT QUEBEC

Saint John and Quebec became the great timber ports of British North America. The trade at its height employed no less than 1400 vessels. At the beginning of the century only about 80 vessels a year entered the port of Quebec; forty years later over 1000 came annually. As many as 500 could be seen along the water front at one time, waiting their turn to get near the rafts which were moored in coves along the shore. It was a picturesque sight. "The shipping in the noble river beneath, and the unceasing song by which the men regulate their labours in loading the lumber ships, rendered most touchingly harmonious by the distance, produce, altogether, an effect that words can scarcely describe"—so wrote a traveller who visited Quebec in 1833.

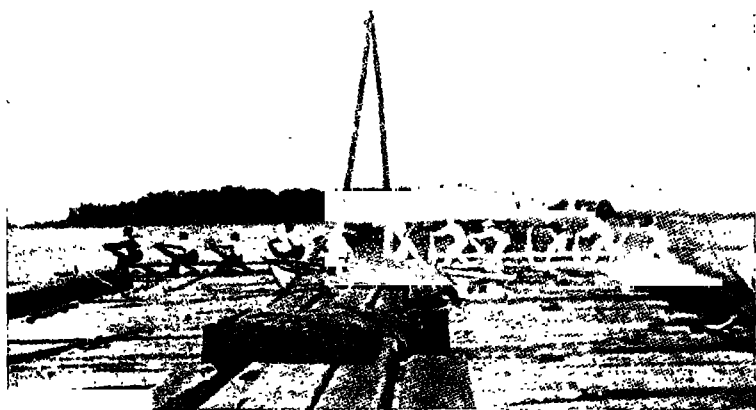
The importance of the square timber trade to the British American provinces in the nineteenth century can hardly be overestimated. The trade had, it is true, a dark side. The production of square timber was wasteful. A considerable part of each tree

was wasted and only the best trees were used. The use of timber ships for immigrants was also unfortunate. On the other hand the trade played a tremendous part in the growth and prosperity



(Can. Geog. Journal)

CONSTRUCTING A SQUARE-TIMBER RAFT



(Can. Geog. Journal)

STEERING INTO THE LACHINE RAPIDS

of the colonies, and stimulated every other industry, especially ship-building at Quebec, Saint John, and on the Miramichi and other rivers.

Lumbering, like the fur trade before it, entered into the very

life of the country. There was little that escaped its influence. "He has an axe to grind," and other expressions from it, drifted into common speech. The lumberjack's skill with the axe and his daring on the river are proverbial. With his bright costume, rollicking songs, and carefree ways, he has been made the subject of an endless number of stories and anecdotes. Like the voyageur he is a part of Canada's tradition.

On de rapide you want to see heem  
If de raf' she's swingin' roun'  
An' his yellin' "Hooraw Batecse! Good man!"  
W'y de oar come double on hees han'  
W'en he's makin' dat raf' go flyin' down,  
                    Johnnie Courteau!<sup>2</sup>

**A Revolution in Transportation Begins.** Late in 1810 a young business man set out from Detroit for Montreal. It took him, according to a letter which he wrote at the end of his journey, twelve days to reach York by water, and eleven more before he got another vessel bound for Kingston. Four days of sailing brought him near Kingston, only to be carried by a contrary wind across the lake to Oswego. Another eleven days' delay, a near shipwreck, and a catalogue of lesser dangers and annoyances finally landed him in Montreal forty-nine days after he had left Detroit. Such were the problems of travel in 1810. In spite of an increase in sailing ships and the building of a few roads, it was almost as slow and uncertain as it had been a century earlier.<sup>3</sup> Ten years later, however, the scene was changing rapidly.

In land travel the first improvement was the extension of roads and the increase of stage coaches. Stage coaches, carrying passengers and mail and running on regular schedules, marked a great advance not only in British North America but in older countries. In 1816 a coach service was begun between Halifax and Windsor in Nova Scotia, and in the same year one was

<sup>2</sup> From the poem *Johnnie Courteau* by the Canadian poet William Henry Drummond.

<sup>3</sup> Cadillac, the founder of Detroit, had travelled between the same two points in 1701 in forty-eight days. Today the journey takes fifteen hours by train, and four or five by air.

started from Montreal to Kingston. A year later, it was extended to York and ten years later to Detroit. The coaches were run by private individuals or by companies. Travelling by coach was, however, at best a matter of necessity. The roads were rough and the coaches springless, the bodies being supported by heavy leather straps so that they swayed and jolted with every bump. The traveller, who spent several hours cooped up in one of these



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

#### A TOLL GATE ON A PIONEER ROAD

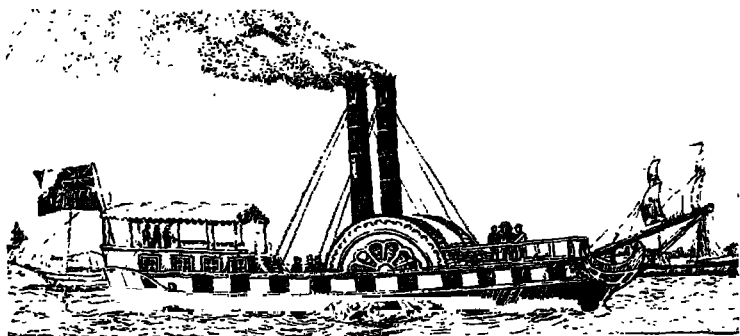
small boxes with two or three companions and their luggage, could count himself fortunate if he emerged with nothing worse than a few bruises.

The main roads were usually built by the government of each colony, but some were built by companies like the Canada Company. Many pieces of road were also built by small companies which were formed for the purpose and which were allowed to collect tolls from those who travelled on them. The term road-building must not, however, be misunderstood. It meant, at first, not much more than the clearing of a path through the woods, and the laying of logs side by side through swampy places to form the corduroy road so well described by Drummond in the poem of that name.



De corduroy road go bompety bomp,  
De corduroy road go jompety jomp,  
An' he's takin' beeg chances upset hees load  
De horse dat'll trot on de corduroy road.

Of course it's purty rough, but it's handy t'ing enough  
An' dey mak' it wit' de log all jine togeder  
W'en dey strik de swampy groun' w'ere de water hang aroun'  
Or passin' by some tough ole beaver medder.



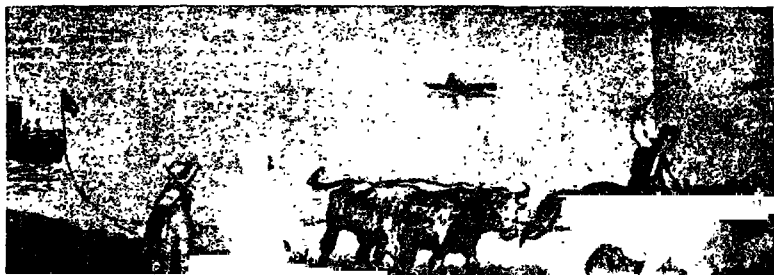
(Public Archives)

THE STEAMER *Accommodation*

**Steam Navigation.** The real revolution in transportation came not on land but on the waterways through the introduction of steamboats and canals. Canadians were among the pioneers in developing steam navigation. As early as 1809 the first steamboat in British North America made its appearance—the *Accommodation* built at Montreal for John Molson, a merchant of that city. The *Accommodation* was an experiment. She made the trip to Quebec and back successfully, although her six horse power engine was too weak to drive her unassisted against the swiftest parts of the current. Molson made a very important contribution to the early development of steam navigation. He formed the first successful steamboat company in Canada, experimented with vessels, and brought skilled workmen from the British Isles to manufacture engines. The *Accommodation* was quickly followed by the *Swiftsure* and other more successful boats. Within ten years, steam navigation on the St. Lawrence was firmly established,

and steamboats were appearing on the Great Lakes. The first, the *Frontenac*, was built in 1816 near Kingston. By the 1830's steamboats were in use even on the smaller lakes and rivers.

Steam navigation enormously increased the speed, certainty and comfort of travel, and stimulated commerce and settlement. The thousands of immigrants in this period could scarcely have been handled without steamboats. Mail was speeded up:



(Public Archives)

TOWING AN EARLY STEAMBOAT PAST ST. MARY'S CURRENT  
AT MONTREAL

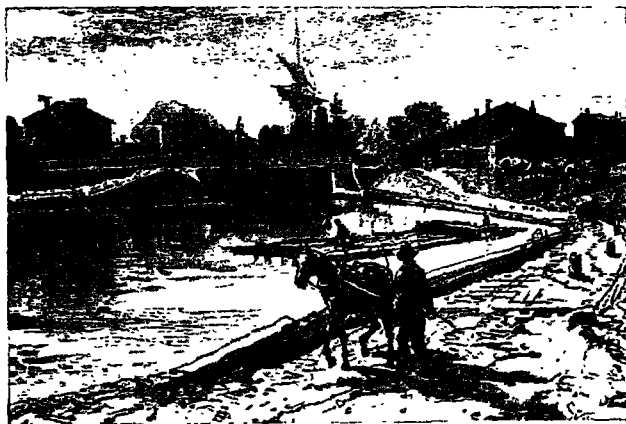
in the 1820's it became possible to send a letter from Montreal to Quebec and receive a reply within forty-eight hours. Steam also made Montreal an ocean port. The trip up the St. Lawrence from Quebec was so difficult for sailing ships that few ocean vessels found it worthwhile. In 1823, however, a steam towboat the *Hercules* was built for the purpose of towing vessels from Quebec, and the experiment was so successful that ocean vessels from this time came to Montreal in increasing numbers. With the new commerce came also the first improvements in Montreal's harbour, the building of wharves and the deepening of channels. The speed and comfort of travel by steamer even led people to travel for pleasure. Such a thing was almost unthinkable in 1810, but twenty years later conditions were changed. The Montreal

ways and British North America shared in the popular enthusiasm. Even in the Maritime provinces where coastal shipping could serve most of the people, there were proposals for canal building; but nowhere did the possibilities of canal building seem more alluring than along the St. Lawrence. Only the rapids between Prescott and Montreal and the falls at Niagara broke its thousand miles of deep water navigation from Quebec to Lake Michigan. If canals were built around these obstructions, the St. Lawrence might become the outlet for the entire trade of the Great Lakes region.

The St. Lawrence had, however, a rival. Soon after 1815 the State of New York began to build the Erie Canal to connect Lake Erie at Buffalo with the Hudson River at Albany. It was little more than a ditch about four feet deep, but on its completion in 1825 it immediately began to draw trade not only from the American side of the Lakes but from Upper Canada. So the St. Lawrence and the New York routes came once more into keen competition, as they had in the early days of the fur trade. The Erie Canal was watched in Canada with the greatest interest from the moment it was begun. "Shall the immense trade of the lakes centre in the United States or in Canada?", asked the *Quebec Gazette* in 1815. "Both New York and Quebec have *natural* advantages, the latter a mighty river, the former a climate more favourable to navigation." The Montreal merchants and other Canadians who were interested in the trade of the St. Lawrence were sure that, in spite of the handicap of being closed during the winter, the St. Lawrence could be made superior to either the Erie Canal or the Mississippi in competing, as one paper put it, for "the treasures of the almost illimitable West." If canals were built the St. Lawrence could accommodate large boats throughout its entire length and would be an unequalled waterway from the ocean into the heart of the continent. The St. Lawrence also had the advantage of the preferences which were given to colonial exports by the British government.

However desirable they might be, the St. Lawrence and Niagara canals were an enormous project for two provinces such as Upper

and Lower Canada, especially as sharp differences of opinion arose over the necessity of building them. The first canal to be attempted was that around the Lachine Rapids which was built by the government of Lower Canada. Eight and a half miles long, five feet in depth, it was opened in 1825, the very year of the completion of the Erie canal. Meanwhile another and greater project was under way—the first Welland Canal around Niagara Falls. Its construction was largely due to the enthusiasm of William



(Public Archives)

#### THE WELLAND CANAL AT THOROLD

This was the second Welland Canal, completed in 1846.

Hamilton Merritt, a merchant of St. Catharines. He formed a company, got some assistance from the governments of Upper and Lower Canada and Great Britain, and finally after a multitude of discouragements the first vessel passed through from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario in 1829. Eight feet in depth and with forty little locks built of wood, the first Welland Canal had little resemblance to its modern successor which can accommodate the longest lake freighters and is one of the largest canals in the world. In its day, however, it was no less a triumph of man over nature. Its construction, said the *York Patriot*, was proof of "the progress of civilization now rapidly extending over the uncultivated lands of

the West, and maintaining its steady course to the shores of the great Pacific Ocean."

Merritt's success with the first Welland Canal aroused him to further efforts, and for a number of years he became the most prominent advocate of building a system of canals to conquer the St. Lawrence rapids. His enthusiasm at times made him over-optimistic about the benefits which would result, but the later



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

#### AN EARLY PRINT OF THE RIDEAU LOCKS AT OTTAWA

The house at the upper right stands on the site of Canada's  
Parliament Buildings.

improvement of the St. Lawrence as a deep waterway from the ocean to the Great Lakes is in no small measure due to Merritt's pioneer efforts.

A third canal project was started in the 1820's, the Rideau Canal connecting the Ottawa River at the point where the Canadian capital now stands with Lake Ontario at Kingston. Unlike the others it was paid for entirely by the British government and was planned as a measure of defence. The War of 1812 had shown that Upper Canada could not be protected if the communication between Montreal and Lake Ontario was cut. The Rideau

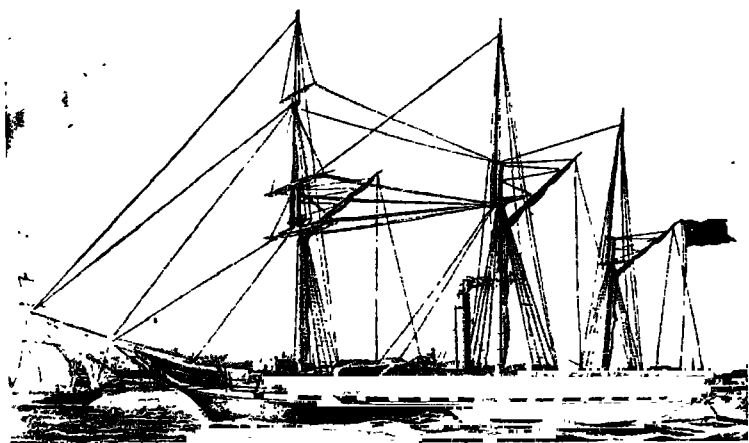
Canal was intended to provide a second line of communication, and one less exposed to attack than the St. Lawrence. Completed in 1832, and costing about one million pounds it was the most expensive military work ever constructed by the British government in North America. Happily it never had to serve the purpose for which it was intended, but it did have other uses. It opened a new line of settlement; and for some years, in spite of its shallow depth of not more than five feet in places, it was a much-used route for immigrants and trade to Upper Canada.

By 1832 the Lachine, Rideau, and Welland canals provided the first unbroken water route from Quebec and Montreal to Lake Huron, but even before they were completed their small locks were inadequate for the growing commerce of Upper Canada, and still more inadequate to meet the competition of the Erie Canal. States south and west of Lake Erie were building canals to connect their rivers with the Lakes, and the commerce of the Upper Lakes was increasing by leaps and bounds. If the St. Lawrence was to compete with its rival, canals must be built around the rapids below Lake Ontario.

It seemed unreasonable to men like Merritt that one of the world's greatest waterways should be obstructed by a few miles of rapids, but the difficulties were formidable. Opinion was divided even in Upper Canada on the desirability of undertaking such an expense, and the government of Lower Canada refused to give assistance. Montreal merchants favoured the idea since the canals would increase Montreal's trade, but the majority in Lower Canada were against spending money on a plan which they thought would benefit the upper province rather than themselves. In 1833 Upper Canada decided to go ahead alone, but the time was most unfortunate. Within the next five years political difficulties and a serious depression brought the project to a standstill, and it was apparent that to carry it through a much stronger effort than that of one province was needed.

So important a work could not be permanently blocked, and events soon provided the opportunity of going on with it. In 1840 Upper and Lower Canada were united by an Act of the

British Parliament,<sup>4</sup> and the project was once more taken up, this time on an enlarged scale. Plans were made for canals around the rapids below Lake Ontario and also for the enlargement of the Lachine and Welland canals. The minimum depth of all locks was nine feet, which was large enough for vessels sailing the Lakes at that time. This was the first St. Lawrence deepening scheme, and with its completion in 1848 vessels were able to navigate the entire distance from the ocean to the Upper Lakes.<sup>5</sup> The



(Public Archives)

*THE Royal William*

St. Lawrence canals never fully realized the prophecies of their most enthusiastic advocates who had predicted that they would draw to Montreal almost the whole export trade of the Lakes. Nevertheless they were a notable achievement. They provided a trunk line of water communication which has been in use ever since 1848, and which with later enlargements and improvements has played a vital part in the commerce of Canada and the continent.

<sup>4</sup> The circumstances which led to the Act of Union are described in chapter 23.

<sup>5</sup> In 1853-55 the United States built a canal at Sault Ste. Marie which opened navigation into Lake Superior. A Canadian canal was opened at Sault Ste. Marie in 1895.

**Steam Spans the Atlantic.** Today the far flung parts of Canada and the British Commonwealth are drawn together by the aeroplane: a century ago steamboats performed the same valuable service. One of the pioneers in this extension of steam navigation was the *Royal William*, launched at Quebec in 1831. Built for the purpose of sailing between Quebec and

Halifax, she was "the last word" in equipment and design. In her first season she made three successful trips, fully proving the possibilities of steam for long voyages. "Her canvas was not unfurled," wrote an enthusiastic observer who saw her steam into Halifax for the first time, "nor an inch of it spread to the wind. She walked the waters like a thing of life!" In 1833 she added to her laurels by crossing the Atlantic, being the first vessel to use steam all the way.<sup>6</sup> In the same year she visited Boston, the first British steamer to enter an American ocean port, and was greeted by an enormous



SAMUEL CUNARD

crowd and a United States army band which played *God Save the King*.

The next step was the establishment of a regular trans-Atlantic mail and passenger service, and in this Nova Scotia led the way. In 1838 Joseph Howe<sup>7</sup> was crossing to England in a sailing ship when it was overtaken by the American vessel *Sirius*, one of the earliest to cross the Atlantic with the aid of steam. Howe was tremendously impressed. "On she came," he wrote later, "with the speed of a hunter, while we were moving with the rapidity of

<sup>6</sup> She also used sails when the wind was favourable.

<sup>7</sup> Howe, who is described in the following chapter, was the most important public leader in Nova Scotia at the time.



an ox-cart loaded with marsh mud." On reaching England Howe urged the British government to establish a regular trans-Atlantic mail service by steam for the purpose not only of promoting commerce but of binding the empire together. "The pride, as well as the interests of the British people," he urged, "would seem to require means of communication with each other, second to none which are enjoyed by other states." The British government had already been considering the matter, and Howe seems to have



**S**AILINGS of the British and North American ROYAL MAIL STEAM-SHIPS, being at the rate of 20 voyages in 12 months, (beginning 4th September 1841.) from England to America.

| Steamer.       | Leaves<br>Liverpool. | Leaves<br>Boston. | Leaves<br>Halifax. |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Caledonia..... | September 4          | October 2         | October 4          |
| Acadia.....    | " 19                 | " 16              | " 18               |
| Columbia.....  | October 5            | November 1        | November 3         |
| Britannia..... | " 19                 | " 16              | " 18               |
| Caledonia..... | November 4           | December 1        | December 3         |
| Acadia.....    | " 19                 | " 16              | " 18               |
| Columbia.....  | December 4           | 1842 January 1    | 1843 January 3     |
| Britannia..... | January 4            | February 1        | February 3         |
| Caledonia..... | February 4           | March 1           | March 3            |
| Columbia.....  | March 4              | April 1           | April 3            |
| Britannia..... | April 19             | May 16            | May 18             |
| Caledonia..... | May 4                | June 1            | June 3             |
| Acadia.....    | " 19                 | " 16              | " 18               |
| Columbia.....  | June 4               | July 1            | July 3             |
| Britannia..... | " 19                 | " 17              | " 19               |
| Caledonia..... | July 5               | August 1          | August 3           |
| Acadia.....    | " 19                 | " 16              | " 18               |
| Columbia.....  | August 4             | September 1       | September 3        |
| Britannia..... | " 19                 | " 16              | " 18               |

GEO. BURNS SYMES.

Quebec, 27th October, 1841.

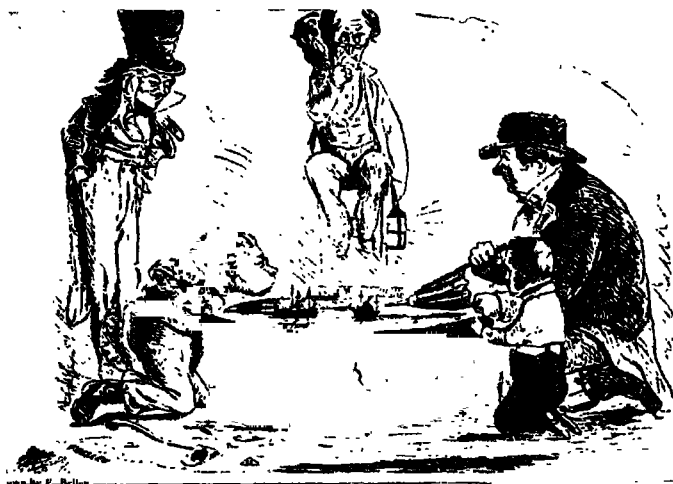
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(Public Archives)

Schedule of Cunard's sailings as advertised in the *Quebec Gazette*, January 3, 1842. This is one of the first advertisements for trans-Atlantic steam service.

turned the scale. Tenders were asked for the regular conveyance of mail across the Atlantic by steam; but the idea was as bold as was that of establishing a regular trans-Atlantic air service in the 1920's. Only one business man on either side of the ocean was willing to risk it, Samuel Cunard of Halifax. Cunard, the son of Loyalist parents, had grown up in the midst of the commerce and shipping of Nova Scotia. Starting with little but his own ability and energy, he had become by 1840 the leading business man of the province. With his rare combination of imagination, enthusiasm, and efficiency, he had studied

steam navigation for years, and he felt certain that he could fulfill his contract for a trans-Atlantic service which would run on schedule time. He ordered ships to be built for the purpose, and his venture was a success from the start. The first Cunarder, the *Britannia*, completed her maiden voyage from Liverpool to Halifax



(Cunard White-Star Ltd.)

An American cartoon showing John Bull helping Cunard with his trans-Atlantic service while Uncle Sam looks at the efforts of an American competitor. This was the first cartoon in which the United States was represented as Uncle Sam.

and Boston in 1840. Her arrival created intense interest and marked the beginning of a new era in the relations of America and Europe.

Cunard's triumph was a spectacular illustration of the changes which in little more than a generation had transformed the British North American colonies, and had brought them into a new relation not only with each other but with Britain, the United States and the world at large.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Herbert Heaton's book, *A history of trade and commerce* and Mary Quayle Innis's *An economic history of Canada* may be used for reference. William Wood in *All Afloat* "Chronicles of Canada" chapters 6 to 9, deals

with ships and shipbuilding. Detailed accounts of ships, captains and builders are given in Frederick Wallace's *In the wake of the wind ships*. This book has many illustrations. Captain J. E. Bernier, whom Wallace has called "the Dominion's grand old man of the sea" has told the story of his adventurous life as sailor and shipbuilder in *Master mariner and arctic explorer*.

For general reference you will find useful material in Edwin Guillet's *Pioneer travel* and *Pioneer arts and crafts* as well as in the larger book, *Pioneer life in Upper Canada*. Some of the lumbermen's songs are included in *Canadian folk songs old and new* by J. Murray Gibbon. The article on Senator John B. Glasier in *Canadian portraits*, edited by R. G. Riddell, is a description of a pioneer lumberman. Lumbering on the Ottawa in more recent times forms the background of Ralph Connor's *The man from Glengarry*. *Canadian portraits* also contains a biography of William Hamilton Meritt. *The heart of Howe* by D. C. Harvey, a collection of speeches, includes an appeal for improved communications. On Samuel Cunard there is a Ryerson reader.

Almost all public libraries and many schools keep bound copies of the Canadian Geographical Journal. You will find excellent illustrations in the following articles: March 1925: "A pioneer of ocean navigation—Samuel Cunard"; July 1935: "Ships of the timber trade"; November 1937: "The lumber industry of Canada"; May 1939: "Canada's forests."

## *Chapter XXI*

### **Cultural Beginnings**

**W**HAT is the meaning of the word home? Of course we all know the answer, but how difficult it is to make a definition which satisfies us. Certainly a home is much more than a house, or than the work by which the family makes a living. A home has a way of life which the whole family understands and in which all members have a share. So with a nation. It is more than the land on which it lives or the work which its people do, important as these are. Every nation develops in generation after generation its own way of life, its habits and customs, and its own way, too, of expressing its highest ideals. Through its family life, its churches and schools, its historic traditions, its literature, music and art, and in many other ways, it creates what we call a national "culture" which marks it off from other nations, even from those which are very similar.

Canada is a young nation in this sense, and yet we can see even in its early history the beginnings of a Canadian culture. Two great streams of cultural influence have flowed into Canada. The first came from France through the work of Champlain, Laval, and thousands of others, many of whose names are now unknown. The second flowed into English-speaking Canada in two branches, one directly from the British Isles, the other from the Thirteen Colonies and the United States which had themselves drawn their cultural beginnings mostly from Britain. It began to flow strongly with the coming of the Loyalists and it continued with the great migration in the first half of the nineteenth century. The early effects of this second stream is the subject of this chapter.

**Churches and Schools in a Pioneer Period.** For the first pioneer families life was hard and often drab. The burdens of work left time for little else, and separation from neighbours often brought a feeling of loneliness and isolation. In most pioneer



BACKWOODS JUSTICE IN UPPER CANADA.  
A TRIAL IN SIMCOE COUNTY, UPPER CANADA

(Description on opposite page)

(John Ross Robertson Collection)

communities churches were the first influence which helped to raise the level of people's thoughts above their everyday problems. Church services brought people together, encouraged them to sing, and combatted the roughness and drunkenness which were all too common. To the churches, also, pioneer communities usually owed the beginnings of schools and education.

The history of the Church of England in Canada dates from the founding of Halifax, where St. Paul's, the first church erected in English-speaking Canada, was built by soldiers of the garrison only a few months after the town was begun. This Westminster Abbey of the provinces by the sea, as it has been called, still stands, its walls hung with tablets and other reminders of historic men and deeds. The coming of the Loyalists gave added strength to the Church of England. In 1787 the Rev. Charles Inglis, a Loyalist clergyman from New York, was made bishop of Nova Scotia—the first Anglican bishop ever appointed in a British colony. His immense diocese ran as far west as Detroit. A year later a school, now known as King's College School, was started in Windsor, Nova Scotia, and shortly afterward King's College, now affiliated with Dalhousie University, was founded.

Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational,<sup>1</sup> and Baptist churches were begun in Nova Scotia's pioneer settlements just before and after the American Revolution by missionary preachers, some of whom came from the British Isles, some from the Thirteen Colonies. Of these pioneer preachers none left a deeper impression than William Black, son of a Yorkshire family which came to Nova Scotia just before the Revolution. As a very young man Black felt called to preach. Starting out with little to encourage him but his own zeal, he was soon known throughout the province. Later he sought aid for his work in England where he visited John

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<sup>1</sup> In 1925 the Methodists, Congregationalists, and part of the Presbyterians joined to found the United Church of Canada.

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The log house in which the court was held. The trial. The jury deliberating. The jury at the end of the trial was ordered by the judge to go outside as there was no room for them to deliberate in the house. The account goes on to say that with great foresight the jury betook themselves to an orchard, and in about the time required to eat half a dozen apples apiece they returned with a verdict in favour of the defendant.

Wesley the founder of Methodism. For many years Black was superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist church in the Maritime Provinces.

The greatest single influence in the early history of education in the Maritime Provinces was the Reverend Thomas McCulloch. In 1803 McCulloch came to Pictou as a Presbyterian missionary from Scotland with his wife, his three children, a little library of books, and a pair of globes. He was distressed to find the people without means of education. Soon after he arrived he began to



(Conant "Upper Canada Sketches")

#### A METHODIST CAMP MEETING

teach boys, first in his house, then in a log cabin, and after years of effort managed in 1816 to establish the school known as Pictou Academy. His energy was ceaseless, and his imagination led him into all kinds of useful activities. He studied the resources of the province, collected specimens for a museum, and began a scientific laboratory. Above all, he believed that education should be made available to every class of people. When Dalhousie University was founded in 1840, he became its first principal. It is scarcely too much to say that McCulloch moulded a generation of his fellow Scots, and left an influence which may be traced far beyond the bounds of Nova Scotia.

The same kind of process in the establishment of churches and

schools can be seen in Upper Canada. Here American influences were strong, as one would expect in view of the large immigration from the United States during the early years of the province. Especially active were the Methodists, whose "saddle-bag" preachers<sup>2</sup> rode through the pioneer settlements, and organized camp meetings where people were gathered together for several days of almost continuous services. "We crossed the St. Lawrence in romantic style," wrote a Methodist missionary who came to the

province not long before the War of 1812. "We hired four Indians to paddle us over. They lashed their canoes together, and put our horses in them, their fore-feet in one canoe, their hind-feet in another. It was a singular load"—and a precarious one too, "for some part," he adds, "was rough, especially the rapids."



JOHN STRACHAN

In 1799 there arrived in Upper Canada a young Scotsman, John Strachan, who for no less than sixty-eight years played a prominent part in the religious and educational life of the province. For some years before moving to York, Strachan taught a boys' school

in Cornwall which quickly gained a wide-spread reputation. Strachan's pupils soon realized that education was a serious matter with him, and that they had better master it with all possible speed. Among them were a number who grew up to occupy positions of importance, and this was one of the secrets of Strachan's later influence. Soon after his arrival he became a clergyman of the Church of England, and later the first Anglican bishop of the province. Far more than anyone else he laid the foundations of the Church of England in Upper Canada.

<sup>2</sup> So called because they carried their possessions in saddle-bags.



Strachan was a fiery little man, with tremendous energy, an unbending will, and a tongue that never left anyone in doubt of his opinions. When the Americans captured York in 1813, he is said to have stopped two soldiers from plundering, though he had no weapon but that which "nature had placed in his mouth." After the War of 1812 his influence increased rapidly. He became a member of the Legislative Council of the province, and for a time



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

School at Cornwall, Upper Canada, about 1845. It was at Cornwall that John Strachan started his school in 1800.

the superintendent of schools. Strachan was opposed to democratic education as we know it. He believed that schools and universities should be under the exclusive control of the Anglican Church as was the case at that time in England, and he was only defeated in this aim after years of political controversy. In spite of this defeat he made a lasting contribution to education in Upper Canada, among his achievements being the founding of two universities, King's College which in 1848 became the University of Toronto and Trinity University, now affiliated with the University of Toronto, which he established in 1852 because the control of the Church of England over King's College was taken away by the government. Strachan was often harsh and unbending, but

he had qualities of unflinching courage and ready sympathy which made him widely admired and even beloved. During the terrible cholera epidemic of 1832, for example, he went continually amongst the sick and dying with no thought of his own safety.

Another Scot who played an important part in the life of Upper Canada was the Rev. Alexander Macdonell, a Roman Catholic priest who became the first bishop of his church in the province. Macdonell was a Highlander, an enormous man six feet four inches in height. About the beginning of the century, when Britain was at war with Napoleon, Macdonell raised a Highland regiment, and on their being disbanded in 1803 he resolved to take his men to Canada where he got land in Glengarry County on the St. Lawrence near the settlements of Scottish Loyalists. In Glengarry the clansman's spirit ran high and one incident during the War of 1812 gives us a delightful picture of Macdonell and Glengarry's fighting Highlanders. Early in the war they raised a regiment which was accustomed to parade on the ice of the St. Lawrence opposite the American town of Ogdensburg. One day they chose not to stay on their own side of the river. With John Bethune, the Loyalist Presbyterian minister, on one flank and Macdonell on the other, they marched across the ice and, before Ogdensburg's defenders could recover from their surprise, captured the town.

Macdonell for years travelled through Upper Canada visiting his scattered congregations. In 1832, when he was over seventy, he remarked in a letter that his annual tour had been almost two thousand miles. Like other pioneer clergymen he was interested in education, and succeeded before his death in establishing a seminary at Kingston.

**A New Aim in Education.** Today we have schools supported by taxes and we expect every child to receive some education. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the few schools in existence were private schools attended only by boys whose parents could afford to pay fees.<sup>3</sup> This contrast is one of the best illustrations of the spread of democratic ideas, which in the nineteenth century

<sup>3</sup> "For each boy *eight guineas* per annum and one cord of wood" were the fees advertised for the second school in York, which was opened in 1802.

affected not only education but politics, government, and even matters such as fashions in clothing and the habits of daily life. The first sign of change in education was the beginning of government grants for schools. New Brunswick passed a law as early as 1802 providing £10 per year for each parish which started a school, and other provinces passed somewhat similar laws in the



*(John Ross Robertson Collection)*

#### "MARCH OF INTELLECT"

This was the title given to the picture by the man who drew it when he visited the school in December, 1845. The school was in Middlesex County, Upper Canada, and the artist was William Elliott, a District Superintendent of Schools.

next few years. But the schools established under these laws were usually wretched affairs. "No lickin', no larnin'," as people used to say, was the principle on which most of them were run. All too commonly the teachers had little or no training, books were few and dog-eared, and school buildings seemed, as one writer remarked, to be "erected as pounds to confine unruly boys and punish them by way of freezing them, and smoking them." There was as yet no idea of educating all boys and girls in properly equipped schools supported by taxes and with well trained teachers. In Nova Scotia, Thomas McCulloch led in the fight for a more

democratic system of education against those, who like Strachan in Upper Canada, believed that the Church of England should have control of schools. In Upper Canada probably the greatest contribution to education was made by Egerton Ryerson.

Ryerson's father was a Loyalist officer, who settled after the American Revolution first in New Brunswick and later on the north shore of Lake Erie. Like



EGERTON RYERSON

every boy on a pioneer farm, Egerton did all kinds of farm work, such as ploughing, mowing with the scythe, and cradling the grain. His schooling was limited, but fortunately he had one or two good teachers. He was fascinated by the study of English grammar, which may come as a surprise to some of the readers of this book. Like everyone in those days he next studied Latin and Greek. When twenty-two he became a Methodist preacher, and in the next year, 1826, sprang into prominence by attacking the views of Strachan who was then one of the most powerful men in

the province. This was the beginning for Ryerson of many years of political controversy. He was for a time editor of the *Christian Guardian*, a newspaper published by the Methodists which he made the most widely circulated paper in Upper Canada. His most enduring work, was, however, in education. He was chiefly responsible for founding an academy in Cobourg, which later became Victoria University, and in 1844 he was appointed superintendent of education for the province.

Ryerson's appointment marked the real beginning of a uniform system of schools under the control of the provincial government.

He studied the schools of the British Isles, European countries, and the United States, and took whatever he could from their experience. He tried to get well trained teachers and Canadian text books. Up to that time practically all text books had to be brought either from the British Isles or the United States. Ryerson held his position for thirty-two years, and during that time the Ontario school system was firmly established. Canada's western provinces later copied much from it, so that Ryerson's influence finally went far beyond his own province.

By 1850 Upper Canada, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia were all developing provincial school systems. The foundations of university education also had been laid. In addition to the universities already mentioned, several others had been begun: Acadia in Nova Scotia, founded by the Baptists; King's College, Fredericton, later the University of New Brunswick; McGill, established by the bequest of James McGill, one of the North West Company merchants of Montreal; and Queen's, established in Kingston by the Presbyterians. In education as in many other ways, the first half of the nineteenth century was a notable period of pioneer expansion.

**Reading and the Increase of Newspapers.** Today we take reading for granted. Through public libraries, newspapers, and other means, reading material is so widespread that people often do not bother to use it. Such was not the case in the early years of the nineteenth century. Common people, even when they were able to read, could scarcely get books. The earliest successful effort to meet the need of books were Mechanics' Institutes, which were copied from England, and first came into British North America about 1830. They provided lectures as well as libraries, and were in fact a pioneer effort in adult education. In many places they were the fore-runners of the modern public library.

The increase of newspapers did more, however, than anything else to supply reading material. After 1815, and especially after 1830, they began to spring up almost like mushrooms, and in many cases they were nearly as short-lived. Money was scarce and the editor, who was often the owner, typesetter, printer and

reporter, rolled into one, was usually glad to take what he could get. In the Cornwall *Observer* of December 18, 1835, we read, for example, "Our wood-paying subscribers will please send us a few cords of wood at their earliest convenience." The paper of the 1830's was a small affair compared to the modern newspaper.

Usually of four pages packed with small print, it had no pictures, few advertisements, and scarcely anything that we would call a head line. Most of its news was copied from other papers and much of it from English papers, four, six, or more weeks old. To people hungry for information and enlightenment, however, these papers came like manna from heaven. "Generally on the evening after the paper comes to hand," wrote a Nova Scotian, "a few of the neighbours assemble in my house, and, after our homely and heartfelt compliments are exchanged a *reader* is appointed, who after drawing his chair up to the table, trimming the

candle, coughing, and clearing his throat, unceremoniously bawls out, 'Silence'—and immediately all are attention. After the reading is over, then come the remarks." The "remarks", no doubt often went on into the night, for the papers were full of hot arguments since everyone was discussing the new democratic ideas in politics and education. Today the comparatively few surviving copies of these old newspapers are among the most valuable of our historical sources preserved in archives and libraries. Nowhere can we get a better idea of what people were thinking and saying a century ago.



(Public Archives)

"THE POLITICIAN"

Newspaper editors had a powerful influence and two stand out in particular, William Lyon Mackenzie of Upper Canada and Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia. Mackenzie came to Upper Canada in 1820 and four years later established the *Colonial Advocate*. He was a fiery reformer by nature with a tongue and pen like a whiplash, and his zest in attacking the views of men like Strachan was simply unquenchable. At times his zeal got the better of him, and carried him far beyond other more moderate reformers like Ryerson. In 1837 Mackenzie was the leader of the Rebellion<sup>4</sup> which broke out in Upper Canada; and, for some years after it, he was an exile from the province. Following his return in 1849, however, he again took an active though less violent interest in public affairs, not only as a newspaper editor but as a member of parliament. To sum up the influence of Mackenzie's long and stormy career in Upper Canada is by no means easy. Certainly he made an important contribution to the early development of Canadian printing and journalism. In his political controversies, although he made mistakes in judgment, he was sincere, and never hesitated to face risks in fighting for what he believed were the interests of the common people. The rising spirit of democracy owed much to his untiring efforts.

Howe, like so many other leaders of his generation, was a son of Loyalist parents. His father, had settled in Halifax, having left New England with "nothing but his principles and the pretty girl" whom he had just married. Howe learned printing in his father's shop and from his father, to whom years later he paid a glowing tribute, he got as he said "my fondness for reading, my familiarity with the Bible." He seems to have read everything he could get hold of, and soon developed a breadth of ideas and an ability in expressing himself which have been unsurpassed in the history of Canadian public life. In 1828, when only twenty-four, he bought the newspaper the *Novascotian*, and soon made it the most powerful political influence in the province. But Howe was interested in more than politics. He had a deep and abiding love for his native land, and travelled to every nook and corner of

<sup>4</sup> This is described in chapter 23.

it, writing long descriptions of its resources and beauty, and visiting the people in their homes. He was equally welcome in the fisherman's cabin or in the houses of the well-to-do, for his jolly, care-free manner attracted old and young alike. Howe was determined to raise the whole level of life in Nova Scotia, and to arouse in the hearts of its people a worthy spirit of pride and patriotism. So he became an ardent supporter of schools, libraries, Mechanics' Institutes, and many other means of improving the level of prosperity and intelligence. Nowhere in British North America can the cultural beginnings described in this chapter be seen more clearly by 1850 than in Nova Scotia, and no one contributed more to them than Howe. He was a product of Nova Scotia's very soil. He understood and believed in her people, and in a real sense his career gives us a picture of them at their best.

**"Sam Slick".** A young country can scarcely be expected to produce works of literature,—

its people are too busy with the pioneer tasks of home building and establishing their first industries. One work of permanent reputation was, however, written in British North America before 1850, *The Clockmaker, or the Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slickville*. Its author, Thomas Chandler Haliburton, was a native of Nova Scotia and a lifelong friend of Howe. Haliburton's first important work was a history of Nova Scotia but his fame rests on the story of the mythical Samuel, a Yankee clockmaker who sold stacks of worthless clocks by using, as he said, "soft sawder and human natur'." Flattery and smooth talk, of which he had an endless supply, were the



THOMAS CHANDLER HALIBURTON  
Author of "Sam Slick".



"soft sawder" which got Sam into a house, and once in he seldom failed to make a sale. Haliburton's masterpiece delighted readers all over the English-speaking world. It is, however, more than a book of humour. In Sam's "travels" and behind his tall stories, we can see the Nova Scotia of Haliburton's day, and so in a real sense *The Clockmaker* is also a book of history.

By the middle of the nineteenth century there were many signs that the provinces of British North America were developing characteristics, institutions, and attitudes of mind which were distinctively their own. They had as yet no spirit of national unity, but they had sturdy provincial loyalties, each of which has brought its own contribution to Canadian life. These loyalties are woven into Canada's national tradition, and in understanding them we shall go far toward understanding ourselves.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

*Canadian portraits* edited by R. G. Riddell, contains a biography of Thomas McCulloch; and William Smith's *Political leaders of Upper Canada* has scholarly articles on Ryerson, Strachan and Mackenzie. Howe is discussed in Adrian Macdonald's *Canadian portraits* and in *The tribune of Nova Scotia* by W. L. Grant "Chronicles of Canada". The *Canadian book of printing* issued by the Toronto Public Libraries has excellent pictorial material. The Guillet and Dickie books mentioned in chapter XVII, and *Pioneer days in Ontario* by Henry and Paterson may also prove useful. You will be interested in the descriptions of country schools in *The yellow briar* by Patrick Slater, Thomas Chandler Haliburton's book *The clockmaker, or the sayings and doings of Sam Slick of Slickville* can be procured in a cheap edition.

## Chapter XXII

### The Fur-Traders' Empire at Its Height

FOR two hundred years the history of Western Canada is the story of a fur-traders' empire. The roll of its builders and adventurers is filled with names famous in Canadian history: Groseilliers, Radisson, La Vérendrye, Alexander Henry, Samuel Hearne, and many others. Step by step the bounds of exploration and trade were pushed west and north until in 1793, Alexander Mackenzie reached the salt waters of the Pacific. By that time two Companies faced each other in competition for the furs of the west. Both were British. They had no other rivals, and the fur-traders' empire was now on the eve of its greatest development.

**The Nor'Westers Reach the Pacific.** Mackenzie, when he crossed the Rockies, pointed the way to the last great unexplored fur country, the Pacific slope. He had dreams of a trade which spanned the continent, meeting ships from England with supplies, and sending furs to China and around the Horn to England. If any one could realize such dreams it would be the men of the North West Company with their daredevil courage and tireless energy. But, for over ten years after Mackenzie's exploration, the Nor'-Westers were divided among themselves. Rival factions even broke off and formed short-lived companies, the most famous—the XY Company<sup>1</sup>—being led by Mackenzie himself. Rum selling, drunkenness among the Indians, violence and murder marred the trade, but in 1804 wiser counsels prevailed. A union into one strong organization was brought about,<sup>2</sup> and the North West Company was once more ready to advance westward.

It was none too soon. Russian traders were by now moving along the coast of Alaska toward the country known as "West of

<sup>1</sup> This curious name had a simple origin. The North West Company's fur packs were marked NW. The rival company adopted the next two letters after W.

<sup>2</sup> Mackenzie was forced into the background at this time, and went to Scotland where he lived in retirement until 1820.

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the Mountains", and American traders and explorers were pushing west from the Mississippi. In 1805, two explorers, Lewis and Clark, were sent by the American government to find a route from the Missouri River to the mouth of the Columbia, and shortly afterward John Jacob Astor, the greatest fur merchant of the American west began organizing a company to trade in the Columbia valley. The Nor'Westers could not afford to delay.

For the westward thrust they chose two men whose names are among the most famous in the long list of the Company's explorers Simon Fraser and David Thompson. Fraser was to follow



FORT ST. JAMES

(Hudson's Bay Co.)

Mackenzie's footsteps westward from Peace River; Thompson was to move west from Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan.

Fraser was a man of action, and a past master in the subtle art of handling the Indians. In 1805-6 he established the first posts ever placed within the present boundaries of British Columbia, one of them, Fort St. James, being now the oldest settlement in the province.<sup>3</sup> The problem was how to get a water route for trade to the Pacific. With that purpose, he was ready by 1808 to attempt his greatest exploit, the exploration of the river which bears his name. Mackenzie had been on its upper waters, but no one knew where it emptied. Fraser hoped it would turn out to be the Columbia. He was warned by Indians against its wild rapids, terrible whirlpools, and impassable canyons with waters rushing in torrents which no canoe could withstand. The stories

<sup>3</sup> In 1811 the beginnings of British Columbia agriculture were made at Fort St. James when the North West Company agent planted potatoes, turnips and barley.

proved only too true. At the region of the Big Canyon the party was forced to use Indian trails and to crawl around bluffs, and up and down walls of rock sometimes by ladders. Finally, when he had reached the mouth of the river, Fraser was forced to turn back by Indians who swarmed out "howling like so many wolves and brandishing their war-clubs." The river was too dangerous for a trade route, and Fraser found also to his disappointment, on making an observation, that he was not on the Columbia but on a river considerably further north. He had, however, completed one of the most dangerous feats in the entire history of western exploration.

Thompson had less daring and feverish energy than Fraser, but his patience and determination have made his name in the long run more famous. Thompson's fame does not rest on his work in British Columbia. His great aim was the mapping of the west—the establishing of the first framework of really accurate geographical knowledge. A few points had been fixed by careful observation here and there but no one had attempted anything on a large scale. For years, in the midst of his fur trading, Thompson pursued his ambition day in and day out, measuring and calculating with unwavering persistence. When his *Map made for the North West Company in 1813 and 1814* was completed, it represented a life time of effort. It combined the surveys of other men, but most of it was his own. All the North West Company's forts, seventy-eight at that time, were marked on it; and, after hanging in the Company's headquarters at Fort William for years, it survived to become the basis of all our maps of the Canadian west.

It was in 1807, while he was in the midst of these map-making labours, that Thompson was sent to push the North West Company's trade westward beyond the mountains. He quickly reached the upper stretches of the Columbia, although he did not know which river it was, and built Kootenay House near its source. Four years later he finished tracing the Columbia to the sea, only to find that Astor's American Company had just built a fort, Astoria, near the river's mouth. Astor was unable, however, to hold out against his Canadian rivals. In 1813, the North West



Company acquired Astoria, and with it secured the unrivalled control of the trade all along the coast from the Columbia to Alaska. So Fraser, Thompson, and the Nor'Westers who followed them, drove a wedge through the mountains and extended the North West Company's trade all the way from Atlantic to Pacific. To them we owe in no small measure the fact that British Columbia is Canadian today.

**The Rival Companies and Their Posts.** Meanwhile events of great importance were brewing elsewhere. To understand them we must glance for a moment at the fur-traders' empire in the first decade of the century. The two companies had by now spread their network of forts far west of Lake Superior and Hudson Bay. The Nor'Westers had been much the more aggressive. With a kind of vast encircling movement from Lake Superior to the Mackenzie, they had planted their posts so as to cut across the path of the Hudson's Bay Company. But the older company had not been idle. In its early years it had depended on the Indians bringing their furs to the forts on the Bay, but when the Nor'Westers began carrying their goods to the Indian villages the Hudson's Bay Company was forced to do the same. It too built posts west to the Rockies.

Around the posts there slowly developed the first permanent white population of the Canadian west. The two companies had in their employ a little army of clerks, traders, guides and canoe-men, which by the early years of the nineteenth century must have numbered from fifteen hundred to two thousand. More than half were French, most of them loyally attached to the North West Company. Among the English-speaking part, the Scots far outnumbered the English in both companies. Hundreds of these men took Indian wives, often making a bargain in the Indian

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*The early years of the nineteenth century brought sharp conflict between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. On this map we can see how their interests conflicted. As a result of this competition the fur trade and fur-trading posts, only a few of which are shown on the map, were rapidly extended to the Pacific where American and Russian interests were also converging. The shaded area shows the Selkirk grant, and it can readily be seen how the Selkirk settlement threatened the Nor'Westers' line of communication. The competition was stopped in 1821 by the union of the companies. After that time, the trade was all carried on by Hudson Bay, and connection with the west was lost to Canada for a generation.*



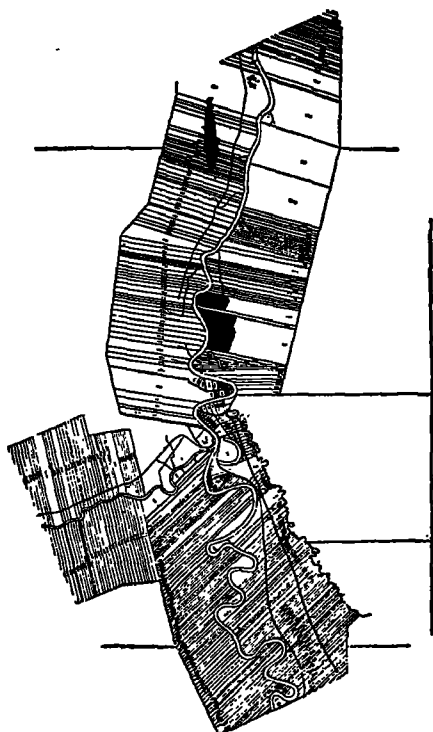
fashion by giving presents to the parents and receiving the daughter in return. So little settlements of half-breeds grew up around many of the posts. The half-breeds, or Métis as they were called in French, were sturdy and capable people, who supplied the companies with many of their best servants. They could deal with the Indians and were excellent hunters and canoemen. They knew the country and its ways, and it is no wonder that their descendants have later played a prominent part in the history of the North West.

Rivalry between the two companies was inevitable. In places their posts stood almost side by side, and quarrels could scarcely be avoided. Still there were, in the first years of the century, many signs of good-will. On Christmas Day, 1799, for instance, a Hudson's Bay factor wrote to his superiors in London, "I had the honour of my neighbours (from the North West fort) company to dinner; your Honours has the honour of bearing the expenses." And in 1807, a Nor'Wester writing in his journal shows that these courtesies were not confined to Christmas; "Two of the Hudson's Bay people arrived from Fort des Prairies, who were so obliging as to bring me letters from several gentlemen in that quarter. The greater part of the North West and Hudson's Bay people live on amicable terms." The scene was changing, however. A conflict with ten years of violence and bloodshed was about to begin.

**Lord Selkirk Finds the Red River Settlement.** The chain of events which led to this life and death struggle had its beginnings in the far distant Highlands of Scotland. Hundreds of clansmen were living there in poverty and without land. To their relief, a young Scottish nobleman, the Earl of Selkirk, resolved to devote his life and fortune. "It is our duty to befriend these people," he wrote. "Let us direct their emigration; give them homes under our own flag and they will strengthen the empire." Some had already gone to Nova Scotia and Upper Canada. Selkirk himself sent eight hundred to Prince Edward Island, but he was not satisfied. He had more spacious dreams. He wanted to get a large tract of land, and he looked far inland to the valley of the Red River. The scheme of starting a settlement in the

heart of the fur-trading empire seemed a wild one, but Selkirk was not to be turned aside. He began buying shares in the Hudson's Bay Company, and in 1811 he succeeded in getting from the company a grant of no less than 116,000 square miles. This great tract covered parts of what are now Manitoba, North Dakota and Minnesota.

Before the year was out Selkirk's first party sailed to Hudson Bay under the command of Miles Macdonell, a Glengarry Highlander. They had a miserable winter in Port Nelson, but managed to build



Plan of lots along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers from an old Hudson's Bay Company map. The long narrow lots facing on the river are very similar to those in Quebec. The small triangle in the centre is now the site of the business section of Winnipeg.

some bateaux, and in the spring made the long and dangerous journey to Red River. Near the junction with the Assiniboine, on a tongue of land made by a bend in the river they picked the spot for the headquarters of the colony. It now lies within the city of Winnipeg. To honour Selkirk they used his family name and called it Point Douglas.

#### War at Red River.

For the North West Company, Selkirk's scheme was scarcely less than a declaration of war. His grant of land not only lay directly across their main highway to the far west, it was the chief source from which the Nor'Westers drew supplies of pemmican for their canoe brigades. The

settlement "would strike at the very existence of our trade," wrote a partner of the company. At any cost Selkirk must be driven to abandon it. The Nor'Westers tried to frighten the first settlers even before they left Scotland. "Their habitations, their crops, their cattle, will be destroyed by Indians," a pamphlet warned them, "and they will find it impossible to live in the country."



LORD SELKIRK

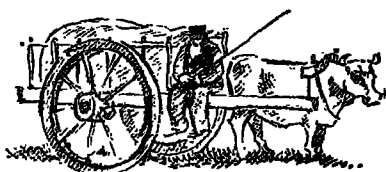
The Nor'Westers were not without allies. The Métis in the valleys of the Red and Assiniboine, did some farming, but they depended chiefly on buffalo hunting and making pemmican for the fur trade. They feared and resented the planting of a farming colony. In 1814 came the crisis. Governor Macdonell in that spring issued an order forbidding the exportation of pemmican from Selkirk's territory. He claimed it was needed for food, but the Métis and the North West Company took the order as a declaration of war. In the next two years the colony was twice destroyed. In 1815 crops were trampled down,

houses burned, and Macdonell and over one hundred and thirty settlers carried off to the North West Company headquarters at Fort William and to Upper Canada. In the same year more settlers arrived through Hudson Bay, under Governor Semple; but, in the following June, Semple and twenty-one of his men were killed in a Métis attack at Seven Oaks, which is close to Winnipeg's Main Street. For the second time the colonists had to desert Red River.

Help was coming, however. Selkirk was on his way west from Montreal, bringing with him about one hundred Swiss soldiers of the De Meuron regiment, which had just been discharged after

fighting for the British in the War of 1812. When he heard of Seven Oaks, Selkirk decided to take strong action. He seized the North West Company's headquarters at Fort William, and took steps to plant the colony for the third time.

In 1817 Selkirk himself spent four months at Red River, and in that time did much to establish the colony. He signed the first treaty in the Northwest for obtaining land from the Indians.<sup>4</sup> He planned roads and bridges, set aside sites for schools and



(Hudson's Bay Co.)

RED RIVER CART

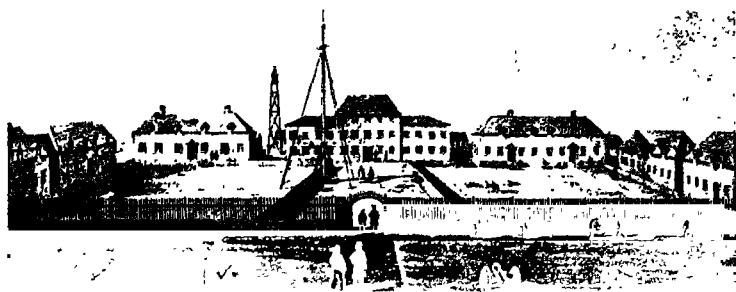
churches, and even thought of an experimental farm. This was probably Selkirk's happiest time in all these weary years. After leaving Red River, he became embroiled in law suits because of the seizure of Fort William. His last days were filled with disappointment and

loss, and he died in 1820 a harassed and broken man. He had spent over half a million dollars, and shortened his life in the struggle to establish a British settlement at Red River. Selkirk died with his ambition unrealized, but he builded better than he knew. Today his generosity, courage, and devotion are remembered, and his name is honoured among the founders of Western Canada.

**The Union of 1821.** When Selkirk died both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company were suffering severely from the effects of their fierce contest, which had been raging not only in Red River, but throughout the west. The Bay Company had even invaded the far-famed Athabaska country which lay beyond the limits of the land grant of 1670 and had been considered the Nor'Westers exclusive preserve. In this struggle for control of the fur trade the Hudson's Bay Company had two strong vantage points,—title to all the land draining to Hudson Bay and a sea route from England to the very edge of the fur-trading country. From ports on the Bay trading goods could be distributed inland

<sup>4</sup> By the treaty they gave up their claim to a strip along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

earlier in the season and at far less expense than from Montreal. The position of the North West Company had grown more difficult as it pushed its trade west to the Pacific slope and north into the MacKenzie River Basin. Amalgamation of the two companies had been considered for a number of years. The affair at Seven Oaks, the seizure of Fort William, the growing scarcity of beaver pelts and loss of revenue to both companies at length led saner



*(Hudson's Bay Co.)*

### YORK FACTORY

minds to the point where the advantages of union overcame bitter rivalry. In 1821 an agreement was reached and the two companies were united under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. So the ruinous conflict was ended and a monopoly of the fur trade was established from Labrador to the Pacific.

The results of the union make it one of the most important events in the history of Western Canada. It broke the connection between the North West and the eastern provinces. The Nor'Westers' canoe route from Montreal was abandoned, and Fort William sank into insignificance. After 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company used only the sea routes to Hudson Bay and the Pacific Coast. Not until the coming of the railway, half a century later, was the link between Rupert's Land and the eastern provinces renewed.

But there were other results no less important. Peace now reigned in the western fur trade for almost the first time in one hundred and fifty years, and British power in the northern half of the continent was greatly strengthened. The destructive rivalry of two British companies had been a serious weakness at a time when American and Russian traders were becoming more active in the far west. The Hudson's Bay Company became more than a mere trading company. It governed more than half of what is now Canada, managing the Indians, making laws, holding courts, and



(Hudson's Bay Co.)

NORTH WEST CO. TOKENS

ruling over red man and white man alike. Under the British flag the Company controlled its vast domain until a Canadian Dominion was formed which was capable of taking it over. Canada holds the west today because she fell heir to

the achievements of both the Nor'Westers and the Hudson's Bay Company.

**Simpson Organizes the Fur-Traders' Empire.** Following the union a thorough re-organization was needed, and the Hudson's Bay Company was fortunate in finding among its young men a leader, George Simpson, who was to prove himself the greatest figure in the Company's long history. Although only thirty-four, he was put in complete charge of the Company's affairs in America. For nearly forty years he ruled his empire, subject to the authority of the British crown, the direction of the Company's committee in London, and the council of the Chief Factors in the North West. Under the Little Emperor, as he was called, the trade prospered as never before. He insisted on fair treatment for the Indians, discouraged the selling of liquor, and favoured a wise policy of hunting to conserve the supply of fur-bearing animals.

On the main waterways he replaced canoes by York boats which carried far more and were cheaper to operate. Sturdily built, and propelled by a square sail or by heavy twenty-foot oars, the York boat could stand rough weather, run a rapid, or even be hauled

over a portage on rollers. For years, it was the mainstay of the Company's freighting system, and only disappeared when forced out by steam and the gasoline engine.<sup>5</sup> West of the mountains other methods were used. Goods were brought around the Horn from England to points such as Fort George on the Columbia or

*Sea Hike Emperor of  
the Fur Trade, 1821.*



*Sir George Simpson.*

(Bobbs Merrill Co., N.Y.)

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON

Fort Langley on the Fraser. Between these coastal points and forts in the interior such as Kootenay, Hope, and Fort St. James, systems of bateaux and horse brigades carried goods and furs back and forth.

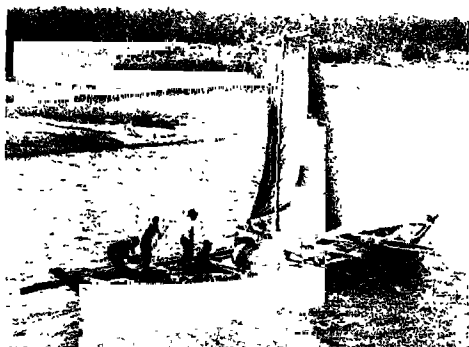
Year after year Simpson ranged in astonishing fashion over vast distances, visiting every part of his territory and when necessary going to England. Accompanied by his piper and with all the pomp he could command, he was always an object of interest. "We watched the great canoes," wrote one who saw him, "the flag

of the Hudson's Bay Company proudly floating at each turn, the Iroquois crews chanting their boat songs, until they had turned the first point." Perhaps his most remarkable journey was that from York Factory to Fort Langley in 1828 when he travelled by express canoe more than three thousand miles in sixty-five days.

Under Simpson the network of forts and posts expanded, and the principal posts increased in size and strength. The West was changing. York Factory was no longer a mere trading fort. It

<sup>5</sup> Two York boats were built as late as 1923.

became a great depot for importing goods and exporting furs. The Company's inland headquarters were at Norway House. It became what Fort William had been for the North West Company—a centre for council meetings and a depot for supplies and furs. Situated near the north end of Lake Winnipeg, it was a hub for main-line water routes running to York Factory, the Red and Saskatchewan Rivers, and the Athabaska country. Today, although



(Hudson's Bay Co.)

YORK BOAT

its glory is departed, it presents much the same picture as it did when the fleets of York boats and large freight canoes raced in with their singing, swaggering voyageurs. Lower Fort Garry built in stone in the 1830's still stands, its walls and buildings giving us a glimpse of the fur-traders' empire at its height. Near the

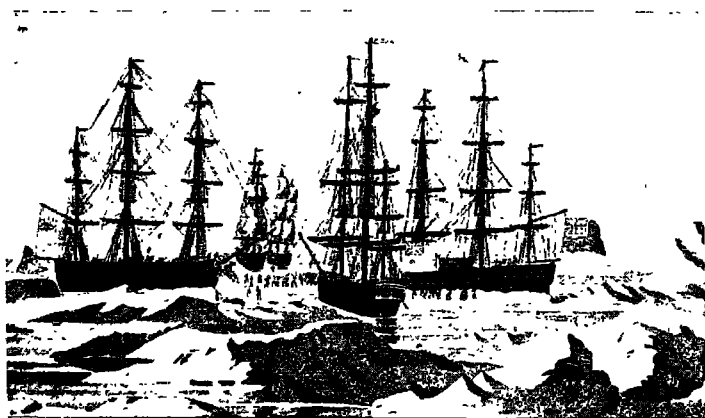
Rockies, E d m o n t o n

House became a centre. It too was more than a trading post. York boats were built there, grain and vegetables were grown, and pemmican was packed in great quantities for the fur brigades.

Among the many posts one other must be mentioned, Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River. From it John McLoughlin, the Great White Eagle (so named by the Indians because of his flowing snow-white hair), reigned over the whole Columbia region almost like a feudal lord. McLoughlin was born at Rivière du Loup and his mother's father had fought with Wolfe at Quebec. Today his name stands high among the founders of both British Columbia and Oregon. He occupied a nearly independent position under Simpson, and over a period of twenty-five years did more than any other man to lay the foundations of commerce along the British Columbian coast. He sent out expeditions which built posts at strategic points along the sea and far up into the



interior. One of them, for example, chose the site of Victoria. Fort Vancouver, with about forty buildings, became not only a fur trading centre but a flourishing agricultural community. McLoughlin enforced law and order with an iron hand, but he needed no soldiers or armed guard. With all his firmness he was just and humane, and he was loved and admired by Indians and whites alike.



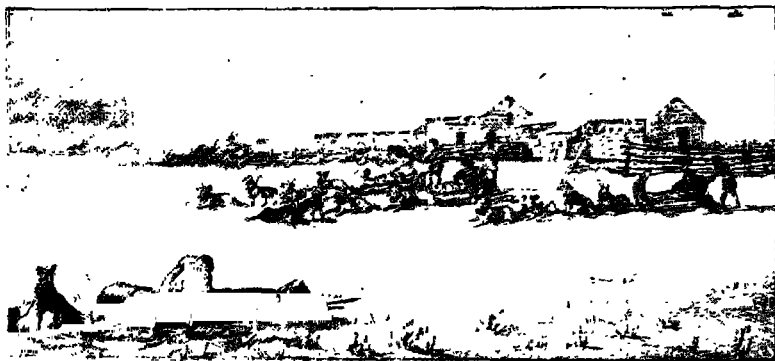
Ships of the Arctic expedition of 1819-22 at Prince of Wales Fort.

**Challenging the Arctic.** Between 1820 and 1850 there was written one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of modern Arctic exploration. Following the Napoleonic War, the British navy turned again to the problem of the North West Passage, which still fascinated people's minds even though Cook had shown that no waterway of commercial value existed. A series of expeditions, in which the Hudson's Bay Company assisted, was sent out with the result that the Arctic coastline was put on the map from Coronation Gulf westward as far as Alaska. The greatest single leader in this story of hazardous adventures was a British naval officer, Captain, later Sir, John Franklin. Franklin nearly lost his life on his first trip, 1819-22, when he journeyed from Hudson Bay to the mouth of the Coppermine, and then with pemmican for only fifteen days started on a trek of 650 miles eastward along the

coast. In attempting to return to its base, his party cut across the Barren Grounds toward Great Slave Lake and was reduced to the last stages of starvation before being found. Twenty-five years later Franklin's last expedition ended in one of the worst disasters in Arctic history. Starting out to attempt the North West Passage by water, his ships disappeared into the unknown north. In the next ten years over forty expeditions were sent to solve the mystery of their fate, and only gradually was the tragic story pieced together. After spending almost eighteen months in the ice near King William Island, the party abandoned the ships and tried to march out to safety. Not a man survived. People are always inspired by examples of bravery, and for years the story of Franklin's expedition made a great impression throughout the whole British Empire. Today the Arctic is for Canada a region of growing opportunity, and we can now see that the Arctic explorers were accomplishing more than they themselves could have realized.

**Pioneer Days at Red River.** At Red River the union of the companies in 1821 brought a new day of peace, even though difficulties were by no means ended. Nowhere in British North America did pioneers face greater odds. In 1817 frost and storm had destroyed the crops. Then for three years clouds of grasshoppers appeared. Perhaps the worst calamity was in 1826 when floods drove many from their homes. But the settlers hung on. By that time there were about 1500 in all, including Métis farmers whose farms were laid out along the river very much as were the farms in Quebec. The settlers could buy or sell almost nothing as the Hudson Bay route was too expensive for anything but the fur trade. The West might be able to grow the best wheat in the world, but it could not sell it until the railway came years later. So there was no encouragement for immigration, growth was slow, and the settlers had to rely almost entirely on their own resources. The famous Red River cart, made without a scrap of iron, was a triumph of ingenuity. The two large, wide-rimmed wheels would carry half a ton; and, as they squeaked constantly, a string of Red River carts could be heard a long way.

**First Signs of a New Era.** The fur-traders' empire at its height after 1821 had only two doors open to the outside world—Hudson Bay and the Pacific Coast. Some day others would open and the fur empire would decline. By 1850 there were signs that that day was quickly approaching. Two other doors were opening—the one far west in Oregon, the other at Red River. About 1840 the Columbia valley began to receive settlers by hundreds from the eastern States, and soon there was a demand in the United



(Public Archives)

DOG TRAINS LEAVING FORT GARRY FOR ST. PAUL IN 1831

States that Britain should give up the whole Oregon country which she had held jointly with the United States since 1818. The northern limit of Oregon was the Russian boundary of Alaska, the line of  $54^{\circ} 40'$ , and by 1844 the cry of "Fifty-four forty or fight" was sweeping through the United States. Britain wanted the Columbia River as a boundary, and for a time war seemed almost inevitable. Finally a peaceful negotiation triumphed, and by the Treaty of 1846 the present boundary line of the forty-ninth parallel was extended west from the Rockies to the Pacific Coast. The fur trade was plainly nearing its end in the Columbia valley, and in 1849 the Hudson's Bay Company moved its headquarters for the Pacific slope from Fort Vancouver to Victoria. At the same time the company obtained a grant of Vancouver Island from the British Crown on the understanding that a colony of

British subjects would be established there. The day of real settlement in what is now British Columbia was beginning.

At this very moment, the door between Red River and the United States was also opening. American settlement was moving west and north around Lake Michigan, and in 1844 a number of American traders visited Red River. The Hudson's Bay Company forbade the Métis and white settlers to sell furs across the border, but a smuggling trade was growing rapidly. In 1849 an incident occurred which showed that the company could no longer enforce its regulation. A half-breed who was guilty of smuggling furs was released without punishment because the Métis surrounded the court house and demanded his release. Red River was turning its back on the Hudson Bay gateway and beginning to look southward.

What was to be the destiny of the fur-traders' empire of the North West? Would it remain a part of British North America or would it become a part of the United States? That question, so important for the Canadian nation of the future, was to be answered within the next thirty years.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Books for general reference are Stephen Leacock's *Adventurers of the far north*, Agnes Laut's *The adventurers of England on Hudson Bay and Pioneers of the Pacific coast*, all from the "Chronicles of Canada"; also *Builders of the far west* by F. W. Howay; and several of the Ryerson readers. Interesting historical accounts of the Selkirk settlement may be found in *Manitoba mile-stones* by Margaret McWilliams, and *The Red River Colony* by Louis Aubrey Wood "Chronicles of Canada". John Herries McCulloch in the novel *Men of Kildonan* gives a moving picture of the settlers' struggles. *Young Mac of Fort Vancouver* by Mary Jane Carr is about a boy a little younger than most of you, but the story is such a good one, and the descriptions of the fort, trading methods and people like Governor Simpson and John McLoughlin are so effective that you should read it. *Roselle of the north* by Constance Lindsay Skinner tells of a white girl adopted by the Crees when she becomes involved in the quarrels of fur traders. In a story *Painted arrows* and a biography *The last buffalo hunter* Mary Weekes recreates the days of the great hunts. Many libraries will have H. V. Moberly's *When fur was king*, a record of long service with the Hudson's Bay Company.

## *Chapter XXIII*

### **First Steps Toward Democracy and Self-Government in a Free Empire**

CANADA is unique among American countries in the way in which it has come to nationhood. Every other American country broke away from the empire to which it belonged, and gained self-government by revolution. The United States broke away first. Then, between 1810 and 1825, a series of revolutions tore apart the Spanish and Portuguese empires and created the Latin American countries of Central and South America. In contrast with this, the colonies which later became Canada stayed within the British Empire and grew to nationhood step by step.

The first great advance toward self-government in British North America was made by 1850, and the purpose of this chapter is to tell how it was brought about. Later, other parts of the Empire such as Australia and New Zealand copied it, and this part of Canadian history has, therefore, a significance far beyond the bounds of present day Canada.

**The Government of the Old British Empire.** To understand the growth of self-government we must know something of how the colonies were controlled at the end of the eighteenth century.

Their government was, of course, directed from England and the British Parliament was the supreme authority in the Empire. Parliament, however, did not pass laws about local affairs in the colonies, but dealt only with questions which affected the empire as a whole. Of these the two most important were defence and trade.

The colonies contributed to their own defence, as for example in the War of 1812, through their militia regiments and their privateers; but the chief responsibility lay on the British government. Britain supplied the naval defence of the Empire. She built forti-

fications, and kept garrisons in important places like Halifax and Quebec; and, at critical times as in the War of 1812, sent additional forces across the Atlantic. The British government also spent considerable sums on works such as the Rideau Canal and Fort Henry at Kingston.

The trade of the colonies was regulated by the British Parliament through the Navigation Acts, whose purpose was to encourage commerce with Britain rather than with foreign countries. Only ships flying the British flag could enter colonial ocean ports such as Halifax, Saint John and Quebec; and many articles from foreign countries, especially manufactured goods, were forbidden to enter the colonies unless they were first sent to England. On the other hand, the Navigation Acts had at least two advantages for the colonies: (1) British ships, and this included ships of the colonies, had a monopoly in colonial ports. This gave them, for instance, an advantage in trade with the British West Indies which was very much prized by merchants and ship owners in the Maritime Provinces. (2) The second advantage was the preference, or lower duty, granted in the British market to colonial timber and wheat.<sup>1</sup> This more than anything else, explains why the British North American colonies did not object to the restrictions of the Navigation Acts, as the Thirteen Colonies had done before the American Revolution. The preferences were felt to be essential to the prosperity of the Maritime Provinces and the Canadas alike.

Colonial affairs from day to day were directed by the Colonial Secretary. He was responsible for enforcing the laws of Parliament in the colonies; he also dealt with the appointments of colonial Governors and other important office holders, many of whom were sent out from England; and he kept in touch with affairs in each colony, receiving streams of reports from Governors, and sending back bags full of instructions and advice. As a member of the British Cabinet, the Colonial Secretary acted in the name of the King; and when, therefore, we speak of things being done by the Crown, we mean that they were done through the Colonial Secretary. His department, the Colonial Office, kept a constant watch

<sup>1</sup> See chapter 20 for the importance of the preferences to the square timber trade and the St. Lawrence Canals.

over colonial affairs. "Mr. Mother Country" it was called by a critic, who thought the colonies were far too much tied to its apron strings.

The position of the colonies in the Empire was on the whole a favourable one. They were free from heavy burdens, and paid no taxes to the British government. Moreover, British colonists, unlike those in other empires, enjoyed the rights and liberties which had been won in England through centuries of struggle, such as freedom of speech, the right to petition against grievances, trial by jury, and Habeas Corpus or the right of not being kept in prison without a clearly stated charge. These rights lie at the basis of free government today, and the eighteenth century colonists understood them well.

In each colony the government consisted of (1) a Governor sent out from England, (2) a small Executive Council whose members were appointed by the Crown to advise the Governor, and (3) an elected Assembly.<sup>2</sup> It was in the relations of these three that difficulties arose. In England, Parliament controlled the Cabinet, and could vote it out of office; the Cabinet in turn controlled the King. In the colonies it was different. The Assembly was the weakest, not the strongest, part of the government. It was expected merely to vote taxes and pass laws suggested by the Governor. It could control neither the Executive Council whose members held office for life, nor the Governor. In other words, the colonies did not have the British system of Cabinet or "Responsible" Government, as we have it in Canada today. The introduction of Responsible Government was the great advance made in British North America by 1850.

**The "Family Compacts."** One result of the weakness of the Assembly was that, in each colony, power lay in the hands of a small minority of wealthy and influential people. These Family Compacts, as they were appropriately called,<sup>3</sup> were so in control of

<sup>2</sup> Upper and Lower Canada by the Canada Act of 1791, each had also a Legislative Council which voted on bills passed by the Assembly. In the Maritime Provinces the Executive Council did this in addition to advising the Governor.

<sup>3</sup> The name first appeared in Upper Canada about 1828, but was used also in other provinces.

political offices, land granting, education, banks and so forth, that the Governors could scarcely be independent even when they wished. The Councils were Family Compact strongholds. They could block bills passed by the Assemblies, and often the Compact had enough supporters in the Assembly to control it as well. Judges and magistrates were appointed from the little circle of Family Compact supporters, and the Chief Justice sat on the Executive Council. Thus, in each province, the Family Compact could largely control the making of laws, the enforcing of them, and the punishment of people who broke them.

This certainly was not democratic government, but neither was it unnatural in the early nineteenth century, since democracy, as we understand it, was just beginning to develop. Nor was Family Compact government entirely bad. Most of its leaders were men of honesty and ability, and some sense of public duty. Minority rule was, however, bound to be challenged. The nineteenth century was a great liberalizing century. In Britain, the United States, South America, and many parts of Europe a new democratic spirit was rising. In British North America, especially after 1815, we can see it in such things as education, the establishment of newspapers, and the careers of men like Howe, Mackenzie, and Ryerson. People were rousing themselves against minority rule, and the Family Compacts with their privileges were sure to be attacked.

**The First Blows at Minority Rule in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.** In Nova Scotia, a famous trial began the struggle against minority rule. On New Year's day, 1835, Joseph Howe printed in his paper the *Novascotian* an attack on the officials of Halifax<sup>4</sup> accusing them of corruption and mismanagement. Howe had never been unreasonable in his political writing, and he was widely respected even among the Tories, but the Family Compact decided to make this a test case and charged him with libel. So feared was the Compact's power that no lawyer would defend Howe, and he resolved to defend himself. With a magnificent speech of over six hours, he held jury and court room spellbound

<sup>4</sup> Municipal government was then by appointed officials. One of the most important illustrations of the rise of democracy in this period was the change from appointed officials to elected councils, school boards, etc.



and won a complete victory. When he was carried home in triumph on the shoulders of his cheering supporters, people knew that a turning point had come in the history of Nova Scotia.

In the next year Howe was elected to the Assembly, and immediately, as leader of the Reform Party, he pushed forward his campaign. Like every opponent of minority rule he was accused of



Joseph Howe after a Halifax triumph

disloyalty. The Family Compacts always declared themselves the special supporters of the Governors, who were the King's representatives, and denied that there could be any loyalty but their own. Howe never failed to denounce this ridiculous view. Britain, he said, preserved her colonies through "the natural affection of their inhabitants" and not through the "patriotism of a dozen or two persons, whose names

are scarcely known in England." His first big victory came in August, 1837, when a despatch from the Colonial Secretary ordered that the control of the Family Compact over the Executive Council be reduced. Four members of the Assembly were appointed to the Executive Council,<sup>5</sup> and the Governor now had Reformers, as well as Tories, to advise him. Clearly the Family Compact stronghold was beginning to crumble.

Meanwhile in New Brunswick a struggle very similar had been going on, led by Lemuel Allan Wilmot, a lawyer who was, like

<sup>5</sup> It was at this time that a Legislative Council was created in Nova Scotia, and three members of the Assembly were appointed to it. This also weakened the Family Compact.

Howe, the son of a Loyalist family. Wilmot got even an earlier victory than Howe. In 1836 he went to England and brought back the Colonial Secretary's consent that the Assembly should have greater powers in such important matters as land granting and the provincial revenues.

The victories in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, important as they were, were still far from bringing Responsible Government. Indeed Reformers themselves were not yet ready to demand the full Cabinet system. They wanted a more democratic government and an end of Family Compact rule, but they did not want to weaken the tie with Britain. Meanwhile in Upper and Lower Canada the same struggle against minority rule had begun, but with very different results.

**Drifting Toward Rebellion in Upper Canada.** In July 1818 the little frontier capital of York was the scene of a convention, such as had never before met in Upper Canada. Hundreds of pioneer farmers had gathered from all parts of the Province to consider a protest against their grievances. They were loyal men, many of them veterans of the War of 1812, but they were filled with righteous indignation. Robert Gourlay, a recently arrived Scottish settler, was the prime mover. Gourlay had been struck by the backwardness of the Province, and had circulated a letter asking people to state their causes of discontent. "What in your opinion", ran one of his questions, "retards the improvement of your township in particular, or the province in general, and what would most contribute to the same?" The letter and the convention made Gourlay a popular hero, and the Governor and Councils were thoroughly alarmed. Gourlay was arrested, imprisoned for months, and after a most unfair trial was threatened with death if he did not leave the province. Unfortunately, he had injured his cause by his extreme and unwise language, calling Strachan, for example, "a lying little fool." But there was no justification for the treatment given him, and the whole affair was an unhappy prophecy of the bitter and violent spirit which finally led to rebellion.

The grievances which were so widespread in Upper Canada centred chiefly around land, education, and religion. In spite of its abundance land was expensive and hard to obtain, owing

mostly to the fact that large blocks were held in idleness, many of them granted to government officials or favoured individuals who were keeping them to sell at high prices. Since these vacant lands paid no taxes, the scattered settlers had to bear a double burden. Roads were scarce and bad, and the pioneer farmer often could not transport what little he had to sell or find a market for it. To remedy these grievances the Family Compact was doing nothing, although settlers were beginning to come into the province in large numbers.

The "Clergy Reserves" were one of the greatest causes of discontent because they touched all the grievances of land, education, and religion. The Canada Act of 1791 had provided that in each new township a reserve of land, equal to one-seventh of the land granted to individuals, should be set aside "for the support of a Protestant clergy." Strachan claimed all the Reserves for the Church of England. Others said the Reserves should be divided among all the churches, while still others argued that they should be used entirely for the support of schools which were sorely needed.

Strachan claimed, however, much more than the Clergy Reserves. He believed that the Church of England was intended by the Canada Act to be "established", as in England; that it should control education; and that its special privileges<sup>6</sup> should be protected. He thought that churches like the Methodists were full of American influences, and he feared republicanism and extreme democratic ideas. To his opponents, his charges of disloyalty seemed most unfair. Like Howe in Nova Scotia, they resented the idea that government was safe only in the hands of a privileged minority.

A Reform Party began to appear in Upper Canada in 1825. William Lyon Mackenzie had just started the *Colonial Advocate* in York, and in it he violently attacked the Family Compact. Mackenzie was fearless and sincere, but he poured out such a stream of abuse on his opponents that he aroused the most bitter resentment. In 1826 a number of young Family Compact sympathizers raided

<sup>6</sup> Marriages, for example, could only be performed by a Church of England Clergyman or a justice of the peace. Not until 1830 did people have the right to be married by any clergyman they chose.

his press and threw some of his type into Toronto Bay, but this outburst solved nothing as Mackenzie sued them and got damages which set him up in business again. He soon had a rapidly growing support, especially in the newer settlements, and in the election of 1828 the Reformers won a majority in the Assembly for the first time.

Unfortunately, they accomplished little: the Family Compact controlled the two Councils, and the Reformers spent their time in complaining of abuses rather than in making constructive proposals. In two years the Family Compact again had a majority in the Assembly, and the most extreme Tories now decided to make an object lesson of Mackenzie. Their line of attack was not very wise. Twice they expelled him from the Assembly and each time he was re-elected; then three times they refused to let him take his seat. On the last of these occasions there was almost a riot in the House. So Mackenzie became more than ever a popular hero.

By this time tempers were hot; Mackenzie was lashing his opponents with tongue and pen and they were replying with gems such as: "A reptile unworthy of the notice of any gentleman." Rioting had broken out over Mackenzie's elections, and moderate men were fearful of still more violence to come. Unfortunately, the Reformers, unlike those in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, were divided. In Upper Canada settlements were so scattered, and immigrants were pouring in so rapidly, that it was hard to organize a united party. But this was not the only difficulty. Mackenzie could not win the confidence of all the Reformers. He was fearless and popular, but so unreasonable and



WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE

extreme that many who sympathized with him were afraid to trust his judgment. In 1833 he quarrelled with Ryerson and the Methodists, who were leading the fight against Strachan's claims to control the Clergy Reserves and education, and from this point the Reformers were hopelessly divided.

Into this scene of bitterness and confusion came in 1836 the worst choice for Governor in the history of British North America

—Sir Francis Bond Head. Head started out well by placing three moderate Reformers on his Executive Council, among them Robert Baldwin. Baldwin was the first Reformer in British North America to advocate the Cabinet system of Responsible Government, and he was to play a great part in solving the difficulties of the next ten years. He had no sympathy with Mackenzie's extremes, and if Head had chosen to work with moderate men like Baldwin something might



Rebels drilling in North York

have been done to reform abuses. Instead, he immediately quarrelled with Baldwin and the other moderate Councillors, then brought on an election, and charged everyone who opposed him with disloyalty. By these unwise and unfair tactics, Head and the Compact won an overwhelming victory.

The position of the Reformers now seemed hopeless. Moderates among them like Baldwin could do nothing but wait, trusting that some change for the better would come. Extremists like Mackenzie grew more and more bitter. By July, 1837, Mackenzie's

paper was asking "Will' Canadians declare Independence and shoulder muskets?" By late summer men were drilling and gathering arms secretly, and Mackenzie was travelling through the province addressing meetings and organizing support. It is not clear that even yet he planned rebellion, but at this moment events in Lower Canada forced the issue.

**Drifting Toward Rebellion in Lower Canada.** The struggle against Family Compact government in Lower Canada had one great difference from that in the other provinces—it was in part a conflict between French and English. The English-speaking merchant class largely controlled the Chateau Clique<sup>7</sup> and through it the Executive and Legislative Councils, while the French had a large majority in the Assembly. But this was not enough to cause civil war. Indeed, for almost thirty years after the Canada Act of 1791, French and English got on fairly well together in spite of some hot disputes. About 1820, however, came a turning point. With the union in 1821 of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, the fur trade was ended for Lower Canada, and the merchants went into the new commerce in timber and grain. They wanted canals built and immigration from the British Isles encouraged. The French were not interested in commerce. They objected to taxes for schemes like canals, and they feared a large increase of English settlers.

In 1822 a proposal was made which left a deep impression in Lower Canada. The Chateau Clique and the Tories of Upper Canada almost succeeded in getting the British Parliament to pass an Act uniting the two provinces. This would have put the French in a minority in the new united Assembly, and the Act also provided that after fifteen years English only should be allowed in the debates of the Legislative Council and the Assembly. French-Canadian leaders were thoroughly alarmed, and from this time the French majority in the Assembly organized itself in an unbending struggle against the Chateau Clique. Their leader was Louis Joseph Papineau, a seigneur of good family, tall, handsome and eloquent. Papineau's father had helped defend Quebec during the American

<sup>7</sup> This name was much used in Lower Canada, being taken from the Chateau St. Louis which was the residence of the Governors in Quebec until it was destroyed by fire in 1834.

invasion of 1775; he, himself, had been an officer in the War of 1812, and as late as 1820 he had praised the advantages enjoyed by French Canadians under British rule. After 1822, however, he became convinced that the French were threatened with the loss of their rights and influence.



LOUIS JOSEPH PAPINEAU

The chief weapon of Papineau and his followers was that the Assembly could refuse to vote taxes. The Governor had a few sources of revenue like land-granting which were not controlled by the Assembly, but these were not enough to keep the government going. So the two parties were deadlocked—the majority in the Assembly refusing to provide money for the things the Chateau Clique wanted, the Chateau Clique running the Councils and blocking the wishes of the Assembly. In 1830 the British government offered to give the Assembly control of all revenues, if in return it would vote a permanent

sum to pay the salaries of the Governor and other officials, but Papineau refused this proposal. He was set on a complete victory or nothing.

As the struggle dragged on, tempers flamed up and signs of violence appeared. In 1832 rioting broke out during an election in Montreal, stones were thrown at troops called out to keep order, shots were fired, three French Canadians were killed. The Tories were even more responsible than the Reformers for these first signs of violence, but there was blame on both sides. Papineau, like Mackenzie, criticized but offered almost nothing constructive. He proposed that the Legislative Council be elected, but this would still have left the Governor and Executive Council in an inde-

pendent position. In 1834 Papineau and his supporters drew up an astonishing document of complaints, known as the Ninety-two Resolutions. Some of its protests were fully justified, but as a whole it was bitter and unreasonable and its approving references to the American Revolution were unwise. This divided the Reformers as the quarrel of Mackenzie and Ryerson had done in Upper Canada. Papineau lost the sympathy of moderate French Canadians, and especially of the leaders of the Church who had no desire to encourage rebellion.

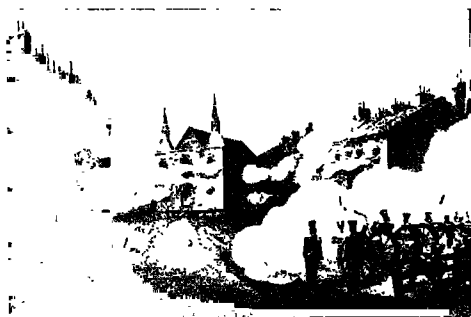
By 1837 government in the province was at a standstill, and finally the Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, resolved to take decisive action. On his suggestion the British Parliament passed Ten Resolutions renewing the offer of 1830, but saying that, if the Assembly refused to accept it, the Governor might pay out money without the consent of the Assembly. The announcement of Russell's Ten Resolutions created tremendous excitement. "The people," declared Papineau, "should not and will not submit to them." Through the summer, meetings were organized and men began drilling on both sides. "The time has come," declared Wolfred Nelson, one of Papineau's lieutenants, "to melt our spoons into bullets." By autumn Montreal was on the verge of civil war, and in November street fighting broke out. Papineau seems not to have favoured rebellion at the last,<sup>8</sup> but the storm had now got beyond him. The first shots were being fired. The short but unhappy civil war had begun.

**The Rebellions of 1837-8 and the Mission of Lord Durham.** On the night of November 21, 1837, a detachment of soldiers floundered through rain and half-frozen mud toward St. Denis on the Richelieu River. There the rebels were gathered in force, and next morning after five hours of fighting the attackers had to retire leaving six killed. It was the rebels' only victory. Two days later at St. Charles on the Richelieu a rebel force was routed. "We had two small rusty field pieces," wrote its leader afterwards, "but they were as useless as two logs.

<sup>8</sup> Papineau fled to the United States at the beginning of the Rebellion, and later went to France. He returned to Canada in 1845, and sat in the legislature for eight years, but by that time he had lost his influence to more constructive leaders.



The firearms were common flint locks in all conditions of dilapidation, some tied together with strings." About three weeks later at St. Eustache just west of Montreal another rebel force was routed, the church in which it had gathered burned, and about seventy killed. The Rebellion in Lower Canada was broken.



(John Ross Robertson Collection)

#### THE BATTLE OF ST. EUSTACHE

It had been hopeless from the beginning. Only in the districts near Montreal did it have support. The French-Canadian Clergy denounced it and the great majority of the French-Canadians, discontented though they were, took no part. Papineau had misjudged his people in rashly en-

couraging them toward violence, but no less to blame had been the extreme Tories who for years had branded the French-Canadians as an inferior race and had goaded Papineau and his supporters to desperation.

In Upper Canada the rebels had even less success. On learning of the rebellion in Lower Canada, Mackenzie, who had all along been in touch with Papineau, felt that the hour to strike had come. A force gathered at Montgomery's Tavern, just north of Toronto, intending to seize the capital. Untrained, and armed only with muskets, home-made pikes and even wooden cudgels, the rebel "army" must have been a pathetic sight. On December 5, it marched down Yonge Street, until in the darkness of early evening it met a picket on guard. A "comic opera" battle resulted. One volley was fired, and both sides struck with panic turned tail and ran in opposite directions. Two days later Montgomery's Tavern was attacked and burned, and the rebels scattered.

This by no means ended matters, however. Mackenzie and many of his supporters fled across the border, where thousands of people mistakenly believed that Canada was just waiting to be

liberated. Mackenzie set up, what he called, a "Provisional Government", for Upper Canada, and prepared for an invasion of Canada with Navy Island in the Niagara River as headquarters. Canadian forces gathered on their side of the river, and one night some bold spirits crossed to Navy Island, seized the Steamer, *Caroline*, which had been carrying supplies to Mackenzie, and burned her. This attack on American territory aroused tremendous excitement. Soon there were other alarming incidents. In January, 1838, a raid was made from Detroit by a party of "Patriots" in the schooner *Anne*, the commander calling upon the citizens of Upper Canada to "Rally around the standard of Liberty, and victory and a glorious future of independence will be yours." In March several hundred men walked across the ice of Lake Erie and raided Pelee Island. For months Upper Canada was in a state of alarm. In May a lawless gang attacked the steamer *Sir Robert Peel* in the St. Lawrence and burned her. In June there was a raid across the Niagara River, and an attempted rising in the Shorthills district. These outbreaks accomplished nothing, however.

The Rebellion failed in Upper as it did in Lower Canada because thousands of Reformers, though they hated Family Compact rule, would not join an armed rising. But this was forgotten by violent Tories, who branded all their opponents as disloyal and proceeded to spread terror through the Province. Rebels were hunted down, innocent people suffered, and hundreds who were hopeless of improvement moved to the United States.

The Rebellions in Canada were a shock to England. Queen Victoria had just come to the throne, and a new era of loyalty seemed to have opened. Now her first year was marred by rebellion in the largest colony of her empire. Action was needed, and the British Government took it by appointing the Earl of Durham on what proved to be the most important mission ever sent from England to British North America. Durham was one of England's greatest public figures. A proud aristocrat, but known for years as a liberal, he was among the chief of those who had framed the Great Reform Bill of 1832. Spirited and hot tempered, he had also a courage and devotion to duty which would risk much in a great cause. Only his high sense of public duty took him to

Canada, for he was a sick man when he consented to go. On April 24, he embarked at Portsmouth and six weeks later was greeted at Quebec by cheering crowds, who lined the streets to welcome him.

Durham's problems were baffling. The Assemblies of Upper and Lower Canada had been suspended; hundreds of political



*(From Lindsay's Life and Times of W. L. Mackenzie)*

#### THE BATTLE OF MONTGOMERY'S FARM

prisoners filled the jails; violence along the American border threatened to flare into open warfare with the United States; and in the midst of these problems Durham was expected to prepare recommendations for reforming the government of the Canadas and ending the strife which for years had torn the Canadas into warring factions.

The difficulties with the United States demanded most skilful handling. Acts of lawlessness and rumours of invasion continued through 1838, and the governments of the border states did nothing to curb them. During the summer a secret society, the Hunters' Lodges, was organized to conquer Canada, and grew, it is said, to 80,000 members. Serious trouble, having nothing to do with the Rebellions, also broke out between New Brunswick and Maine. Here the exact location of the boundary had been in dispute since the Treaty of 1783, and this resulted in violent

quarrels between lumbermen from the two sides of the border. New Brunswick and Maine each called out its militia, and at one time the troops were only thirty yards apart. That this Aroostook War, as it was called, and all the other border clashes did not bring war with the United States, was owing to the efforts of Durham, the British government, and President Van Buren of the United States,



*From Lindsay's Life and Times of W. L. Mackenzie*

#### THE BATTLE OF WINDMILL POINT

On November 13, 1838, rebels crossed the St. Lawrence just below Prescott. This rather imaginative view is from an old print.

who worked together to preserve peace. Feeling was running high in the United States, and Van Buren courageously risked his popularity by doing all he could to avoid a crisis.<sup>9</sup>

Durham spent five crowded months in Canada, most of it in Quebec, but he travelled as far as Niagara, and through his secretaries collected an enormous

amount of information which later was used in his famous *Report*. It was one of his most statesmanlike actions which ended his mission. On June 28, 1838, the first anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession, he freed the political prisoners who had crowded the jails for months. Eight only were held, and these he banished to Bermuda. Unfortunately, in naming a particular place of banishment, he exceeded his powers, and his enemies in England pounced on this legal error. The British government was weak, and, instead of defending him for an unimportant mistake, it disallowed his order. Deserted by those who should have supported him, Durham felt he could do nothing but resign. "The streets were crowded," wrote one who saw him ride through Quebec for the last time. "The spectators filled every window and every house top, and though every hat was raised as he passed, a deep silence marked the grief for Lord Durham's departure."

<sup>9</sup> The boundary between Maine and New Brunswick was finally settled in 1842 by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.

**Durham's Report.** Gloom and disappointment would have been the end of Durham's mission had it not been for the *Report* into the preparation of which he threw all his feverish energy. Two months after his return to England it was completed, printed, and laid before Parliament. It was to prove a turning point in the history not only of Canada, but of the Empire.

The *Report*, while it touched on all the provinces, gave by far the most attention to conditions in the Canadas. To end the crisis there Durham had two principal recommendations: the union of Upper and Lower Canada, and the introduction of Responsible Government. He favoured union because the separation of the provinces since 1791 had caused many disputes, and had made impossible, for instance, the completion of the St. Lawrence canals. Durham, however, had other motives also for urging union. He believed that conflict between French and English was at the root of the trouble in Lower Canada, and that union would help to solve the difficulty by reducing the French to a minority in the new government, instead of leaving them with the large majority which they had held in the former Assembly. He proposed, moreover, that the French should be made like English Canadians as rapidly as possible by discouraging the use of their language and changing their laws.

Durham's views on the French Canadians are the most serious defect of his *Report*. Much of what he said was true. They lacked training in self-government and their leaders had been rash. Certainly men like Papineau could not be trusted with Responsible Government. But Durham was wrong in thinking that the French could be deprived of their language and laws after two centuries of settlement along the St. Lawrence. The future was soon to show that difficulties between French and English could be solved, not by Durham's policy, but only by developing co-operation and a sense of responsibility on both sides.

Responsible Government was the most daring and important of Durham's recommendations. By it he meant that the British system of Cabinet Government should be adapted to the colonies. The objection to this idea had been that there might be a clash between the Executive Council and the instructions sent to a Gov-

error from the Colonial office. In such a case, how could the Governor obey both his masters? "Responsible Government," said Haliburton in Nova Scotia, "is responsible nonsense." Durham had two answers to this dilemma. (1) He proposed to make a clash unlikely by limiting the power of the colonial governments to local affairs, in which Britain had no desire to interfere. Four matters which touched the relation of the colonies with the Empire were to be kept under control of the British government. These were: the regulation of trade, foreign affairs, land granting, and the form of government as provided, for instance, in the Act of Union which Durham was recommending. (2) His second answer was that Responsible Government would strengthen, not weaken, the Empire. He denounced the Family Compacts and their claim that the loyalty of the colonies depended on keeping them in power. Durham could not prove that freedom and self government would make the colonies more loyal, but the future was to show that he was right.

The honour of first advocating Responsible Government must go to Robert Baldwin of Upper Canada, who had been urging it for several years. Baldwin wrote to Durham while he was in Canada, and convinced him that Responsible Government would work. But Durham's contribution was also essential. By his *Report* he forced it on the attention of the British government and people, and ensured that it would be given a trial. Only by the combined influence of Durham and colonial reformers like Baldwin did Responsible Government become a possibility.

Durham's other recommendations, if less important, were not less necessary to his aims. He had a vision of the colonies in the future, not weak and divided, but united into a British-American nation. Before coming from England, he had hoped that a federation could be formed immediately, but he soon saw that this was still impossible. As a first step he urged the union of the Canadas and the development of communications, such as the completion of the St. Lawrence Canals and even a road from Halifax to Quebec. To train people in democratic government he advocated the establishment of local and municipal governments, and elected councils. Lower Canada in 1839 had nothing of this kind, and

in Upper Canada the system of local government was imperfect. He also recommended the extension of education, because as he said, general education was necessary to the "establishment of a strong, popular government."

Durham's *Report* is not above criticism, but its merits far outweigh its defects. It held up the ideal of colonial self-government as something to be welcomed not feared and suppressed. It encouraged democracy by recommending the development of education and local government. It pointed to the possibility of a strong British-American nation. Today, for these reasons, Durham is numbered among Canada's nation builders. He did not live to see his dream realized. He died in June, 1840, his death hastened without doubt by the strain of his Canadian mission. His last words were, "Canada will one day do justice to my memory."

**The Struggle to Define Responsible Government, 1839-46.** Even though Durham's *Report* was approved by the British government, Responsible Government was not yet won. The Family Compact groups were bitterly opposed to it and many people both in England and Canada thought it was only a step toward dissolving the Empire. Almost ten years of political strife for Canadian Reformers were needed to show just what Responsible Government was, and to prove that it must be fully accepted.

In Nova Scotia Howe and the Reformers had seemed on the way to victory in 1837, but the Rebellions in Canada had injured their cause by making many people think that all Reformers were disloyal. Now with Durham's *Report* to support them, the Reformers demanded once more that the Assembly should have control over the Executive Council. At this moment a sensational incident occurred. J. B. Uniacke, who had been the Tory leader in the Assembly, changed his views and became Howe's chief supporter. This courageous act greatly strengthened the Reform party, and three Reformers, including Howe and Uniacke were admitted to the Executive Council.

The Executive Council now included members of both parties in the Assembly, and some argued that this was Responsible Government. True Cabinet Government, however, is party government,

that is, the members of the Cabinet must all belong to the party which has the majority in the elected House. For a time Howe and the Reformers tried belonging to an Executive Council which included their opponents, but they soon found this entirely unsatisfactory, and insisted that the Council should be made up of members of the majority party only. The Governor and Tories opposed their demand, and for several years political strife raged over this question. It is hard for us to realize how bitter the struggle was; Howe was denounced as a red republican, threatened with violence and challenged to duels. He even fought one, allowing his opponent to fire and then firing in the air himself. During these years the Tories managed to keep a majority of not more than three in the Assembly, but such a condition could not continue indefinitely. As soon as the Reformers won an election they were sure to demand that a real Cabinet made up only of members from their own party be formed. What would happen then? The answer came in 1846, but before seeing what it was let us turn to the Canadas, since the same question about the meaning of Responsible Government arose there.

In October, 1839, the new Governor, Charles Poulett Thomson, or Lord Sydenham as he soon became, landed at Quebec. Thomson, who was a statesman of great charm and wide experience, felt that the Canadas needed, more than anything else, a programme of practical reforms. First he persuaded the governments of Upper and Lower Canada to agree to the union of the provinces, after which an Act of Union was passed by the British Parliament and came into effect in February, 1841. Union was most unpopular among the French Canadians, because it put them in a minority in the new government,<sup>10</sup> and equally unpopular with the Family Compact of Upper Canada, which feared quite rightly that its power would be reduced. Following Union, Sydenham succeeded in carrying through a series of useful measures including a system of local government by elected councils, such as Durham had recommended, and also arrangements for the construction of the St. Lawrence canals.

<sup>10</sup> By the Act of Union, Upper Canada was given the same number of members as Lower Canada, although it had a smaller population. Durham had recommended that representation be according to population.



In accomplishing all this, Sydenham acted as his own Prime Minister. There were no well organized parties at the time of the union, and Sydenham built up a party of his own, which had a majority in the elected Assembly. He appointed new men to the Executive Council so that the Family Compact no longer controlled it, and he consulted his Council on all important matters, though he did not feel bound to accept its advice. Sydenham's supporters insisted that this was Responsible Government. As in Nova Scotia, however, the Reformers of Upper Canada led by Robert Baldwin declared that Responsible Government meant Cabinet Government, and that they would be satisfied with nothing less. A tremendous debate on the meaning of Responsible Government took place in the first session of the Legislature after the union, but it did not clear the air very much. The *Kingston Chronicle* said in reporting it that, "The perpetual foaming and puffing of the honourable gentlemen reminded us of a set of small steam engines whose safety valves kept them from actually bursting their boilers on the floor of the House".

To win their case, the Reformers had to develop a well-organized party with support among both French and English. This could only be done by leaders who trusted and understood each other. Fortunately, there were two such, Robert Baldwin and Louis Hippolyte LaFontaine. The partnership of Baldwin and LaFontaine is one of the finest chapters in the history of Canadian public life. LaFontaine had been a supporter of Papineau; and, though he had not taken part in the Rebellion, he had fled for a time from the country. Like most French Canadians he had not liked the union, but he saw that the wise policy was not always to obstruct and oppose as Papineau had done, but to take part in government and show that he and his followers were worthy of responsibility. Baldwin, on his part, welcomed co-operation with French-Canadian Reformers. He saw that Durham had been wrong about the French, and that true Responsible Government could come about only if French and English Reformers worked together.

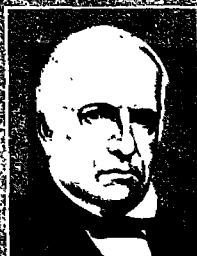
Baldwin and LaFontaine had their first great victory in 1842. By September of that year their supporters had a majority in the Assembly, and for the first time the Executive Council became a



HON. JOSEPH HOWE  
N.S.



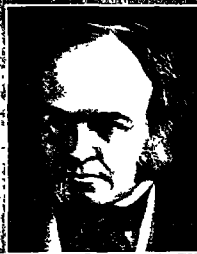
HON. ROBERT BALDWIN  
UPPER CANADA



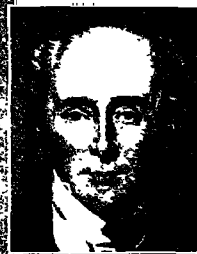
SIR L. H. LAFONTAINE  
LOWER CANADA



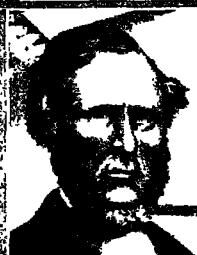
LORD DURHAM



LORD ELGIN



EARL GREY



HON. GEORGE COLES  
P.E.I.



HON. L. A. WILMOT  
N.B.



HON. R. J. UNIACKE  
N.S.

LEADERS IN THE MOVEMENT FOR  
RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

real Cabinet with all its members chosen from the Reform party. This notable advance toward full Responsible Government owed much to one other person, the new governor Sir Charles Bagot.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Sydenham, he was willing to accept the Cabinet system, and to trust the French-Canadian Reformers with a share in the government. A storm of indignation greeted his courageous decision to accept the control of the Reform party now that it had a majority in the Assembly. "According to the Family Compact journals," he wrote, "I am a radical, a puppet, an old woman, an apostate."

The battle for Cabinet Government was by no means won, however. The British government felt that Bagot had gone much too fast in giving the Reform party control; and, when Bagot died a few months later, Sir Charles Metcalfe was sent out with the idea that he would go back to Sydenham's method of taking an active part in affairs and only accepting the advice of his Executive Council when he pleased. A deadlock quickly developed between Metcalfe and his Council. "I cannot consent to be the tool of a party," he declared, and in the election of 1844<sup>12</sup> he threw himself into the fight, denounced the Reformers as disloyal republicans, and succeeded in defeating them.

Thus by 1845-6 the condition in Canada was in a way similar to that in Nova Scotia. In both cases the Reformers were determined that Responsible Government should mean Cabinet Government, while the Tories, knowing that they could not always control the Assembly, were violently opposing the idea of Cabinet Government and insisting that the Governor should continue to manage things and act independently when he pleased. In both cases also there were possibilities of a very dangerous deadlock. At this point a change took place in Britain which had a far-reaching and decisive influence.

<sup>11</sup> This was the same Sir Charles Bagot whose name was connected with the Rush-Bagot Treaty.

<sup>12</sup> Elections were violent affairs at that time. They lasted two or more days and voters did not vote by ballot but declared their vote publicly at the polls. An account of an election in the 1840's says that "Bodies of voters armed with bludgeons, swords and firearms" kept driving each other from the polls. "One man had his arm nearly cut off by a stroke of a sword, and two others are not expected to live from the blows they have received."

**The Principles of Cabinet Government Accepted, 1846-49.** In the 1840's Britain adopted "Free Trade", that is she abolished duties on goods imported from foreign countries. This sweeping change was a hard blow to the British North American colonies since they lost the preferences which had been given to their timber, wheat and flour; but it meant, on the other hand, that the British government gave up its control of the colonies' trade and was willing to allow them more freedom in directing their own affairs. The year 1846 was the great turning point. In that year the Corn Laws were repealed by the British Parliament, a new government came into power in London, and with it a new Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, took office. The change was like a breath of fresh air; Grey, who was Durham's brother-in-law, believed that Responsible Government meant Cabinet Government, and that it should be granted to the colonies generously and without hesitation. In November, 1846, Grey sent a famous despatch to this effect to the Governor of Nova Scotia. The Governor, he said, must not support one party against another, but must accept the control of whichever party held a majority in the elected Assembly.

Grey's despatch was all that Reformers in British North America had hoped or asked for, and in Nova Scotia it brought the struggle for Cabinet Government to an end. In an election in 1847 the Reformers won a majority in the Assembly, and following it they were directed by the Governor to choose the members of the Executive Council. Uniacke became Prime Minister, Howe, Provincial Secretary, and for the first time Nova Scotia's Executive Council became a real Cabinet. After a struggle of more than ten years, the battle had been won without rebellion or bloodshed. In New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island the political struggles during these years were very confused, but they finally had the same result. The first Cabinet, or party ministry, was formed in Prince Edward Island in 1851 with George Coles as Premier, and in New Brunswick in 1854.

In Canada, meanwhile, the final scene was as violent as in Nova Scotia it was peaceful. Early in 1847 Lord Elgin, the greatest governor ever sent to British North America, arrived at Quebec. He had a clear idea of his policy—he would put Cabinet Govern-

ment into effect and following Lord Grey's despatch would work with whichever party had a majority in the Assembly. The Tory ministry, which was in power when he arrived, was "As weak as a lot of shelled pease," Elgin wrote; and, when an election some months later gave the Reformers a majority, Elgin called on Baldwin and LaFontaine to form a ministry.

For the second time a Cabinet had been formed in Canada. But the end was not yet. Baldwin and LaFontaine started immediately a remarkable series of reforms, among them being many, such as the improvement of education and the further extension of elected councils in municipal government, which greatly hastened the growth of democracy. Altogether the new ministry was responsible for nearly two hundred measures. One of them, the Rebellion Losses Bill, brought a crisis. This was a bill to compensate people in Lower Canada whose property had been destroyed during the Rebellion of 1837. Compensation for property had already been given in Upper Canada, and Lower Canada was now to have the same treatment. The bill refused compensation to anyone who had aided the Rebellion; but the Tories, who bitterly resented Elgin's action in calling on Baldwin and LaFontaine to form a ministry, decided to make this a test case. The cry, "No pay to rebels", was raised. Excitement and riots spread through both provinces, and Tories demanded that Elgin should refuse to sign the bill if it were passed.

Elgin, however, though he did not like all the details of the bill, was determined to stand by the principle of Cabinet Government; and on April 25, 1849, he drove through Montreal to the Parliament Buildings where he signed a number of bills, among them that on Rebellion Losses. "When I left the House of Parliament," he wrote later, "I was received with mingled cheers and hootings. A small knot of individuals consisting, it has since been ascertained, of persons of a respectable class in society, pelted the carriage with missiles which they must have brought with them for the purpose." This was only a beginning. That night a mob rushed into the Parliament Buildings, drove the members out, set fire to the buildings, and completely destroyed them, including the Parliamentary Library with its records which could never be replaced. For three

days Montreal seemed in the grip of revolution. On the 30th Elgin again drove through the streets to meet the members of the Legislature. This time he narrowly escaped death. His carriage was pelted with stones and every panel broken. Through the whole crisis Elgin refused to take any action of his own, and insisted that responsibility must rest squarely on his ministers and on the ma-



The Burning of the Parliament House in Montreal, April 25, 1849

iority which supported them in the Assembly. Thus, at the risk of his life Elgin upheld the practice of Cabinet Government, and never again was it tested so severely as in 1849. From this time it was accepted by both parties as a foundation principle of Canadian government.

So bitter were some of Elgin's opponents that they issued an "Annexation Manifesto" urging that Canada join the United States. They got little support, however. The real cause of discontent was economic, not political. The years 1847-49 had been years of depression; the colonies had lost their preferences and trade was very bad. In 1849 an improvement began, which the British Parliament aided by repealing the restrictions keeping foreign ships out of colonial ports. In 1854 trade was still more benefited by a Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, which was concluded largely through Elgin's efforts, and which allowed

products of farm, forest, mine and fisheries to cross the boundary line freely. Elgin had always believed that there was no real desire for annexation, and that with prosperity the demand for it would disappear. Events had justified him.

**The Significance of Responsible Government.** In the struggle for Responsible Government two aims were twined together: the desire for a more democratic rule within each colony, and the desire for a greater degree of freedom and self-government in the Empire. It was the mingling of these two aims which made the struggle so complicated. Responsible Government meant for the colonies, not independence, but a growing democracy and freedom. This was the belief of the leaders who fought for it, and by 1849 they had shown that such an ideal was possible.

Their work was, also, a foundation on which others built, for Responsible Government went on expanding through the later history of Canada and the Empire far beyond the bounds which leaders like Baldwin, Howe, and LaFontaine had traced for it. "I have been possessed with the idea," wrote Elgin, "that it is possible to maintain on this soil of North America, British connexions and British institutions if you give the latter fairly and trustingly." This was the faith that made Responsible Government a reality in British North America, and then transformed the Empire.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Joseph Howe's words come ringing down through the years in *The heart of Howe* by D. C. Harvey, a book of selections from Howe's speeches. The reading list for chapter XXI gives other references for Howe. Two useful books in the "Chronicles of Canada" are *The Patriots of '37* by Alfred Decelles, a chronicle of the rebellion in Lower Canada, and *The Family Compact* by W. S. Wallace, an account of events in Upper Canada. The first book has material on Papineau, the second on Mackenzie. You will find *Early life in Upper Canada* and *The lives and times of the patriots* by Edwin C. Guillet useful for reference on Mackenzie's life, the rebellion in Upper Canada, later risings on the American border, and the fate of the rebels. Use the chapter headings as guides to the information you wish. The article on Marshall Spring Bidwell in R. G. Riddell's *Canadian portraits* gives a picture of a moderate reformer of Upper Canada. Some of the people living at the time of the rebellions have left us first-hand impressions. The letters in Langton's

*Early days in Upper Canada* contain shrewd comments on land speculation and politics (pp. 101, 139-141, 159-163, 171, 180-183). Mrs. Moodie in *Roughing it in the bush* (the chapter called *The outbreak*), and Mrs. Traill in *The backwoods of Canada* (chapter XIX) describe the effects of the rebellion on their lives. In much lighter style a novel *The only girl* by Emily Poynton Weaver shows how ordinary people became involved in the events of 1837. *The winning of popular government* by Archibald MacMechan, "Chronicles of Canada", deals with the period after the rebellions, from Durham to Elgin. There is a good account of Durham in the first chapter. *How Canada grew up* by D. J. Dickie has short articles on this period.





## **PART V**

### **The Dominion in the Making**



*(from a painting by Fergus Kyle)*

**The Iron Horse.**

## Part V

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### The Dominion in the Making

As the nineteenth century neared its halfway mark deep changes stirred in British North America. The stagecoach age had passed, the railway age was beginning. In the United States railways were already reaching toward the Maritime Provinces, toward Canada, and even toward the West from Chicago. Everywhere men were on the move. Red River was turning to look south across the border, and beyond the Rockies gold seekers were swarming up the West Coast. By 1858, they had reached the Fraser. From Atlantic to Pacific, British North America was drawing closer to the United States. Would it finally be absorbed? Certainly this seemed likely if it continued merely as a string of weak and disconnected colonies. But why should they not unite to form a British-American nation, bound together by common loyalties and helping each other in trade and defence? From such an impulse came Confederation in 1867, uniting four provinces. Confederation was a triumph of statesmanship, for only a minority in any province was really ready for it. Far-seeing leaders seized an opportunity which, if neglected, might never have returned. Within four years the new Dominion was enlarged to the Pacific. With Confederation came the first growth of national hopes and patriotism, but with it came also problems which seemed at times insuperable. Four million people, themselves divided, had undertaken to occupy and govern half a continent, whose parts were separated by great stretches of rock-land, forests, and mountains. The years following Confederation were years of depression, but in spite of disappointments, racial difficulties, and political strife, Canadians went on building their country and binding its parts together. As the years passed, other changes also appeared. With the United States, old suspicions and resentments gradually gave way to a new understanding. With Britain, a new relation developed. Step by step self-government was achieved, and from the old Empire emerged the ideal of a family of free nations joined not by force but by common interests and a spirit of co-operation.

## *DATES TO REMEMBER*

### PART V

- 1852** Cable laid between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.  
**1853** St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway opened—the first international railway.  
**1854-66** The Reciprocity Treaty with the United States.  
**1858** Gold rush to the Fraser River.  
**1859** Galt's tariff.  
**1860** Grand Trunk Railway finished from Sarnia to Rivière du Loup.  
**1861-65** Civil War in the United States.  
**1864** The Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences on Confederation  
**1866** Fenian raids.  
The London Conference frames the British North America Act.  
Transatlantic cable permanently installed.  
**1867** The Dominion of Canada formed with four provinces.  
The United States purchases Alaska from Russia.  
**1869** The acquisition of Rupert's Land.  
**1870** The Red River Rebellion.  
Manitoba becomes a province.  
**1871** British Columbia enters Confederation.  
The Treaty of Washington.  
Withdrawal of British forces from Canada, except from Halifax and Esquimalt.  
**1873** Prince Edward Island enters Confederation.  
The Royal North West Mounted Police organized.  
**1876** Completion of the Intercolonial Railway.  
First export of wheat from the West.  
Bell's first telephone message.  
**1879** The National Policy adopted.  
**1880** Britain transfers the Arctic Islands to Canada.  
**1885** Canadian Pacific Railway completed.  
The North-West Rebellion.  
**1887** First colonial conference called in London.  
**1895** Production of hydro-electric power at Niagara Falls.  
**1899-1902** The Boer War.  
**1903** Discovery of silver at Cobalt.  
The Alaska boundary dispute settled.  
**1904** Saunders develops Marquis wheat.  
**1905** Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan created.  
Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern railways undertaken.  
**1909** Establishment of the International Joint Commission.

## *Chapter XXIV*

### **British North America on the Eve of Confederation**

**T**HE period up to 1850 has been called the age of wind, wood, and water in British North America. After that begins the age of steam and steel. It is true that 1850, like many dates in history, was not a sharp dividing line. Steamboats were common before 1850 and even a few miles of railway line had been built. Nevertheless commerce, industry, and travel still depended on wood, wind, and water. Wooden vessels driven by sails, square timber for export, mills run by water wheels—these were the order of the day. But about 1850 there were signs of a new era and among them the most important was the railway.

**The Railway Age Begins in British North America.** Canada's pioneer railway train made its first journey on July 21, 1836. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in the colony and no wonder a crowd gathered to view the great event. Fourteen and a half miles of wooden rails topped with iron strips had been laid from La Prairie on the St. Lawrence opposite Montreal to St. John on the Richilieu River. This Champlain and St. Lawrence Railway, as it was called, was expected to shorten the journey from Montreal to New York, by at least five hours. The business-like little engine, the "Dorchester", so different from our modern stream-lined giants, was the latest model from Newcastle in England. Behind it on the opening day, were two little passenger cars for the Governor-General and special guests, and behind them several flat cars with benches for about two hundred other "respectable persons" as the newspapers called them. Bringing up the rear and soon left far behind were two more cars drawn by horses, because it was thought the Dorchester might not be equal to pulling everyone. The trip was voted a great success, even by the horse-

drawn guests for their cars were attached to the train on the return journey, and all agreed that while the speed was terrific—perhaps twenty miles per hour in places—the motion was much easier than that of a stage coach.

Three years later in 1839 the first “iron horse” came to the Maritime Provinces when a four-mile line was opened at the Albion Mines in Pictou County. On the opening day the little engine, appropriately named the “Samson”, puffed back and forth



*(The Royal Bank)*

The opening of the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railway, July 21, 1856.

drawing admiring crowds, and there was a great celebration including a torch-light procession and the roasting whole of an enormous ox stuffed with savoury dressing.

The railway era really began in the 1850's. At the beginning of the decade there were in British North America only some sixty miles of short lines which were intended merely as portages between waterways. By 1860 there were over two thousand miles, and railways were rivalling the waterways. Most of this railway building was done in Canada. In the Maritime Provinces trade and commerce still relied on the sea, but Canada, and especially Canada

West,<sup>1</sup> was inland. Its waterways were closed in winter, and railways could open it to settlement as nothing else could do. Moreover, by 1850 American railways were reaching toward the border and were ready to strike into and across Canadian territory.

Three lines were opened by 1855 which showed that a revolution in Canadian transportation had begun. The first to be finished, the St. Lawrence and Atlantic from Montreal to Portland, Maine, was the first international railway ever built. It was completed in 1853 by the joint efforts of Canadian and American investors for the purpose of connecting Montreal and the St. Lawrence with an ocean port that was open all winter. A year later, the Great Western was opened from the Niagara River through Hamilton to Windsor. It was intended not only to serve the part of Canada West through which it ran, but also to



(Canadian National Railways)

THE SAMSON AS PRESERVED IN HALIFAX

be a link for the through line from New York to Buffalo and westward from Detroit to Chicago. In 1855 the third line, the Northern, was finished from Toronto to Collingwood. It opened up the country north of Toronto but was also built with the idea that it would draw trade from Chicago and the Western States by way of Lake Michigan and Georgian Bay.

By this time a kind of fever of railway building began to spread, especially through Canada West. Every town wanted its share and little lines began to sprout in various directions, some of them foolishly planned and most of them quite incapable of realizing the rosy hopes of their builders. Still they encouraged settlement,

<sup>1</sup> Following the Union of 1841, Upper and Lower Canada were known as Canada West and Canada East. At Confederation in 1867 they were named Ontario and Quebec.



opening lands which had been inaccessible by roads or waterways. "Railroads," said one enthusiastic admirer, "are magic wands, horns of plenty, from which we scatter the seeds of population, and they spring up and fill the place we have made for them as water does when you dig a canal in a moist country."

Soon it was clear, however, that short disconnected railway lines were not enough. To prevent her trade from being drawn off through the United States, Canada needed a main line, or "trunk" line, which would run east and west from Lake Huron to Montreal and Quebec. Such a line might even attract the trade of the



Toronto in 1854 showing the water front just before railways came in.

American West. The St. Lawrence canals had been built for that purpose but already railways were putting canals in second place. Such were the ideas behind the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway which by 1860 was completed from Sarnia on the west to Rivière du Loup on the east—the longest trunk line on the continent. It was a very costly enterprise, and many people in Canada West objected to the assistance given it by the government on the ground that money was being spent extravagantly.

The section between Montreal and Toronto was completed in 1856, and the first through trains made their trips on October 27 of that year. People gathered in little crowds all along the line to

see them pass. "This is a most notable event in the history of our country," said the *Toronto Globe* which had been the Grand Trunk's severest critic. "We have assailed the manner in which the enterprise has been prosecuted. We have at no time denied the vast importance of the work." "It is certainly a novel feature in the history of Canadian travelling," said another, "when papers printed in Montreal can be read in Toronto the same day."

**An Era of Rapid Change.** Railways opened a vista of new and exciting possibilities. They were the first real invention in land travel for centuries. Stage coaches were slow and rough, and



(Canadian National Railways)

#### THE COMFORTS OF TRAVEL IN STAGE COACH DAYS

incapable of carrying freight, but railways were different. They could be built across great stretches of difficult country, and might solve, as nothing else could, the problem of the barriers which separated the parts of British North America.

As early as 1850 Joseph Howe went to England to get help for the building of an Intercolonial Railway to join the Maritime Provinces and Canada. So large a project would require the support of all the provinces and the British government as well. For a time Howe seemed to have succeeded; then differences arose over the route. The British government insisted that for reasons of defence the line through New Brunswick must be as far from the American border as possible, which would have meant that it

would miss Saint John and Fredericton. After much negotiating the scheme broke down. It was sure to come, in time, however, for men were talking even of railways which would span the continent. "I believe," said Howe in 1851, "that many in this room will live to hear the whistle of the steam-engine in the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and to make the journey from Halifax to the Pacific in five or six days."

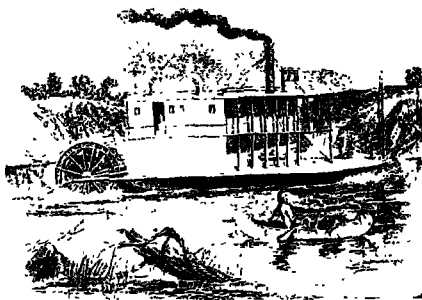
Railways were not the only change which "speeded-up" communications in the 1850's. The telegraph became common in this decade, and cables were even laid underwater. In 1852 the first cable in British North America was laid between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In this decade, too, ocean navigation by steam especially for passenger traffic became common. In 1850 a majority of immigrants still came by sailing vessels. In 1860, of 7836 who arrived in the St. Lawrence, only 904 came by sail. In 1851 the first steam service from Quebec across the Atlantic was begun. The company was founded by a Scots-Canadian, Hugh (later Sir Hugh) Allan, and its ships were known as the Allan line.

These changes in communication by land and sea were lessening barriers of distance, and rapidly drawing the provinces of British North America closer not only to Europe but to the United States.

**The Opening West.** Meanwhile in the West changes scarcely less rapid were taking place. In the 1850's settlement in the United States swept north and west of Chicago until it reached far up toward the Red River valley. Minnesota, which lay just south of the boundary line, had by the end of the decade a population of 172,000. No longer were Fort Garry, the Red River settlement, and the fur-trading empire of the Hudson's Bay Company isolated from the outside world. As early as 1853 a monthly mail service was organized between Red River and the nearest post office in Minnesota. Soon hundreds of ox carts were going back and forth between St. Paul and Fort Garry. In 1859 a steamer, the *Anson Northrup*, was put on Red River, and the trade across the border shot up by leaps and bounds. Even the Hudson's Bay Company began to abandon the Hudson Bay route and to import its goods through the United States. In the same year two young

newspaper men from Toronto brought press and type by the same route and began the *Nor' Wester*, the first newspaper published in what are now the Prairie Provinces.

These developments at Red River aroused great interest in Canada and especially in Canada West. After the union of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies in 1821, the West had been cut off from Canada,—how completely it is hard to realize. There is a story of a young clergyman who was told in 1832 to go to Sault Ste. Marie to establish an Indian mission. He had great difficulty in finding out how to get there, and wrote later, "Following the instructions I left York, as if going to the north pole, on the 20th of September, 1832, and reached Sault Ste. Marie on the 20th of October following." The fur-traders' empire was as unknown to Canadians as if it had been in the heart of another continent. In



The *Anson Northrup* on Red River.

the 1850's, however, a great change took place. As the route was opened to Red River through the United States, Canadians began to ask themselves what was going to happen to the North West. It could scarcely remain permanently under the Hudson's Bay Company—but would it be joined to Canada, or would it drift into union with the United States?

So keen was the interest in these questions by 1857 that the Canadian Assembly requested the British government to take steps to unite the North West to Canada, and in reply the British House of Commons appointed a special committee of investigation. This committee of 1857 brought out the widest differences of opinion as to the possibilities of settlement. Some witnesses thought immediate settlement was possible on a large scale. Sir George Simpson, on the other hand, said that conditions were unfavourable for profitable agriculture: and indeed, until the West got cheap trans-

portation through the later building of railways, it must be admitted that Simpson's opinions were more nearly correct than were those of his opponents. No more interesting opinion was given than that of Chief Justice Draper who had been sent as a witness by the Canadian government. "I hope you will not laugh at me as very visionary," he said, "but I hope to see the time, or that my children may see the time when there is a railway going all the way across the country and ending at the Pacific; and I entertain no doubt that that will be accomplished."



*(from Harper's, 1860)*

Red River cart brigade at Pembina.

The Committee of 1857 recommended that, if Canada wished to take over lands in the Red River and Saskatchewan valleys which were suitable for settlement, her desire should be favourably considered by the British government, and that the Company should continue to hold the fur trade in regions where permanent settlement was impossible. These recom-

mendations had no immediate results, however, because Canada was not yet equal to taking over even a part of the North West. Canadian opinion was far from united on the question. Many French Canadians were indifferent, or were opposed, on the ground that the North West would be settled by English-speaking Canadians. To acquire territory so far away would, moreover, be of doubtful value unless a route from Canada could be opened which would rival the route through St. Paul, and this was so enormous an undertaking that many thought it impossible. Red River, said an American paper, is "divorced from Canada by physical barriers which no human power can overcome."

Immediately following the inquiry of 1857 two expeditions were sent into the North West to settle, if possible, the questions which had been argued before the Committee. The expedition sent by

the British government, under the leadership of John Palliser, travelled from Red River westward across the mountains to the coast, and reported that wooded lands which were not too far north, were suitable for farming but that the open prairie was unsuitable. It advised the British government not to lend aid for the construction of any route between Canada and Red River because settlement would not be sufficient to repay so great an expenditure. The second expedition, which was sent by the Canadian government, was under the direction of a Canadian engineer, S. J. Dawson, and a professor, H. Y. Hind. Hind's



WINNIPEG IN 1846

opinion on the possibilities for settlement was more favourable than Palliser's, and Dawson after two years of careful surveys reported that a route by road and water could be opened from Fort William to Red River. For the moment nothing was done, but events were moving fast, and not many years were to pass before the Dawson road was built.

Ten years had brought enormous changes to the North West. In 1850 Red River had been a corner of the fur-trading empire remote from the world. By 1860 its isolation was ended. It lay squarely in the path of settlement and its future was hanging in the balance.

**Gold on the West Coast.** In 1849 there crowded to California a swarm of fortune hunters such as had never before collected in America. Gold had been discovered, and like a magnet it drew reckless adventurers from nearly every country in the world. Almost overnight they transformed the Pacific Coast.

From the diggings in California miners were soon pushing restlessly north from one valley and river to another, always hoping to "strike it rich" around the next bend, and at last in 1858 they reached the Fraser. The Fraser rush was one of the greatest on record. Wild rumours of the riches to be found there had spread



(Archives of British Columbia)

VICTORIA IN 1858

mysteriously down the coast, and within a few months a crowd estimated at not less than 25,000 swarmed to Victoria, Esquimalt, and Puget Sound, all bound for the new diggings.

1858 may well be named the birth year of modern British Columbia. Until that year Victoria and Esquimalt, the only two settlements, had scarcely more than 200 people. In 1849 Vancouver Island had been made a separate colony, and had even been granted an Assembly, the first in what is now Western Canada, but the Hudson's Bay Company was really in control of affairs and the fur trade still ruled supreme. Then came the rush of 1858. Victoria suddenly became a tent city with a pioneer newspaper, the *Victoria Gazette*, and with a population interested not in furs but in gold. On the mainland, with thousands of prospectors crowding in, a separate government was needed. In

1858, therefore, an Act of the British Parliament created a new colony, British Columbia, and within a few months a site was chosen for a capital which was named by Queen Victoria, New Westminster.

Meanwhile, gold seekers were starting a mad scramble up the Fraser, testing every sand bar for hidden treasure. Soon they reached the terrifying canyons which had almost cost Simon Fraser his life fifty years earlier. Many rich bars were found but the adventurous pushed on. Undaunted by danger and the frightful difficulty of bringing in supplies, they always hoped to find the fabulous gold seam from which nuggets had been washed into the river bed. Late in 1859 Cariboo Lake, the centre of the richest region, was discovered, and within a few months the fame of the Cariboo country had spread far and wide. In 1861 it yielded over \$2,600,000 in gold. Every yard of every creek was combed over. On the famous Williams Creek there were said to be 4000 miners in a stretch of seven miles. A few miners made fortunes. One claim even gave \$2000 a day through the whole of 1862. But for every miner who succeeded hundreds were disappointed, and within ten years the Cariboo diggings were all but exhausted. They had yielded, however, no less than \$25,000,000 in gold, and even more important they had brought the beginnings of settlement with permanent industries like agriculture and lumbering in the Fraser Valley.

Nothing in the Fraser gold rush was more remarkable than the establishment of government and the preservation of law and order. In no other pioneer mining region in America were there so few disturbances or so little destruction of life and property, and for



(Archives of British Columbia)

JAMES DOUGLAS



this the chief credit must go to Governor (later Sir) James Douglas. Douglas, who had started as one of Simpson's young men in the fur trade, was governor of Vancouver Island when the gold rush began. He was determined that the lawlessness of the California camps should not spread north of the boundary line; and, although at first he had no authority on the mainland, he required miners to buy licenses and took what steps he could to enforce the law. At Douglas's request the British government in 1858 sent out a company of Royal Engineers and with this small force of 150 officers and men Douglas did wonders.

They had been selected not only for military purposes, but also for scientific and practical work in road building and other kinds of construction. With them came thirty-seven women and thirty-five children. When they were disbanded in 1863 many of them chose to stay as pioneer settlers in the mainland colony.



*(Archives of British Columbia)*

The Cariboo Road.

Douglas's greatest achievement was the building of the famous Cariboo road which stretched, from Yale on the Fraser River, north for 480 miles into the Cariboo country. Swing-

ing around mountain curves, clinging to precipitous cliffs high above whirling waters, it was the boldest enterprise in road building ever undertaken in a pioneer community in British North America. On the earlier pack trails, the cost of freight had been enormous, and the prices of goods carried to the Cariboo country were fantastic—\$50 for a pair of shoes, \$90 for a hundred weight of potatoes. The completion of the Cariboo road changed this, and opened a regular postal and stage service with express coaches drawn by six horse teams and travelling day and night in relays of twelve to thirteen miles. Pack trains of mules carried heavy freight; and, strangest

of all, twenty-one camels were tried, but they proved a failure. Their smell frightened the horses and created havoc along the way.

The Cariboo Road was a panorama of movement and colour.

Who were they that came riding, riding,  
over the Cariboo Trail?

Horses and mules, wise men and fools,

Merchant, thief, kloochman, chief,

Soldier, sailor, parson, jade;

(This is the way a trail is made!)

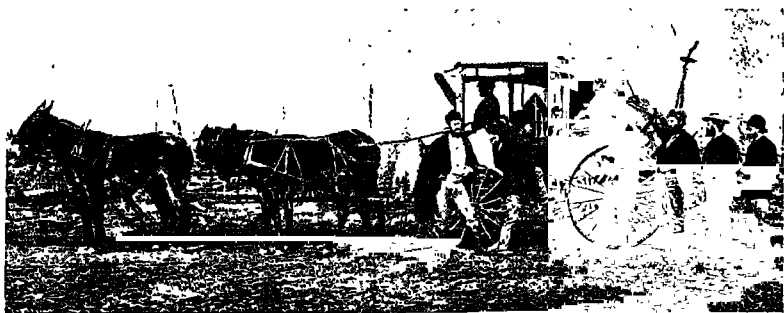
Jail-bird, gentleman, foeman, friend;

All of them coming to Yale in the end;

Barkerville, Lillooett, Yale in the end;

Over the Cariboo Trail,

Over the Cariboo Trail!<sup>2</sup>



(Archiv of British Columbia)

#### A CARIBOO STAGE COACH

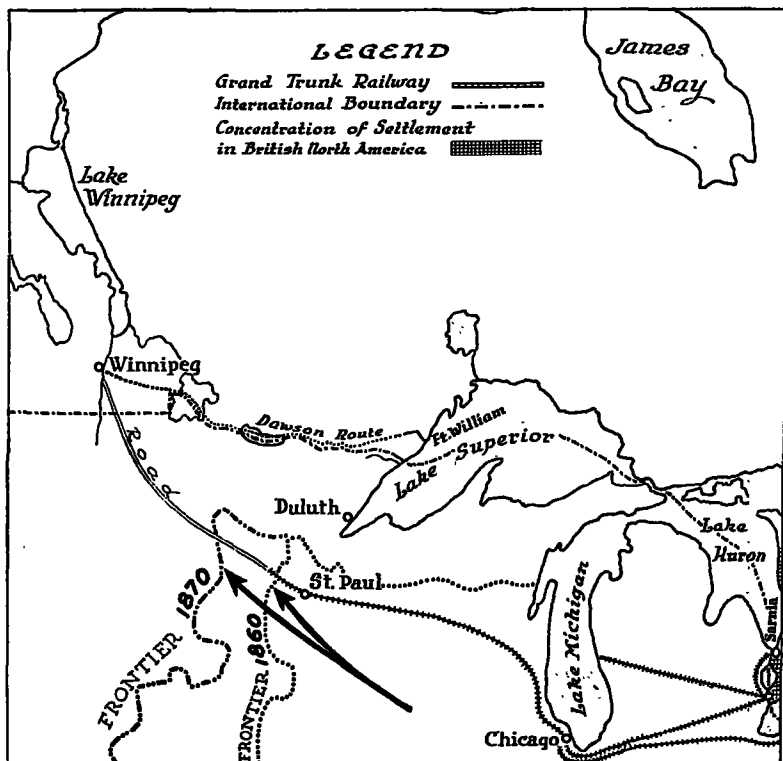
But it was more than a miners' road. It brought law and order to the Cariboo country, and it was a symbol of the new era which the gold rush had begun on the north-west coast.

**British North America Faces a New Future.** From Atlantic to Pacific British North America was changing in the 1850's with startling rapidity. Railways, telegraphs, and steamships were "speeding-up" communications, and men were on the move everywhere. In the Maritime Provinces and Canada the best farm

<sup>2</sup> From *The Cariboo Trail* by Elspeth Honeyman Clarke, quoted in F. W. Howay, *British Columbia: The Making of a Province*, p. 146.

lands were quickly filled up in this decade, and settlers in Canada West began to push north into the rocky fringes of the Pre-Cambrian Shield. Many in search of land went to the United States, where settlements and railways were spreading westward to the Mississippi and even beyond.

What was to happen to British North America? Possibilities and problems were opening up which could scarcely have been imagined a few years earlier. Men were talking of railway and telegraph lines across the continent, and it was even suggested that a railway from the Maritime Provinces to British Columbia might

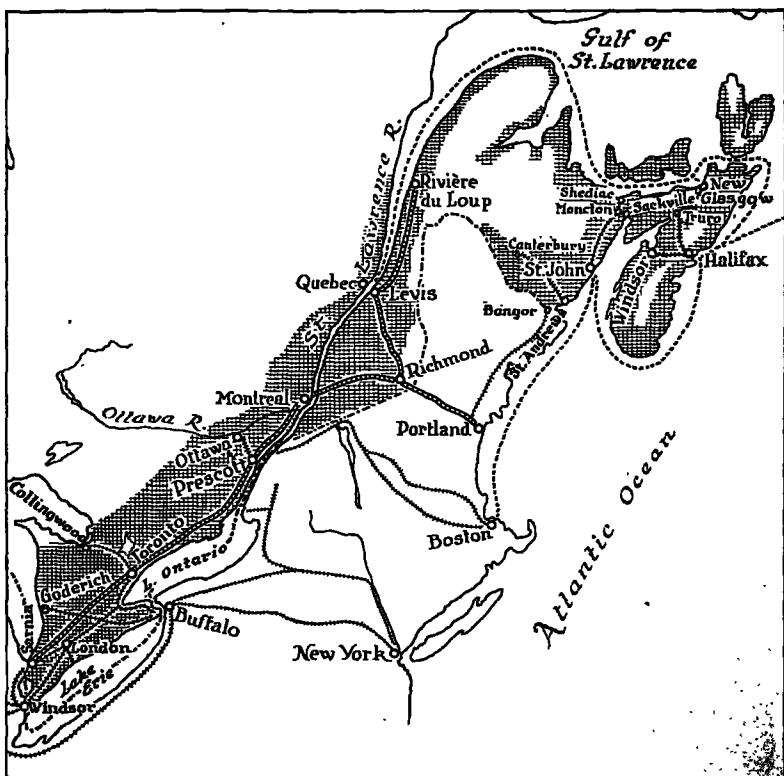


ON THE EVE OF CONFEDERATION

*This map illustrates many of the factors which led to Confederation. In*

join with steamers on the Atlantic and Pacific to make an all-British route from England to Australia—so far had men's thoughts gone since Cunard tried his bold experiment of ocean navigation in 1840.

British North America had, however, far more pressing problems than a route to Australia. Strung out for hundreds of miles along the northern boundary of the United States, its widely separated parts were divided by barriers which seemed impassable. The Maritime Provinces were divided from Canada by the rough highlands of Northern New Brunswick. Canada was separated from



particular it shows the development of railway connections with the United States and the barrier separating the Maritime Provinces from Canada.

Red River by hundreds of miles of rockland and forest. The Pacific Coast lay 1,500 miles beyond Red River—so far across prairies and mountains that to everyone but the fur trader it seemed to belong to another world. We can get a good idea of how remote it was by the story of "The Overlanders," a party of about sixty young men who set off to the Cariboo from Canada West in May, 1862. They went by the United States through St. Paul to Red River; and then, with about one hundred ox carts, crossed the prairie from Fort Garry to Edmonton. Going on through Yellow Head pass, they finally reached the headwaters of the Fraser and Thompson. Then, building rafts, they floated down, part of them by one river, part by the other. Some were killed, and it is a wonder that any survived. From Canada to Cariboo had taken them four months, May to September.

How difficult the union of British North America would be in the face of such barriers! And yet if its parts were not united, could they survive as separate colonies? From Atlantic to Pacific they seemed to be drawing closer to the United States. Railways were now attracting Canadian trade to New York and Portland, and there was talk of building a railway from Portland to the Maritime Provinces. Red River was turning its trade toward St. Paul, and the colonies on the West Coast were far more closely connected with California than with Canada and the Maritime Provinces. United the parts of British North America might stand. Divided they could scarcely hope to avoid being absorbed piecemeal by the United States.

Nor were the physical barriers of rocks and forests the only obstacles. Canada and the Maritime Provinces had little to do with each other and very little in common. They had separate tariffs which prevented freedom of trade among them, different postal systems and stamps, and different regulations about money. "In Canada," said a member of the British Parliament, "the pound or the dollar are legal tender. In Nova Scotia, the Peruvian, Mexican, Columbian dollars are all legal: in New Brunswick, British and American coins are recognized by law." Each province had its own history and its own loyalties. Nova Scotians were proud of their leadership in winning Responsible Government, of

their loyalty to the empire, and of their public men like Howe and Haliburton. New Brunswick cherished its Loyalist tradition; and Prince Edward Islanders, affectionately called their home "The Island," being quite sure that it could have no rival anywhere. The Maritime Provinces had no great desire for union among themselves, but they had still less for union with Canada. Between them and Canada there was little trade and almost no travelling back and forth. "We don't know each other," said a Halifax paper. "We are shut off from each other, geographically, commercially, politically and socially. . . . Our interests are not identical, but the very opposite."

Thus, at the beginning of the 1860's, British North America stood at the cross roads, with powerful forces pulling toward union and others just as powerful pulling against it. What would be the result? Would it become a united nation or would it remain weak and divided? The question was soon to demand bold and challenging decisions—how soon and how challenging, few people realized.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Early railway building in Canada is described in O. D. Skelton: *The railway builders* (Chronicles of Canada), Herbert Heaton: *A history of trade and commerce*, and in articles in D. J. Dickie: *How Canada grew up*. It would be a good idea to compare the story of railway building in Canada with that in Britain and in the United States. History text books will give you the information in brief form. You should try to find out when the first railway came to your community and what changes occurred in consequence.

The fortunes of the Red River settlement after Selkirk's time are followed in D. J. Dickie's *The west*, pages 136-149, and in Margaret McWilliams's *Manitoba milestones*. There is a short biography of John Christian Schultz, editor of the *Nor'Wester*, in R. G. Riddell's *Canadian portraits*. Nellie McClung in *Clearing in the west* tells most interestingly the story of her childhood on a pioneer farm near Brandon when the new movement of settlement had begun.

For accounts of the Cariboo Gold Rush you may turn to D. J. Dickie: *The west*, F. W. Howay: *Builders of the west* and *British Columbia, the making of a province*, Agnes Laut: *The Cariboo Trail*, and B. F. Townsley: *Minefinders*. There is a biography of Sir James Douglas in the Ryerson Readers, and one of Sir Matthew Begbie, his chief justice, in Riddell's *Canadian portraits*. The problem of coinage at this period is discussed in Paul Montgomery's pamphlet: *The romance of Canada's money*.

## *Chapter XXV*

### Confederation

“**S**IR, it is my fervent aspiration and hope that some here tonight may live to see the day when the British American flag shall proudly wave from Labrador to Vancouver Island, and from Niagara to the shores of Hudson Bay.” So spoke the Canadian leader, George Brown, in 1858. Lord Durham and others had also dreamed of a united British American nation, but in the 1850's it was still nothing but a dream.

Then within four years, 1861-64, swift-moving events changed the entire situation, and far-seeing leaders seized an opportunity such as perhaps would never have presented itself again.

**The Immediate Causes of Confederation.** First among these swift-moving events was the Civil War in the United States. Beginning in 1861 and raging for four years, it proved to be the greatest civil war in history up to that time. It brought almost three million men into the field, and before it ended the victorious North was a great military power.

Canadian and British sympathies were aroused by the North's fight against slavery, and yet a series of unfortunate incidents almost embroiled the North and Britain in open war. To Canada and the Maritime Provinces this was a most serious danger. Northern extremists declared that, when the war ended, their victorious armies would march against Canada, and that the United States had a “Manifest Destiny” to control the entire continent. “Four hundred thousand thoroughly disciplined troops,” said one newspaper, “will ask no better occupation than to destroy the last vestiges of British rule on the American continent and annex Canada to the United States.” Along the border there were many signs of bitterness and misunderstanding, and at one time the

American government was on the point of renouncing the Rush-Bagot agreement which had lasted for almost fifty years.

Defence thus suddenly became a vital problem for British North America. Without railway connections by which they could help each other and without a plan for common action, the divided provinces were in a most dangerous position. In the winter of 1861-2 troops, which were hurriedly sent out from England to Canada, actually had no other way of reaching Quebec than by travelling in sleighs from Saint John over the old Temiscouata route. To rely on such methods in the railway age was to invite disaster. Only through union could the common problems of defence and railways be solved. "As fragments," declared D'Arcy McGee of Canada, "we shall be lost; but let us be united and we shall be as a rock." England still sent garrisons to the colonies for *their protection, and during the Civil War she had over 18,000 troops in British North America*; but, as the French-Canadian leader, George Étienne Cartier said, "If we desire to obtain England's support for our defence, we must help ourselves. When we are united the enemy will know that if he attacks any province he will have to deal with the combined forces of the Empire."

Trade, like defence, loomed up during the Civil War as an argument for union. In 1854 Lord Elgin had negotiated a reciprocity treaty for ten years which had greatly encouraged trade with the United States in fish and agricultural products. By the end of the Civil War, however, the government at Washington appeared certain to cancel the treaty, and in face of this danger it seemed that the provinces should at least do all they could to encourage trade among themselves. "Why," said one speaker, "should provinces of the same empire be cutting each other's throats with razors called tariffs?"

In the spring of 1864, at the very moment when the problem of defence became acute, a crisis arose in the government of Canada. For several years a deadlock had been developing. The majority party in the legislature consisted of a few members from Canada West and most of the French members from Canada East. Its leaders were John A. Macdonald and George Étienne Cartier. Opposing them were a few French members



from Canada East and a majority of the members from Canada West under the leadership of George Brown, an enormous dour Scotsman who had founded the *Toronto Globe* in 1844. Brown's party called itself the Clear Grits, and between it and the Macdonald-Cartier party a most bitter political feud developed. The Grits firmly believed that Canada West was being dictated to and controlled by the French, while the French on their side feared and resented the attacks made on them by Brown and his followers.



JOHN A. MACDONALD

Of all the questions separating the parties, representation by population or "Rep by Pop" was the most difficult. When the two provinces were united in 1841 they had been given equal representation in the legislature although Canada East then had the larger population. Twenty years later the tables were turned—Canada West had the larger population and the Grits demanded that she now be given

the larger representation. To the French this seemed unfair, and yet it was equally unfair to continue with the old system. Thus the union of 1841 was becoming impossible.

**The Great Coalition and the Memorable Year of 1864.** Early in 1864 the situation became desperate. Within three years there had been two elections and three cabinets. Government was at a standstill since the parties were so evenly balanced that sometimes even the absence of a single member from the House threatened to overturn the cabinet.

In times of crisis great leaders rise above party and forget their own interests for the sake of the country. This was the spirit which made possible the Great Coalition of June, 1864—the first definite step toward Confederation. In the Coalition Brown joined with Macdonald and Cartier on the understanding that the

union of the two provinces would be changed into a federal union (that is, one in which there would be a central government for matters of common concern like defence, and provincial governments for matters like education). It was also agreed that representatives would be sent immediately to the Maritime Provinces with the purpose of seeking a federal union for all British North America.

The announcement of the Coalition made a tremendous sensation. For years political strife had been so violent that it seemed impossible to bring the opponents together. Brown, to his undying credit, took the first step toward reconciliation, and in doing so had to break with some of his friends and loyal supporters who would have nothing to do with Macdonald and Cartier. "Nothing but the strongest sense of duty," he said afterward, forced him to so hard a decision. Cartier was no less courageous. He risked his support and political future in uniting with his arch enemy. But courage and high purpose are infectious, and people were swept off their feet by the example of unselfish leadership and the hope that a great accomplishment would come out of it. "In that memorable afternoon," later wrote a member of the legislature, "when Mr. Brown, not without emotion, made his statement to a hushed and expectant House, and disclosed that he was about to ally himself with Sir George Cartier and his friends, for the purpose of carrying out Confederation, I saw an excitable, elderly, little French member rush across the floor, climb up on Mr. Brown, who, as you remember, was of a stature approaching the gigantic, fling his arms about his neck, and hang several seconds there suspended, to the visible consternation of Mr. Brown and the infinite joy of all beholders."



GEORGE BROWN

Meanwhile events were moving also in the Maritime Provinces. Here there was no deadlock as in Canada but the problems of defence, trade, and railways were looming up with increasing importance, and this had led to a proposal for "Maritime Union." In the spring of 1864 plans were made for a conference at Charlottetown to discuss Maritime Union, and to this conference the Canadian Coalition got permission to send delegates. So were begun the negotiations which three years later resulted in Confederation.



(Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau)

#### THE CHARLOTTETOWN CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 1864

1864 was a year of destiny for British North America. All the forces for union—defence, railways, trade, the problem of the West, Maritime Union, the deadlock in Canada—seemed for a few months to come together and move in one direction. "If," said Macdonald later, "it had not been for this fortunate coincidence of events, never, perhaps, for a long series of years would we have been able to bring this scheme to a practical conclusion."

**The Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences.** On September 1, 1864, the Charlottetown Conference met in what is now called the Confederation Room in the old Province Building of Prince Edward Island, and here the first real steps toward Confederation were taken. After hearing the five Canadian delegates, the Conference was so impressed with the possibility of creating a united nation that it resolved to hold a larger conference without

delay for the purpose of trying to work out a definite plan. "For twenty long years," said Macdonald, "I have been dragging myself through the dreary waste of colonial politics. I thought there was no end; nothing worthy of ambition; but now I see something which was well worthy of all I have suffered in the cause of my country. . . . That there are difficulties in the way would be folly for me to deny. . . . We would not be worthy of the position in which we have been placed by the people if we did not meet and overcome these obstacles." Such was the spirit that came out of the Conference at Charlottetown.

After a week of discussion the delegates went on to Halifax and then to Saint John where, at a round of meetings and dinners, the arguments for national union were explained and laid before the public.

*Less than a month later, on October 10, the second of the Confederation Conferences opened at Quebec.* With good reason the Quebec Conference has been called the most important political gathering in the history of Canada, for it worked out the plan of union which is now the basis of Canada's constitution. The Conference was truly national—every province, even Newfoundland, was represented and from each province came members of both political parties. The setting was a noble one. The windows of the conference room in the legislative building looked out over the St. Lawrence, and we may be sure that the Fathers of Confederation thought many times of the drama of Canadian history which for over 250 years had been unfolding on this very spot.

Of the thirty-three delegates eight must have a special word. Leading those from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were the premiers, Charles (later Sir Charles) Tupper and Samuel Leonard (later Sir Leonard) Tilley. To none did the cause of Confederation owe more in these years. They had been chiefly responsible for calling the Charlottetown Conference to discuss Maritime Union, and when they became convinced that a wider union was needed they worked for it through thick and thin in the face of the most discouraging difficulties. From Prince Edward Island came Edward Whelan, who fought eloquently for Confederation in his province, and whose delightful book, *The Union of the British*

*Provinces*, is probably our best description of what went on in these critical months of 1864. Among the Nova Scotian delegates one was missing who should have been there, Joseph Howe. Howe had been unable to attend at Charlottetown. His absence was to have unhappy results.



(Prince Edward Island Travel Bureau)

#### THE CONFEDERATION CHAMBER IN CHARLOTTETOWN

The bronze tablet, which was placed on the wall in 1914 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Conference, bears this sentence: "In the hearts and minds of the delegates who assembled in this room on September 1st, 1864, was born the Dominion of Canada."

Most prominent among the delegates of Canada West were George Brown, whose first unselfish step had made the Great Coalition possible, and John A. Macdonald, who above all the Fathers of Confederation had the supreme gift of leadership. Only Macdonald with his infinite tact, his amusing stories, and his tireless patience could have guided discussion and brought agreement among men of such varied views. From Quebec came George Étienne Cartier, without whose statesmanship, it is safe to say, French Canada could not have been brought into Con-

federation: his name, prophesied one of his colleagues, would rank in Canadian history with that of his illustrious ancestor, Jacques Cartier. Canada East also sent Alexander T. Galt, a Montreal business man, who had been one of the first advocates of Confederation, and D'Arcy McGee, the silver-tongued orator whose glowing words stirred the hearts of all who heard him. As a young man in Ireland McGee had thrown himself into the struggle for Irish nationalism. Later in the United States he had belonged to the Fenians, an Irish nationalist society, but he turned against them denouncing their violent anti-British activities. In 1857 he came to Canada. Immediately his imagination was fired by the possibility of a united British American nation, and to that ideal he became a martyr. In April, 1868, less than a year after Confederation was achieved, a Fenian shot him to death in Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion which he had done so much to create.

**The Seventy-Two Quebec Resolutions.** The plan of union drawn up at the conference was put into the famous seventy-two Quebec Resolutions which were signed by all the delegates. Their aim was clear—to provide a strong national government, while at the same time leaving each province in control of its own local affairs. The American Civil War was believed to have been caused chiefly because the national government was too weak, and the Fathers of Confederation had no intention of repeating this mistake. Besides having control of such matters as defence and trade, the national government was to name the lieutenant-governors of the provinces, was to have power to disallow provincial laws, was to control all criminal law, and appoint all judges for the courts. The Conference also agreed that an Intercolonial Railway should be built immediately between the Maritime Provinces and Canada, and that as soon as possible the North West, and even British Columbia and Vancouver Island, should be brought into the union and communications opened up from Atlantic to Pacific.

The thorniest problem of all was money, and on this the Conference almost broke up. It was agreed that the national government would have control of taxes such as the tariff, but this would put the governments of the Maritime Provinces in a very difficult

position since they supplied their municipalities with money<sup>1</sup> and in future, without a revenue from tariffs, they would be unable to do so. Finally a compromise was worked out by which the national government agreed to pay each of the provinces an annual grant equal to eighty cents for each person in the population. This was to be in full settlement of all provincial demands on the national government, but, as we shall see, it proved to be far from a permanent arrangement.

From Quebec the delegates went on to Montreal where they were entertained at a great ball and on the next day at a public banquet with numerous toasts and speeches. From Montreal they journeyed by steamer to Ottawa, were met by an immense crowd with a torchlight procession, and later inspected the new parliament buildings. Then they went on to Toronto, stopping at Kingston and at Belleville, where they were received by a guard of honour and "hailed with loud cheers and waving of handkerchiefs by the fair ones of the town." At many points people gathered to cheer the train on its way, and at Toronto it was met



GEORGE ÉTIENNE CARTIER

by apparently the entire population and another torchlight procession with the city's firemen appropriately carrying the torches.

So the movement for Confederation was launched on its way. Within six months wonders had been accomplished—the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences had been held, a plan of union had been drawn up, and in all the provinces the imagination of the people had been stirred by the possibility of creating a new nation, and by the example of public leaders who showed that they were willing to rise above political quarrels and unite in a great cause.

**Winning Consent for Confederation.** The battle was, how-

<sup>1</sup> In Canada the municipalities levied their own taxes.

ever, only begun. "Let us not think that we are past danger," said George Brown in Toronto. "We have still to meet the legislatures of the provinces."

In Canada the debate on the Quebec Resolutions was long and stubborn, lasting over five weeks. Today, it makes a printed volume of over 1000 pages. The opposition came principally from Lower Canada: from English Canadians who feared being left as a minority in the lower province, and from French Canadians who were unwilling to follow Cartier and who feared that the French would be in a worse position if all the provinces were united. The Fathers of Confederation freely admitted that the proposed plan had defects. "To assert that our scheme is without fault, would be folly," said one of them. But above these defects loomed one great question which was clearly stated at the beginning of the debate in the Speech from the Throne—whether British North America should be "consolidated into a state, combining within its area all the elements of national greatness, or whether the several Provinces shall remain in their present fragmentary and isolated condition." To this question there could be in the end but one answer, and the votes when finally taken favoured Confederation by 91-33 in the Assembly and by 45-15 in the Legislative Council.

In the Maritime Provinces the result was very different. Tupper on his return to Halifax met a cold reception, and soon the forces



*(Canadian Government photograph)*

Monument to Thomas D'Arcy McGee at Ottawa with the Parliament Buildings in the background.



of opposition were rising in an irresistible flood. For this there were many reasons. The Maritime Provinces were divided from Canada and from each other. Each cherished its own history and traditions. Their trade lay on the sea and their people had the independence and pride of all seafaring folk. For defence they had, as they had had for a century, the British navy and their own stout vessels. The idea of a united British American nation made an appeal, but the arguments that were strongest in Canada—

railways, defence, the West, political deadlock—were either less urgent or were entirely absent in the provinces by the sea.



CHARLES TUPPER

The legislature of Prince Edward Island defeated the proposal by 23-5; and Newfoundland, whose interests were much more with Britain than with the other British American provinces, also rejected it. In Nova Scotia the question hung for a moment in the balance, but within a few weeks Howe decided to throw

his influence against the plan and a long and bitter struggle began. Howe had been one of the earliest advocates of union and an Intercolonial Railway, but he now took the ground that the Quebec Resolutions were unfair to the Maritime Provinces, and would put them in a position inferior to that of the Canadas. Soon, so violent a feeling swept over Nova Scotia that Tupper decided not to place the Resolutions immediately before the Legislature, but to wait until a more favourable time.

In New Brunswick events were even more discouraging. A storm of opposition was whipped up. The people, it was charged, had been sold by the government like sheep for eighty cents per head and the interests of the Maritime Provinces had been sacrificed. In the spring of 1865 an election swept the anti-Confederation forces into power with a total of 35 out of 41 seats. Every

Cabinet member, including Tilley, was beaten. The cause of Confederation seemed dead.

A month later Macdonald, Brown, Galt, and Cartier sailed to England to urge action on the British government. No delegation so strong had ever before left Canada for the British Isles. It found the British government fully persuaded that Confederation must be carried through, although before the Quebec Conference Maritime Union rather than Confederation had been favoured. Just why the British Government had changed its policy in the autumn of 1864 is not perfectly clear, but there seems little doubt that the chief reason was danger from the United States and the belief that the British American provinces could not be defended unless they were united. From this time the determination of the British government to see Confederation achieved was a most important fact, and without this influence it is difficult to see how a union could have been completed.



SAMUEL LEONARD TILLEY

In spite of pressure from London, however, the cause of Confederation went from bad to worse all through the remaining months of 1865. Before the end of the year the Canadian Coalition was threatening to break up. George Brown withdrew from it, not because he was wavering on Confederation, but because he felt he could no longer work with Macdonald.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of 1866 the prospect seemed hopeless. Then, at the darkest moment, the tide began to turn.

For this the Fenians, one of the strangest organizations that ever affected Canada's history, were at least partly responsible. They

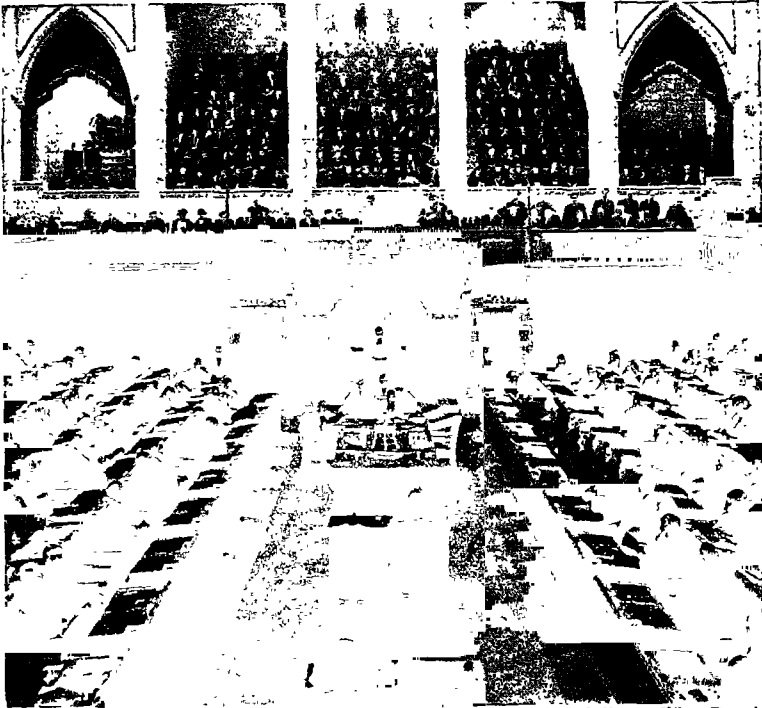
<sup>2</sup> Years later Macdonald, in describing his relations with Brown, said, "We acted together, dined in public places together, and went into society in England together, and yet on the day after he resigned we resumed our old positions and ceased to speak."

became very active in the United States at the end of the Civil War. The most extreme among them had the wild idea of conquering Canada and making it a base to conquer England, and in the early spring of 1866 they began to collect armed bands at various points along the border all the way from Detroit to New Brunswick. The United States government showed no disposition to suppress them, and American newspapers added to the alarm by anti-British propaganda and threats of annexation. In March, the Canadian government called out 10,000 men for the defence of the border. At the end of May about 600 Fenians crossed the Niagara River from Buffalo, and there was a skirmish at Ridgeway in which nine were killed. Other threats in these months were made along the borders of New Brunswick and Lower Canada. These events made a deep impression. Canadians were aroused by the invasion of Canadian soil; and the problem of defence, which had seemed very remote, suddenly became very real. It is a curious fact in Canadian history that the Fenians unintentionally did a great service to the cause of Confederation.

In June another election in New Brunswick showed how events were turning. The result of the previous year was completely reversed, Tilley being returned to power with a majority of 30 to 8. This surprising change had several causes, but among the most powerful was the realization that the British government was now determined to see Confederation carried through. Opinion was changing also in Nova Scotia, and within a few weeks the Assembly carried a motion in favour of sending delegates to England for the purpose of framing a plan of union in consultation with the British government. From this point events moved quickly, and in December, 1866, the third and last of the Confederation Conferences met in London with sixteen delegates in attendance, six from Canada and five each from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The long struggle to win consent for Confederation was nearing a successful conclusion.

**The London Conference and the British North America Act.** The Conference had the Quebec Resolutions as a basis for its work, but even so its task was difficult, and two months passed before every detail was finished. Macdonald was the "ruling

genius" through all these weeks when, as an observer said, every argument was watched as terriers "watch a rat hole." Finally the work was complete, a bill was prepared for Parliament, and a few weeks later, in March 1867, the Act which we know as the British North America Act was passed. In one respect the British North



(National Film Board)

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN SESSION IN THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

America Act was unique. Even though it had been planned in consultation with the British government, it was in fact the work of the colonial delegates to London. "There is no other instance on record," said George Brown, "of a colony peacefully remodelling its own constitution. . . . Canada is rightly setting the example of a new and better state of things." Where so bold a step would lead

no one knew. Many in England thought it would lead to independence. Macdonald and his colleagues were sure it would not. But Parliament was willing to leave that problem to the future, and meanwhile to grant to British North America the constitution which its representatives had drawn up. So the Act was passed without serious opposition or any important change. "We are laying the foundation of a great state," said Lord Carnarvon in introducing the bill in the House of Lords. "We are in this measure setting the crown to the free institutions which more than a quarter of a century ago we gave them, and therein we remove, as I firmly believe, all possibilities of future jealousy or misunderstanding."

By the British North America Act the four provinces—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the two Canadas, which were now renamed Ontario and Quebec—were united into the Dominion of Canada.<sup>3</sup> The Act also provided that other provinces might come in later, and that an Intercolonial Railway running from Halifax to the St. Lawrence should be built immediately. The most important feature of the Act, however, was its description of the new federal system of government.

The new national government, with its capital at Ottawa, was to consist of a Governor-General appointed by the Crown and a Parliament of two Houses, the House of Commons and the Senate. Members of the House of Commons were to be elected, Quebec being given 65 members and each of the other provinces the number it should have in proportion to its population. The Senate was differently planned. Its members were to be appointed for life by the Governor-General in Council, that is by the Cabinet of the national government. Twenty-four senators<sup>4</sup> were given to the Maritime Provinces and twenty-four to each of Ontario and Quebec. In this way it was thought that the interests of the various

<sup>3</sup> A number of names were considered, including *Laurentia*, *New Britain*, and even *Cabotia*, *Columbia*, and *Ursalia*. According to an unverified story the word *Dominion* was suggested by the Old Testament verse, "And His Dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth" (*Zechariah*, IX, 10). The word had, however, been used earlier. *Virginia*, for instance, had been known as the *Old Dominion*.

<sup>4</sup> After the western provinces were brought in, twenty-four more senators were added to make up the present number of ninety-six.

provinces would be protected. The provinces were left with the governments to which they had been accustomed, except of course that Ontario and Quebec were given separate governments. In future, however, the Lieutenant-Governors of the provinces were to be appointed by the Cabinet at Ottawa instead of by the British government.



THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR IN THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS

In rules of debate and procedure the Canadian Parliament follows very closely the example of the British Parliament. The Speaker's chair is a replica of the Speaker's chair in the House of Commons in London, and was presented by the British Parliamentary Association.

The Fathers of Confederation wished to make the new federal system strongest where the strain would be greatest, that is, at the centre. For this purpose the British North America Act gave to the national government the right (i) to appoint senators, (ii) to appoint or remove lieutenant-governors, and (iii) to disallow provincial laws, i.e. to declare them void. A fourth provision with the

same purpose is the division of powers between the national and provincial governments which is found in section 91 of the Act. The provincial governments are given control of matters of local concern, and these subjects are enumerated, among them being education, property and civil rights, municipal institutions and the incorporation of companies within the province. All matters not so given to the provinces are left by the Act under the control of the national government, and for greater certainty some of these national matters are enumerated, such as, defence, the regulation of trade, criminal law, the postal service, currency and coinage, the census. In some matters the powers of the national and provincial governments overlap. The national government can, for example, levy taxes of any kind, while provincial governments may levy direct taxes within their own borders.

To make a clear division of powers is the most difficult problem in any federal system. No Act can draw an exact and permanent line between national and local matters, and it is not surprising therefore that at various times since 1867 friction has arisen between the Dominion and provincial governments. Every written constitution has much added to it in the course of time by custom, and in general there has been a tendency for the provincial governments to increase their powers beyond the point intended by the Fathers of Confederation. Nevertheless, the British North America Act has served its purpose well, and has proven to be an efficient and far-sighted piece of legislation. Under it Canada grew not only in size but in powers of self-government until as a nation in the British Commonwealth she gained complete control of her own affairs.

**The New Nation.** On July 1, 1867, the new Canadian Dominion came into being. One cannot read the speeches of the Fathers of Confederation without feeling the spirit of confidence which runs through them. None knew better than they the baffling problems which lay ahead: at the same time they were sure that a new era full of challenging hopes and possibilities was beginning. On Confederation, declared George Brown, "hangs the future destiny of half a continent." "Does it not lift us above the petty politics of the past, and present to us high purposes and great

interests?" "In our confederation," said Cartier, "there will be Catholics and Protestants, English, French, Irish and Scotch, and each by its efforts and success will add to the prosperity of the Dominion, to the glory of the new confederation. We are of different races, not to quarrel, but to work together for the common welfare." "The colonies are now in a transition state," said Macdonald. "Gradually a different colonial system is being developed—and it will become, year by year, less a case of dependence on our part, and of overruling protection on the part of the Mother Country, and more a case of a healthy and cordial alliance. Instead of looking upon us as a merely dependent colony, England will have in us a friendly nation."

To all these hopes D'Arcy McGee added the touch of his poetic imagination: "I see in the not remote distance, one great nationality, bound, like the shield of Achilles, by the blue rim of ocean. I see it quartered into many communities—each dispensing of its internal affairs—but all bound together by free institutions, free intercourse, and free commerce: I see within the round of that shield, the peaks of the western mountains and the crests of the eastern waves—the winding Assiniboine, the five-fold lakes, the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, the Saguenay, the St. John, and the Basin of Minas—by all these flowing waters, in all the valleys they fertilize, in all the cities they visit in their courses, I see a generation of industrious, contented, moral men, free in name and in fact—ever capable of maintaining in peace and in war, a constitution worthy of such a country."

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

*Fathers of Confederation* by A. H. U. Colquhoun, in the "Chronicles of Canada" series, is a good general book on this period. Short biographies of the leaders of the Confederation movement may be found in W. J. Karr's *Explorers, soldiers and statesmen*, the Ryerson readers, and M. O. Hammond's *Confederation and its leaders*. The last-named book has a full-page portrait of each leader. Try to find other pictures showing groups of these men at the conferences. If you collect stamps, you should have a number which illustrate the Confederation story.



## Chapter XXVI

### A Mari Usque Ad Mare

CARVED in stone above the main door of Canada's parliament buildings are the words: "The wholesome sea is at her gates, her gates both east and west." On the first Dominion Day, in 1867, the idea that a single nation might be built in British North America, from sea to sea, still seemed a daring ambition. No sooner had the British North America Act been passed than Nova Scotia, the Atlantic province, asked to be allowed to withdraw; while westward, between Ottawa and the Pacific, lay a vast unpopulated land which was not yet even a part of the Dominion. The newly created Confederation had still to be tested and proven, its machinery of government organized, and the loyalty of its people aroused. Dark and difficult days lay ahead. Nevertheless, within six years, Canada's bounds were enlarged to the Pacific, three provinces were added, and the first steps had been taken in binding the country together.

**Rounding out the Dominion.** Rupert's Land was the first territory to be acquired. Before Confederation it had become clear that the Hudson's Bay Company could not continue to hold the privileges of trade and government granted by its ancient charter. Red River was growing. The newly arrived settlers were dissatisfied with Company rule, and south of the border the line of population was advancing. The best solution was to transfer the territory to the new Dominion, but the details were not easy to decide. The Company naturally expected compensation for giving up its charter and wished also to have its commercial interests protected. Finally, in 1869, an arrangement was completed: the Company agreed to surrender its charter to the British government, which, in turn, transferred Rupert's Land to Canada: Canada, on her part, undertook to pay the company £300,000 and give it land equal to one-twentieth of the land on the prairies. In 1870 Mani-

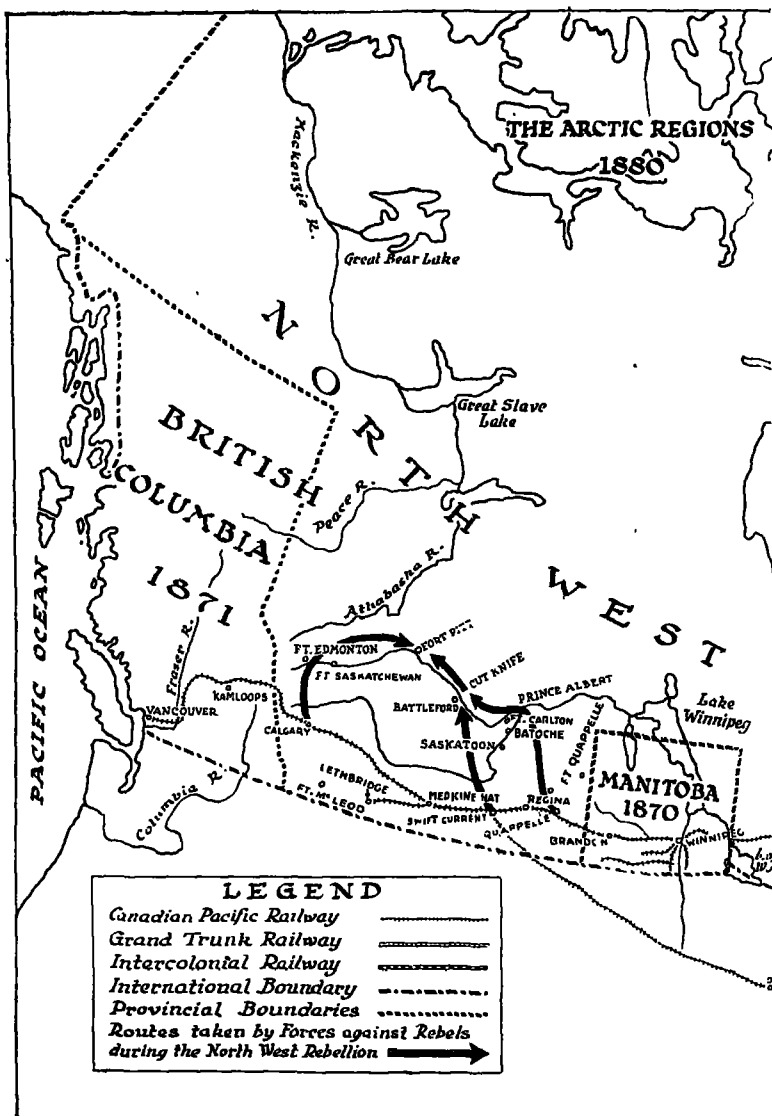
toba became Canada's first new province. The remainder of the great area was now known as the North West Territories, and the old name Rupert's Land was dropped.

Though the transfer was not made without trouble, as we shall see, its importance in Canadian history would be hard to overestimate. "Quietly and almost without observation," as Macdonald said, Canada had acquired a western empire. The acquisition came at the one point in the century when it was possible. A generation earlier it would have been out of the question. A generation later the West would undoubtedly have been absorbed by the United States.

Now that Canada extended to the Rockies, British Columbia's entrance into Confederation became a possibility. In 1866 the colonies on Vancouver Island and the mainland had been united under one Governor with a partly elected Council, but the new colony had heavy debts and demands for full Responsible Government were rising. Out of these conditions came the agreement with Ottawa. The Dominion government promised a grant to the provincial treasury, and undertook also to complete a railway to the Pacific within ten years. In 1871 British Columbia joined the Dominion as a province, with an elected legislature in full control of provincial affairs.

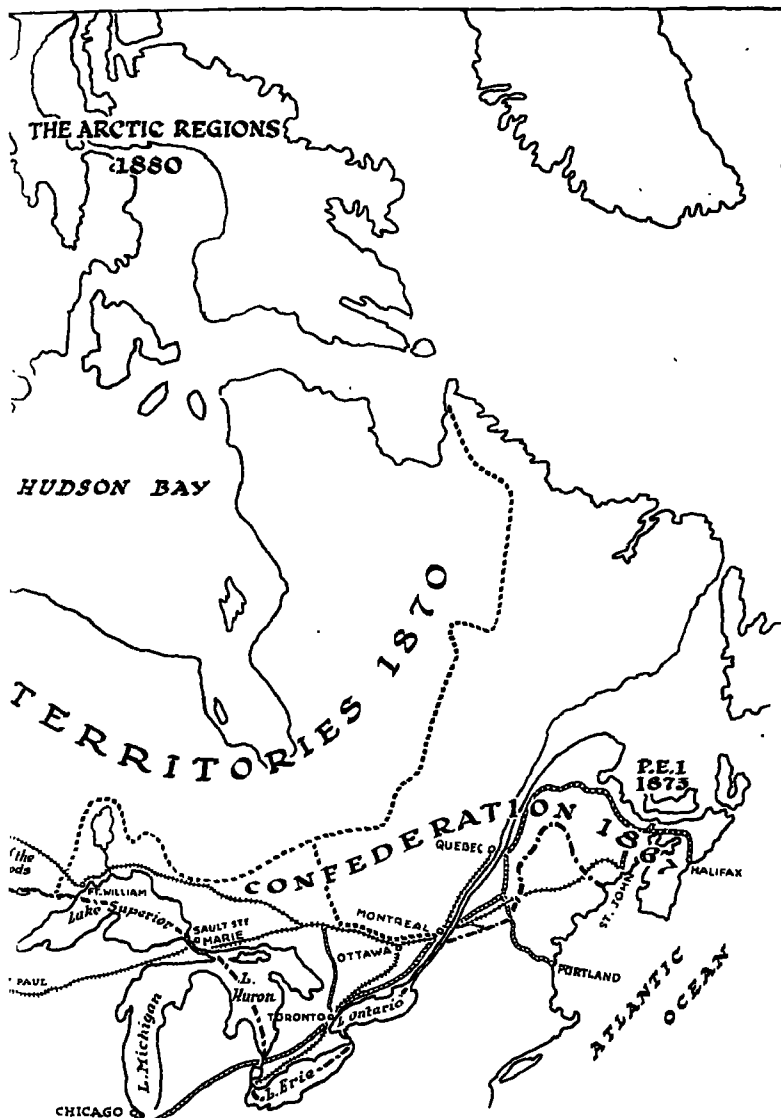
Two years later Prince Edward Island came in as the seventh province. Opinion had changed in the Island since 1867, and people now felt that the effort to maintain a separate political life would be increasingly difficult. Financial terms were arranged with the federal government, which promised also to maintain steamship and telegraph communications with the mainland. The union was declared on July 1, 1873. Three weeks later the Governor-General, Lord Dufferin, visited the Island; and from Charlottetown, he wrote to Macdonald: "I found the Island in a high state of jubilation and quite under the impression that it is the Dominion that has been annexed to Prince Edward and in alluding to the subject I have adopted the same tone."

One further extension, little noticed at the time, came at the end of the decade. The acquisition of Rupert's Land had left Canada's northern boundary uncertain, and in 1880 the British



### THE EXPANSION OF CANADA, 1867-1900

This map indicates the acquisition of territory and the addition of provinces during Canada's first quarter century. The main railway lines which bound



the Dominion together are shown. The arrows suggest the lines of march followed by troops sent to put down the Rebellion of 1885. Manitoba in 1870 was about half the size shown on the map, the boundary which is given being that of 1881 when the province was enlarged.

government transferred to Canada all the remaining northern possessions of the Crown. So a claim was acquired over lands in the Arctic, and the Dominion's territories were rounded out to their full extent.

**Binding the Dominion Together.** To strengthen and bind together the parts of the new Canada was a task far more difficult



(From Bengough's Caricature History)

**"UNITED AND HARMONIOUS"**

The cartoonist shows a mystified Grit wondering what is the secret of Sir John's control over the Tory party. Sir John says to the Jumping Jack, "Now, if you have the most unbounded confidence in me,—the most utter, regardless, and unlimited confidence, hold up both hands."

handle men. No one in Canadian history has surpassed him in this respect. The stories about him are legion, and before he died he became almost a national institution even in the eyes of his many political enemies.

Macdonald contributed to national unity in ways too numerous to mention. Day by day, for a quarter century, he directed men and affairs with one end alone in view. His two great achievements

than to enlarge its bounds. It had little real unity and, after the first flush of enthusiasm, alarming signs of division appeared. To Macdonald, more than to anyone else, goes the credit of preserving Confederation at its beginning. From 1867 to 1891, with one intermission of five years, 1873-78, he was Prime Minister. He was not without faults, and he left many problems unsettled. "Old Tomorrow" he was called, because of his habit of putting off difficult decisions in the hope that he could avoid making them. Nevertheless, he had the imagination to believe that a united Dominion from sea to sea was possible and to this one ideal he bent every other consideration. His great quality was his ability to lead and

were, however, the creation of a Dominion-wide political party, and the completion of the steel band of railways linking the provinces from Atlantic to Pacific.

Macdonald's Liberal-Conservative party, commonly known as the Conservatives or the "Tories", was a continuation of the English-French party, which he and Cartier had organized in the Canadas before Confederation, together with supporters from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick led by Tupper and Tilley. Macdonald also attracted the support of the growing manufacturing towns and the railway builders. During the early years of Confederation an opposition party gradually emerged, called the Liberals, or more commonly the "Reformers" or "Grits." Adopting the reforming ideas of George Brown, who retired from politics in 1867, it represented in general the farmers, particularly of Ontario, and was led first by Alexander Mackenzie and then by Edward Blake. Mackenzie, who was Prime Minister from 1873 to 1878, was a careful and painstaking public man. Blake was an able lawyer, under whose direction the Canadian Supreme Court was brought into being. But neither had the personal attraction of Macdonald, and neither succeeded in winning much support in French Canada.

One of Macdonald's first and most difficult problems was the discontent of Nova Scotia, where feeling that Confederation was not an advantage was overwhelming. The first provincial election put in a government opposed to Confederation, and in the first election for the Dominion Parliament every candidate but one, who favoured Confederation, was defeated. Howe was the leader of this opposition, and so keenly did he feel that he went to England to urge Nova Scotia's release from the Dominion. The British government, however, gave him no encouragement, and finally Macdonald persuaded him to change his mind. An increased grant from the federal treasury was promised, and Howe made known his acceptance of these "better terms" by entering Macdonald's cabinet in 1868. When Howe died in 1873 he was serving as Lieutenant-Governor in his native province, whose life had been so entwined with his own for over half a century.

The building of the Intercolonial Railway did something to

change opinion in the Maritime Provinces. It had been promised in the federation agreement, and six months after the passing of the British North America Act the track was being laid eastward from Quebec city. The British government guaranteed a loan to help the Dominion pay for the road, and existing lines in the Maritime Provinces were taken over. The route finally chosen was not the most direct. Following the south shore of the St.



(From Bengough's Caricature History)

### THE HAPPY PAIR

The cartoonist shows Howe and Macdonald being tied together with the knot of Confederation. Macdonald's dress is adorned with beavers, maple leaves and a Union Jack.

Lawrence, for reasons of defence, it kept as far as possible from the United States border. The Intercolonial Railway was the first line owned and operated by the Dominion government. When it was opened on July 1, 1876, the eastern half of Canada's steel band was complete.

The other half, from Ottawa to the Pacific, was more difficult and already it had proven almost too much for Macdonald's political skill. West of Lake Superior railway lines in the United States were reaching toward the border. Macdonald saw that the need for a Canadian line was urgent, but the task was enormous. From Ottawa to Winnipeg stretched a thousand miles of rock land and

forest, west of Winnipeg were five hundred miles of prairie, and beyond that lay the mountains. The great problem was to find men with financial resources sufficient for so great an undertaking. The common prophecy was that there would never be enough traffic to make the road pay, and so the government had to offer assistance in the form of cash and land grants. With these inducements various groups were willing to accept the contract, and Macdonald finally chose one led by Hugh Allan of Montreal. Word now got about, however, that Allan and his friends had given

the Conservative party large sums of money during a recent election. Macdonald protested that his hands were clean, but "the Pacific scandal" aroused such a furore that he was forced to resign, and in the election of 1873 Mackenzie and the Liberals came into power.

**The Problem of Governing the North West Territories.** Meanwhile, problems had been developing in the West. The territory which Canada took over in 1869 contained two and a half million square miles. To this vast and remote empire the new and untried Dominion undertook to bring law and order, railways, people, and all the equipment of civilization. Canadians had little idea how great a task they were attempting.

At first, it was planned to govern the whole North West as a territory—that is, as a kind of colony; and William McDougall was sent as governor so that he might be on the ground when the transfer from the Hudson's Bay Company took place. As he travelled west on the American railways, the easiest and quickest route, he had no suspicion of the surprise awaiting him. When he crossed the boundary north of St. Paul, however, he found his way to Winnipeg blocked by armed men. The settlement at Red River was in the grip of rebellion.

In all the discussions preceding the transfer, the one group whose interests had not been consulted were the settlers already in the North West. Numbering about 10,000, they were a curious assortment: Hudson's Bay Company officials and servants, descendants of Selkirk settlers, and most numerous of all the Métis, who regarded themselves as pioneers of French-Canadian settlement on the plains. Two newer groups had also come in, one from the United States and one from Canada West, now Ontario. The latter had been demanding annexation to Canada, and some of them were very



BLACKWASH AND WHITEWASH  
(From Béchough's Caricature History)

Macdonald being blackened by his enemies and excused by his friends at the time of the Pacific Scandal.



tactless in proclaiming the transfer as a great victory. None of the groups, except that from Canada West, wished in fact to be governed as a colony from Ottawa, and the Métis were most unhappy at the prospect. They thought they might lose their language and schools; and, when they saw surveyors from Canada at work even before the transfer took place and cutting across the boundaries of their farms, they feared that their lands would be taken from them.



(From Bengough's Caricature History)

Miss Canada to Cartier, who has just returned from England after arranging for the acquisition of Red River, "Thank you, Sir George, I've been waiting for him such a long time. But don't you think, after all, he may prove rather troublesome?"

In Louis Riel, a young half-breed with some education and ability, the Métis found a leader, and they made up their minds to oppose the new regime. A "provisional government" was set up, a Council chosen, and an Assembly elected. When McDougall arrived, he could do nothing but withdraw to the United States and ask Ottawa for help.

Resistance to Riel came chiefly from the Canadians at Red River, and many of them were imprisoned in Fort Garry. One, Thomas Scott, was thought by Riel to be unruly, and after a

hasty trial was executed. Scott was a native of Ontario and a member of the Orange Lodge. Thousands in Ontario regarded his execution as little short of murder, while in Quebec feeling ran equally high on the other side. The bitterness caused by this tragic event was responsible, more than anything else, for the indelible memories which followed for years the Red River trouble.

The provisional government, meanwhile, had drawn up a statement of its wishes, and two men of influence had come to Ottawa who paved the way to an agreement. One was Bishop Taché, the religious leader of the settlers at Red River, who had been in Rome when the trouble broke out. The other was Donald Smith, a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had lived for many years

in the North West and was now the Company's agent in Canada. Smith was sent to Red River as a commissioner for the Canadian government, and he and Taché between them arranged that representatives should go to Ottawa to discuss Red River's grievances. From these negotiations came the agreement which resulted in the creation of Manitoba as a province. The Manitoba Act of 1870 granted a provincial government at Red River, and recognized the right of the French-speaking settlers to their language and schools. In one important respect only was the new province different from the older ones: it did not control its own land or natural resources. Macdonald and his cabinet were already planning to build a railway across the prairies, and they hoped that settlers would soon follow. For these reasons they decided to keep the land under the control of Ottawa.

In the spring of 1870, the Canadian and British governments together decided to prevent any revival of trouble at Red River by sending a military expedition to the West. Under the command of Colonel Garnet Wolseley a force of 1200 Canadian and Imperial troops was organized, together with boatmen and teamsters. Travelling entirely through Canadian territory, it went by lake steamer to Port Arthur and then over the Dawson Road, on which work had been started, to Fort Garry. The journey from Port Arthur presented tremendous difficulties. Almost fifty portages were passed, trails were cut through the forest, and dangerous rapids run. From Toronto to Fort Garry took ninety-five days. Wolseley's expedition did no fighting, but it showed that Canada was prepared to face the difficulty of defending her new possessions, and that Britain would co-operate in assisting her.



LOUIS RIEL

**The Mounties Come to the West.** Though the Red River Rebellion had ended, the West was by no means secure. In 1871 a small band of Fenians made a raid across the border at Fort Pembina, and at the same time news was reaching Ottawa that whiskey smugglers were trading across the border in the far West, and had even set up a supply base called Fort Whoop-Up, over



WOLSELEY'S EXPEDITION AT A PORTAGE

which they flew the United States flag. "West of Manitoba," wrote an observer, "there is no security for life or property beyond what people can do for themselves." The Canadian government met the problem first by sending a garrison to replace Wolseley's soldiers who had been with-

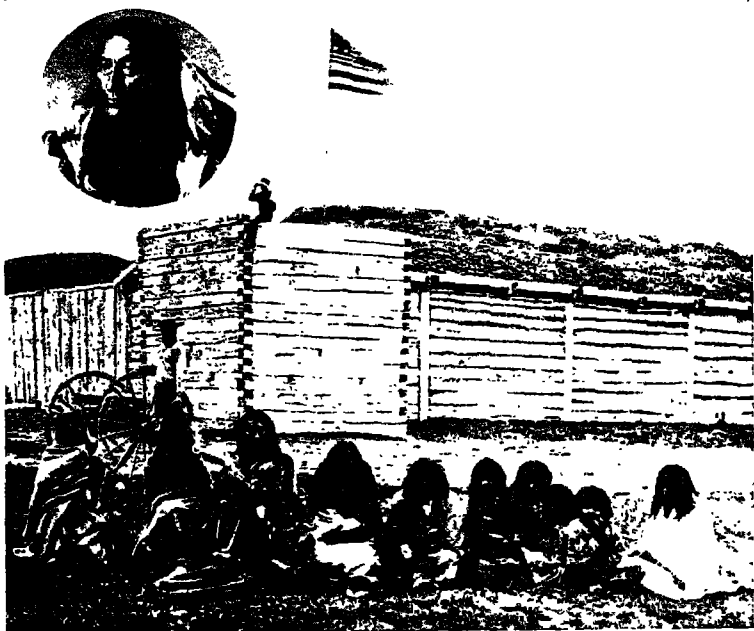
drawn, and then by organizing in 1873 the famous force of Royal North West Mounted Police. In the next summer their scarlet coats<sup>1</sup> appeared on the prairies for the first time, when a detachment of 300 men rode westward from Dufferin, now the border town of Emerson, to posts on the plains. This land march, ending at the point where Fort McLeod was built, is one of the most notable episodes in the Mounties' long and stirring history.

The Mounted Police were never a large force, and always depended more on their reputation for honesty, fairness, and unflinching courage than on numbers. They set to work at once to deal with law breakers and to clear away the sources of trouble. Whiskey runners disappeared as if by magic, and soon Fort McLeod

<sup>1</sup> Scarlet was chosen for the tunic because it was admired by the Indians on the Canadian side of the border. In 1872 the troops of the Winnipeg garrison had changed from green to scarlet uniforms because, as an Indian said, "We know that the soldiers of our great mother wear red coats, and are our friends." In 1920 the Police were given duties in various parts of the Dominion and the name was changed to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

became a centre for the preservation of law and order in the border lands of the far West.

The Police also had an important part in another very difficult problem, that of the Indians. The prairie Indians had lived by hunting and had depended almost entirely on the buffalo for food. With the coming of the white man, the great herds of buffalo



(R.C.M.P., Ottawa)

#### FORT WHOOP-UP

Inset, a Cree Indian Chief.

disappeared, and in the 1870's many thousands of Indians were in danger of starvation. In desperation they sometimes turned to cattle rustling or to a search for buffalo across the border where they got into trouble. It was clear that the days of hunting were over for the Indians, and that they must settle down or face starvation. The Canadian government set up a Department of Indian

Affairs which decided that the various tribes must be gathered together on Reserves, where they could be encouraged to turn to agriculture. The policy was a wise one but it was incredibly difficult for the Indians to face so sharp a change in their age-old habits. Treaties were made gaining their consent and promising them land, farm implements, animals, and small annual payments of money.



Missouri River Whiskey Runners north of the border in 1874.

By 1877 a series of treaties had obtained from the Indians the right to the soil in the entire southern area of the West from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains.

Much of the work of persuading the Indians to go on the Reserves was entrusted to the Mounted Police. Their forts had been centres for the distribution of food

and from these centres the tribes were shepherded northward to the wooded country where lands were set aside for them. This difficult period, during which the Indians gave up their old ways of life and opened the West to settlement, passed without the tragic wars which occurred during a similar period in the United States. For this the Indian Department, the Mounted Police, and the Hudson's Bay Company were largely responsible. The Mounties were always regarded as friends by the Indians. "The Police have protected us," said Crowfoot, a chief of the Blackfeet, "as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter."

**The Rebellion of 1885 and the Beginning of Responsible Government in the North West Territories.** When trouble did come again in the West in 1885, it was not the fault of the Mounted Police. The causes of this second disturbance were in many ways similar to those fifteen years earlier, and no mistake in Macdonald's long career was more unfortunate than the failure of his government

to settle the grievances which developed a second time into rebellion. Many of the Métis after 1870 had made their homes in the valley of the Saskatchewan; and, as settlement moved west, they feared again that they would lose their lands. They asked the government at Ottawa to grant them titles to their farms, and to con-



THE MOUNTED POLICE BARRACKS AT REGINA IN 1885

sider other claims to land which they made, but these requests were neglected.

Meanwhile, discontent was rising among the Indians of the same region. They brooded over their lost freedom, and after 1880 the government, short of money, reduced the rations which it had been giving them. In 1884, Riel, in response to messages, came again to lead the Métis. Since 1870 he had lived in the western States or in Quebec, part of the time in an insane asylum. Unbalanced in judgment and with weaknesses, such as vanity and indecision,<sup>2</sup> which were even worse than they had been fifteen years earlier, he was none the less sincere and, in many ways, able. He regarded himself as the Métis national leader and they readily followed him.

Throughout the winter of 1884-5 discontent grew, and the government gave no heed to the warnings of Mounted Police and Indian agents. Suddenly in March the storm broke. A party of

<sup>2</sup> See chapter 28 for Laurier's view of Riel.

Police was attacked near Duck Lake and driven back with the loss of nine men. Soon the whole north country was in arms, and a series of raids was made on outlying forts and Hudson's Bay posts. Riel, who had not wanted an Indian rising, now tried to persuade the Indians to join him at Batoche, and efforts were made also to enlist the support of Indians and settlers elsewhere on the prairies.

When the news of rebellion reached Ottawa by telegraph on March 27, the government was taken completely by surprise. It now moved with a speed very different from its previous inaction. It had, moreover, in contrast with 1870, the great advantage of a direct connection with the West, since the Canadian Pacific Railway was complete from Winnipeg to the mountains, and the line north of Lake Superior was nearly so. Troops were immediately sent west from Winnipeg to hold the railway, and were soon followed by some 8000 men from Eastern Canada. Opposing them were about 1000 Métis and an uncertain number of Indians.<sup>3</sup> The forces from the East reached the prairies in remarkably short time. They had been transported over gaps in the line north of Lake Superior on sleighs. By the middle of April three columns had been sent northward from the railway, one from Qu'Appelle, one from Swift Current, and one from Calgary.

The rebellion ended almost as suddenly as it began. One main engagement, lasting three days, was fought at Riel's headquarters of Batoche; the settlement was taken, and Riel surrendered a few days later. The rebellious Indian bands submitted within six weeks, and before midsummer peace was restored. The Métis had resisted sharply, but their cause was hopeless from the start. By no means all of the Indians and settlers had joined them, they lacked organization and equipment, and their Indian allies were uncertain. Ottawa now agreed to deal with the question of land claims, and a more generous policy was adopted toward the Indians. The rebellion had been a challenge to the Canadian effort to build a Dominion from sea to sea. It was a challenge which need never have risen, but once made it had been effectively met.

<sup>3</sup> The total Indian population of the West was about 20,000. An important fact was that the Indians as a whole did not rise.

During the 1880's the first steps toward self-government were taken in the North West Territories. The settlers who came from Eastern Canada were no less eager than their fathers had been to control their own affairs. At first, the government at Regina, which was made the capital, was in the hands of a Lieutenant-Governor chosen by Ottawa and an appointed Council. It was agreed, however, that as soon as any area one thousand square miles in extent contained a thousand people, it could elect a representative to the Council. The first such elected member was chosen in 1881. By 1888 these elected members of Council had become so numerous that they were formed into a separate Legislative Assembly. As in colonial days, this assembly had tax-voting powers, and soon the members were demanding Responsible Government in much the same way that members of the Assembly in the British North American colonies had made the demand forty years earlier. In 1897 the change was made, and the territories were given self-government for local matters. A few years later the population was so increased that the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were created.<sup>4</sup>

**Macdonald's National Policy and the completion of the Pacific Railway.** When the Conservatives ousted Mackenzie and the Liberals from office in the election of 1878, the main plank in their platform was the so-called National Policy. By it they meant the placing of a high tariff wall around the Dominion so as to protect its new industries. This, they argued, would build up a home market for Canadian producers of all kinds, and would compensate for the failure to get a renewal of reciprocity with the United States. The new tariff was welcomed by the growing manufacturing interests of Central Canada, but it did not equally benefit agriculture. In the Maritime Provinces and the West it seemed to work hardship, because in these areas there were few factories and the farmers, fishermen, and lumbermen wished to buy and sell in the neighbouring American markets.

The National Policy was continued after Macdonald's time, and even when the Liberals came again into power they kept it with some modification. There has been much debate in Canada as to

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 28.



whether the Policy made the country as a whole richer or poorer, but there is little doubt that it helped in the early years of the Dominion, to draw the various parts of Canada together, by directing the flow of trade from one section to another.

The railway to the Pacific was Macdonald's great concern when he returned to power in 1878. Mackenzie and the Liberals had changed the early plans. They thought the line should be built by government and in sections, as finances permitted, with water and



*(Canadian Pacific Railway)*

### THE END OF STEEL, 1880

road connections, meanwhile, to fill in the gaps. Times were hard during these years and there was good reason for caution. In British Columbia, however, the delay seemed a broken promise, and there was even talk of breaking away from the Dominion. When Macdonald regained office he lost no time in reviving plans for the construction of the road, and a contract was given to the Canadian Pacific Railway company. The terms were indeed generous: in return for building and operating a line to the Pacific, the company was to receive 25 million dollars, 25 million acres of land, portions of the line already built valued at over 30 million dollars, and certain other concessions such as a monopoly of traffic in the west. A kingdom was given for the West's iron horse, as a Canadian historian has well said; and, before the line was

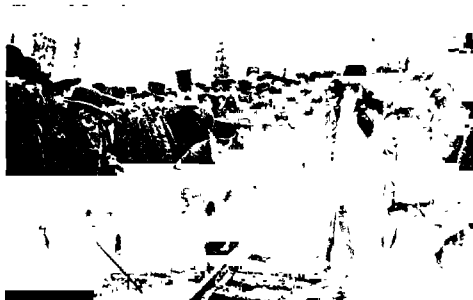
finished, the government had to lend the company additional money.

Nevertheless, the company's risk and responsibility were truly great, and the enterprise was an act of faith and imagination. Hopes of profit lay entirely in the future, and meanwhile two thousand miles of railway through difficult and almost uninhabited country had to be built.

The company was fortunate in having for chief engineer William Van Horne, an American who had gained wide experience in railroad building south of the border. Van Horne was a man of tremendous energy, and soon the line was reaching across the prairies and through the rough country north of Lake Superior with remarkable speed. In the Rockies

the line had to be built through some of the most difficult mountain country in the world, but by 1885, five years earlier than the contract required, the work was finished. On a November day of that year a little group of men gathered at a station in the mountains. There was a brief ceremony, and the last spike in the last tie was driven by Donald Smith, the former Hudson's Bay Company representative.

The completion of the Dominion's band of steel was the fitting climax of Macdonald's long career. More than anyone else he had been the builder of Confederation, working through every discouragement to preserve and strengthen the Dominion's unity. The period from 1867 to 1891 was hard and disappointing. Economic depression and sometimes, as in 1885, racial and religious bitterness threatened more than once to break the country in pieces.



*(Canadian Pacific Railway)*

#### THE LAST SPIKE

The driving of the golden spike which completed the Canadian Pacific Railway, November 7, 1885. It was driven by Donald Smith (Lord Strathcona) and behind him may be seen Van Horne and Sandford Fleming.

Canadians learned how difficult it is to make a federal system work, and how hard is the problem of reconciling the interests of different provinces and different classes of people. But in spite of reverses, they went on building their country. By 1891 the Dominion was no longer an experiment. The venture had succeeded, and Canada was strong enough to enter presently upon a period of greater development.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

*Father Lacombe, blackrobe voyageur* by Katherine Hughes tells the story of a famous missionary among the Crees and Blackfeet, and gives a good picture of the west from 1864 until after the North-West rebellion. *The last buffalo hunter* by Mary Weekes notes the passing of an era in the west. You may be able to secure a copy of an earlier book, *From ocean to ocean* by George Grant. It is the diary of a keen observer who travelled with Sandford Fleming, across Canada in 1872 before the transcontinental railway was built. The chapters that tell of the journey from Toronto to Red River make the reader realize clearly the tremendous changes that have occurred. Another such journey is described in the first chapter of *The railway builders* by O. D. Skelton (Chronicles of Canada). This book gives an excellent account of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. A longer book with good illustrations is J. Murray Gibbon's *Steel of empire*. There is interesting material in D. J. Dickie's *The west*, pages 273-301, and in the novel *The great divide* by Alan Sullivan. There are Ryerson readers dealing with Sir Sandford Fleming, Lord Strathcona (Donald Smith), and with the building of the C.P.R.

The North West Rebellion is discussed in H. A. Kennedy's *The book of the West*, pages 98-116; F. W. Howay's *Builders of the West*, chapters VI and XII, and A. L. Burt's *The romance of the prairie provinces*. There are a number of accounts by people who were closely affected by the events: W. B. Cameron's *The war trail of Big Bear* is an exciting narrative by a trader who was captured by the Indians. Nellie McClung in *Clearing in the West* tells how children in Manitoba felt about the rebellion (chapters XX, XXIII). T. M. Longstreth's *In scarlet and plain clothes*, pages 198-234, speaks for the Mounted Police. Good articles in the Canadian Geographical Journal are *When the Mounted Police went West* (February and March 1935), and *Memories of '85* (August 1935). These are well illustrated.

## Chapter XXVII

### Canada in the Horse and Buggy Age

ALL of the British North American provinces, and even many of the states of the union, were agog with excitement when the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, left England to visit America in the early summer of 1860. Accompanied by the Colonial Secretary, he sailed on the steamer *Hero* on July 10; an advance ship, the *Flying Fish*, going ahead, and the *Ariadne*, the largest ship, bringing up the rear.

**The Visit of the Prince of Wales in 1860.** When the *Hero* docked at St. John's, Newfoundland, on July 23, it was met by dignitaries and reporters from all the colonics. One entertainment followed another, as the Prince toured Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces, and the reporters gleefully sent out the news from Halifax that "At the Newfoundland ball the Prince danced eleven of the thirteen dances but last night he was the hero of seven quadrilles, four waltzes, four gallops and three polkas." The balls indeed seemed to be the crowning festivity in each city. "Turning towards the ballroom," said a Halifax paper, "one gets a glimpse, as it were, of fairy land. What a blaze of light, of gold braid, of jewels, of sparkling eyes of—gas!"—gas light being the latest thing in illumination. Montreal built a ballroom three hundred feet in diameter and accommodating six thousand dancers. "It has risen literally by magic, with its artificial streets of water and plantations of trees, among which at night were hundreds of lanterns shining. It is lighted by nearly two thousand gas lamps. Around the orchestra were some half-dozen jets of various perfumes, in which the fairer half of the brilliant assemblage could dip their tiny handkerchiefs."

So the tour went on. Each town and city produced its best, and each retarded or speeded up its public works so that the Prince

could lay the corner stone or drive the last rivet. In Montreal he did the latter for the famous Victoria Bridge, which linked the north and south shores of the St. Lawrence and which the *London Telegraph* called "the monumental work of the century on the American continent." In Ottawa he laid the corner stone of the new Parliament Buildings, in Toronto he opened Queen's Park, and at Queenston unveiled Brock's Monument. At Ottawa his boat was met by 150 birch canoes arranged in the form of a V, and

## THE BEST EXAMPLES OF CARRIAGES

FASHIONABLE IN THIS DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR OF 1897

ARE BUILT AND  
EXHIBITED BY **MAYTHORN & SON** AT **BIGGLESWADE**



(*London Illustrated News*)

The height of style in the Horse and Buggy Age. Two Victorias and a Phaeton.

paddled by over 1000 men singing their lilting boat songs. Most of the paddlers were in red shirts and white trousers, but a few Indians were dressed in full regalia. On the following day the Prince was taken to see a timber slide at the Chaudière Falls, and rode down it on a crib. By September 20 he had toured all of the larger towns and cities of Newfoundland, the Maritime Provinces and Canada. He had seen regattas and lacrosse games, had been presented to 200 Indians at Sarnia, and had watched a tight-rope walker go across Niagara Falls. He had met all the dignitaries and many of the common people.

On September 20, he crossed from Windsor to the United States, where he was greeted with an equally varied round of hospitality. From Chicago he went shooting on the prairies; in Pittsburg he

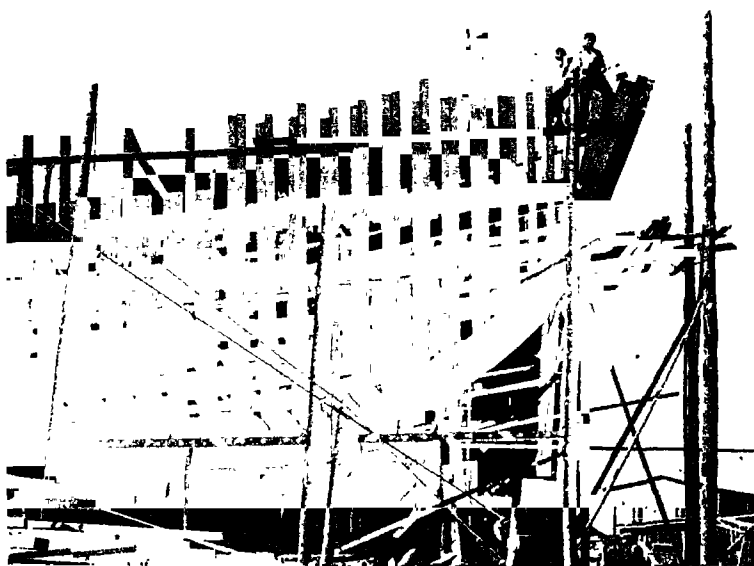
went down into the coal mines; in New York he visited Barnum's circus. In Washington he was officially received by President Buchanan, and unofficially by the people. "The rush at the doors was terrible," reported the *New York Times*. "People clambered in and jumped out of the windows, and confusion reigned. . . . The band played well." On October 20 the Prince sailed for England after a two months' tour, which people in British North America recalled with happy memories and humorous anecdotes for half a century.

The story of the Prince of Wales's visit gives a wonderful picture of life in British North America in the 1860's, a picture of a country which had passed through the first struggles of pioneering and was blossoming out, rather self-consciously, into a later period. Even a decade earlier such a journey would have been out of the question. By 1860 steamers, railways, and better roads made it possible for almost the entire population to see the Prince, and for some even to follow him from place to place. Telegraph lines enabled city newspapers to print news of his entertainment immediately, and newspapers which had sprung up in all the small towns were quick to copy the stories.

Nor could such celebrations have been arranged a few years earlier. The emphasis given in the accounts to illumination shows how novel the idea of lighting was—each house and even the stores and public buildings lit candles, lanterns and gas lights, and the ballrooms were ablaze with these same illuminations. The glitter and pomp of the royal tour must, of course, not be over-emphasized. Only the larger cities could afford such displays, but even the smaller towns presented addresses of welcome, and the celebrations of these tinier communities, which drew crowds for miles, suggest the increase in leisure time and the changes in transportation which had taken place. Pioneer districts were still at hand, but by the 1860's the older settlements had gone far beyond their first difficulties and had reached a more advanced stage of development.

**Transportation and Communications.** Progress in transportation continued after 1860 and especially after Confederation. In this period, for instance, Canada reached its highest point as a

maritime country, for a time ranking fourth among the ship-owning nations of the world. This was chiefly owing to the Maritime Provinces, which by 1867 had a tradition of sea-faring stretching back more than a century. Almost every ambitious Maritime Province boy hoped to become a captain. Thousands did so. Many went into the Royal Navy, and seven Nova Scotians became



*(Director of Public Information)*

BLUENOSE SHIPS IN THE MAKING

admirals. In the days of "wooden ships and iron men", Bluenose clippers were known in the ports of every continent. They carried gold miners to British Columbia, Australia, and South Africa, brought silk from Japan, and spices from India to Europe. Joseph Howe tells a story of visiting a home in the township of Yarmouth in 1867, where he saw above the mantel a frame holding seven pictures. "Who are these?" he asked the mother. "These are my

seven sailor boys.' 'But these are not boys, they are stout powerful men.' 'Yes,' said the mother, with the faintest possible exhibition of maternal pride, 'they all command fine ships, and have all been round Cape Horn'. The men who sailed the Bluenose clippers also built them or watched them built, and knew every inch of wood and canvas that went into them.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close the day of the wooden ship passed, and Canadian companies which by 1900 ran regular service from Quebec to Liverpool, from Vancouver to Hong Kong and Sydney, used modern steel vessels, most of them built in Britain. The proud story of the Bluenose clipper is still, however, one of the great chapters in Canadian history.

The development of railway transportation after Confederation was rapid, not only through the completion of the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific, but through the building of many branches which covered the Eastern provinces with a network of lines. Through the whole period, improvements in the St. Lawrence waterway system were continued. The ship channel from Quebec to Montreal was deepened stage by stage, until by 1900 work had begun on a thirty-foot channel. By 1903, also, the canals above Montreal had been deepened to a minimum of fourteen feet, and a Canadian canal had been completed at Sault Ste. Marie to supplement the one built earlier on the American side. Canada thus had a waterway with a minimum depth of fourteen feet from Montreal to Port Arthur and Fort William at the head of Lake Superior.

Roads mattered even more to most individuals than did railways



One of Vancouver's first street cars.



and canals. When corduroy roads and springless coaches knocked passengers about until they were black and blue, there was little incentive to visit even the nearest town and a long trip was regarded with horror. However, as gravel roads replaced swamp and forest trails, more up-to-date conveyances equipped with springs became possible. This marked a real advance, for it meant that travel by road became a pleasure instead of a tedious or even painful ordeal. A buggy, for example, is not only a rather fragile but, at times, even



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)  
Replica of the first telephone switchboard in  
the British Empire, Hamilton, 1878.

a beautiful vehicle which requires not the heavy work horse but a lighter and swifter animal with some show of spirit. A suitor in the horse and buggy days made a dashing appearance, and his lady friend no longer had to prepare for knee-deep mud, but could wear her best bib and tucker when he called to take her for a

drive. With improved roads, communities became more closely knit together, as visits became easier; and, since trips to the cities were still unusual, the small towns and villages thrived as social and commercial centres. In cities, the horsedrawn tram car was still unrivalled in the 1860's, and not until near the end of the century did it give way to the electric car with seats inside and standing room outside. St. Catharines had the first electric street railway in Canada in 1887, Vancouver the second in 1890.

In communications the most remarkable change during these years was the telephone. Alexander Graham Bell, its inventor, was a young Scotsman who had come to Brantford, Ontario, and it was there in 1876 that he succeeded for the first time in transmitting spoken words by wire. In 1878 the first telephone exchange in the British Empire was installed at Hamilton, and two years later the Bell Telephone Company of Canada was incorporated. Mean-

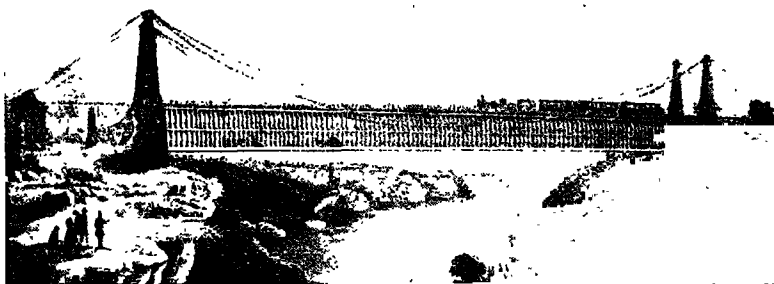
while, in Nova Scotia, G. G. Hubbard, a financial supporter of Bell, had begun to use telephones in the collieries at Glace Bay. By 1888 both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had provincial telephone systems. In British Columbia, the Victoria and Esquimalt Telephone Company had one of the first exchanges in the country. By the end of the century there were over 100,000 miles of telephone lines in Canada.

During these years postal and telegraph systems were established in their modern forms. The first Canadian postage stamps were issued in 1851, and two years later the first Canadian ocean mail service was begun. As the Canadian Pacific Railway was built westward it carried mail service with it, whereas previously mail to British Columbia or Red River had gone through the United States. In 1874 Canada and the United States agreed that mail should pass through the two countries without extra charge. The century ended with a great step forward, the adoption of penny post in Canada and from Canada to other parts of the Empire. Sir William Mulock, Canada's Postmaster-General, had much to do with these developments. Penny post was begun in Canada on January 1, 1899.

Telegraph service developed quickly after the first was begun in 1847 between Toronto and St. Catharines. The submarine cable presented greater difficulties. Following the completion in 1852 of the first in America, that from Prince Edward Island to New Brunswick, the ambitious plan of a transatlantic cable from Newfoundland to Ireland was attempted. The British and American governments aided the Atlantic Telegraph Company which was formed for the purpose. The first cable broke; but several years later, in 1866, a permanent one was completed.

Soon afterward, Sandford Fleming, a Canadian engineer who had a prominent part in building both the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railways, began to urge a Pacific cable from Canada to Australia and New Zealand. He met with much opposition and indifference at first, but kept on urging the British and colonial governments. Finally an agreement was made and the work completed, and on October 31, 1902, Fleming received the first message sent to Canada, a cable of congratulations from the Prime

Minister of New Zealand. Meanwhile, Marconi had invented wireless telegraphy, and on December 12, 1901, flashed the first transatlantic wireless signal from Cornwall, England, to St. John's, Newfoundland. In the following year arrangements were made for a service from Glace Bay, Cape Breton. But the story of wireless belongs to the twentieth century. It was one of the signs that the horse and buggy age was passing.



(Can. Geog. Journal)

THE FIRST SUSPENSION BRIDGE ACROSS THE NIAGARA RIVER  
AT NIAGARA FALLS

One more incident deserves mention because of its world-wide interest. Sir Sandford Fleming in 1876 published a pamphlet entitled *Terrestrial Time*, pointing out the absurdity of each place setting its own standard of time, and suggesting that the world be divided into twenty-four time zones. The confusion which Fleming criticized can easily be imagined from the first Grand Trunk Railway timetable, published in 1856, which said:

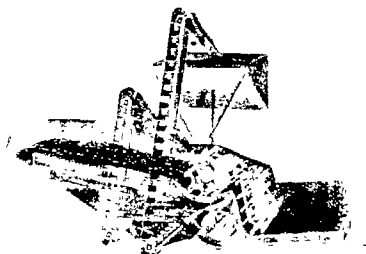
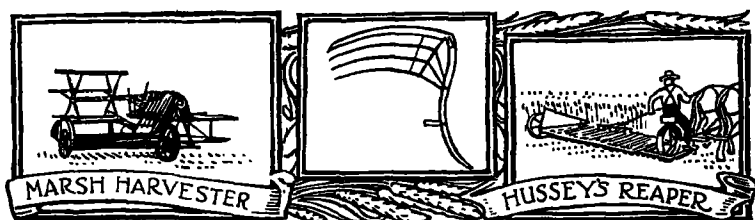
The trains will be run on Montreal time which is:—

|     |       |             |            |            |
|-----|-------|-------------|------------|------------|
| 8½  | mins. | faster than | Brockville | time.      |
| 12  | "     | "           | "          | Kingston   |
| 14½ | "     | "           | "          | Belleville |
| 23  | "     | "           | "          | Toronto    |

Snubbed at first by scientists, Fleming kept urging his proposal on Canadian and American railway companies with the result that in 1883 a standard system of time went into effect in North America. So successful was it that in the next year an International Prime

Meridian Conference was called to which the leading nations of the world sent delegates. Fleming's proposal was accepted, and the Greenwich meridian fixed as the initial one.

The changes in transportation and communications between 1860 and 1900, while less revolutionary than those of the twentieth



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

#### FROM SCYTHIE TO COMBINE

Early farm machines, such as those shown at left and right, marked a great transition from hand labour about the middle of the nineteenth century. The combine came in just after the First World War. The cross-section shown here indicates its operation: the grain is cut at the right and carried to the centre of the machine where it is threshed; the straw then passes out to the left; the threshed grain drops to the bottom of the machine and is carried up and delivered through the long pipe shown at the centre.

century, were remarkable enough. They not only drew together the various parts of Canada, but also, by bridging the great ocean spaces of Atlantic and Pacific, brought the Dominion into touch with world affairs as never before.

**A Transition in Agriculture.** Two very important changes, which went hand in hand, began in agriculture about 1860: the widespread use of farm machinery and the tendency to specialize and produce for an export market. For many years British North American wheat and flour had been sent to Britain and the United

States, but with speedier transportation many other articles, especially livestock, dairy products, and fruit, were added to the export list. The introduction of refrigeration in the 1880's gave another great stimulus in the same direction. The tendency to produce for export affected the farming of Central Canada most, although the Maritime Provinces led the way in many agricultural improvements. The Board of Agriculture of New Brunswick, for example, was the first to introduce Durham cattle into Canada. But since these

provinces already had a variety of industries, it was the farmers of Quebec and particularly of Ontario who specialized most intensely for the export trade.

Improved implements began to appear as early as the 1880's, but until the middle of the century they were still crude and had to be hand-made or imported.



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

A cheese weighing 7000 pounds made at Ingersoll, Ontario, in 1866.

In 1852, Daniel Massey, a farmer who had set up a tiny shop at Bond Head near Newcastle, Ontario, to make ploughs and spare parts for threshers, started the H. A. Massey & Co. He was soon making the Ketchum mower and the Burrell reaper and by 1855 combining them. Two years later, Alanson Harris began a factory, first at Beamsville, and then at Brantford, from which he was soon shipping machinery far and wide. In 1879 sales were made in Winnipeg, in 1883 in Prince Albert. Meanwhile Massey had gained international fame by winning the gold medal at the Paris Exposition of 1867 for his mower and reaper. The two firms finally amalgamated, and by 1885 were shipping machines as far as Germany and Asia Minor.

Large scale production of dairy products began in the 1860's when cheese and butter factories began to appear. The first in Ontario were built in 1864, and the number quickly increased, Ingersoll, Belleville and Brockville being the principal centres. Within five years similar factories were begun in Quebec and the

Maritime Provinces. An amusing illustration of the development of cheese manufacturing was the competition in making large cheeses. One factory in the 1880's made thirty-five, eleven of them weighing 5500 pounds each. The grand champion was "The Canadian Mite", weighing 22,000 pounds and measuring 28 feet in circumference and 6 feet in height. From Perth, Ontario, where it was made, it was sent to the Chicago World's Fair, and after six months under a glass roof there, it was shipped to England for sale to a well-known caterer.

Improvements too numerous to mention appeared on the better farms during this period—machines such as the cream separator, new varieties of fruits, thorough-bred animals, better buildings. The interest in better farming also brought the establishment of agricultural colleges. As early as 1859, one was started at Ste. Anne de la Pocatière in Quebec, and in 1874 the Ontario Agricultural College was opened. Perhaps the best illustration of the progress made in agriculture was the county or town fair, which provided a chance for competition in the production of grains, vegetables, cooking, and sewing. More than that, it spread valuable information and offered excellent entertainment. The farmer of the horse and buggy age, while he worked hard, had reached the place where he had at least a little time and money for intellectual and social advancement.

**The Changing Frontier.** We have been describing the farmer of the older communities, but it must not be forgotten that Canada still had many frontier settlements where the pioneer was far from villages and towns, and life was still a fight for subsistence. Such settlers were to be found in the inland reaches of New Brunswick, in the hinterlands of Quebec and Ontario, in the prairie provinces and the southern valleys of British Columbia. Life in the backwoods sections of the older provinces was similar to that which the pioneer settlers in earlier times had faced, but on the prairies the frontier was changing more quickly.

Following the acquisition of Ruperts' Land plans were made by the Dominion government to encourage settlement in the West. Free lands, in the form of 160-acre homesteads, were offered, and a number of settlers from Eastern Canada, especially

from Ontario, were attracted. Some settlers also came from Europe, two groups in particular. One consisted of German-speaking Mennonites from the borders of Russia, who came with a promise from the Canadian government that they would not be required to do military service. Taking up land south and west of Winnipeg, they lived together in communities rather than on individual farms. The other group, from Iceland, settled on the



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

A Prairie Homestead in the 1880's. The sod shack, as shown in the lower picture, was often the first home.

shores of Lake Winnipeg where they fished and farmed, and after great hardships established themselves. In comparison with their numbers, the Icelanders have taken a very active part in the life of Manitoba.

On the whole, however, settlement was disappointingly slow. Farmers from the East found that prairie farming presented very different problems from those to which they were accustomed. Drought, early frosts, and grasshoppers attacked their crops. At first, too, they had to be content with sod shacks or tents. The building of the railway improved matters, but only toward the end of the century did better transportation and the scientific

study of grains hold out a prospect that the West would become a great wheat-producing region.

Pioneers nearer the Rockies were interested in ranching, and many of them came from the northern states. Ranching began in 1872 when a hundred cattle were driven up from Montana. Soon shacks and corrals began to appear, but the rancher, too, had his troubles. It was with great joy that the Royal North West Mounted Police were welcomed as a protection against Indians and whiskey runners. Gradually law was enforced and



A RANCHING SCENE IN THE SHADOW OF THE ROCKIES

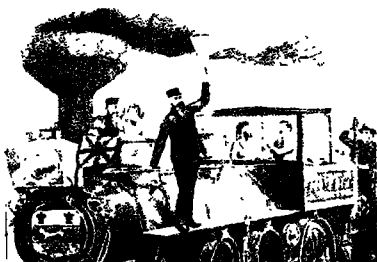
the day of the cowboy dawned. Climate and grass were ideal for ranching in the foothill country of what is now southern Alberta, and the building of the railway greatly enlarged the market. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, when settlers poured in and wire fences began to cut up the open range, the cattlemen prospered, in spite of periodic difficulties with hard winters, prairie fires, wolves, coyotes, and cattle thieves.

**Lumbering, Mining and Manufacturing.** Through most of the century lumbering was the backbone of Canadian industry, the square timber trade and shipbuilding being complementary industries. Indeed, the timber trade largely created Canada's merchant marine. Fortunately when the European market for timber declined, as it did in the last quarter of the century, a Canadian one arose. Railways required ties and lumber was needed in the West.



By this time, too, a shift in the making of paper from the use of rags to pulpwood was creating another new demand. Early experiments with pulpwood were not satisfactory, but by 1880 a successful method was devised and manufacturing began. By 1881 there were five pulp mills in Canada. The great expansion of the industry came later, but its foundations were laid before 1900.

Before Confederation, mining was comparatively unimportant, even with the coal mining of Nova Scotia, the Fraser gold rush, and the attempts at mining on the north shore of Lake Superior. Two men, who did much to encourage mining, deserve special mention, however,—Sir William Logan and Sir William Dawson. Logan, who was Director of the Geological Survey for the Province of Canada from 1843 to 1867 and for the Dominion from 1867 to 1869, set about the immense task of surveying the min-



"ALL ABOARD FOR THE WEST"

From a cartoon about 1880.

ing regions of the provinces. Each year a new area was completed, and as early as 1863 a comprehensive "Geology of Canada" was issued. Dawson, a native of Pictou, Nova Scotia, early became important in scientific work. In 1855 he became principal of McGill University, and for over thirty years made contributions to Canadian geology which were widely recognized on both sides of the Atlantic.

The expansion of railways gave mining in Canada its real start. In the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland, coal and iron mining companies were organized. By 1882 the Nova Scotia Steel Company had produced the first steel ingots in Canada. On the opposite coast, gold mining continued as one region after another was opened up—Cariboo, Kootenay, and in 1898 the Yukon. During the 1880's and 90's, in the Rossland-Trail district silver, nickel, copper, lead and zinc were discovered. These minerals were expensive to handle since they required advanced technical skill and expensive equipment for smelting, and it was not

until later when hydro-electric power was developed that the importance of these discoveries in British Columbia was realized.

In Ontario the most valuable discovery was the great bed of copper-nickel ore, uncovered a short distance from Sudbury during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1883. This was to become later the world's greatest nickel-producing deposit. Prospectors flocked in, and by 1890 a region for about thirty miles around had been thoroughly explored. But again the difficulties of handling base metals delayed progress.

The period from 1860 to 1900 was important in mining because it brought in the wealth of the British Columbia gold mines, established the coal and iron industries in Nova Scotia, and laid the foundations for base metal mining in British Columbia and Ontario. Moreover, it trained groups of miners and geologists, such as Jas. N. Tyrrell and A. P. Coleman, who were to make great contributions to Canadian mining history.

Manufacturing gained headway very slowly although, as we have seen, the production of iron and steel, pulp and paper, and cheese and butter was thriving by the end of the century. The earliest manufacturing concerns had been breweries and foundries. By the 1860's iron works were able to manufacture not only rails but train locomotives. In 1860 the first large scale cotton textile mill was started at Merritton, Ontario, and by the next year the industry had extended to the Maritime Provinces. By 1881 there were 19 mills producing \$4,000,000 worth of cotton goods, as well as woollen mills which had been started even earlier. Until the end of the century Canada was, however, still overwhelmingly agricultural, even though manufactures had grown sufficiently by 1879 to provide Macdonald with an argument for his National Policy.

Changes in industrial life were reflected, also, in commercial enterprises. Banking and insurance firms, mortgage and loan companies, were established. With increased manufacturing, a group of moneyed men and an artisan class grew up with the result that manufacturers' associations and labour unions started; but as yet, neither extreme wealth nor extreme poverty were common.

**Living Conditions.** A town, or even a village, was the centre

of every community in the horse and buggy age. Transportation had improved so that people could easily reach their nearest town, but it had not yet been so speeded up that great cities dominated whole regions as they do today. In the East these rural centres had many small industries such as flour and lumber mills, tanneries, machine shops, creameries, and woollen mills. The general store was the favourite gathering place, and to it nearly everyone came sometime during the week. Almost anything could be found there,



The corner of Portage Avenue and Main Street in Winnipeg about 1870.

from a needle to a threshing machine. Around its big box stove or its cracker barrel circulated the community news. Every town had its newspaper, however, and the bigger ones had dailies: the great city papers with their "features" had not yet arrived. Schools and churches were the com-

munity centres not only for education and religion but for entertainment and education; the only great difference being that in the older regions fine brick and stone buildings were going up, while on the frontier people might gather in a house or even in the open air.

Standards of comfort and enjoyment changed both in town and country during the horse and buggy age. A better house and barn and a fine team of driving horses were the ambition of every farmer. First in the Maritime Provinces, then in Central Canada, log cabins gave way to finer homes, and labour-saving devices provided the farmer and his wife with some time to read or visit. Farmers' societies, such as the Patrons of Industry, were organized, and farm journals sprang up which aimed to improve the conditions of farm life. "Farmers' wives and daughters," said one of them, "should have time for reading, sewing, music and fancy work", because "without some trace of female refinement no house is a home." As public school education became common, the number of high

schools and academies increased. In cities the houses by 1860 could have gas and water. Twenty years later electricity was coming in, and on busy streets pavements were replacing gravel surfaces, or stone and wooden paving blocks. The protection of life and property was also improved, though only a beginning was made; Toronto's first professional fire brigade was organized, for instance, in 1874.



(National Gallery of Canada)

PARLIAMENT HILL, OTTAWA, IN THE 1890's

Recreation and entertainment took many forms. Every town of any size had its theatre, and by the 1880's there were travelling companies to play in them,—blood and thunder melodramas with titles like "Bertha the Sewing Machine Girl" being popular. Choral societies flourished, and famous visiting singers such as Jenny Lind or the French-Canadian, Madame Albani, drew crowds in the cities. Interest in sports spread rapidly. Cricket, curling, yachting and rowing had many devotees—Ned Hanlan, the famous sculler, thrilled Canadians in the late '70's by beating all opponents on both

sides of the Atlantic. Other games, such as lacrosse, hockey, football and baseball, were organized with more definite rules at this time. As early as 1874 McGill University sent a team to the United States to compete with Harvard. The game must have been an amusing one since Harvard insisted on using a round ball for one period and McGill an oval one for the other.

Life in the horse and buggy age had a certain leisureliness which the age of electricity has made difficult; but, at the same time, it had passed the harshness and too-extreme simplicity of earlier days. Even the difference in living conditions between East and West was decreasing by the end of the century. While cities in the older provinces were advancing in rather quiet fashion, their western rivals were beginning to sprint to city size.

**The Growth of National Loyalty.** With Confederation, and even before it, we can see signs of a new national loyalty; and, although after 1867 it had many ups and downs and often seemed conspicuous by its absence, no account of these years would be complete without mention of it. That Canadians were beginning to realize the possibilities of their country, and to become interested in other parts of the Dominion than their own, was shown in many ways. Almost every settlement in the older provinces had a son who had gone to British Columbia with the miners, or to the prairies to farm or ranch. Almost every small-town paper carried letters from these pioneers. Interest in the West was aroused, too, by church missionary societies, and by descriptions written by men like Sandford Fleming, Bashop Taché, and Principal Grant of Queen's University, whose striking book *Ocean to Ocean* was published in 1873. Canadians also began to feel that their land was gaining recognition in other countries, as names like those of Sir William Dawson, Alexander Graham Bell, and Sir William Osler the famous medical authority, became widely known. In politics the desire to strengthen a true national patriotism was best illustrated by the Canada First movement organized in 1871-4 by a group of young men. Its career was brief but much of its platform was adopted piecemeal by the other parties and its influence fully justified the lines written by Charles Mair, one of its founders, a few years later:

"The seed they sowed has sprung at last,  
And grows and blossoms through the land."

Nowhere, however, was Canadian feeling portrayed so vividly as in writing. With Confederation a new spirit showed itself in Canadian literature, and among the many writers of the Confederation period there are some whose work was of permanent value. In French Canada, Octave Crémazie and Louis Fréchette were most famous. Among English Canada's poets who became widely known beyond the Dominion were Charles G. D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman, and Duncan Campbell Scott. All of these were moved by the spirit of the time, and felt something of the challenge which led Roberts to begin his *Ode for the Canadian Confederacy* with the line:



CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

"Awake, my country, the hour is  
great with change!"

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

You will find useful information about many of the changes which occurred in this period in text books on science, geography, agriculture, and business practice, also in Herbert Heaton's *a History of trade and commerce*, and in reference books such as *The encyclopedia of Canada*, edited by W. Stewart Wallace. The clipper ships of the Maritime Provinces are described in V. P. Seary's *The Romance of the Maritime Provinces*, chapters XVI and XVII. Some of the books listed for chapter XX are also useful. F. Lawrence Bahcock's *Spanning the Atlantic* brings the story up to date. *Alexander Graham Bell* by Catherine Mackenzie is a detailed biography of the inventor. Shorter

accounts appear in Ellison Hawks's *Pioneers of wireless*, pages 96-112, Frances E. Benz's *Talking round the earth*, pages 37-158, and The Canadian Geographical Journal, February 1939. The development of postal services in England and the Empire is traced in Wilfrid L. Randell's *Messengers for mankind*. *The Atlantic cable* is a book by S. A. Garnham and Robert L. Hadfield.

J. Murray Gibbon's *Canadian mosaic* refers to Mennonite and Icelandic communities in the West. In the novel, *The Viking heart*, an Icelandic author, Laura Goodman Salverson, tells about a family which settled near Winnipeg. Encyclopedias and local newspaper files should have articles on some of the famous people mentioned in this chapter. There is an account of Sir William Logan in R. G. Riddell's *Canadian portraits*. Madame Albani's autobiography, *Forty years of song* will be in many libraries. Try to find William Drummond's poem "When Albani sang." Selections from the works of the poets of the period and biographical notes may be found in John Garvin's *Canadian poets*, E. B. Kemper's *A book of Canadian verse and prose*. See also the anthologies listed for chapter XXXI.

Everyday life in rural Ontario at this time is sketched in Ralph Connor's *Glengarry schooldays*, *The man from Glengarry*, and part one of the author's autobiography *Postscript to adventure* (published under his own name, Charles W. Gordon). E. A. Howes, in a little book of memories, *With a glance backward*, describes his boyhood on a farm. Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine sketches of a little town* is a delightfully humorous book.

*Maria Chapdelaine* by Louis Hémon is a beautifully written story about the life of a French-Canadian family on a bush farm. J. E. LeRossignol in *The flying canoe*, *The Beauport road* and *The habitant-merchant* tells some of the traditional stories and describes the typical characters of a Quebec village. Adjutor Rivard's *Chez nous* and Georges Bouchard's *Other days, other ways* contain quietly written essays on houses, people and customs. The biography of Louis Jobin in *Canadian portraits* by R. J. Riddell describes the life of a famous wood carver.

Records such as those mentioned here are all too few. There is an excellent opportunity for an enterprising class to compile a booklet about its own community at this period. You might set down, before it is too late, the memories of old people. Find what you can about changes in farm implements and methods if you live in the country, and about developments in industry and transportation if you live in a town or city. The artists of the class might make illustrations showing buildings, dress, and implements.

## Chapter XXVIII

### On The Threshold of The Twentieth Century

**I**N 1897 the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated in London. From all over the world came representatives to this brilliant pageant, and among them Wilfrid Laurier, Canada's newly-elected French-Canadian premier. Nothing could have been more appropriate. Sixty years before, when the young queen had come to the throne, Canada was seething with rebellion and racial strife. Now Laurier came with a message of unity and goodwill. His eloquence and charm captured all hearts. Standing at the centre of the Empire, he explained Canada as no one else could have done, for he seemed in himself to be the very symbol of her growth and of her hopes for the future. When he crossed to France he was no less successful. "I am told," he said, "that here in France there are people surprised at the attachment which I feel for the Crown of England, and which I do not conceal." Such people, he pointed out, failed to understand that French Canada, while it loved its own culture, none the less was loyal to British institutions. "We are faithful," he declared, "to the great nation that gave us life; we are faithful to the great nation that gave us liberty."

**The Rise of Laurier and the Election of 1896.** When Laurier came to London he was just beginning his career as premier. A few months before, in the election of 1896, the Liberal party had been swept into office with Laurier at its head. From that time, for fifteen years he was to guide Canadian policy and like Macdonald was to leave an indelible mark in the history of the country.

Laurier was ideally fitted for his great work of leadership. For over two centuries, since the days of Talon, his family had been in Canada. His father and grandfather were farmers—men of liberal



views who took a deep interest in public affairs. He was trained for law, and as a student showed the love of literature and the brilliant ability in argument which marked him throughout his life. At eleven his father sent him to live for a time with a Scottish Presbyterian family. Here he was so lucky as to have an odd teacher who delighted to quote poetry by the hour. So the boy

learned to love the masterpieces of English literature and to understand his fellow Canadians of another language and religion.

From his first appearance in parliament Laurier's eloquence in both languages, his power in debate, and his fairness and tolerance singled him out for leadership. Never did he show his high qualities more than in the debate about Riel after the Rebellion of 1885. Feelings between French and English were almost unbelievably bitter, but for two hours Laurier held the House spellbound while he fearlessly probed the unhappy story,

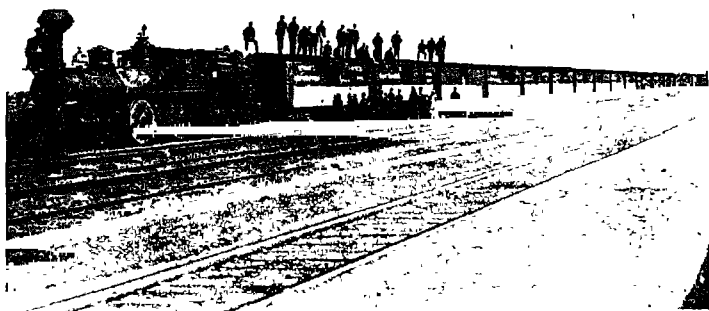
sparing neither side. "I am not one of those," he said, "who look upon Louis Riel as a hero. Nature had endowed him with many brilliant qualities but nature had denied him that supreme quality without which all other qualities, however brilliant, are of no avail. Nature had denied him a well-balanced mind." But, he declared, "we cannot make a nation of this new country by shedding blood." This noble plea for unity and goodwill was, according to Blake who was then Liberal leader, "the finest speech ever pronounced in the parliament of Canada since Confederation."

Soon Laurier was made leader of the Liberal party, and as the Conservative party declined, especially after Sir John's death, the Liberals gained in every province. In 1896 they won the election with a strong majority.



WILFRID LAURIER

Laurier came to power at a fortunate time. For almost thirty years, not only in Canada but in other countries, there had been long periods of depression and only brief periods of prosperity. Macdonald had had to struggle against these discouragements year after year in holding the Dominion together. Now things were turning for the better. Trade and prices were rising throughout the world, the demand for the products which Canada had to sell was increasing, and another period of heavy migration from Europe was beginning. Standing on the threshold of the twentieth century,



(Canadian Pacific Railway)

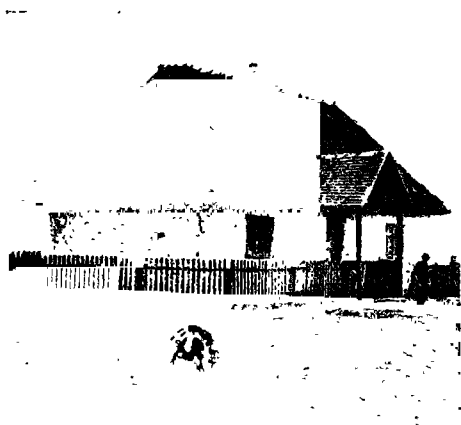
#### SETTLERS ON THEIR WAY TO THE PRAIRIE WHEAT LANDS

Canada faced an opportunity unequalled in her history. Laurier realized it and framed his policy accordingly. His fifteen years as premier, 1896-1911, have been truly called the era of the great expansion.

**Newcomers From Many Lands.** The wave of immigration which set in just at the end of the nineteenth century was the greatest in North America's history. Steamships had by now made ocean travel fast, safe, and cheaper than ever before. Railways had opened up vast stretches of unsettled land. Agriculture and industry were prospering, and millions of homeseekers began to turn eagerly toward the New World. For Canada this was a golden

opportunity. The best free lands of the Western States were filled, while the Canadian West, with little more than 200,000 white people beyond Lake Superior, was still almost empty.

Merely to have land was not enough, however. Homeseekers must be told of the advantages which Canada offered, and this was the task given to Clifford (later Sir Clifford) Sifton, the Minister



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

#### A PIONEER HOUSE

Settlers from Eastern Europe built for their first homes typical Slavic cottages such as this, using logs plastered with mud for the walls and straw for the thatched roof.

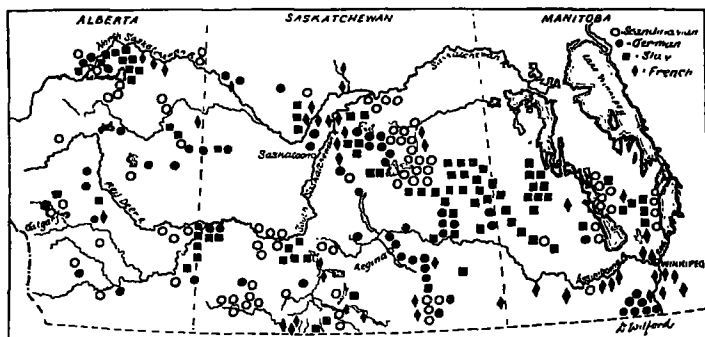
of the Interior in Laurier's first Cabinet. Sifton, himself a westerner, began a campaign for settlers which for vigour and practical results has probably never been excelled. Turning first to the United States he put advertisements in five to six thousand weekly and farm papers, distributed millions of booklets, and brought trainloads of homeseekers to see the land for themselves. Soon the trickle of settlers from the United States became a stream. For

decades Canada had been losing to her neighbour, now for a time the tide was turned. Of almost three million immigrants to Canada in the years 1897 to 1914, nearly one million came from the United States, most of them experienced and progressive farmers. From Britain came another million. The Diamond Jubilee had aroused a new interest in Canada which came to be known in these years as the "Granary of the Empire," and Sifton's campaign in the British Isles was no less successful than in the United States.

Finally, almost a million came from Eastern and Southern Europe—from Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Russian Ukraine, the Balkan countries, and Italy. Canada had never before received such a flood of non-English settlers—thirty or more groups with

different languages and customs. This was the fourth great wave of immigration<sup>1</sup> that has made the Canadian population what it is today, and it marked a new stage in Canada's development. The West was, of course, most affected but every province received a share of new arrivals, Ontario not less than three quarters of a million.

Like every story of pioneer home seeking, this great migration was a drama of high courage—the courage of humble men and



(Can. Geog. Journal)

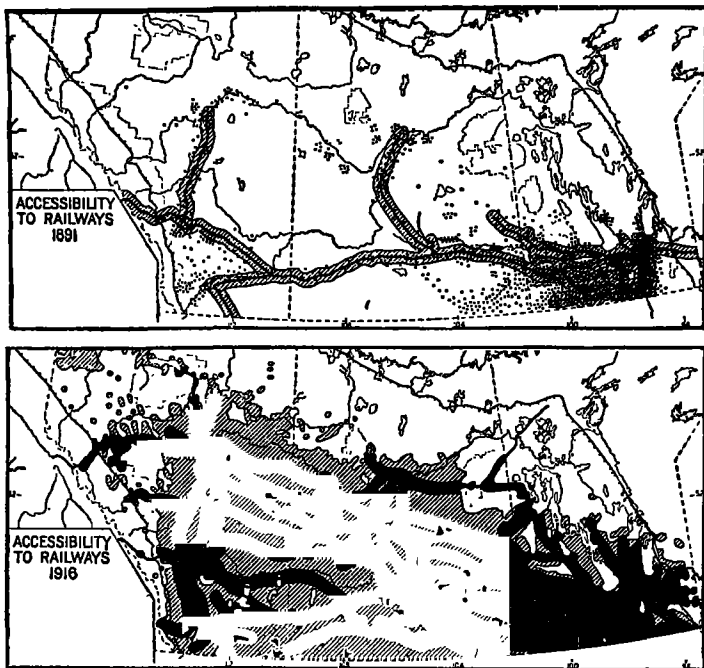
This map shows the distribution of non-English-speaking settlers in the Prairie Provinces.

women venturing into the unknown for themselves and especially for their children. Of such stuff has Canadian history been made for over three hundred years.

To assimilate so many newcomers in so short a time was an enormous problem. Three million were poured into a country of scarcely five millions in little more than a dozen years. Most of those from Britain and the United States fitted quickly into Canadian ways, but for those who came from Continental Europe the problem was very different. The history and government, language and customs of the new land were completely strange. New ways were hard to learn, especially where settlements were made in solid

<sup>1</sup> The others were: the immigration from France in the 1660's and '70's; that from the Thirteen Colonies before and after the Revolution, especially the immigration of the Loyalists; and that from the British Isles after 1815. The immigration between these periods was, of course, at times quite large.

blocks to avoid loneliness as they were at many points in the West; and, unfortunately, the newcomer did not always receive the understanding and help which he should have had. Undoubtedly the school was the most powerful Canadianizing influence, since



(Courtesy of Professor Chester Martin and the Macmillan Company)

These maps show how settlement and railways went together in the Prairie Provinces. The shaded areas in the upper map show the lands within ten miles of a railway; the dots show the settlements. In the lower map the black parts show the lands within ten miles of a railway, and the shaded parts show the settled area beyond that distance.

most immigrants were eager that their children should be educated; but churches and other agencies also played an important part.

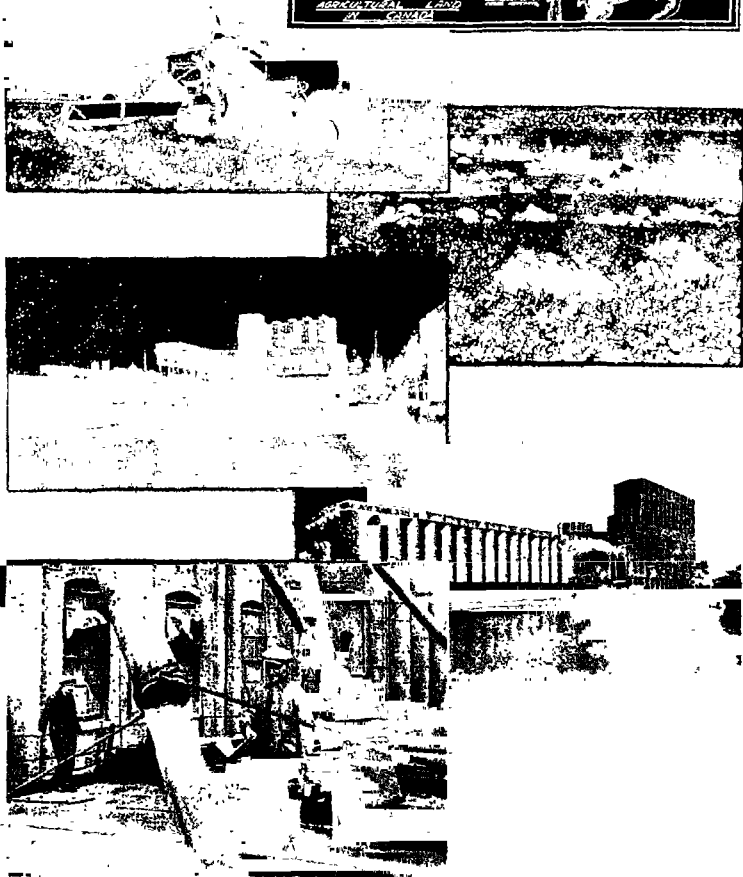
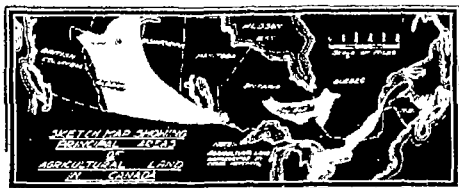
One cannot wonder that these newcomers did not wish to forget entirely the homes they had left, and yet the vast majority sincerely wanted to be loyal citizens in the land of their adoption. Canada, they believed, could give them not only land but a freedom their

fathers had never known. And in return, they brought qualities of thrift and patience, a love of beauty, of music, and of handicrafts, which, if woven into Canada's life, could colour and enrich it.

**New Provinces, New Railways.** The opening of the West was the greatest single event in this first decade of the twentieth century. Scores of little towns sprang up almost overnight, and the broad prairies turned into a sea of golden grain. People were caught with enthusiasm as they felt the new land growing under their very hands. Besides the immigrants from other countries, tens of thousands of settlers swarmed in from Eastern Canada—the great majority from the English-speaking provinces. Among them were not only farmers, but leaders who established Western Canada's institutions, its railways, its education, its churches, business methods, and professions. These "boom" years had, it is true, something of false prosperity. Harder times were to come. Nevertheless foundations were laid that have endured.

By 1905 a new form of government was needed for the Territories lying between Manitoba and British Columbia. Already they had passed through the first stages of self-government. In 1888 an elected assembly had been established and a few years later Responsible Government had been granted. Now they were ready for the final step, and two new provinces were created, Saskatchewan and Alberta, with capitals at Regina and Edmonton. One important restriction was imposed on them, as it had been on Manitoba. The Dominion government kept control of certain "natural resources" such as Crown Lands and water-power. At the time there was little discussion of this action, but twenty-five years later after much agitation the Dominion government surrendered these resources, and so placed the Prairie Provinces on an equality with the others.

Free and cheap land was the magnet which drew people to the West, but until 1896 land grants went slowly, only a few thousand, or even hundred, homesteads being applied for each year. As immigration climbed after 1896, however, homestead entries went up by leaps and bounds, and the Laurier government encouraged this in every way by making as liberal conditions as possible. "In 1908, a Wales was given away; in 1909 five Prince Edward



### FROM WHEATLAND TO SEABOARD

The small map shows only the largest blocks of agricultural land, but illustrates some of the geographical difficulties with which Canada has had to contend. Combines, as shown upper left, did not come in until after 1918. Ships loading with wheat in Montreal harbour are shown middle left. The bottom pictures show one of the great lake-head elevators, and a sample of wheat being taken for government inspection as a ship is being loaded.

Islands, while in 1910 and 1911 a Belgium, a Holland, a Luxembourg and a Montenegro passed from the state to the settler."<sup>2</sup> Although many entries were cancelled, the homestead system was without question one of the most powerful influences in the settlement of the West. Millions of acres were also purchased from government and private owners. Between 1901 and 1916 settlers occupied a total of no less than 73,000,000 acres.

Railways made possible this pioneer expansion. In the fifteen years of Laurier's government nearly 10,000 miles of railway were built—two miles a day year in and year out—and in the following three years 5,000 miles more were added. A railway network was thrown over the West, and two new transcontinental lines were built, the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific. To all these railways lavish aid was given by provincial and Dominion governments in the form of land grants, cash, and the guaranteeing of bonds. In the case of the Grand Trunk, the Dominion government built the line from Moncton west to Winnipeg which was known as the National Transcontinental, while the company built the remainder, which was called the Grand Trunk Pacific, from Winnipeg to Prince Rupert.

By 1916 Canada had nearly 40,000 miles of railway, an amount exceeded only by the United States, Germany, and Russia. No country in proportion to its population had ever made such gigantic efforts to bind together its scattered sections with steel, or to provide outlets for its commerce to the markets of the world. The future was soon to show that the effort was too ambitious. The building of a third transcontinental line was a mistake, and created a serious problem within a few years. Nevertheless, important results were achieved. Great stretches of new land were opened to settlement; roads to the sea were built; industry was stimulated; and depth was added to the country.

**The Story of Western Canada's Wheat.** The West was built on wheat, and yet it was not until 1876 that the first export was made to the outside world—875 bushels from Manitoba to Ontario; and not until 1884 that the first little shipment went overseas by an all-Canadian route—1000 bushels from Brandon to Glas-

<sup>2</sup> O. D. Skelton, *The Day of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, 228.



gow. Then something happened. Within thirty years Western Canada became the world's greatest wheat-exporting region, with a crop which in 1915 reached the total of 342,000,000 bushels.

This astonishing change came through a combination of circumstances which appeared just near the end of the nineteenth century. The world demand for wheat was rising rapidly with the rise of great industrial cities in America and Europe; the development of farm machinery, railways, and steamships now made possible the production and transport of wheat in enormous quantities; and, finally, Western Canada's hard wheat proved to be unexcelled for mixing with soft wheats to make flour of the highest quality.

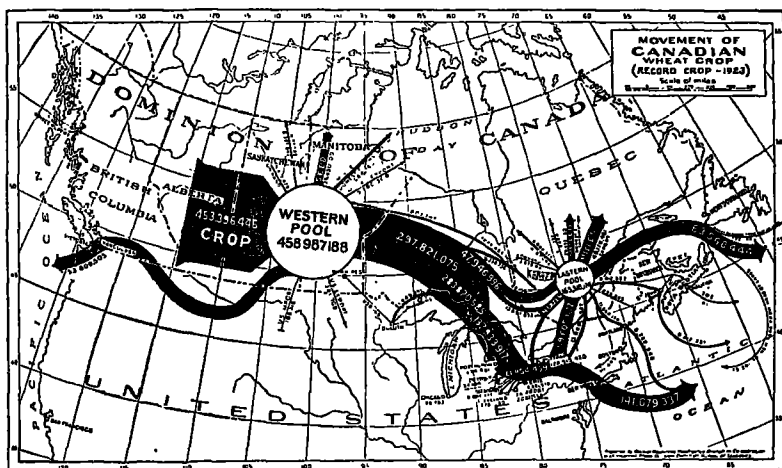
The wheat which first made Western Canada's reputation has a story all its own. About 1842 David Fife, an Ontario farmer, received a sample of wheat from a friend in Scotland. Where it had grown the friend did not know, and when Fife planted it in the autumn only three plants came through the winter.<sup>3</sup> Realizing that it was spring wheat, he sowed the few hardy grains that survived, and in the autumn reaped his first little crop of the wheat which later came to be known as Red Fife. So excellent was Fife's new wheat that it quickly spread into the Western States and then into Manitoba. Here it flourished so well, that little else was exported and by the end of the nineteenth century Western Canada's Red Fife was famous in all the wheat markets of the world.

As the wheat line moved north and west across the prairie the need for quicker-ripening wheats to avoid early frosts became acute, and this led to the discovery of Red Fife's famous successor, Marquis. In 1903 Charles (later Sir Charles) Saunders, who had been appointed Dominion cerealist, set himself in real earnest to solve the problem. The search had been begun some fifteen years earlier by his father, William Saunders, who had gathered samples of early-ripening wheat from all over the world, especially from Northern India and Russia. These were crossed with Red Fife and other varieties, and hundreds of new strains were developed. From these with infinite patience Saunders finally selected a single

<sup>3</sup> There is a story that a cow ate two of these.

head in 1904. By 1909 after many tests the new seed was being widely distributed. It ripened eight days earlier than Red Fife and yielded several bushels per acre more. Twenty years later Marquis formed 80 per cent of Western Canada's crop.

The discovery of Marquis was only the first triumph of its kind; other wheats were later developed for special needs; new methods of cultivation were discovered, grain diseases studied, and insect pests combatted. Scientists and farmers, governments and



(Department of Trade and Commerce)

This map shows the distribution of the Canadian wheat crop both for export and home consumption. The figures are for 1923. Before 1918 wheat was not exported by way of the Pacific ports and the Panama Canal.

universities, worked together to develop a system of agriculture adapted to western conditions, and so year by year the farm line was pushed farther into what only a few decades earlier had been the fur traders' undisputed empire.

One more accomplishment belongs to the story of Western Canadian wheat in the first years of the twentieth century. Never before had it been necessary to move hundreds of millions of bushels from the centre of a continent to the markets of the world. The difficulty was met by the creation of the most efficient system of grain transportation ever devised. Hundreds of little

elevators in prairie towns, great terminal elevators at lake and ocean ports, ingenious machinery for loading and unloading, for inspecting and checking, were all part of it. Not least important was the modern lake freighter which appeared just about the beginning of the century. Marvellously designed for the special conditions of lake and river navigation, it was built with the sole idea of carrying as much cargo as possible and has been well described as "a steel trough with a lid on it."

As early as the 1880's the Dominion government provided a system of grading wheat. These grades were accepted in Britain and so Western Canadian wheat set the standards in the world's wheat markets. In 1904 the Laurier government passed a Grain Inspection Act, and thus there was gradually developed a careful system of regulation and control so that Western Canada's wheat should maintain its reputation for unexcelled quality.

**Mining, Manufacturing, and the Rise of Cities.** Meanwhile there was expansion also in other parts of the country. In 1897 and 98 the Klondike gold rush began. In rapidity, size, and intensity it has perhaps never been equalled. More than thirty thousand men from all over the world scrambled into the Yukon by every possible route, but especially through Skagway and over the famous Chilkoot Pass. As always happened, only a few "struck it rich," but millions in gold were taken out. The wild rush quickly subsided, but it left permanent results. It opened the Yukon, steamboats appeared on the river, and a railway connecting with them was built from Skagway to White Horse. Within a few years placer mining gave way to dredges and other large scale methods. The Mounted Police played a very important part in these early Yukon days. The meaning of their flashing red coats was now known far and wide, and desperadoes like the notorious "Soapy" Smith<sup>4</sup> and his gang stayed for the most part on the Alaskan side of the boundary.

Two other mining regions were opened in these years, which, although less spectacular than the Klondike, were far more important in the long run. The first was the Kootenay District of

<sup>4</sup> Smith had got his nickname by selling cakes of soap some of which contained \$10 bills. Only his friends, of course, got the lucky cakes.

southern British Columbia. By the early '90's it was swarming with searchers, not only along the river banks, but on the sides and even on the tops of the mountains. The result was the discovery of silver-lead and copper-gold deposits which in later years made the district the greatest smelting centre in Canada and one of the richest mining areas in the world. Towns sprang up, railways were



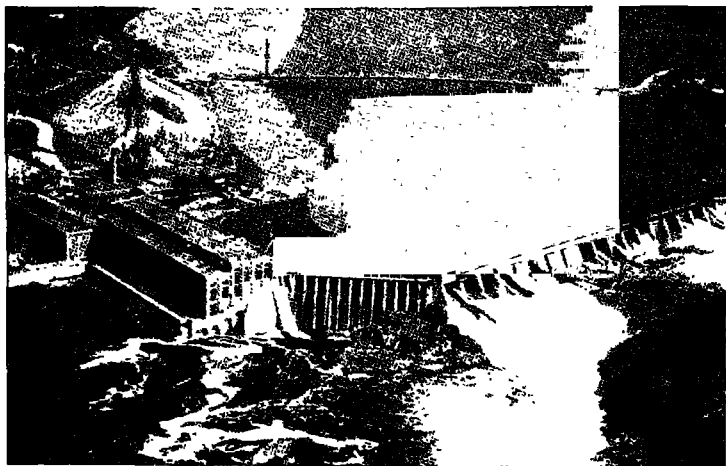
A PACK TRAIN AT DAWSON IN THE YUKON IN 1899

built, and the whole area was opened not only to mining but to other activities as well.

The second region was in Northern Ontario. Just at the beginning of the century settlers began to make their way into the great Clay Belt which lies like a pocket in the Precambrian Shield north of Lake Nipissing. To open the region the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway was begun by the Ontario government, and it was during the construction of this line that the silver deposits at Cobalt were found in 1903. They soon proved to be among the richest ever discovered.

The Cobalt discovery marked the real opening of the Precambrian Shield to the miner. These ancient rocks, the oldest

in the world according to geologists, had long been known to contain gold, silver, nickel, copper, and other minerals, but after 1903 intensive prospecting began. Within a few years gold discoveries, such as those at Porcupine and Kirkland Lake, were made; and so the hard-rock mining of the Precambrian Shield was fully launched on its way. Within a few years it was to become one of Canada's greatest industries.



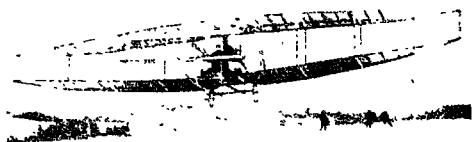
White Coal. One of Canada's many Hydro-Electric Plants.

Meanwhile other industries were expanding throughout the country, and in particular manufacturing, which received a very great stimulus in these years from the growth of hydro-electric power. In 1895 the first Canadian hydro-electric power was produced at Niagara Falls and from that time Canada has been among the pioneers in hydro-electric development. Her resources of water power are distributed from coast to coast and are well located in relation to the centres of industry and population. For Ontario and Quebec this was most important. They lacked coal, and hydro-electric power came just at the right moment to encourage an industrial development which would otherwise have been impossible. One of the most striking examples of the effects of hydro-electric power was the growth of the pulp and paper industry.

Ontario was among the pioneers also in developing hydro-electric power by a system of public ownership. In 1906 the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario was established, with Adam (later Sir Adam) Beck as its chief. Within a few years it became one of the world's greatest electrical enterprises, bringing cheap electricity not only to manufacturers and city dwellers but to thousands of farms.

Finally, one other change of these years must be noted—the growth of large cities. Everywhere in Europe and America there was a drift from country to cities—especially to the large cities—and Canada was no exception. This tendency was by no means altogether desirable and it was widely deplored. But it belonged to a time when transportation was being speeded up, and business and industry were increasing with tremendous rapidity. Like the first aeroplanes that were already making their hopping little flights, and the first funny-looking automobiles that were chugging along the roads, the rise of cities was only one of many signs that the horse and buggy age had ended and that a new machine age was beginning.

**Canada's First Half Century.** Laurier's fifteen years as premier were years of unprecedented growth and prosperity. While he did not create this good fortune his policy undoubtedly did much to promote it, by encouraging immigration, the opening of the west, and the expansion of commerce and industry. In addition he had to his credit wise measures such as the establishment of a Board of Railway Commissioners to control railway rates and service; a Civil Service Commission to oversee the appointment and promotion of government officials; and a Commission of Conservation to devise means for the preservation and economical use of Canada's natural resources.<sup>5</sup> In 1900, also, a Department of



(Saturday Night)

J. A. D. McCurdy making the first aeroplane flight in the British Empire in his home-made "Silver-Dart" at Baddeck, N.S., on February 23, 1909.

<sup>5</sup> This Commission was disbanded in 1921.

Labour, with a cabinet minister at its head, was created to collect information with regard to labour, and to help in regulating relations between employers and employees.

Above all Laurier aimed at national unity, urging Canadians of different races and creeds to understand each other, and to emphasize not the things which divided them but those they had in common. No task lay nearer his heart than this, and for it he was uniquely fitted. "Canada" he declared, "has been the inspiration of my life. I have had before me, as a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day, a policy of true Canadianism, of moderation, of conciliation."

Canada's first half century was dominated by two great leaders, Macdonald and Laurier, and between them they held the high office of premier for no less than thirty-six of the Dominion's first forty-four years. Essentially they had the same policy, even though they were of opposite parties. To bind together the far-flung sections of the country, and to win the people of every province to a common loyalty was their constant purpose. How great was their measure of success may be seen if we compare the Canada of 1867 with that of 1911. Four eastern provinces had increased to nine, covering half a continent. Vast changes had taken place in trade and communications, in ways of life and habits of thought. And in the midst of this a new spirit had developed—a spirit of pride and loyalty which gave to the words Canada and Canadian a new meaning.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Laurier's life is described in *The day of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* by O. D. Skelton (Chronicles of Canada), and more briefly in a Ryerson reader, in Adrian Macdonald's *Canadian portraits*, and in W. J. Karr's *Explorers, soldiers and statesmen*. Tables of figures showing the rapid increase in population during Laurier's period and the various nationalities represented may be found in the volumes of the *Canada year book*. *Canadian mosaic* by J. Murray Gibbon contains interesting information about the culture and crafts of the national groups. Frederick Niven in a rather slow-moving novel *The flying years* tells of the development of the west. Nellie McClung's *Clearing in the west* is an entertaining record of her girlhood in a pioneer community a little before this period. Girls will enjoy Bess Streeter Aldrich's novels *A lantern in*

*her hand* and *A white bird flying*. They deal with new communities in the United States under conditions similar to those in Canada. Some of you will be able to draw from your own family circle true stories of this period of immigration. A collection of such stories would make an interesting history of the community.

For the building of new railways you may refer to O. D. Skelton's *The railway builders* (Chronicles of Canada) chapter X, and to Herbert Heaton's *History of trade and commerce*. The development of Canada's hardy wheat is traced in Paul de Kruif's *Hunger fighters*, chapter II, and in the biography of Dr. Angus Mackay in Riddell's *Canadian portraits*. A good article in "New wheat creations" in the Canadian Geographical Journal for March 1939.

There is a historical account of the Yukon Gold Rush in *Minefinders* by B. F. Townsley. Vivid descriptions of the adventure and hardship of Klondike days are given by a woman who took part in the "rush", by mounted policemen, and by a successful miner: the books are *My seventy years* by Mrs. George Black (begin at part II); *Policing the Arctic* by Harwood Steele (first 100 pages); *In scarlet and plain clothes* by T. M. Longstreth; *Yukon yesterdays* by Major Nevill Armstrong. Robert Service's poems and his novel *The Trail of '98* give a highly coloured, romantic version of Gold Rush days.

Mining developments in Ontario are included in Townsley's *Minefinders*. The following articles in the Canadian Geographical Journal are well illustrated: January 1937; "The Story of McIntyre"; May 1937, "The Noranda Mine"; July 1938, "The Lake Shore Gold Mine." Hydro-electric development is dealt with in a Ryerson Reader: *The story of Hydro*, in a brief biography of Sir Adam Beck in John Henderson's *Great men of Canada*, and in an article in the Canadian Geographical Journal, September 1937, "Canada's water-power wealth."



## Chapter XXIX

### Relations With Britain and the United States

**I**N the half century from the American Civil War to the end of Laurier's premiership, Canada's relations with Britain and the United States went through a change as striking as the change from candles to electric light. At the beginning of the half century Canada was merely a string of scattered colonies subordinate to Britain though enjoying Responsible Government, while their relations with the United States were full of distrust and hostility. Fifty years later these colonies were a united Dominion, far advanced on the road to nationhood. From Britain Canada had won increasing powers of self-government; and with the United States she had at last, after many difficulties, come to a relation of friendship and understanding which in many ways was unique in the world. How and why did so great a change come about?—that is the subject of this chapter.

**The Crisis of the 1860's.** During, and immediately following the American Civil War, Britain and the United States were on such bad terms that several times open war seemed almost inevitable. One cause of this unfortunate condition was the division of opinion in England about the Civil War. In spite of very strong feeling against slavery there was much sympathy for the South, especially among the wealthy and aristocratic classes, and the British government came to the verge of recognizing the South as an independent country. One of the North's bitterest causes of resentment was the destruction caused by the *Alabama*. This famous ship and several others built in English ports for the South were allowed by the British government to go out into the Atlantic, where they were fitted with guns and for months created havoc by attacking Northern merchant vessels.

The North's bitterness against England soon turned against

Canada. At the beginning of the war Canadians overwhelmingly favoured the North, and 40,000 are said to have enlisted in the Northern army to fight against slavery. But as anti-British newspapers in the North, and even a few public men, made violent threats and declared that Canada should be conquered and annexed, Canadian sympathy turned to fear and distrust. During the war there were several extremely dangerous cases of trouble along the border; and, had it not been for cool heads on both sides of the Atlantic, Britain and the United States might have been plunged into a war which would have been one of the greatest calamities in modern history.

The end of the Civil War in 1865 did not by any means end the crisis. For several years more the Fenian Raids, which the United States government did almost nothing to prevent, kept

Canada in a state of alarm and caused the destruction of lives and property. Talk of annexation also continued, and the threat against Red River and British Columbia became especially serious. American agents were working actively between St. Paul and Red River, and in 1871 the Fenians attempted a raid across the Manitoba border. In British Columbia at the time of Confederation there were thousands of American settlers. Others were moving in, and a special dispute arose with regard to the ownership of San Juan Island which lay between Vancouver Island and the mainland, but on which side of the boundary had never been settled. In 1867, the very year of Confederation, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, and the American Secretary of State suggested



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)  
British gunboat at Goderich on Lake Huron  
in 1866.

that this would be a step toward the absorption of Canada as it would help to hem her in on the Pacific. Events were moving fast and it was clear that British Columbia could not remain isolated but must soon be joined either to the United States or to Canada.

Meanwhile, a most serious situation of another kind was developing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. During the years 1854-66 the Reciprocity Treaty had opened the inshore fishery to American vessels, that is it had allowed them to fish within three miles of the coast. After 1866 the Canadian government

demanding that American fishermen purchase licenses, and in 1870 it excluded them entirely from the inshore fishery. Six cruisers were fitted out as a marine police, and within three months over four hundred American fishing boats were



(from the *Canadian Book of Printing*)

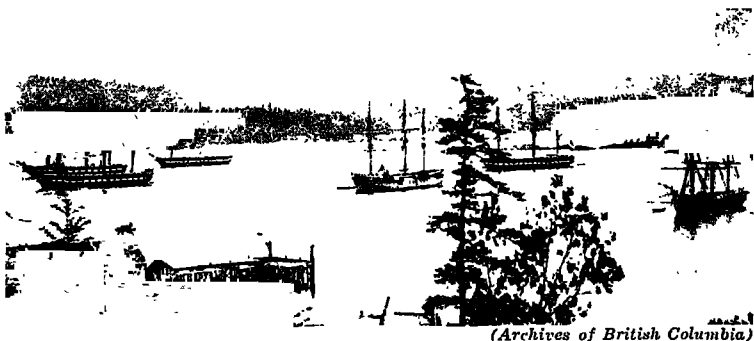
A cartoon of 1866 ridiculing the Fenians.

taken. Feeling ran high, no one knew when an explosion would take place, and the *New York Times* warned that "the fisheries question cannot remain in its present state another year without bloodshed."

During these months Senator Sumner of the United States threw fuel on the flames by a speech in which he declared that the *Alabama* had prolonged the Civil War by many months and that Britain should pay the entire cost of the war during this time. As an alternative he suggested that Canada might be ceded to the United States. These preposterous ideas were, perhaps, not taken seriously by many public men in the United States, but the situation was too dangerous to be neglected. From Atlantic to Pacific, and from London to Washington a whole series of pressing problems had reached an acute stage. This was the condition which brought about the Treaty of Washington.

**The Treaty of Washington, 1871.** The terms of the Treaty are a bundle of compromises, and show how difficult was the task

of finding agreement. The *Alabama* claims were left to an international tribunal which met later at Geneva and awarded the United States \$15,500,000; the inshore fisheries were opened to American vessels for twelve years and Canada was awarded compensation which was later fixed by a commission at \$5,500,000; the right of free navigation of the River St. Lawrence, which had been given the United States in the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, was renewed, while Canada was given similar rights in Lake Michigan, and in the Yukon and some other rivers on the West Coast: the ownership of San Juan Island was referred to the German



British warships on station at the Esquimalt Naval Base in 1870.

Emperor who later awarded it to the United States. Canada's claims for damage done by the Fenians were, however, passed over, although they were fully as justified as the *Alabama* claims.

The treaty was a severe disappointment to Canada. The refusal of the Fenian claims seemed very unfair, and she had hoped in return for the fishing privileges to get a renewal of the Reciprocity agreement. Only Macdonald's plea that the treaty be accepted "for the sake of peace, and for the sake of the great Empire of which we form a part," made the parliament at Ottawa accept it. Nevertheless, as we look back on the treaty, we can see that it was a milestone in the relations of all three countries and of the English-speaking world. It showed that Britain and the United States could reach peaceful settlement on even the most difficult problems,

and that Canada had a part to play between them. Canada had created some of the problems which divided them, but by her concessions on the fisheries and the Fenian claims she had also helped them to reach agreement.

The treaty also opened a period of better relations. After 1871 the demand for annexation died down. The people of the United States began to see that Canada did not want annexation though she wished to live in close relations with her neighbour, and also they began to realize that she remained in the Empire not because she was compelled but because she enjoyed freedom and an increasing amount of self-government. It is true that future relations with the United States were to bring misunderstandings and pin pricks, but never again was war between Britain and the United States to come so close as in the Civil War period. A century had passed since the American Revolution began. Every quarter of it had brought either war or the threat of war. Now a second and a better century was opening.

The Treaty was also important for Canada because it marked a step in her national growth. She had a share in negotiating the agreement, Macdonald being appointed by the British government as one of the five commissioners who went to Washington; and, after the treaty was drawn up, the Parliament at Ottawa debated and voted on its acceptance. This was the first of a series of steps which gradually have given Canada control of her relations with foreign countries.

**Macdonald's Policy Toward the United States.** The Treaty of Washington did not, however, bring much immediate benefit. Trade was depressed throughout the world, and the two decades following Confederation were, in fact, years of depression and internal bitterness so serious that many prophesied that Confederation would break up. Canada's condition would have been much better had she enjoyed some advantage in her two chief markets, the British Isles and the United States; but Britain's policy of free trade prevented Canadian products being given a preference in the British market, and in 1866 the benefit of reciprocity with the United States had been lost.

Macdonald had hoped to obtain a renewal of reciprocity in the

Treaty of Washington in return for the fishing privileges of the Gulf and the free navigation of the River St. Lawrence. This was, however, absolutely refused, and Canada found during the next forty years that she faced an American tariff wall which went almost steadily higher and higher.

During the '70's and '80's the Canadian government did not give up the hope of obtaining reciprocity, but every attempt to make an agreement was fruitless.<sup>1</sup> When times were very bad in the '80's, some of Macdonald's opponents began to advocate two proposals—"Unrestricted Reciprocity," and "Commercial Union"—

which were more extreme than the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854-66. While it had been confined to articles like fish, lumber, and agricultural products, Unrestricted Reciprocity would have allowed complete free trade across the boundary. Commercial Union would have gone still further by providing that

the two countries would also have a common system of tariffs for their imports from other countries. Macdonald opposed these ideas with all his power. They would have meant giving up his National Policy of protecting Canadian manufacturers, and he believed that they would also have led finally to political union of Canada and the United States.

These extreme ideas probably had little chance of success. Few



(from Bengough's *Caricature History*)

A cartoon of 1868 showing Miss Nova Scotia being tempted to join the United States. The evils of politics in the United States, about which much was said at the time, are contrasted with the advantages of Confederation.

These extreme ideas probably had little chance of success. Few

<sup>1</sup> The Mackenzie government negotiated a treaty in 1874 but it was thrown out by the United States Senate.

people in the United States were interested in them, but just before the election of 1891 the Liberal party did take up the proposal of Unrestricted Reciprocity, and Macdonald's last fight was on this issue. Going up and down the country he appealed to the voters to defeat what he called the "veiled treason" of Unrestricted Reciprocity, and he coined the famous sentence, "A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die." His appeal was mainly to the sentiment of loyalty, but one cannot believe that he made it merely to win the election. Undoubtedly he believed that Canada would grow to nationhood by remaining British, and that any policy which drew her into a commercial union with the United States would mean the end of the dream for which the Fathers of Confederation had fought so hard. The election of 1891 was Macdonald's last triumph. Exhausted at the end of it, he fell ill and within a few weeks was dead.

**Canada's Changing Relations With Britain.** During these years a great, though gradual, change came into the relations of Canada and Britain. No single event showed it. Rather it was like the growth of a plant, scarcely realized until it had taken place. It consisted of two tendencies which on the surface seemed to oppose each other, but which in reality were twined together. Only by understanding them, can we see the unique way in which Canada grew toward political maturity and by so doing helped to transform the Empire. These tendencies were, on the one hand, the development of self-government or autonomy, and on the other the growth of a new spirit of co-operation.

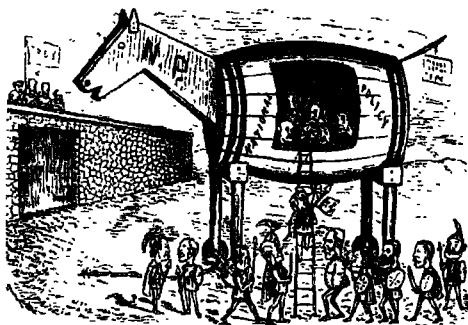
An important sign of the growth of autonomy was the decline of the power of the Governor-General. More and more, like the king in Britain, he became an "official" figure, while the affairs of government were carried on in his name by the cabinet. Pardons, for instance, were still granted in his name, but the cabinet made the decisions. This change in the position of the Governor-General was, of course, simply a growth of the principle of Responsible Government which had been expanding ever since the days of Elgin.

After Confederation the Governor-General's principal responsibility, in addition to his ceremonial duties, was to act as a link

between the British and Canadian governments. All communications between London and Ottawa passed through his hands. But even this began to break down. In 1880 the Canadian government appointed a Canadian High Commissioner in London so that it might have a direct representative in Britain, although the Governor-General continued also for many years to be a channel for communications with the British government.

The chief development in autonomy during this period was Canada's increasing control over commerce, shown (i) in control over her tariff, and (ii) in the part which she began to take in negotiating commercial treaties.

With regard to the tariff, the most important step came as early as 1859 in the "Galt Tariff", so called because Alexander Galt was Minister of Finance at the time. By it, duties on manufactured goods were sharply raised with the purpose of protect-



ANCIENT TRICKY FACTS

(from *Bengough's Caricature History*)

One of many cartoons on the National Policy. Macdonald's Cabinet is entering the horse. The sign says, "Please let us IN."

ing them against competition from other countries. This action came as a shock to the British government. When Britain had adopted Free Trade in the 1840's Canada had been freed from tariffs imposed by the British Parliament, but no one had expected that she would use this freedom to raise a tariff against British, as well as against foreign, manufacturers. The British government protested,<sup>2</sup> and in reply Galt wrote a famous statement in which he declared that, unless the British government wished to take over Canada's powers

<sup>2</sup> It should not be forgotten that Galt's Tariff was also directed against the United States, and that it brought from Washington a much sharper, if less speedy, reply, since it was one of the chief reasons for the United States cancelling the Reciprocity Treaty as soon after the Civil War as it was able to do so.



of self-government, the Canadian Parliament must be allowed complete control of its financial policy. It is the duty of the Canadian government, wrote Galt, "distinctly to affirm the right of the Canadian legislature to adjust the taxation of the people in the way they deem best." "Self-government would be utterly annihilated if the views of the imperial government were to be preferred to those of the people of Canada." Galt's arguments were accepted by the British government, and from that time Canada's control of her tariff was taken for granted. Twenty years later, Macdonald's National Policy carried the tariff still higher than Galt had done in 1859 without any question being raised as to the right to do so.

In negotiating commercial treaties, Canada began to take a direct part soon after Confederation. Macdonald's appointment to the conference in Washington has been already noted. Several times during the next few years representatives were sent to Washington for the discussion of reciprocity, or to international conferences which dealt with commercial matters; and in 1877 the British government agreed that commercial treaties, made in future by Britain, should not be binding on Canada unless she wished to be included.

Let us turn to the development of the spirit of co-operation. In Canada the chief reason was the sense of growing freedom in an Empire which offered advantages without imposing burdens. George Brown stated this point very well just before Confederation. "In these colonies," he wrote, "we have enjoyed great advantages under the protecting shield of the mother country. We have had no army or navy—our whole resources have gone to our internal improvement,—and, notwithstanding our occasional strifes with the Colonial Office, we have enjoyed a degree of self-government and generous consideration such as no colonies in ancient or modern history ever enjoyed at the hands of a parent state." And a few years later Lord Carnarvon, when Governor-General, wrote that nothing strengthened the tie between Britain and Canada "more than the consciousness that the maintenance of this connection depends on Canada's own free will." Canada's position in the Empire was, in fact, coming more and more to be

that which Durham and Elgin, Baldwin and Howe had prophesied would result from the granting of Responsible Government.

About 1870 a great change began to appear in the attitude of Britain. Before that time, for about thirty years, most public men in England had believed that the Empire was bound to break up, because the adoption of Free Trade had ended the old colonial preferences. They thought, in fact, that it would be to Britain's advantage to get rid of those colonies which were able to look after themselves so that she would not have the expense of protecting them. This, for example, was what led to the withdrawal in 1871 of all British soldiers from Canada,<sup>3</sup> except those at the naval bases of Halifax and Esquimalt. Soon, however, new views were put forward, and men in England as well as in Canada argued that the Empire need not break up, but that means should be found of encouraging a spirit of co-operation and partnership. Out of these ideas came one definite step—the calling of the first Colonial Conference in 1887. Canada and every self-governing colony sent representatives to discuss the Empire's problems of trade and defence. While it had little immediate result, it was the first of a long series of conferences which later played an important part in the development of the Empire.

In conclusion, we may observe that Macdonald's policy toward both the United States and Britain was truly Canadian. With the United States he wanted close and friendly relations, though he fought against extreme proposals such as Unrestricted Reciprocity which he thought would tend toward annexation and the breaking up of Confederation. Toward Britain and the Empire he had a deep loyalty, which was based not only on sentiment but on a belief that, through the Empire, Canada enjoyed freedom and rights of British citizenship that were of real advantage to her. At the same time, he believed that Canada should control her own

<sup>3</sup> C. P. Stacey in *Canada and the British Army*, 253, describes the departure of the garrison from Quebec: "On the afternoon of November 11, 1871, the troops marched out for the last time from the citadel above Cape Diamond. To the strains of *Good-bye, Sweetheart*, *Good-bye*, and *Auld Lang Syne*, the column swung through the narrow streets to St. Andrew's wharf. There, amid the good wishes and regrets of a great crowd, . . . the soldiers embarked . . . and as the troops dropped down the great river, an era in the history of Canada came to an end."

affairs, and should decide what contribution she wished to make to the Empire's defence.

— **Laurier's Policy Toward Britain.** In its underlying principles, Laurier's policy was the same as that of Macdonald. He too wanted friendly relations with the United States, growing powers of self-government, and a close partnership with Britain



*(London Illustrated News)*

The Imperial Conference in the Jubilee year of 1897. Laurier is standing second from the left.

and the Empire. Times were changing, however, and like every statesman, Laurier had the task of applying his principles in his own way.

His first step was to adopt a "British Preference," i.e. the tariff was altered so as to allow manufactured goods to enter Canada from Britain at a lower rate of duty than from other countries. By this action the government "killed two birds with one stone": Empire trade was encouraged and the price

of British goods lowered for Canadian consumers, while Canadian manufacturers were still left a considerable measure of protection. The new policy aroused keen interest in Britain and elsewhere, and was one of the reasons for the enthusiasm with which Laurier was greeted at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. "With Canada's lead," said the London *Daily Mail*, "we stand at the threshold of a new epoch in the history of the Empire."

A few months later Canada took the lead in another policy no less important in its own way,—the establishment of the imperial penny post, which allowed a letter to be sent anywhere in the Empire for two cents. Since the days of Cunard, steamships, railways and cables had transformed communications, and penny post was one more step in drawing the parts of the Empire more closely together.

Laurier soon had to face, however, a more difficult problem than those of trade and communications. In 1899 the South African War began between Britain and the Boers of the Transvaal Republic. The causes were complex and did not concern Canada, but feeling ran very high because British citizens in the Transvaal had been treated in a tyrannical way. Canada had never taken part in an overseas war,<sup>4</sup> and neither her own safety nor the safety of Britain was considered to be at stake. Nevertheless, so strong a demand for sending a force arose that, three days after war was declared, the government decided to raise a contingent of one thousand men. Before the war ended three years later over seven thousand men went from Canada, among them the Strathcona Horse, a regiment of roughriders from the West. Canadian troops



Stamp marking the introduction of the imperial penny post.

<sup>4</sup> In 1884 four hundred Canadians, most of them French-Canadian voyageurs, had helped in transporting a British expedition up the Nile River. Macdonald was opposed to sending a Canadian fighting force to this campaign, but proposed that the British government might recruit troops in Canada at its own expense. The suggestion was not carried out.

shared in most of the outstanding actions of the war including the relief of Kimberley, the battle of Paardeberg, and the relief of Mafeking where Baden-Powell was besieged. Their record of courage, initiative, and endurance in these engagements sent a thrill of pride through the country.

Unfortunately, the war also created a division of opinion, especially in Quebec. Here Henri Bourassa, the eloquent grandson of Papineau, led a group of French-Canadian "Nationalists," as they were called, in open opposition to Canada's participation. Faced on one side by these extremists who thought he was doing too much, and by critics in English-speaking Canada who thought he was doing too little, Laurier tried to steer a middle course, but the task was not easy.

**An Empire of Free Dominions.** The ten years following the Boer War saw a notable advance in the development of the Empire along the lines which had already been laid down. The idea of an Empire of free Dominions under the British flag was now accepted, and had taken hold of the imagination of people and leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1900 the Australian colonies were united into the federation of the Commonwealth of Australia. New Zealand had also risen to the status of a self-governing Dominion. Most striking of all was South Africa. Four years after the Boer War the Transvaal was given full self-government. It was one of the wisest and boldest steps in the long history of the Empire. A year later the Boer leader, General Botha, who had fought against the British, was representing the Transvaal in a Conference at London. In all these developments Canada's example had a great influence, not only because she was the senior Dominion but also because from the time of Durham she had led the way in working out Responsible Government.

The extension of Canada's responsibilities and autonomy went quietly forward in these years. In 1907 the name Colonial Conference was changed to Imperial Conference, in order to suggest the change in the character of the Empire. In 1909 a Department of External Affairs was established at Ottawa. Commercial relations were almost the only relations Canada had with foreign countries, and she now had control of them, although treaties were still

ratified by the British, as well as the Canadian parliament.<sup>5</sup> Canada was already responsible for all military forces within the country, and in 1910 she took control also of the naval bases at Halifax and Esquimalt.

Empire defence became increasingly important in the Imperial Conferences of this decade. The British government would have liked a policy of defence for the Empire as a whole, and New Zealand favoured this idea. Canada, however, took the view that she was willing to play her part in the defence of the Empire, but that she must have control of her own policy, and be free to determine how much and in what way she would contribute. Australia and South Africa also supported this view.

About 1908 when the menace of Germany began to loom up in an alarming way, the problem of defence became acute. Not satisfied with the most powerful army in the world, Germany was building a navy to challenge British control of the sea. Obviously this was a danger to Canada. Laurier favoured establishing a Canadian navy, as Australia had done, and this was agreed to by the British government. His plan was opposed, however, by the Nationalists in Quebec as going too far in aid to Britain and by the Conservative party in the English-speaking provinces as not going far enough. The question aroused violent debate, and these differences of opinion were among the chief reasons for Laurier's defeat in the election of 1911.

After the election the Conservatives, who had come into power under the leadership of Robert Borden, proposed that Canada should immediately contribute three Dreadnoughts to the British navy as a temporary measure to help meet the German menace, but this proposal after a most stubborn debate in parliament was defeated by the Senate. The result was that no decision was made on naval policy before the World War broke out in 1914.

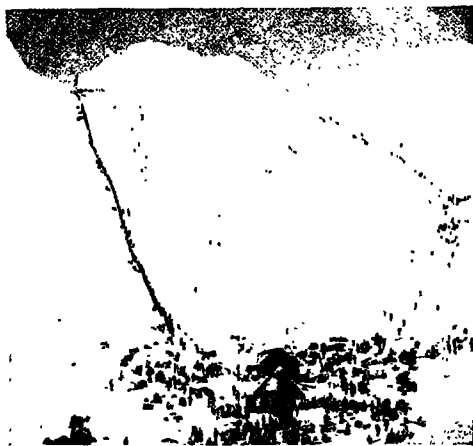
It is worth noting that Laurier and Borden were agreed on two fundamental points: that Canada should control her naval policy, and that she should contribute in some way to the Empire's naval

<sup>5</sup> A treaty was also signed by the British ambassador in the country with which the agreement was made. The first departure from this practice was in the Pacific Halibut Treaty made with the United States in 1923.

defence. The difference of opinion came chiefly in the question of whether Canada should have her own navy or should merge her contribution in the British navy.

### **A Turning Point in Relations With the United States.**

Early in Laurier's term of office, the Alaska boundary produced one of the most difficult disputes in the history of Canada's relations with the United States. In 1825 a treaty between Britain and Russia had defined the boundary of Alaska, including that of the "panhandle" which stretches south along the coast. After the



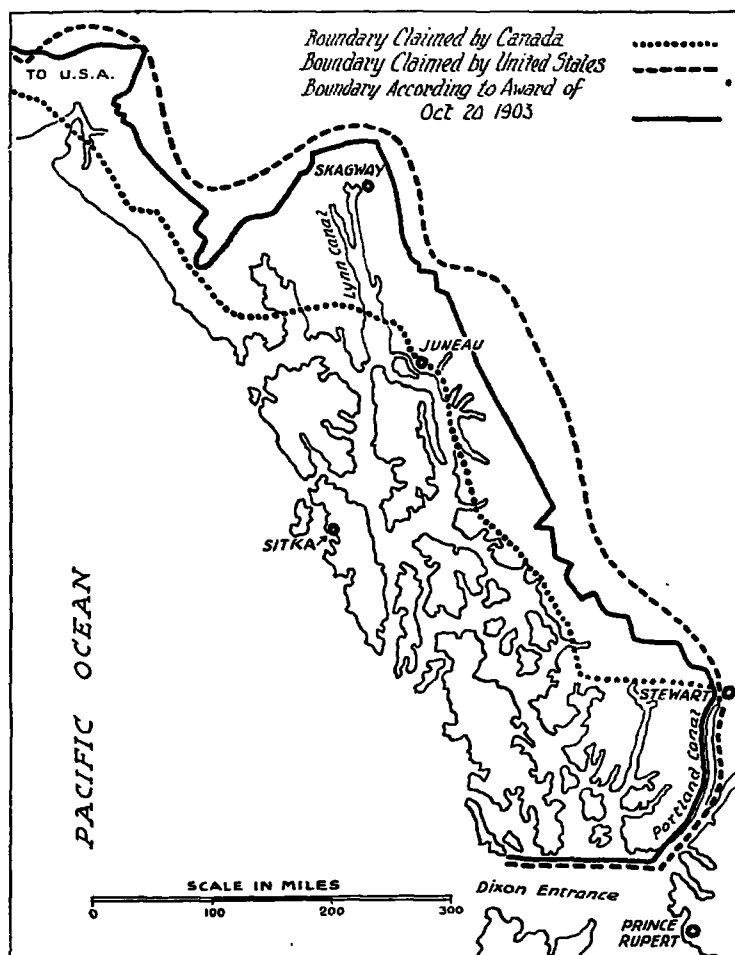
The Trail of '98 over Chilkoot Pass. Men climbing with packs form the line on the left. Men returning are on the right.

United States purchased Alaska in 1867, the boundary between the "panhandle" and British Columbia was found to be so badly defined that no one could tell where it ran. Then came the discovery of gold in the Klondike and the rush of thousands of men over the "Trail of '98." With the opening of the Klondike the boundary could no longer be left unsettled.

According to the Treaty of 1825 the line was to run from Portland Channel north along the summit of mountains parallel to the coast; and, where these mountains were more than ten marine leagues from the coast, the line was to be drawn ten leagues from the coast and parallel to its windings. No chain of mountains ran parallel to the coast, however, and also the coastline was so broken that no line could be drawn parallel to it.

The claims of the two countries were as far apart as possible, and the chief argument, therefore, centred around the method of settling the dispute. Canada wanted an arbitration board of three,

one from a neutral country; but the United States insisted on a commission of six, three from each side, and a treaty was finally signed to this effect though it was also agreed that the members should be "impartial jurists of repute." When the members were appointed, however, the United States named three who were



THE ALASKA BOUNDARY DISPUTE



known to be completely opposed to the Canadian claim. They were able men but certainly not "impartial jurists." As an American newspaper said, "the chances of convincing them of the rightfulness of Canada's claim are about the same as the prospect of a thaw in Hades." The decision was a foregone conclusion. The American representatives were adamant; and, finally, Lord Alverstone, who had been sent from England as one of the three British representatives, sided against his two Canadian colleagues. With the exception of two small islands in Portland Channel, the United States obtained practically all it wished, while Canada was denied a port such as Skagway, which she especially desired.

Canada greeted the decision with a storm of disapproval. The reason was not so much because her claim had been denied, but because of the treatment she had received. It appeared that the United States had broken her pledge by appointing three men whose opinions were already formed; while Britain, so Canadians felt, had "let Canada down" in order to avoid trouble with the United States. They did not, however, know the full truth. Some years later it was revealed that the United States president was determined to hold the disputed territory by force if necessary, and that the negotiation was in a sense therefore a mere matter of form. Canada would have got no more if she had been dealing alone with United States.

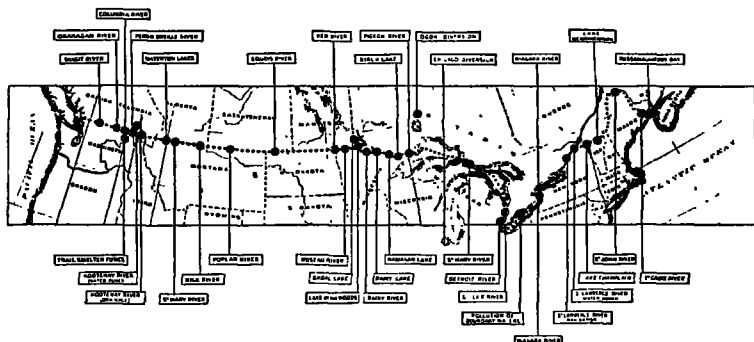
The Alaska boundary case would deserve less attention were it not that, like the Treaty of Washington, it was a turning point in the relations of Canada, Britain, and the United States. It was the last occasion on which the United States used tactics toward Canada of such an unneighbourly kind. Also, it was the last of the many boundary disputes between the two countries. But it was more than that. It was one of several settlements which, in these years, cleared away causes of irritation between Britain and the United States, and allowed them to come closer together.<sup>6</sup> This growing understanding was one of the most important facts in world diplomacy at that time, and it was of special importance

<sup>6</sup> Another of these settlements which affected Canada had to do with the building of the Panama Canal. Britain gave up rights which she had in this matter and agreed that the United States should go ahead provided the Canal would be open to the shipping of all nations on equal terms.

to Canada since ill-will between Britain and the United States was the most serious danger Canada could face.

In 1909 occurred an event—the establishment of the permanent International Joint Commission—which showed how far Canada and the United States had moved toward a better understanding. The Commission has been called a daring experiment. Certainly it was given very unusual powers. (1) It was given complete authority over the use or diversion of boundary waters, i.e. rivers through or across which the boundary ran, and of rivers flowing

## INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION WATERWAYS PROBLEMS



Thirty-six problems are marked. This map in full size, with an article on the Commission, is given in the Canadian Geographical Journal of January, 1938.

from boundary waters. Not only private companies but even the governments of Canada and the United States must obtain permission before interfering in any way with these waters. (2) It became a body for investigating other questions arising along the boundary. At the request of either government it might inquire into such cases and make reports with recommendations. (3) It might even by consent of the two governments be given authority to settle problems of any kind arising between them.

The commission consists of six members, three from each country, and is expected to arrive at decisions without an umpire. In thirty years it has never failed to find a solution, and in most cases the decision has been unanimous. Some of these cases have been of great interest and difficulty, such as that of the St. Mary

and Milk Rivers which rise in Montana and flow across the boundary into Canada. The St. Mary continues north but the Milk River returns to the United States. It was decided to connect them by a canal and to divide their waters equally between the people on both sides of the border. The estab-



These pictures suggest how intimately the affairs of Canada and the United States are mingled along the international boundary. The upper picture is at Estcourt, Maine, where Canada is just across the street, or in some cases just across the room. The lower is at the outlet of Rainy Lake where a dam and power houses bridge the boundary. Fort Frances, Ontario, is on the right, International Falls, Minnesota, on the left.

lishment of the Commission, said one of its founders, "was one of the best things done in our time for peace and good will between the British Empire and the United States." Its work, wrote an American statesman, "is a signal illustration of the true way to preserve peace—by disposing of controversies at the beginning before they have ceased to be personal and before nations have become excited and resentful about them."

There were other events toward the end of Laurier's premiership which showed the new relations of friendship with the United States.

In 1910 the old problem of the fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, was referred to the international tribunal at The Hague, where it was finally settled; and in the next year a long controversy over fur-sealing on the Pacific coast was settled by international agreement.

More important was the revival of the idea of reciprocity. The United States government, contrary to its attitude in the days of

Macdonald, was now willing to make an agreement, and in fact took the lead by having it ratified in Congress. Laurier, however, encountered such strong opposition that he decided to call an election; and, when it took place in the autumn of 1911, he was defeated. Other questions, such as the opposition to his naval policy, entered into the result especially in Quebec, and the issue was also confused by the variety of the arguments over reciprocity so that it was not clear whether the agreement would have been a good thing or not. The election and all that led up to it did, however, show how far Canada and the United States had moved in their relations since the Civil War. A new spirit of mutual respect was replacing the former feelings of distrust and hostility.

**Fifty Years in Retrospect.** The more one looks at the relations of Canada, Britain, and the United States during this period, the more they seem like relations within a family which had been divided by long-standing quarrels. Canada in the 1860's was like the child of divorced parents—and rather a problem to both of them. Fifty years later she had travelled far on the road to maturity, while the parents meanwhile had been learning that they had much more in common than they had imagined. In this whole process, Canada had played an essential part. Her growth in self-government had been one of the chief influences in transforming the Empire into a union of free peoples unlike any other in history, and this change in the character of the Empire had in turn been one of the influences which made a better understanding between Britain and the United States possible.

How important were these silent and gradual changes, was soon to be revealed. In 1914 Canada stood on the threshold of events which were to thrust her rapidly forward into the full responsibilities of nationhood.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

There is a good article on the work of the International Joint Commission in the Canadian Geographical Journal for January 1938, "From sea to sea" by Lawrence J. Burpee.

*See The International Joint Commission Between the United States of America and the Dominion of Canada by CHACKO N.Y. 1939. This is an exhaustive study of the Commission.*



## **PART VI**

### **Canada in the British Commonwealth and the World**



Wings Over Canada —A plane on the Trans-Canada Airway

## Part VI

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### Canada in the British Commonwealth and the World

In 1914 began the conflict known as the First World War. Starting in Europe, it drew in or seriously affected, before its close, every nation of the world. It was a World War also because it shifted the balance in world affairs. For a century, since the end of the Napoleonic War, there had been a period which is known as the Pax Britannica. Not that it was free of wars; but at no time did any nation threaten to dominate Europe or the world, and during the entire period the British navy was supreme and kept the world's sea routes open to the ships of all nations on equal terms. This was the century during which Canada grew from a group of separated colonies to a united Dominion, and during which, in fact, all the American nations developed. Britain was the centre of world commerce, and the British Empire with its growing Dominions became a kind of international system which, in spite of defects, carried the ideals of freedom and self-government to many parts of the world.

As the twentieth century opened, there were ominous signs that the Pax Britannica was nearing its end. Armaments mounted; bitter rivalries increased; and finally the storm clouds broke into the First World War. The central issue was Germany's threat to overrun Europe and dominate the world. Germany, however, was defeated, and following the war, the League of Nations was established in an attempt to organize a system of world peace. An era of tremendous advance also began in science and communications, but pressing economic and racial problems were left unsolved. International rivalries again flared up, the League system crumbled, and in 1939 Germany once more embarked on her mad ambition of world conquest.

In the stress of these world-shaking events Canada moved toward maturity and gained the full status of nationhood. The Second World War found her ready to assume her responsibilities and to stand as a member of the British Commonwealth with other freedom-loving nations in defence of their common liberties.



## *DATES TO REMEMBER*

### PART VI

- 1914 The First World War begins.  
The Panama Canal is opened.
- 1915 Canadians at Ypres stand against the first gas attack.
- 1917 Canadians capture Vimy Ridge.  
Imperial War Cabinet formed.  
The United States enters the war.  
The Canadian National Railways formed by the government.
- 1919 Canadian delegates attend Peace Conference and sign treaties. Canada becomes a member of the League of Nations.  
Post-war depression; labour troubles including the Winnipeg strike.
- 1920 First prairie wheat shipped through Panama to Britain.
- 1922 The combine introduced into the West.
- 1923 Banting discovers insulin.
- 1924 Canadian Wheat Pools organized.
- 1926 The Declaration of Equality framed by the Imperial Conference.
- 1927 Rapid development of Peace River and Clay Belt regions.
- 1929 The great depression begins.
- 1930 Natural Resources returned to Prairie Provinces, and Dominion home-  
stead policy discontinued.
- 1931 Statute of Westminster passed by British Parliament.  
Japan invades Manchuria: first break in the League system.
- 1932 Ottawa Imperial Trade Agreements.  
National broadcasting system organized.
- 1935 Trans-Canada Airways starts nation-wide service
- 1936 Reciprocity agreement with the United States.
- 1937 Rowell-Sirois Commission appointed.
- 1939 King George VI and Queen Elizabeth tour Canada and the United States.  
Weekly air mail service begun between Montreal and Southampton.  
The Second World War begins.  
British Commonwealth Air Training Plan established.
- 1940 June—The fall of France.  
August—Ogdensburg Agreement with the United States, and establishment of permanent Joint Board of Defence.  
August to October—Battle of Britain.
- 1941 Germany attacks Russia.  
The Atlantic Charter.  
Japan attacks the United States.

## Chapter XXX

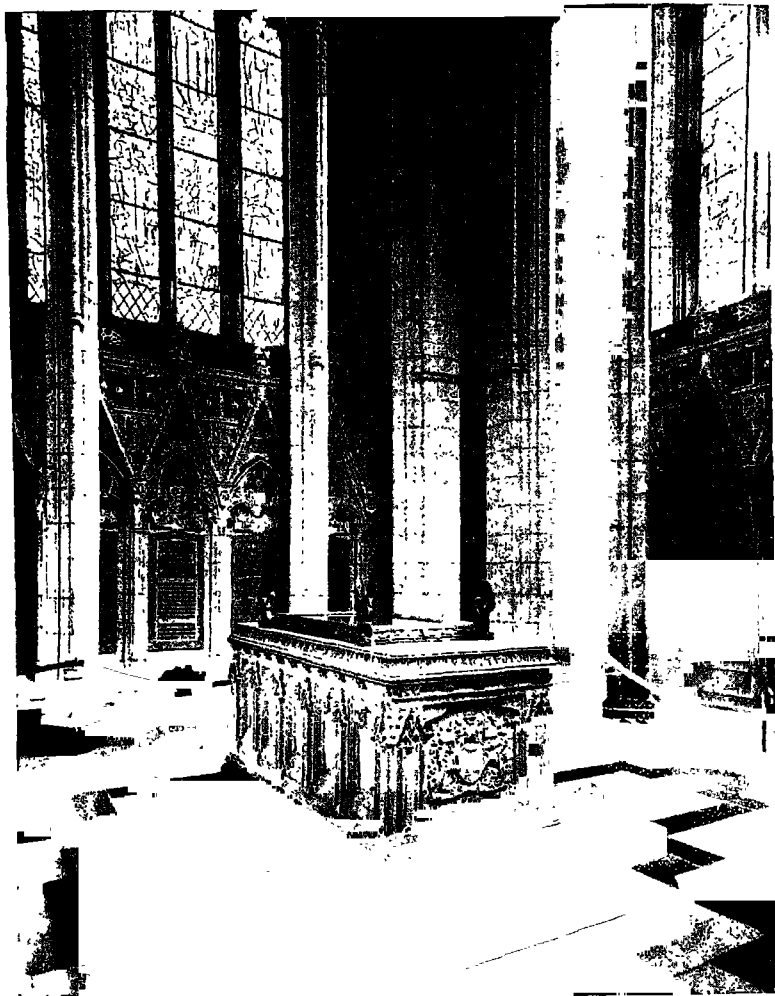
### Canada and the First World War, 1914-18

ON June 28, 1914, the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was shot to death in the little Serbian town of Sarajevo. This was the match that set off the explosion of the First World War. For years Europe had been dividing into two armed camps, the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance; and, six weeks after Sarajevo, she was plunged into war—Britain, France, and Russia ranged against Germany and Austria-Hungary, with lesser countries entangled on both sides. Before the war ended, more than four years later, it had spread to the seven seas and drawn in most of the nations in every continent.

The real causes of this gigantic struggle are complex and go deep into the history of the modern world, but the chief issue, though not the only one, was clear. The war was fought to prevent Germany from dominating the continent of Europe and gaining control of the sea routes of the world.

**Why Canada Entered the First World War.** Canada's response to the events of 1914 was unhesitating. Seldom has she been more united. Premier Borden and his cabinet immediately offered Canada's full aid to Britain; and parliament, which was hurriedly summoned to Ottawa, upheld their decision without question. Behind this unanimity, however, lay a mixture of motives, each of which had a share in determining Canada's action although most people did not stop to analyse them at the time.

As a part of the Empire, Canada was, of course, legally at war when Britain was at war. Nevertheless she was free to decide for herself how much she would contribute, and her legal obligation alone would not have carried her far. Vastly more important was the conviction that the war was one which demanded her full sup-



(National Film Board)

### THE MEMORIAL CHAMBER AT OTTAWA

This room commemorates the part played by Canada in the First World War. In the Altar of Sacrifice placed in the centre are recorded the names of the dead. The wall panels contain accounts of actions in which Canadian forces took part.

port. "Long we have enjoyed the benefit of our British citizenship," said Laurier, "Today it is our duty to accept its responsibilities and its sacrifices." From Atlantic to Pacific Britain's stand was approved; and the brutal attack which Germany made on Belgium, in violation of her pledged word, sent a wave of resentment across the country.

Canada's population was, however, extremely varied, including as it did not only English and French but also three million immigrants who had arrived within less than twenty years, two-thirds of them from non-British countries, many from countries now on the enemy side. Among such diverse groups there were bound to be wide differences of feeling. With those who had just come from the British Isles, naturally the first thought was that the war was for the defence of Britain. Most English-speaking Canadians who had never seen the British Isles, and whose families had been in America perhaps for generations, also felt some sentimental attachment to Britain, but their first thought was for Canada, and they supported the war because they firmly believed that Canada's safety was at stake. French Canadians had a still different attitude. They were loyal to Britain because they preferred to live under the British flag rather than run the risk of being absorbed by the United States, but they had no sentimental attachment to Britain or even to France. For generations they had been almost completely isolated from Europe, and were far less in touch with world affairs than were the majority of English-speaking Canadians. A few leaders like Laurier understood what was at stake, but to most French Canadians the war seemed very remote.

With so many points of view among her people, Canada's unity at the moment of crisis was remarkable. One fact, more than any other, accounts for it. She felt no compulsion, she was free to contribute what she wished. This was, indeed, the strength of the Empire as a whole. German observers had confidently predicted that, in the face of war, it would fall to pieces. Exactly the opposite happened. The Dominions, even South Africa, rallied to the cause because they felt that, if the Empire were broken to pieces, their safety and freedom would be menaced.

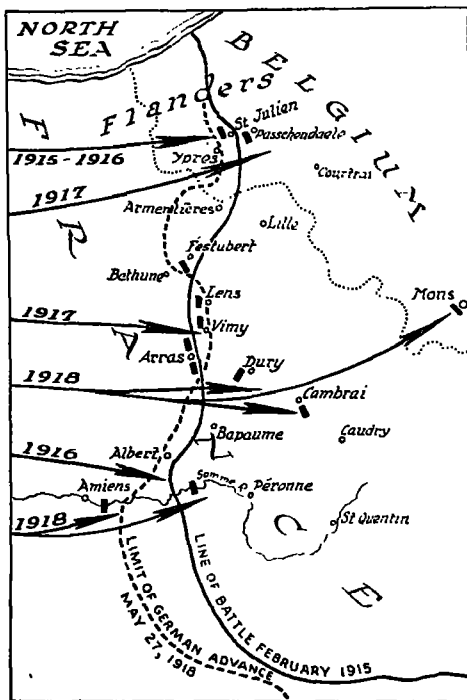
At bottom, therefore, the most important reason for Canada's

entrance into the war was that she was contributing to her own defence. She could not afford to see Britain and France defeated; and Europe and the seas dominated by the hostile power of Germany. This, too, in spite of many other considerations was the fundamental reason why the United States entered the war in 1917. When the submarine menace threatened to bring about a German

victory, it was clear that the future and independence of every American nation was involved.

**Canada's War Effort Overseas.** Canada's part in the war was the greatest national effort in her history up to that time. At the beginning, no country was less prepared or less military in spirit. She had fewer than 3,000 regular soldiers, scarcely the beginning of a navy, and practically no manufacture of war supplies. Before the war ended, out of a population of barely eight millions she put 628,000 men into uniform, and sent more than 424,000 overseas, of whom more than 60,000 did not return.

The great majority of these men were in the fighting forces; but, during the war, units for



THE WESTERN FRONT IN THE FIRST  
WORLD WAR

The arrows show the chief sectors in which the Canadian forces were engaged. The map suggests vividly the contrast in the military operations of the First and Second World Wars. In 1914-18 defence was stronger than offence, and the battle on the Western Front was for the most part a gruelling contest in trench warfare.

particular duties were also organized, such as the Canadian Railway Construction Corps which in the last year and a half did all the construction of light railways behind the British lines; the Canadian Forestry Corps which supplied no less than seventy per cent of the timber used by the Allied armies in France; and the Canadian Army Medical Corps, whose numbers overseas included hundreds of Canadian young women serving as nurses. Canada also shared in the naval war, even though she had no navy of her own. In 1917-18, when the submarine danger was at its height, the Atlantic Coastal Patrol was organized to help keep open the life line of ships across the North Atlantic. At the end of the war the Patrol included 133 vessels and over 5,000 men, and the British navy had been entirely relieved of responsibility for guarding Canadian waters.

In air warfare Canadians played a part of special importance. No less than one-third of all the pilots in action in Britain's Royal Air Force at the end of the war were Canadians. Hundreds of pilots were trained in Canada; and the Canadian Royal Flying Corps, which was organized toward the end of the war, co-operated in air training with the United States. In July, 1917, three months after the United States had entered the war, 1,400 men came from south of the border for training, and in the following winter Canadians went to aerodromes in Texas. Among Canada's fighting pilots were many whose names became widely known, and one of them, Colonel "Billy" Bishop, V.C., made the most spectacular record of any pilot in the war, shooting down 72 German planes.

Canada's greatest contribution, was, however, the Canadian Army Corps which, from 1915 to 1918, took its place in the Allied armies massed along the fighting lines of France and Flanders. Within a few hours of the declaration of war, the first contingent was assembling at Valcartier near Quebec, and two months later it set sail down the St. Lawrence in the largest armada of troopships that had ever crossed the Atlantic—thirty-two vessels escorted by ten battleships and carrying 33,000 men, 7,000 horses, and all the equipment for a fighting division. By the middle of February, 1915, this first Division was in France; and, a few weeks later at

Ypres, it won undying fame when it faced without flinching the first waves of poison gas ever let loose in modern war. Had the Germans succeeded in this battle in smashing through to the Channel ports, as they hoped to do, they would have inflicted a crushing defeat on the whole Allied army. Completely unprepared, the Canadians held their lines in the face of this diabolical form



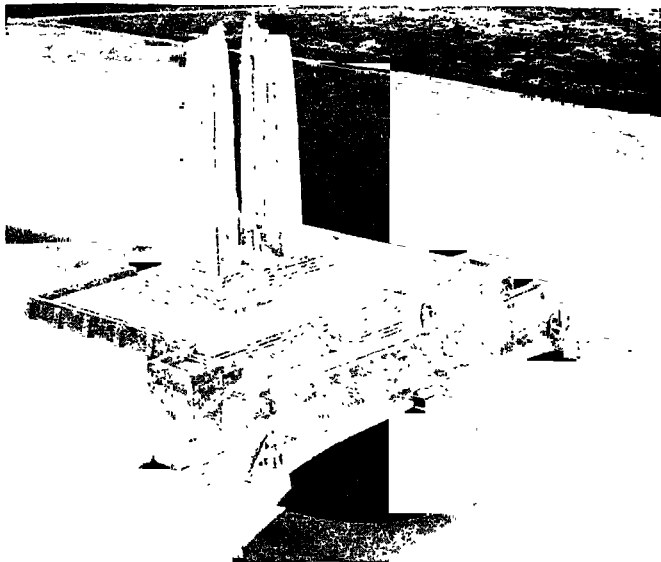
(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

**LIEUTENANT AND AIR MARSHAL "BILLY" BISHOP, V.C.**

The upper picture was taken during the First World War. The lower shows Air Marshal Bishop in World War II as he presents wings to a graduate of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

of attack, and had the satisfaction of being told later by Sir John French, the commander of the British forces, that their valour had "saved the day" for the whole British army.

By the end of 1915 two more Canadian Divisions had landed in France, and in the following August a fourth was added. In these two years a succession of gruelling battles was fought; and between



*(National Film Board)*

#### THE VIMY MEMORIAL

This memorial, erected by Canada on the Vimy battlefield, was unveiled on July 26, 1936. On its base were carved the names of 11,285 Canadian soldiers who have no known graves. The memorial was designed by the Canadian sculptor, W. S. Allward.

them came months of even more trying trench warfare when it seemed, in spite of every effort, as if nothing better than deadlock was possible. In the spring of 1917 came the greatest Canadian victory up to that time, and in some ways the greatest of the war—the capture of Vimy Ridge. Three major attempts had already been made to dislodge the enemy from this strategic point. After six months' preparation the Canadian Corps launched its attack,



captured the ridge in one day, and by a week's bitter fighting succeeded in consolidating its gains. Vimy Ridge remained in Allied hands until the war's end.

Following the victory at Vimy, the Canadian Corps was put for the first time under the command of a Canadian, General (later Sir) Arthur Currie. Currie was not a professional soldier, but had risen through sheer merit from the rank of an unknown officer.

Under him the Canadian Corps was brought to a level of morale and training unexcelled in the Allied armies.

In the spring of 1918 the German army made its last desperate offensive. Russia had collapsed in the previous year, but the United States had come in, and the Germans hoped to defeat the British and French armies before the United States could bring its full strength into the struggle. For weeks the enemy drive threatened to break through, but heroic efforts held it, and, as it slackened, preparations were made for the counter-offensive which was to smash the German army. By this time the Canadian Corps had won a place among the picked troops of the Allied army. "The Canadians," later wrote Lloyd George, the British Premier, in his *War Memoirs*, "played a part of such distinction [on the Somme in 1916] that thenceforward they were marked out as storm troops; for the remainder of the war they were brought along to lead the assault in one great battle after another. Whenever the Germans found the Canadian Corps coming into the line they prepared for the worst."

The Corps was chosen as the spearhead for the offensive in the Amiens sector. In the last days of July, with the utmost secrecy, it was moved from the Arras front, and its presence at Amiens was



GENERAL SIR ARTHUR CURRIE

a complete surprise to the Germans when it hurled itself against the enemy line on August 8. That day, the German general, Ludendorf, said afterward, was "the black day of the German army." With it began what have been called "Canada's Hundred Days"—a period of three months in which one thrust followed another like the blows of a mighty hammer. Early in September the Hindenburg line was broken at Dury. On October 9, Cambrai was entered after a desperate struggle; and, a month later as the



Canadian troops crossing the Rhine into Germany after the Armistice. General Currie is taking the salute.

war ended on November 11, the Canadians entered Mons at almost the very spot where the first troops from the British Isles had met the Germans at the beginning of the war over four years earlier.

From this brief story, it must not be thought that Canadians looked back on their share in the war with a spirit of boastfulness. Millions of men and many nations contributed to the final victory. Compared with the total effort, Canada's part in so vast a struggle was bound to be small. But it was a part of which

Canadians were justly proud. On Flanders Fields the name of Canada took on a deeper meaning.

**The Conscription Issue.** So great an effort could not be made without terrific strain, and by 1917 this strain was showing itself in the difficulty of keeping Canada's four Divisions in France at full strength. Till now the fighting forces had been recruited entirely from volunteers, but as month after month passed with rapidly rising casualties the stream of volunteers became insufficient. Premier Borden had earlier stated that he did not favour conscription; but, when he returned from England in the spring of 1917, he was convinced after carefully examining the situation at first hand, that Canada's forces must be kept up and that conscription was necessary for that purpose.

Borden's announcement of his conscription policy began a debate of the bitterest kind, in which a minority of extremists on both sides appealed to prejudice rather than reason and made statements of the most unjustified character. The most violent opposition came from the French-Canadian Nationalists, led by Bourassa. Bourassa had not opposed Canada's entrance into the war, but he now declared that the war was merely a European war or a war for British imperialism, and that Canada's own interests and defence were not involved. Laurier's position was in sharp contrast to this. Throughout the war he saw clearly that the defeat of Britain and her allies would mean the end of the freedom which Canada had enjoyed. "I speak my whole heart and soul," he said on one occasion in Parliament, "when I say that if Germany were to win I would be thankful that Providence had closed my eyes before I saw the sun rise on such a day."

The difference between Laurier and Borden was, in fact, one of method, not of principle. They were convinced that the war must be won, and they realized that it had entered a most critical phase. Russia had collapsed. The United States had just come in, but it would be months before she was fully prepared. Borden felt that conscription was the fairest and only way of getting the men that were immediately needed. Laurier urged that Parliament should not adopt conscription without getting an expression of opinion from the people, and he proposed a referendum for that purpose. He

believed that the unity of Canada was at stake, and he feared that a conscription law would throw Quebec completely under the influence of the extremists. Bourassa and the Nationalists were attacking him fiercely for his pro-war attitude. He declared that if a referendum supported conscription, he would insist that the law be obeyed, and he was convinced that in the long run nothing would be lost and much would be gained by following this method.

The conscription issue split the Liberal party. Most of Laurier's English-speaking supporters joined the Conservatives in passing the Military Service Act, as it was called, while French-Canadian members voted almost solidly against it. The demand for a coalition government now grew rapidly, and within a few weeks a Union cabinet of thirteen Conservatives and ten Liberals was formed with Borden as premier. Laurier was urged by Borden to come in but refused, believing that, if he did so, he would lose Quebec to the Nationalists. In December an election was held. Prior to it, the Union government passed the War-Time Elections Act by which the men overseas were permitted to vote, as also were the mothers, wives, and sisters of men who had enlisted. This Act in itself aroused a great deal of bitter debate. The election returned the Union government to power with 115 Conservatives and 38 Union Liberals, as against 82 for Laurier. The Nationalists did not put up candidates in Quebec, and Laurier carried 62 of that province's 65 seats together with 20 elsewhere.

The conscription issue left results which lasted unfortunately long after the war was over. This should not, however, be allowed to overshadow other considerations. Canada's efforts revealed a determination which was equalled in few other countries. Actually her army was very large in proportion to her population, and over eighty per cent of it consisted of volunteers. The most tragic effect of the conscription issue was division and misunderstanding between French and English, some of which could certainly have been avoided. To their great credit, Borden and Laurier refused to be swept off their feet by prejudice and passion even when their differences of opinion were irreconcilable. Had their fine example in public debate been followed by everyone, the unhappiest effects of the conscription issue would have been avoided.

**The Home Front.** In modern war the effort on the home front is as vital as that on the battlefield.

From the beginning it appeared that one of Canada's greatest contributions would be production of food. "Food will win the war" became the slogan as Germany's submarines tried to cut Britain off from her supplies and starve her into submission. Canadian farms and homes rose to the challenge. When the war ended 51 million acres were under cultivation as compared with 33 million four years earlier, an increase that created difficult problems after the war but which was essential at the time. The record-



ROBERT L. BORDEN

breaking crop of 1915 on the prairies helped not only to fill the British breadbasket but to raise the spirits of the people. "War menus" and "war gardens" made their appearance, and students by thousands trooped out of the cities to "do their bit" by helping with farm work. As the need for exports overseas increased, many articles such as sugar became scarce, and in 1917 the Dominion government appointed a food con-

troller to encourage saving and control supplies.

In manufacturing, increased production went far beyond the scale expected. Manufactures had been developing rapidly for some years, but Canada was not an industrial country. In the year before the war she had exported only 8½ million dollars worth of manufactured goods to the United Kingdom. Three years later the figure was 339 million. The greatest single contribution was in the making of shells. Soon after the war began, it became clear that munitions were to be used on a scale never before imagined. Canada was not expected to supply much, and at the end of 1914 only 3,000 shells had been shipped overseas. A year later, however, more than 5 million had been sent. By 1917, 630 munition factories employing over 300,000 people were in operation. For a

time Canada produced between a quarter and a third of all the artillery ammunition used by the British army. Altogether, she sent overseas more than 66 million shells. Other industries also increased enormously as need developed. Ship building came to life again, mining expanded, and toward the end of the war the manufacture of aeroplanes was begun. Measures of many kinds were used by the government to conserve supplies and encourage production, among them being "Daylight saving" which was introduced for the first time.

Canada also exceeded expectations in her financial effort. This was made possible by the tremendous increase in exports but at the same time taxation was greatly increased, and the burden of debt shot up over five fold in four years. Among new taxes imposed were the income tax and an excess profits tax which was designed to take a part of the very large profits made in war industries. The introduction of these taxes marked an important change, as the Dominion government had never before relied on direct taxes for any large part of its revenue. The raising of loans from the people also marked a turning point in Canada's financial development. In November, 1915, the first loan—\$50,000,000—was offered with some misgiving by the government. Over twice the amount was subscribed. Other loans for much larger amounts followed, and war savings stamps and thrift stamps were also sold to attract the savings of small investors. At the end of the war no less than eighty per cent of the entire war debt was in the hands of the Canadian people.

As the war went on, its effects spread more and more widely. Living conditions were sharply altered. Wages and employment increased but prices went up even more quickly; and this, together with war profiteering in some quarters, created considerable difficulty and discontent, especially in the last months of the war. Labour unions grew rapidly with the growth of industry, and from this time occupied a much more important place than they had previously done. Changes of other kinds were also hastened, among them women's suffrage. The splendid war record of women, thousands of whom took the places of men in business and industry, swept aside much opposition, and by 1917 every province from

**EXPLOSION TURNS  
HALIFAX INTO  
A SHAMBLES**

**HALIFAX ASKS  
NATION'S HELP**

steps Must be  
struction

**WIPED CLEAN**

**OLD BRITISH SPIRIT RISES,  
HALIFAX STRUGGLES TO FEET**

**AS FLANDERS**

**OFFICIALS ESTIMATE  
HALIFAX DEAD AS 1226**

**WILL RESTORE  
HALIFAX CITY**

**ORGANIZE TO  
HELP HALIFAX**

**RELIEF SHIP  
LEAVES BOSTON**

**WOMEN HEROES  
FACE DANGER**

**OVER 3,000 HOMES ARE DESTROYED  
AND 25,000 HOMELESS IN HALIFAX**

**FOUR HUNDRED CHILDREN  
PERISH IN ONE BUILDING**

*Awful Catastrophe at Richmond School, Halifax...  
Distressing Scenes on All Sides in Tour  
of Ruined City.*

*\$100 to \$30,000,000—Raging Blizzard  
for Caring for Homeless and In-  
f Dead Still at 2,000 or Over —*

THE HALIFAX EXPLOSION AS SEEN IN THE HEADLINES OF 1917

Ontario west had taken some action in the direction of giving women the vote. The War-Time Elections Act also provided for partial women's suffrage throughout the Dominion.

Railways presented a particularly knotty problem. The increase of traffic and the difficulty of maintaining equipment put a tremendous strain on them. The weaker railways were soon in financial difficulties, and the government had to lend large sums to keep them running. The problem of obtaining maximum efficiency also became acute. Lines in places ran side by side and there was much wasteful competition. Railways had been built too optimistically in the previous decade, and beyond the needs of the country. Certainly two, rather than three, transcontinental lines were sufficient. By 1917 immediate action was forced on the government, and after investigation it decided to take over the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk systems. These were consolidated, along with the Intercolonial which the government already owned, into the Canadian National Railways. Thus over eighty per cent of the country's railways were brought under two organizations, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railways. The Canadian National, formed because of war-time pressure, was one of the world's largest experiments in public ownership, and it is not surprising that in the post-war years it presented many difficulties. An interesting detail is that the Canadian government, by taking over the Grand Trunk, became owner of several hundred miles of railway line in the United States. Probably nowhere else in the world would such an incident have passed unnoticed. That it did so was one more proof of the close and friendly relations which the two countries now took for granted.

The war had many other effects, temporary and permanent. Some of the deepest cannot be easily described. Month after month newspapers carried long lists of casualties, and in thousands of homes the delivery of a telegram brought the dread news that a loved one had fallen. Little wonder that emotions ran high as strain increased, and that some, unfortunately, suffered from them unjustly.

Canada was spared the direct ravages of war, but she was not without spectacular incidents. In 1916 the Parliament Buildings



in Ottawa were burned with so sudden a blaze that some of the members barely escaped with their lives. For a time an enemy plot was suspected, but apparently the cause was accidental. On December 6, 1917, occurred the ghastly disaster of the Halifax explosion. As a result of careless navigating, a French ship, loaded with nitroglycerine and gasoline, collided in Halifax harbour with a Norwegian ship carrying a relief cargo to Belgium. The result was the greatest single piece of man-made destruction in the history of the world up to that time. 1800 were killed, 4000 injured, and over two square miles of the city totally destroyed. A record-breaking blizzard on the following day added to the suffering. As the point of departure for hundreds of convoyed ships, Halifax had become the most important port on the Atlantic coast. Its people, knowing the essential part they were playing, struggled to their feet with indomitable spirit.

**Canada's Half Century Mark.** On July 1, 1917, Canada celebrated the completion of her first half century since Confederation. It came at one of the darkest points in the war. The conscription debate was raging furiously, and the air seemed thick with signs of division. Looking back, however, we can see with truer perspective how far Canada had moved since the first Dominion Day. Faced with the greatest test in her history she had assumed responsibilities which would have been unthinkable even a few years earlier, and with them had come growing maturity. The war itself brought swift changes in this direction. The record of the Canadian Corps under its own officers, and the achievements on the Home Front, were paralleled by still other developments. In 1917, to direct the Empire's war effort, an Imperial War Cabinet was formed in which Canada with the other Dominions was represented; and, following the war, she played her part in the peace conference. In fifty years she had moved far from the old colonial status. Recognized by Britain as a partner, she was now taking her place among the nations of the world.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

The histories of the Great War are too detailed to be easily read. Here is an opportunity for you to find out for yourselves how the war affected your community. There are many sources of information including the memories of those who took part in the struggle.

## *Chapter XXXI*

### *An Age of Machines and Speed*

**F**AR in the North an Indian boy had accidentally shot himself, and was hovering at the point of death. Signals flashed out a call for help, and hundreds of miles away a plane, leaving its mail bags on the shore of the Mackenzie in care of a Mountie, took off for the lonely camp where the sufferer lay. The return flight was made in the teeth of a blinding snowstorm, but within a few hours a mission hospital was reached, a skilful surgeon had removed the bullet, and the boy's life was saved. This was in 1931. Fifteen years earlier, such a story would have been impossible. In 1917 Sergeant Wight of the Mounties took 88 days to travel from the mouth of the Coppermine River to Edmonton. It was a quick trip as compared with those of Hearne or Mackenzie, but in 1935 a sick person was carried between the same two points in fourteen hours.

We now take such astonishing changes for granted, but historians of the future will almost certainly look back on the years following the First World War as among the most remarkable in modern history. They were a period of wonderful advance, but at the same time of baffling problems. New vistas were opened up—swift flight through the air, voices and music heard round the globe, discoveries and inventions which could provide a vastly improved standard of health and prosperity. But with these new possibilities came suffering, depression on every continent, and even war. Men had not yet learned to use their knowledge wisely, and every nation was challenged by these distressing difficulties, since the world was being drawn by the miracles of modern science into one community as never before.

**Problems of Post-War Reconstruction.** When the war ended in 1918, Canadians had little idea that they were entering a period

of far-reaching change. Like the people of other nations they wanted only to get back to a peace-time basis. Demobilizing the army was the most pressing need, and the government undertook the task of transporting its soldiers from Europe and returning them to civil life as speedily as possible. No country disbanded its army more completely and quickly than did Canada. Hospitals were opened for those requiring special care; a pension system was begun; vocational training was provided for those who needed it, and various forms of help, such as loans and land grants, were given to aid soldiers in re-establishing themselves.

Other problems were, however, more difficult. Soon after the war, the national debt reached the unprecedented total of over two-and-one-quarter billion dollars; and kept on rising in spite of efforts to economize. The railways, which the government had taken over, continued to lose money; and, although they were thoroughly reorganized, there seemed to be little prospect of them paying their way. The war was quickly followed also by a short but severe depression, which was felt in many countries besides Canada. With the closing of war factories, unemployment increased; wages and prices fell sharply; and discontent spread rapidly. Strikes broke out in many parts of the country, the most serious being that in Winnipeg in 1919 which affected workers of all kinds, including even firemen, police, and some employees of government. For a time the city was virtually cut off from the outside world. Newspapers stopped publication, street cars and elevators ceased to run. Among farmers, feeling was no less high than among industrial workers. During the war they had tremendously increased the production of food, many had invested heavily in machinery, and now they found themselves with prices radically reduced and facing heavy loss.

Unrest and discontent throughout the country brought, as always, a very unsettled condition in politics. Immediately following the war the coalition Union government, which had been formed in 1917, began to break up, and war-time leaders passed from the scene. In 1919 Sir Wilfrid Laurier died after almost fifty years in public life, and a few months later Sir Robert Borden retired. The Conservative and Liberal parties reorganized and new leaders

were chosen: Arthur Meighen, a member of Borden's cabinet by the Conservatives, and William Lyon Mackenzie King, a grandson of the leader of the Rebellion of 1837 by the Liberals.

A great many people were dissatisfied, however, with the old parties. Local labour parties made their appearance and advocated such measures as old age pensions, labour exchanges, and banking



THE HARBOUR OF VANCOUVER

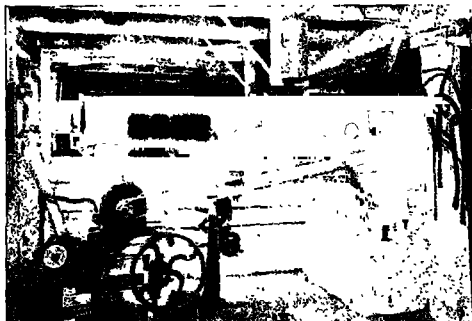
and educational reforms. Farmers' political movements were, for a short time at least, more effective than those of labour. In Ontario, the United Farmers, or U.F.O., captured the provincial government in 1919 and held office for four years. Farmers' governments were also formed in Alberta and Manitoba. Meanwhile a wider movement was being organized, and in 1921, under the name of the National Progressive Party, the farmers entered a Dominion election for the first time. Winning 65 seats, more than half of them in the West, they held the balance of power between Liberals and Conservatives, neither of whom had a clear majority in the House of Commons. For several years they had great

influence, but their success was short lived. As prosperity returned voters tended to drift back to the older parties, especially to the Liberals who favoured reduction of the tariff on articles such as farm machinery. By 1925 the Progressives had broken into groups; and, in the election of that year, their representatives declined to less than half the number of four years earlier.

Finding that direct political action was not very effective in curing their ills, farmers turned to the organization of co-operative movements. These were by no means new, but, after the war they increased rapidly in all parts of the country. Nowhere were they stronger than in the Prairie Provinces where Grain Growers' Associations controlled strings of elevators and carried on business running into millions of dollars. During the war, wheat had risen to a very high price, and the prairie crop had been marketed by a Dominion Wheat Board, which then distributed its profits among the farmers. This arrangement came to an end in 1920, at the very time when the depression suddenly brought a collapse in world prices. Thousands of farmers who had bought land and machinery were overwhelmed by debt and saw their savings of years swept away. Efforts were made to revive the Wheat Board but these failed, and it was then decided to establish a voluntary co-operative system. By 1924 wheat pools were formed in each of the Prairie Provinces; a central selling agency was organized to market the wheat of all the farmers who joined; and within a short time the pools were handling approximately half the entire prairie wheat crop. Almost overnight they had become one of the world's greatest co-operative enterprises. Hard experience was soon to show that their plans were too ambitious. Nevertheless they had a remarkable influence in encouraging other experiments in co-operation, and their story is one of the great chapters in the history of Western Canada.

**The Expansion and "Prosperity" of the 1920's.** The depression which followed the war was short lived. By 1924 the world was entering on a period of prosperity which unfortunately, before it ended, had all the characteristics of an unhealthy boom. It brought, however, a tremendous expansion in many directions, and in this expansion Canada shared to the full.

In these years the era of oil, electricity, and the internal combustion engine really began. Motor cars, aeroplanes, radio, and a thousand other inventions, swept into use and revolutionized ways of doing things in business, in factories, farms, and homes. Many of these inventions were, of course, by no means new. Motor cars and electricity had been coming in for years, but after the war changes were much more rapid. The new inventions became common, so that they affected the lives of millions of people; and the world entered on an age of machines and speed as different from that forty years earlier as the age of steam had been different from the age of wood, wind, and water.

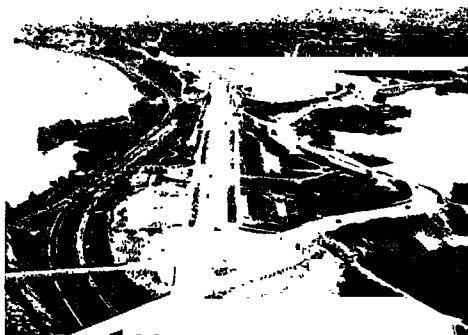


ELECTRICITY ON THE FARM

Nothing was more typical of the new age than the motor car. Before the war, motor vehicles had been comparatively rare. In 1915 there were less than 90,000 in Canada; in 1930 there were almost one and a quarter million. What had been a luxury seemed now a necessity to vast numbers of people who used motors in business, on farms, or in going to and from work. Next to the United States, Canada had for its population more motor cars than any other country, and within a few years it built up an automobile manufacturing industry which was fifth in the world.

The rise of the motor car affected life in innumerable ways. Horses disappeared from city streets and even from some country roads. Blacksmith shops were replaced by service stations; and boys and girls learned to talk about carburetors and speed records. The speed and volume of business was enormously increased, and many people even imagined that because they were travelling faster, they were necessarily growing wiser and more intelligent, a very unfortunate delusion. A new era of road building began. Pavements, which had been a rarity except on city streets, became common in towns and villages, and hundreds of millions were spent

by provincial governments in building paved or improved highways. A century earlier canals, and then railways, had superseded roads as carriers of freight. Now roads came back into their own, as thousands of trucks appeared on the highways and competed for heavy traffic with railways and steamships.



A modern highway development at the entrance to Hamilton.

Motor cars brought the most conspicuous changes in communications, but by no means the only ones. Large steamships were equipped with oil-burning machinery, fishing schooners were fitted with gasoline engines which freed them from the uncertainties of wind and sail, and even the Indians of the north could attach outboard

motors to their canoes, as some of them did. Railways, faced with severe competition, replaced their wooden coaches with steel ones for passengers, and brought in many other improvements such as the modern refrigerator car, which can carry fruit and other perishable goods for thousands of miles. Telephones were vastly improved so that long distance calls were put through while the person held the receiver, and in 1927 a trans-Atlantic service was opened. Most striking of all, radio and the aeroplane came into common use, although their full possibilities were not yet realized. In 1919 a Canadian Air Board had been established. It sponsored the first flight across Canada in the following year; put planes to work on forest patrols and other duties, especially in the north; and started the building of air bases. Soon commercial flying began, first in the north country, and then in more settled regions. By 1929 a chain of lighted air ports connected Winnipeg and Edmonton by way of Regina and Calgary—the first big section of what was later to become the Trans-Canada Airway.

Three works which influenced Canadian transportation should also be mentioned. In answer to the demand of the Prairie farmers for a short route to the sea, the Hudson Bay Railway was built by the Dominion government from The Pas to Churchill. While it never fulfilled its purpose as a grain exporting route, it did open up a section of northern Manitoba. At the same time the new Welland Canal was built. Capable of holding the largest lake freighters, and with only seven locks to overcome a drop of 326 feet, it was one of the great engineering feats of the world. The third work, the Panama Canal, is not Canadian, nor was it built during these years; but it began to affect Canadian traffic



Oil wells in Alberta's Turner Valley. The production of oil here was begun in 1924-5.

in an important way after the war. In 1920 a trial shipment of prairie wheat was sent from the Pacific coast through the Panama Canal to England. Within a few years a considerable part of Western Canada's exports and imports went by this route, and a tremendous stimulus was given to the ports of Vancouver, New Westminster, and Prince Rupert.

Every industry was affected by the new developments in machinery and electricity. In agriculture the use of machinery increased tremendously. Tractors, gasoline engines, and electric motors made their appearance, and provided power for many things which had formerly been done with animals or by hand. This tendency toward mechanization was, of course, much greater in some parts of the country than in others. In the West it was especially strong since the Prairie farmer, to hold his place in the wheat markets of the world, had to reduce his cost per bushel to the lowest possible point. Great tracts were harvested by the combine, which was introduced in 1922 and which could cut and thresh the grain in one operation. By such methods agricultural production of all kinds was raised to the highest point in Canadian



history, and in 1925-6 Canada's wheat exports exceeded those of all other countries combined.

Two pioneer areas were developed in this period, Peace River and the northern frontier of Quebec. Settlers had gone into each before the war, but they now became far more numerous. Between 1927 and 1931 the population of Peace River doubled. In spite of its high latitude it proved to be excellent farming country, handicapped chiefly by its



ROUYN-NORANDA IN 1939

Fourteen years earlier this district was unbroken forest.

lack of railway communication with a Pacific port. In Quebec the new settlements were French-Canadian. The Quebec government encouraged them by opening roads, and the habitants with their love of the soil patiently cut homesteads out of the forest as their fathers had done before them. Many of them pushed on into the clay belt of northern Ontario.

Hydro-electric power was largely responsible for the growth of

manufacturing and mining. This had been true also at the beginning of the century, but development was now much faster. Methods were found of transporting power over long distances, and hydro plants were installed at many points which a few years earlier had been remote from settlement. Manufactures of all kinds expanded, but pulp and paper rose most quickly and soon led all others as an export. Abundant water power, and forest resources which some people felt were being exploited unwisely, made an ideal combination for this industry. The growth in mining was scarcely less striking, and particularly in the Precambrian Shield, where hydro-electric power and aeroplanes opened up new areas

such as that in northern Manitoba. The value of the rocky Shield, whose treasures had scarcely been tapped, except by the fur trader, suddenly began to dawn on the Canadian people.

This expansion of industries was made possible only by a very great increase in commerce. By 1930, in spite of her comparatively small population, Canada was fifth among the nations of the world in the value of exports. Within a generation she had ceased to be an isolated community and had become a commercial country with contacts in every part of the globe.

In these years there were many signs of growth also in other directions. Organizations of all kinds—religious, charitable, commercial and educational — were developed or strengthened across the Dominion. Before the end of the war each of the Western Provinces had its Provincial University. Canadian schools showed that they were capable of turning out well-trained people; and Canadian scientists in many fields added their bit to the world's knowledge. In 1923 Dr. Frederick Banting won the special distinction of a Nobel prize for the discovery of insulin. Among the arts, painting

showed the greatest advance. Canadian painters broke away from the imitation of painting in other countries. The brilliant colours and bold outlines of the northland attracted them especially, and they began to depict the Canadian scene as they saw it. Tom Thomson, who was drowned in 1917 while canoeing in Northern Ontario, was a pioneer in this movement, and after the war his



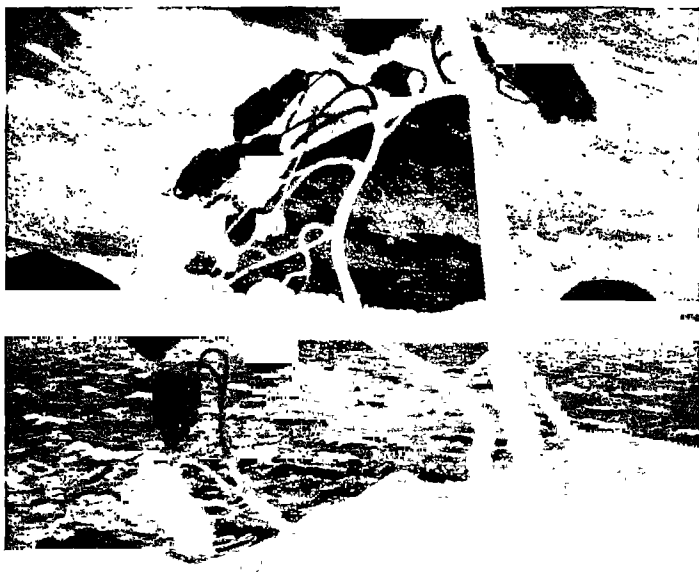
F. G. BANTING

Sir Frederick, who undertook heavy responsibilities in the Second World War, was killed in February 1941 as he was flying to England.

ideas were carried forward by the "Group of Seven" whose work and influence became widely known.

**The Great Depression and its Consequences.** In the autumn of 1929 there began a depression of unprecedented severity which soon affected the entire world, and was one of the events leading directly to the Second World War. The causes of the depression were complex, and even experts are not agreed on them. We can, however, say that the prosperity of the 1920's had to come to an end. It had turned into a hectic and unhealthy expansion. The world was not consuming or distributing properly the goods which it was producing, and nations were not co-operating to solve the problems of trade, tariffs, and international debts, which had got beyond the power of any one country to handle.

For three years conditions grew almost steadily worse. By 1932 millions of people were out of work, and dependent for food and



*(The Art Gallery of Toronto)*

THE WEST WIND BY TOM THOMSON

clothing on relief provided by governments. Trade had declined to a fraction of what it had been; and the depression had become a world-wide calamity. Canada suffered with other countries. Factories closed, the wheat market collapsed, the demand for manufactured goods and agricultural products fell to disastrous levels, unemployment was rife and thousands of people had no means of earning the barest necessities.

Some industries and regions were especially hard hit. The fishermen and coal miners of Nova Scotia suffered severely. Fish could scarcely be sold for enough to pay the cost of catching them. The situation was all the worse because the Maritime Provinces had not profited equally with the rest of Canada from the years of prosperity. Many blamed the tariff on the ground that it encouraged manufacturers in Ontario and Quebec and did little for the provinces by the sea. It was also true that the Maritime Provinces had never fully recovered from the decline of wooden shipping in the last years of the nineteenth century, although some new industries had developed, such as pulp and paper and the fox-farming of Prince Edward Island.

No group in Canada was harder hit than the prairie farmers. Almost without warning wheat prices were slashed and exports dropped to the lowest level in years. The Wheat Pools suffered a crushing blow. They had been paying their members a preliminary sum before the crop was sold. When prices fell, the amount paid out proved to be too large, and the Pools faced enormous losses. Provincial governments had to come to their aid to prevent complete collapse. The central selling agency had to be abandoned, and by 1932 the Pools were operating again as co-operative elevator companies.

The effects of the man-made depression were bad enough, but the West now had to endure a disaster from nature which surpassed anything in its history, except perhaps the trials of the Red River pioneers. A period of drought set in, bringing eight years of successive crop failures. Soil drifting added to the loss, as high winds blew the scorched and powdered earth for hundreds of miles in huge clouds that blotted out the sun. By 1933 thousands of farmers were on relief, their savings of years wiped out, and hundreds



(Can. Geog. Journal and F. H. Ellis)

### THE BATTLE WITH WIND AND DROUGHT

A dust storm and a scene of desolation created by high winds and drought are shown in the upper pictures. Lower left is the same farm after the use of special methods of cultivation to combat soil drifting. Shaded portions on the map indicate the districts where soil drifting was serious. The lower right picture shows a farmer who has left his farm in the drought-stricken region. With a plough tied on behind and their worldly possessions stowed aboard a wheeled shack, he and his family are trekking north to a new frontier home.

of farms were abandoned as families moved north to wooded lands, to Peace River or to the East. Not all parts of the West were equally affected; soil drifting was confined to the prairie region and was most wide-spread in southern Saskatchewan, the heart of the wheat belt.

The year 1930<sup>1</sup> marked the end of an era in the history of the West—the era of the rise of the wheat empire. Covering almost exactly fifty years since railways began to arrive, it had brought over two million people into an almost unoccupied country, and had created one of the world's great agricultural areas. In spite of reverses, results had been achieved which could not be undone. A new chapter was beginning, however. Grain growing could not continue to expand, though it was bound to remain important; and the West had other resources to which it was also turning for the future.

The depression created difficulties never before faced in the nation's history, and these in turn caused severe friction between the Dominion and provincial governments. Unemployment and special problems such as the crisis in the Wheat Pools, threw burdens on provincial governments too heavy for some of them to bear, and the Dominion government then had to come to their aid. The financial relations of Dominion and provinces were further upset by the recent great increase in "social services", i.e. old age pensions, unemployment relief, public health services, widows' allowances, and so forth. By 1937, the annual cost of social services was \$250,000,000 as compared with one million at Confederation, and the demand was growing, as it was also in other countries all over the world. The Fathers of Confederation had not foreseen such a problem. Under the British North America Act the provinces found themselves with power to provide social services, but without means of raising sufficient taxes; while the Dominion government had more extensive powers of raising money but was unable to spend it on social services. This difficulty, more

<sup>1</sup> 1930 not only marked the beginning of the depression, but was the year in which the natural resources which had been kept under the control of the Dominion Government were handed over to the Prairie Provinces. This also brought to an end the Dominion homestead policy which had been so important a feature in Western settlement.

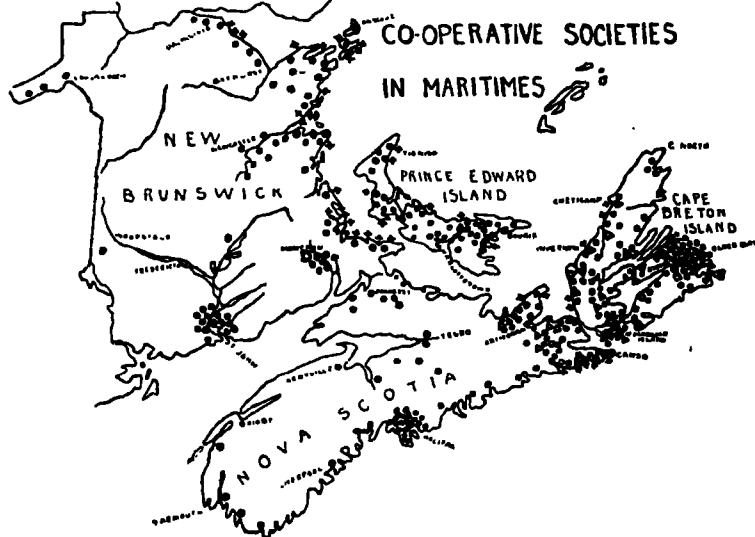
than anything else, threw the Canadian federal system out of balance.

In 1937 Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his cabinet appointed a Royal Commission to study the problem of Dominion-provincial relations. The result was the most thorough investigation since Confederation. The Commission held hearings in every province; and, after almost three years, completed its report, commonly called after the Commission's two leading members, the "Rowell-Sirois Report." It recommended a change in the financial relations of Dominion and provinces by which the Dominion government would collect more of the country's taxes, and would assume more responsibility for social services and provincial debts. These proposals were received with wide differences of opinion, however; and, as the country was by this time involved in the war which began in 1939, the question was dropped after some months of discussion.

During these years the Liberal and Conservative parties had each been in control of the Dominion government. In 1930 Prime Minister Mackenzie King and the Liberals, who had held office for five years, were defeated and the Conservatives under the leadership of R. B. Bennett, a Western lawyer from Calgary, came into power. In the election of 1935, however, the Liberals once more gained a majority. The depression also brought new political movements. In Alberta the Social Credit Party, which advocated radical changes in the control of money and banking, made its appearance and gained control of the provincial legislature, also electing some members to the Dominion Parliament. More widespread was the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, or C.C.F., which was organized in 1933 under the leadership of another Westerner, J. S. Woodsworth of Winnipeg, and which advocated a socialistic programme, including a wide extension of public ownership, and a very great increase in social services.

**The Achievements of the Depression Years.** In spite of their discouraging features the depression years were by no means lacking in achievements. In the West the problems of agriculture were tackled with true courage and all the resources of science. The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act of 1935, which was one of the

measures passed by Prime Minister Bennett's government, provided for a programme of research through the co-operation of Dominion and provincial governments. Methods were devised of combatting soil drifting, plant diseases, and insect pests. New plants were developed, means were found of conserving water, and rust, the great wheat enemy, which affected over twenty-five million acres of wheat



(Can. Geog. Journal)

This scene of dilapidation in a Maritime Province fishing port illustrates the condition which the Co-operative Societies aimed to cure.



land, was challenged.<sup>2</sup> Thus, through the efforts of farmers and scientists, the line of agriculture was pushed, step by step, far north toward the Arctic circle.

From the Maritime Provinces came another story of initiative and accomplishment. Starting in 1929, St. Francis Xavier University at Antigonish, organized study clubs in communities which had been reduced to poverty and in some cases nearly to starvation. People in these clubs discussed the problems facing them in their daily lives, and from this small beginning there developed one of the most successful co-operative movements on the continent.

Enterprises, large and small, were started: credit unions, buying clubs, canneries, turkey pools, and many others. Thousands of people were helped to earn their living through their own efforts, and were given hope and courage. Out of the movement came also an interest in music, handicrafts, and libraries, which raised the life of scores of communities to a new level.

Radio and flying had a remarkable development during these years, and no country profited more from them than did Canada. If an old Klondike miner after forty years' sleep could have seen one of his succes-



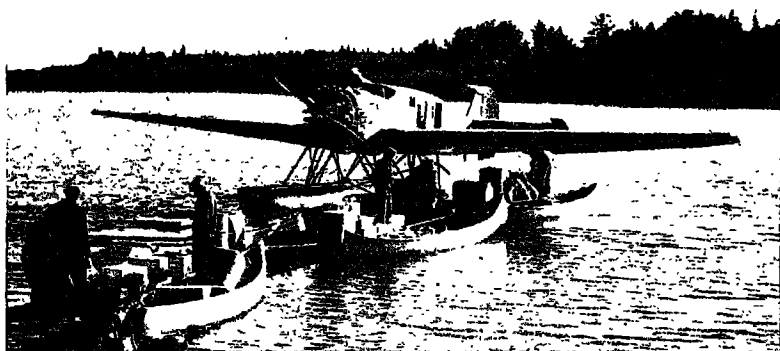
(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

Receiving a time signal in the far north from England.

sors leaning intently over a queer looking little box, he probably would have thought that some strange form of madness had seized him. Certainly he would never have imagined that his modern friend was merely getting a time signal from England, or perhaps waiting to hear from his wife hundreds of miles to the

<sup>2</sup> Through aeroplanes it was found that rust spores floated from the south in winds blowing at a height of four to five thousand feet. The chief remedy has been the development of rust-resisting strains of wheat.

south whether little Johnny had got over the whooping cough!<sup>3</sup> Through commercial flying, broadcasting, and short wave, the prospector and trader in the far north or the Mountie in his Arctic station could keep in almost constant touch with the outer world. These modern miracles of communication were not play-things. They were put to a hundred uses. Maps were made from air photos, weather stations were established, traders, prospectors, supplies of all kinds, and even heavy mining machinery



(Hudson's Bay Co.)

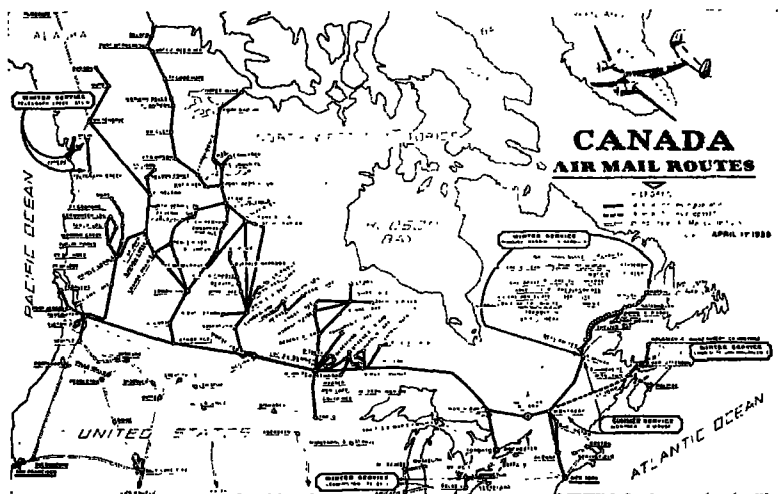
#### THE NEW NORTH WHERE CANOE AND AEROPLANE MEET

were flown into places otherwise inaccessible except by canoe or dog train. Nothing could daunt the northern bush fliers, and for a time Canada actually led the world in the tonnage of freight transported by air. The area touched by these operations was immense, stretching from the southern portions of the Precambrian Shield through the North West Territories and even to the Arctic Islands. McMurray, at the end of the railway 300 miles north of Edmonton, became the gateway to the Mackenzie, and from there the airline stretched north 1600 miles to Aklavik on the shore of the Arctic.

The effects on Canada of this expansion northward cannot yet be measured, but they are very great. Depth has been added to the

<sup>3</sup> The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation began a regular programme of personal messages called "The Northern Messenger."

country. Resources, such as the McMurray oil sands and the radium deposits of Great Bear Lake, have been revealed, and even the Arctic Islands have gained significance, since they may very well be traversed in future by some of the world's important air routes. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have maintained regular patrols in these northern possessions since 1922.



THE CANADIAN AIR MAIL NETWORK IN 1939

Radio and airways also had a rapid development in other parts of the country. In 1932 a national broadcasting system was established, and four years later it was reorganized under the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Most Canadian radio stations are privately owned, and the Canadian system is, therefore, an unusual combination of private ownership and state control. Within five years the national network was expanded to reach every part of the country. In 1935 the completion of a shortwave receiving station at Ottawa made possible the reception of broadcasts from overseas. Meanwhile air mail lines were reaching out to all parts of the country, and also a Trans-Canada Airway, 3314 miles in length was completed from Moncton to Vancouver. Thirty radio stations were required to direct the planes, and landing fields had

to be built at approximately every thirty-five miles, many of them in mountainous and forest-covered country. By 1939 planes were flying from Atlantic to Pacific along the radio beams, and covering the distance from Montreal to Vancouver in less than fifteen hours. In the same year came an even greater achievement—the inauguration of a weekly air mail service between Montreal and Southampton. The North Atlantic, because of distance and weather conditions, had been called “the greatest natural obstacle with which air transport is confronted.” It was just less than a century since Cunard, with equal faith and determination, had conquered the same hazards with steam.

**Democracy's Challenge.** Marvels of invention, such as these, have opened a new period in the world's history. On the one hand, the deep changes caused by them have been among the chief reasons for world-wide depressions and wars. On the other, these achievements of science have made possible advances and standards of living which our fathers could not have imagined. Nations everywhere are struggling with this dilemma, since only by planning and by the action of large masses of people can evils such as unemployment, distress, and want, be banished in the midst of a world that could give security and plenty. These problems present to the democracies like Canada, the boldest challenge which they have ever faced. Can they combine strong government with liberty—government which can act quickly and intelligently, which can use the nation's resources wisely, and which will at the same time respect the rights of the individual citizen? We believe they can. Democracies require from their people not merely obedience but judgment, restraint, self-discipline, and a spirit of co-operation. Theirs is the most difficult form of government. It can be practised only by an intelligent and well trained people. But it has in it the seeds of permanence, for it is based not on force, but on a willingness to accept differences of opinion, and on respect for the rights of the common man.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

Walter E. Gilbert's *Arctic pilot* describes the author's experiences as a commercial flyer in the Arctic, and gives useful information about the development of aeroplane transport in the north. Albert Sandwell's *Planes over Canada*

also deals in part with commercial flying. Philip Godsell's books, *Arctic trader*, *Red hunters of the snows* and *The vanishing frontier* depict the changes which the author, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, has seen as the aeroplane replaced the dog team. Edgar Laytha in *North again for gold* gives a journalistic account of the developments resulting from the discovery of mineral wealth on Great Bear Lake. The illustrations are good. Kathleen Strange in *With the West in her eyes* describes in amusing fashion her experiences as "a modern pioneer" on an Alberta farm after the Great War. *The homesteaders* by Ethel Chapman is a novel about pioneer farming in the West during the depression. *New breaking* by Hugh Boyd outlines the development of the co-operative movement among farmers. It is not easy reading, but may be used for reference.

For detailed information, facts and figures, you will find useful the volumes of the *Canada year book*, published annually. Much more attractive is the small book *Canada: The official handbook of present conditions and recent progress*, issued annually by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. It is well illustrated. The Canadian Geographical Journal has articles on all the topics dealt with in this chapter. Copies of the Rowell-Sirois report will be in most libraries.

If you can do so, visit an art gallery and see the painting of the Group of Seven and other modern Canadian artists. It is not difficult to find reproductions of the work of some of them. A beautifully illustrated book is *Canadian landscape painters* by Albert Robson. Informative, but sparsely illustrated, is the smaller book *A short history of Canadian art* by Graham McInnes. In the realm of poetry, the following collections may be added to those listed for Chapter XXVII: *Anthology of Canadian poetry* compiled by Ralph Gustafson, *Canadian verse for boys and girls*, edited by John Garvin, and *New harvesting* by Ethel Hume Bennett.

Such a reading list as this merely touches some of the movements and changes mentioned in this chapter. Groups of pupils or whole classes can find in this modern period a host of subjects for further study: the chief industries of the community and their development, the history and work of such organizations as the Red Cross, a study of Canadian art and literature—these and many other topics are waiting to be explored. Make use of your geography books, the facts and figures of the *Canada year book*, and newspaper and magazine files.

## Chapter XXXII

### Canada a Nation in the British Commonwealth and the World

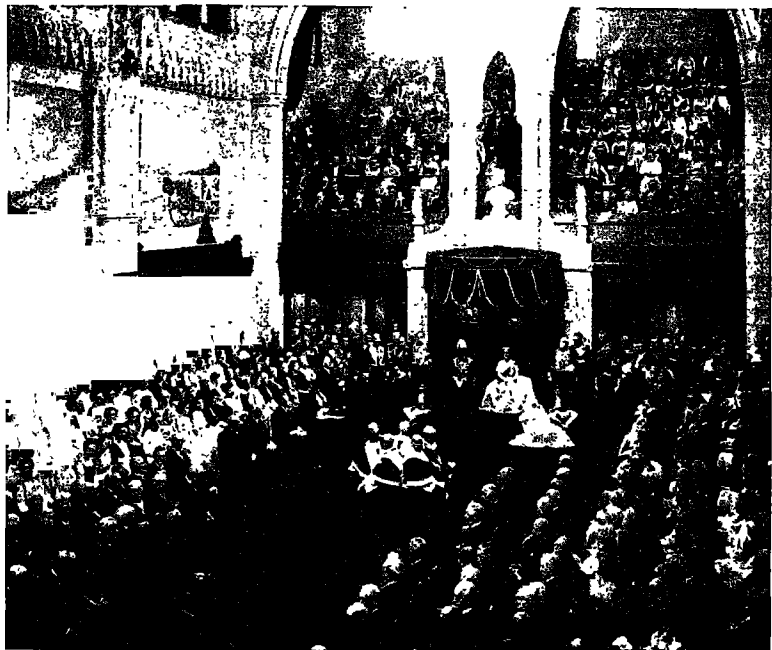
ON May 19, 1939, there occurred in Ottawa an event unprecedented in Canadian or British history. King George VI, who with Queen Elizabeth was making a royal tour, took his place as King of Canada on the dais in the Senate Chamber of the Parliament Buildings, and addressed the assembled members of his Canadian Parliament. Never before had a British King addressed a Parliament outside the British Isles. The scene was one of pageantry and brilliant colour,—the Queen beautifully garbed, the judges of Canada's Supreme Court ranged in traditional British fashion on the woolsack, the visitors' gallery and the members' seats filled to overflowing.

The occasion was, however, much more than a pageant. It was the symbol of a striking change which had taken place in the previous twenty-five years. Since 1914 the Empire had ceased to be an empire in the old sense, and had moved one stage further in its remarkable development. The Dominions were no longer colonies; they had become completely autonomous or self-governing nations, held together by a common allegiance to the Crown. The King was now the King of each of them; and so it was that, as King of Canada, George VI appeared before his Parliament in Ottawa.

Just one hundred years earlier, in the spring of 1839, Lord Durham's *Report* had been published and sent to British North America. How interested Durham would have been, could he have watched in person this scene at Ottawa. Responsible Government had worked itself out far more fully than he could have ever imagined. It had helped to create, out of a group of disunited colonies, a Canadian Dominion. It had spread to distant parts of

the Empire. It had helped to create there other Dominions. And finally, after 1914, it had made possible the growth of Britain and the Dominions into the British Commonwealth of Nations.

**Canadian Autonomy and the First World War.** The development after 1914 began as a result of the war, which brought a very sharp advance in Canada's progress toward nationhood. When the war started, no one, either in or out of the country, had any idea that the Canadian contribution would be as great as it very speedily became. By 1916 Canada had put a large army into the field, and the government was determined that it should have some influence in the plans for conducting the war. On January 6 of that year Premier Borden wrote to the Canadian High Commis-



*(National Film Board)*

#### KING GEORGE VI IN THE CANADIAN PARLIAMENT

The historic scene in the Senate Chamber, Ottawa, when His Majesty, King George VI, accompanied by Queen Elizabeth attended the 4th session of the 18th Parliament of Canada to give Royal Assent to Bills prior to the proroguing of Parliament.

sioner in London: "It can hardly be expected that we shall put 400,000 to 500,000 men in the field, and willingly accept the position of having no more consideration than if we were toy automata. Anyone cherishing such an expectation harbours an unfortunate and even dangerous delusion." At first, the British government could see no way of giving the Dominions a share in the making of policy; but a change of leadership put Lloyd George into office as British Prime Minister, and almost immediately there followed the momentous decision to create in London an Imperial War Cabinet.

In the spring of 1917, its first meeting was held. Borden and the other Dominion premiers sat on equal terms with their colleagues from Britain, and the War Cabinet made plans for the direction of the entire war effort of the Empire. A new era had begun in British Imperial relations. This was clearly understood by all those present; and, at the Imperial Conference, which also met in the spring of 1917, a resolution was passed on Borden's motion stating that the Dominions should be recognized as "autonomous nations of an imperial commonwealth." Thus, the war was transforming the Empire. The British Commonwealth of Nations was emerging, and the Dominions were making contributions to the war effort which they could never have made as colonies.

Sharing the leadership with Borden in these new developments was General Smuts, the Premier of South Africa. Smuts had been a Boer leader during the South African War; but, after it ended, he had been won over by Britain's policy of giving self-government to South Africa. Like Borden, he saw the possibility of creating an Empire of free nations—a Commonwealth bound together not by force but by common interests and common sentiments. Smuts became one of the great leaders of the post-war period, a founder of the League of Nations and an ardent advocate of world peace through international co-operation.

The new position of autonomy and responsibility, which had been gained by Canada and the other Dominions, was shown in many ways during the remaining months of the war. The appointment of Currie, as commander-in-chief of the Canadian Army Corps, was a sign of it in military matters. In government, one



of the important illustrations was the beginning in 1918 of direct communication between Borden and the British Prime Minister. From that time, the Governor General and the Colonial Office were no longer the channel for communication as they had been in the colonial period. The pressing needs of the war and the growing importance of the Dominions had made direct consultation between the British and Dominion governments a necessity.

From the point of view of international law, the new position of the Dominions was most peculiar. The idea that colonies might develop into nations and yet remain in close association with the mother country might seem natural to Britishers, but for people of other countries it was difficult to understand. Nevertheless, in the Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919, the Dominions won full recognition of their new status. Borden insisted that Canada's war effort had justified her being represented on an equality with the smaller nations like Belgium. The result was that Canada was represented at the Conference by her own delegates; the Peace Treaties were signed by them, and later were ratified by the Canadian Parliament. To these marks of recognition others were added: Canada was included in her own right as one of the original members of the League of Nations which was created at the Peace Conference; she was given separate representation, which meant that she had a vote in the Assembly of the League; and was also given the right to be elected as a member of the League's Council.

That some objection should be taken to this new development of the Dominions is not surprising. By some, it was argued that separate representation for the Dominions in the League Assembly meant simply that Britain was being given several additional votes. This was, for instance, one of the objections to the League of Nations put forward in the United States. Such fears, however, proved groundless. The part played by the Dominions in the League showed later that the recognition given them at the Peace Conference was fully justified.

**The Final Acknowledgment of Autonomy—The End of a Century's Progress in Self-Government.** The developments in the Empire which had taken place during the war and at the

Peace Conference made necessary a clearer definition of the relations between Britain and the Dominions. This was the chief problem at the Imperial Conference of 1926, and from this conference emerged the famous statement which has been called the



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

#### CANADA'S ARCTIC PATROLS

Soon after the First World War Canada took steps to extend her authority more effectively over her Arctic possessions by the establishment of R.C.M.P. Posts from which regular patrols are sent out. The upper picture shows a police patrol, and the lower the Post at Pond Inlet established in 1921 in the Eastern Arctic.

Declaration of Equality. Britain and the Dominions, it declared, "are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or internal affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." Like the Declaration of Independence, just one hundred and fifty years earlier, the Declaration of Equality is a milestone in the history of the English-speaking world. But, while the first opened unfortunately a period of civil war and long-continued misunderstanding, the second was an adventure in co-operation and partnership.

A number of legal details were still left uncertain by the Declaration of Equality, which was intended chiefly as a statement of principle. These details were discussed in the next Imperial Conference, and finally settled by the Statute of Westminster passed by the British Parliament in 1931. It declared that no law of the British Parliament should apply to any Dominion unless the Dominion so desired; and also that no Dominion law should be declared void on the ground that it was contrary to a law of the British Parliament. Thus, the last check on the legislative power of the Dominions was removed. In the case of Canada, and at the express wish of the Canadian government, two limitations with regard to the British North America Act, that is, with regard to the Canadian constitution, remained: (1) Amendments were still to be made by the British Parliament, which, however, would act only at the request of the Canadian government. (2) Legal cases involving the interpretation of the British North America Act could still be appealed to the highest court of the Empire, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. These limitations were to be removed whenever Canada wished, and were retained because no method of amending the constitution had been found which was acceptable to all the provinces.

The Statute of Westminster also repeated the principle which had been recognized in 1926 that the Crown is "the symbol of the free association of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." The Crown is the only legal link binding them together. The King thus became King of each member of the

Commonwealth, and so it was as King of Canada that George VI made his royal tour in 1939 and addressed his Canadian Parliament in Ottawa. The Governor General became no longer an official of the British government, as in the colonial period, but the personal representative of the King who consults the Canadian government in appointing anyone to that office. Treaties may be negotiated by any member of the Commonwealth in the King's name, but are not binding on other members unless they request it.

By 1931, therefore, the Dominions had fully gained their autonomy, and had become nations rather than Dominions in the sense in which the word was used at the time of Confederation. The Statute of Westminster brought to an end a long and important chapter in the history not only of Canada, but of the British Empire and even of the world. In just a century the Empire had been transformed from an empire of the old type into a league of states held together by common interests of trade and common ideals of political freedom and government. It had become a kind of international system, pointing the way to peace by co-operation in a world where nations were finding that, to live on the principle of each nation for itself was becoming more and more impossible. In this transformation from Empire to Commonwealth Canada had played a leading part. Since the time of Durham she had been the chief laboratory for the great experiment of colonial self-government which, after a century of trial and error, had finally been brought to its logical conclusion.

**Canada in International Affairs—Her Part in The League of Nations.** Responsibilities come with maturity, and Canada had meanwhile begun also, therefore, to play a part in world affairs. The role was new, and the part was small; but it was not unimportant. As a senior member of the British Commonwealth, and as the next-door neighbour of the United States, Canada was in a position to exert a far greater influence than Canadians themselves realized.

Canada's chief responsibility in international affairs, in the years following the First World War, lay through the League of Nations. Founded in 1919 at the Peace Conference, the League was the most ambitious and most hopeful experiment in international co-

operation in the world's history. Even though it failed in the end to solve the most difficult of all international problems, the prevention of war, it was for over a decade a centre of world diplomacy. No less than fifty-six nations sent their delegates to Geneva, and the

United States though not a member was by 1930 co-operating increasingly in its activities.



Raoul Dandurand

Canada, as one of the League's original members, participated in its work from the start. Beginning with 1920, representatives were sent to each year's Assembly, and in 1927, which was, appropriately, the sixtieth anniversary of Confederation, Canada was honoured by being named one of the nine members selected by the Assembly to the League's Council. The distinction was not an empty one. Canadians had been active in the Assembly's debates, and it was also felt that Canada represented to some extent the point of view of the United States, whose absence from the League was a great source of weakness. Canada, as a member, took her full part in the work of special conferences and commissions, and in other activities such as those of the International Labour Office which had the duty of trying to improve labour conditions throughout the world. Most prominent among the Canadians who served in various ways at Geneva

was the eminent French-Canadian Senator, the Hon. Raoul Dandurand. His complete command of both French and English and his ability as a public speaker made him an outstanding figure. In 1926 he was chosen president of the Assembly, the first British subject to be so honoured, and his services were one of the reasons for Canada's election to the Council in the following year.

The League's most serious difficulty was "Security", that is the problem of freeing nations from fear of aggression, or unjustified

attack. In one phase of this crucial question Canada had great influence. Agreement among all League members on the problem of security, and on disarmament which was bound up with it, was found to be impossible. Every country wanted to follow its own immediate interests, and was reluctant to make promises which might bind it later in case trouble arose. This was the chief reason for the refusal of the United States to join the League, and the same reluctance was shown, in varying degrees, by the League's members themselves. They were divided, however, into two main groups: those who felt insecure because they feared attack, and those whose geographical position relieved them of such fear. Canada was in the latter group. Her geographical position was fortunate. She felt, as one of her representatives said, that she was living "in a fireproof house far from inflammable materials", and for this reason she objected especially to Article X of the "Covenant" of the League which every member had signed.

Article X provided that members of the League would respect and preserve "against external aggression" the territory and independence of all League members, and that in case of any such aggression, or danger of it, the Council "shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled." Borden at the Peace Conference had questioned the wisdom of Article X on the ground that it might be used to prevent changes in boundaries which might later be desirable. The Canadian government also felt that under Article X Canada might be asked to send troops to distant places to take part in disputes with which she had no direct concern. These arguments had also been among the chief reasons for the United States' refusal to enter the League, in spite of the fact that President Wilson upheld Article X as "the heart of the Covenant."

Canada's feeling about Article X was greatly increased by an event in 1922 known as the Chanak incident. As a result of post-war troubles between Turkey and Greece, Turkey threatened to send a force across the Dardanelles into Europe. Since British troops were stationed at that point, there was a sudden danger that Britain and Turkey might be drawn into war; and the British government cabled to Ottawa asking whether Canada desired to

send a force to help in the settlement of a crisis which threatened the peace of Europe. The message, which should never have been sent in the way that it was, came without warning, and was a shock to the Canadian government and people since it suggested that they should take an active part in a serious dispute with which they had no direct concern. Fortunately Turkey did not carry out her threat and the trouble blew over, but the incident left a very sharp impression, and strengthened the view that Canada should maintain an independent position in matters of foreign policy.<sup>1</sup>

In each of the first four Assemblies, Canada urged the amendment of Article X, and finally in 1923 an important resolution was passed which, though it left the Article unchanged, said that each League member should have complete freedom in the control of its military forces. Thus League members were relieved of any obligation to provide troops at the League's request. After 1923 the League turned to other means of attempting to achieve security.

The control of her military forces was not the only question over which Canada kept a watchful eye. She was equally opposed to any interference with her control over immigration laws, trade and tariffs, or raw materials. In this attitude she was by no means alone. Different nations were concerned over different matters, but they had one thing in common. All were reluctant to share their authority or to make sacrifices which they were not forced to make. During the war the Allies had combined their plans and resources, and had carried the principle of co-operation into every part of the war effort. But when victory came, there was a natural tendency to slip back into the old way of doing things. Only by bitter experience were the nations later to learn that, if world peace was to be assured, international co-operation would have to be worked out far more thoroughly than in the 1920's.

**International Relations Outside the League.** Canada's international relations expanded in many other ways during the post-war years. Her rapidly growing trade, bringing her into contact with countries in many parts of the world, necessitated the sending

<sup>1</sup> The incident also showed the serious lack of adequate machinery for consultation between Britain and the Dominions. The Imperial Conferences met every four years, but in the intervals there was no direct means for the careful consideration of pressing problems.

of trade commissioners and the negotiating of commercial agreements. Relations with the United States became so extensive that in 1927 a Legation was established in Washington, and the British ambassador ceased to be the channel for communications as he had been up to that time. Ministers were also soon sent to Paris and Tokyo, and appointments to other countries followed in due course. Canadians still had the advantage of British citizenship, however, and the services of Britain's consuls and diplomatic representatives in all parts of the world.

One event requires particular mention. It had to do with the alliance between Britain and Japan which had been made in 1902 and which was due to expire soon after the war ended. Japan had been an ally against Germany, but the growth of her power and territory as a result of the war had widened the breach already existing between her and the United States. For Canada this was a serious matter, not only because she faced the Pacific but also because friendly relations between the United States and Britain were of the utmost importance to her. At the Imperial Conference of 1921 she urged, therefore, that Britain should not renew the Japanese alliance; but that, instead, a conference be called to make a general agreement about affairs in the Pacific. In spite of strenuous opposition, especially from Australia, the British government was won over by the argument that friendly relations with the United States were essential, and the Canadian proposal was adopted.

Winston Churchill once described Canada as a linch-pin between Britain and the United States. She has not always acted as such, but certainly on this occasion she did. Few Canadians realized that Canada had exerted a decisive influence in a matter of the greatest diplomatic importance. It would have been better had they done so, since Canada, whether she wished it or not, was being drawn into the stream of world affairs. The decision of 1921 is also significant because it shows that, in spite of differences, Britain and the United States were gradually being drawn together in their fundamental interests throughout the world. Twenty years later, they were to find themselves united in the most serious crisis in their history—a crisis in which Japan played a leading role as a common enemy.



### The Decade of Crisis and the Problem of Co-operation.

In 1930 there was a memorable scene in the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva. The meeting marked the beginning of the



#### HANDS ACROSS THE BORDER

The upper picture shows a Mountie and a United States game warden standing beside a boundary marker. The sign is that of a National Wild Life Refuge. Canada and the United States have an agreement for the protection of migratory birds. The lower picture shows workmen exchanging Canadian and United States flags as a prelude to joining the arch of the Rainbow Bridge at Niagara Falls.

League's second decade, and Sir Robert Borden, who had been sent to head Canada's delegation on this special occasion, was asked to address the Assembly. He recalled how different were conditions a decade earlier. "The League was indeed born in a tempest-scourged world. The atmosphere was oppressive, almost stifling." Ten years had seen a remarkable change and the accomplishment of "wonderful concrete results." But, Sir Robert went on, the nations are merely "in the kindergarten of peace. They have learned many a useful lesson. There are others still harder that must yet be learned." The world was re-arming. "Vast armaments" he warned, "are not only

oppressive but dangerous. Is it conceivable that we can advance beyond the kindergarten until the world shall have been freed from the menace of armaments? Do I hear a whisper that this is vain idealism? Let us thank God that the idealism of one generation becomes the achievement of the next."

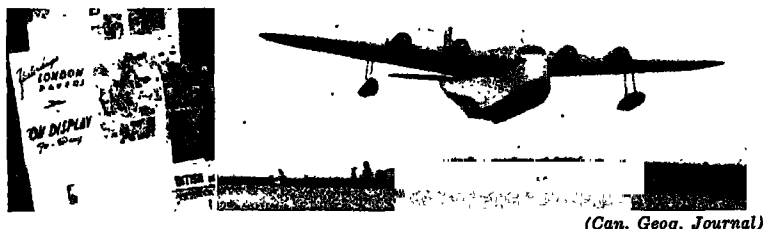
How timely was Sir Robert's solemn warning, even he could not have realized. Within a year the structure of world peace was beginning to crumble, and ten years later it had completely collapsed. Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931 was the first serious breach in the League system. The attack was an unprovoked aggression. The League condemned it, and the United States co-operated fully in the protest. But the Great Powers were unwilling to unite in any further action, and Japan continued her campaign, encouraged by the fact that a Disarmament Conference which was called a few months later failed completely to reach an agreement. The reluctance of peace-loving nations to make sacrifices in standing together was hastening them toward disaster. Other alarming events soon followed. In 1933 the Nazis gained control in Germany. Soon Germany withdrew from the League, of which she had been a member for several years, and shortly afterward she announced that she intended to re-arm in defiance of the restrictions which had been placed on her.

In the same year, 1935, came the second major breach in the League system, when Italy, a League member, attacked Ethiopia. Ethiopia, also a League member, appealed to Geneva, and the League states, better prepared for an emergency than in 1931, imposed "sanctions"<sup>2</sup> or penalties on Italy by refusing to trade with her in a number of important materials. They hoped that this would hamper her war effort. They stopped short of placing an embargo on oil, however. This would probably have brought Italy to time, but she threatened to widen the war if an oil sanction were imposed.

A few months later both Germany and Italy sent troops, or "volunteers" to take part in a civil war which broke out in Spain. They were fishing in troubled waters! In 1938, Germany, seeing how divided and uncertain were her opponents, invaded and annexed Austria declaring this to be her last "conquest." Violent threats, broken pledges, and acts of aggression by Germany now followed each other in quick succession, until finally Britain and France resolved to make a stand in defence of Poland. With Germany's invasion of Poland in September of 1939, the Second World War began.

<sup>2</sup> Sanctions were provided for, by Article XVI of the Covenant.

Canada's share in the events of these disastrous years was a minor one, although it was perhaps more important than Canadians suspected. Few of them felt that Japan's invasion of Manchuria was a matter of direct concern to themselves. Public opinion strongly condemned the aggression, and the Canadian government supported the protest made by the League. But it was not felt that anything more was necessary,—Canada was not a great power; the country was struggling with the effects of the depression, and



(*Can. Geog. Journal*)

#### SPANNING THE ATLANTIC BY AIR

Through radio and the aeroplane, Canada was brought more closely in touch with other parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations in the 1930's. On the right is shown the first weekly mail plane arriving from England on August 6, 1939. On the left is a Canadian news stand advertising "Yesterday's London Papers on Display."

Manchuria was very far away. Ten years earlier, in the discussion of the Japanese alliance, Canada had been the "linch-pin" between Britain and the United States, but in 1931 she did not serve the same purpose—just why has not yet been made clear.

At one other point Canada's influence had a brief importance. When sanctions against Italy were being discussed, the permanent representative of Canada at Geneva suggested that oil should be added to the list. The proposal, which was very much resented by Italy, attracted wide attention, and the Canadian government issued a statement that it was merely the personal suggestion of the representative who made it. Canada thus made clear that she would not support the oil sanction. How much influence this had it is impossible to say. Other very powerful interests also opposed it, and the proposal never came to a vote.

Like many other countries Canada was being hastened toward

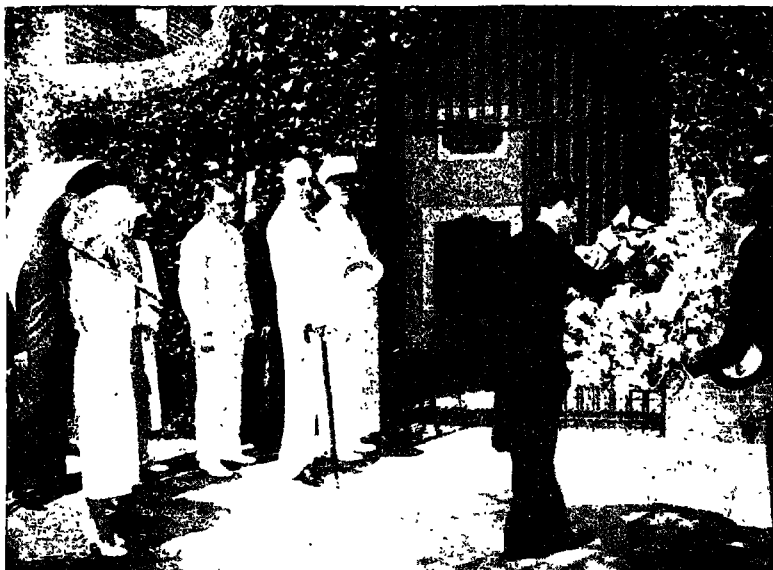
war during these years by a series of crises in which she played little part, and by policies in the making of which she had no share. As the League system broke down, Germany's lawless and unscrupulous leaders took complete control of the situation. The Great Powers were divided and wavering; the lesser nations, in the absence of any effective system of international co-operation, could do almost nothing. Canadians like millions of others hoped for the best. They were slow to believe that the leaders of any nation would willingly plunge the world into war; and they hoped that, at the worst, conflict might be confined to Europe. They were living in a world that had not yet realized that "peace is indivisible", and that war is like disease in the body—if one part is infected, the whole body is in danger.

Among the few encouragements in these critical years were signs of better understanding among the nations of the British Commonwealth and between Britain and the United States. At the Ottawa Conference in 1932, a series of agreements was drawn up to promote trade among the members of the Commonwealth; and, four years later, Canada and the United States concluded a Reciprocity Treaty which lowered tariffs on a wide range of articles. It was the first such agreement in seventy years. Better understanding did not, however, show itself so much in common policies—for there were still many differences preventing full co-operation—as in other ways which were harder to measure, but which in the long run went deeper. Common peril was creating a new realization of common interests. Tyranny was overrunning Europe, and the cause of democracy was hopeless unless nations like the United States and those of the British Commonwealth drew together in defence of their freedom.

The royal tour of King George and Queen Elizabeth in 1939 was a striking sign of this new spirit of understanding. Few monarchs have had a more exacting test. From the moment of their landing at historic Quebec they were the centre of unprecedented crowds, their every action described by radio and by scores of reporters who had been assigned to view this first visit of a British king to American soil. Everywhere they mingled with the people, often unexpectedly breaking through the time-table of

official ceremonies to do so. To millions they became a symbol of the meaning not only of the British Commonwealth but of British democracy.

Crossing to the United States they received a welcome no less remarkable than that in Canada. Their coming was evidence that a page in the book of history had been turned; another chapter



King George VI laying a wreath on Washington's tomb. On the left are President Roosevelt carrying a cane and Queen Elizabeth with umbrella.

was being written. When the king laid a wreath on Washington's tomb, it was more than an empty formality. It was visible proof that ancient grudges were dying, and that a new understanding was taking their place.

Ten months earlier a scene no less significant had taken place on the border between Canada and the United States. President Roosevelt and Premier King had come to open the Thousand Islands Bridge which spans the St. Lawrence between Ontario and New York. Like all international bridges it was a symbol.

of good-will, and President Roosevelt, speaking at Kingston just before the opening ceremony, used the occasion to make an historic pronouncement. "Canada," he said, "is part of the sisterhood of the British Empire. I give to you assurance that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other empire." Two days later, Mr. King acknowledged this declaration. "We, too," he said, "have our obligations as a good, friendly neighbour, and one of them is to see that enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way, either by land, sea or air to the United States across Canadian territory."

Thus, as the clouds of war thickened in Europe, there emerged signs not only of better understanding between Britain and the United States, but of a common determination that the United States and Canada would stand together in defence of North America against the threat of aggression.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

An excellent summary of Canada's part in the League of Nations is given in Gwendolen M. Carter's pamphlet *Consider the Record: Canada and the League of Nations* published by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and the Canadian Association for Adult Education.

## *Chapter XXXIII*

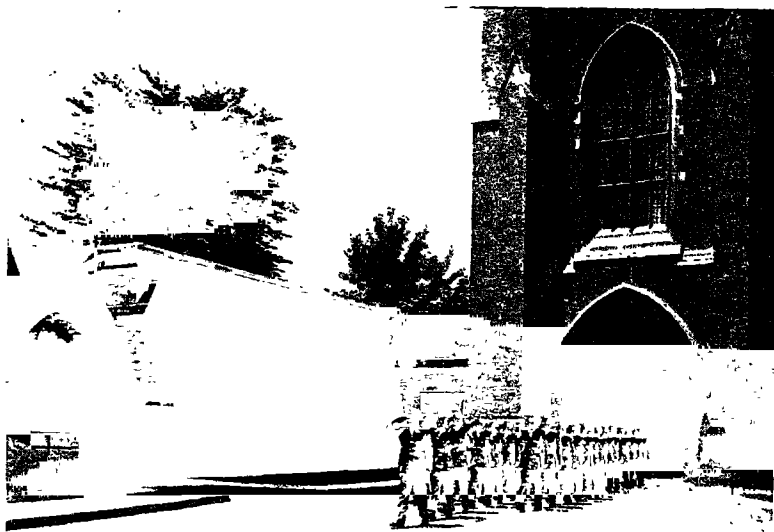
### Canada and the Second World War—The War for Freedom

**T**HERE has not been a time when the countries of the world have faced such a crisis as they face today. . . . If this conqueror by his methods of force, violence and terror, and other ruthless iniquities is able to crush the peoples of Europe, what is going to become of the doctrine of isolation of this North American continent? If Britain goes down, if France goes down, the whole business of isolation will prove to have been a mere myth. There will in time be no freedom on this continent; there will in time be no liberty. Life will not be worth living. It is for all of us on this continent to do our part to save its privileged position by helping others." In these words Prime Minister Mackenzie King expressed the overwhelming conviction of Canadians, as Hitler's Germany drove Europe into the maelstrom of war. With deep reluctance but unshakable determination, Canada was resolved to play her full part in resisting the dark tide of aggression which threatened to engulf the world.

**Canada Enters the Second World War.** It was as a member of the British Commonwealth and as a North American nation that Canada entered the Second World War. Interests and sentiment alike impelled her. As one of the world's greatest trading nations, she could not afford to have the markets and sea routes of the world dominated by a country like Germany, which declared that it was bent on world conquest and would use its power for its own selfish purposes. Canadian interests were entwined with those of the British Commonwealth throughout the world, and Canadians enjoyed the privileges of British citizenship wherever the British flag flew. Almost half of Canada's entire export trade went to the

nations of the Commonwealth; more than one-third of it went to Britain alone, and the North Atlantic was for Canada, as it was for Britain and the United States, a life-line of commerce. If Britain were crushed Canada's economic position would be fundamentally altered.

Canadians were moved, however, by more than economic interest. They had grown to nationhood in an empire whose vital principle



(Hart House)

These men of the R.C.A.F., in training at a Canadian University in 1942, have just marched through the archway of the Memorial Tower built after the First World War, and are saluting the tablets at the left on which are carved the names of graduates and undergraduates of the University who gave up their lives in that conflict.

had been the growth of self-government. Nazi Germany had declared her deadly hatred of the ideals of democracy. Wherever she extended her power, she destroyed parliamentary government and the liberties of the individual. Through the cruelty of the Gestapo, she subjected commerce, education, the church, the press, the radio, and every privilege of citizenship to the ruthless demands of the German state. Glorifying war as a good thing in itself, she

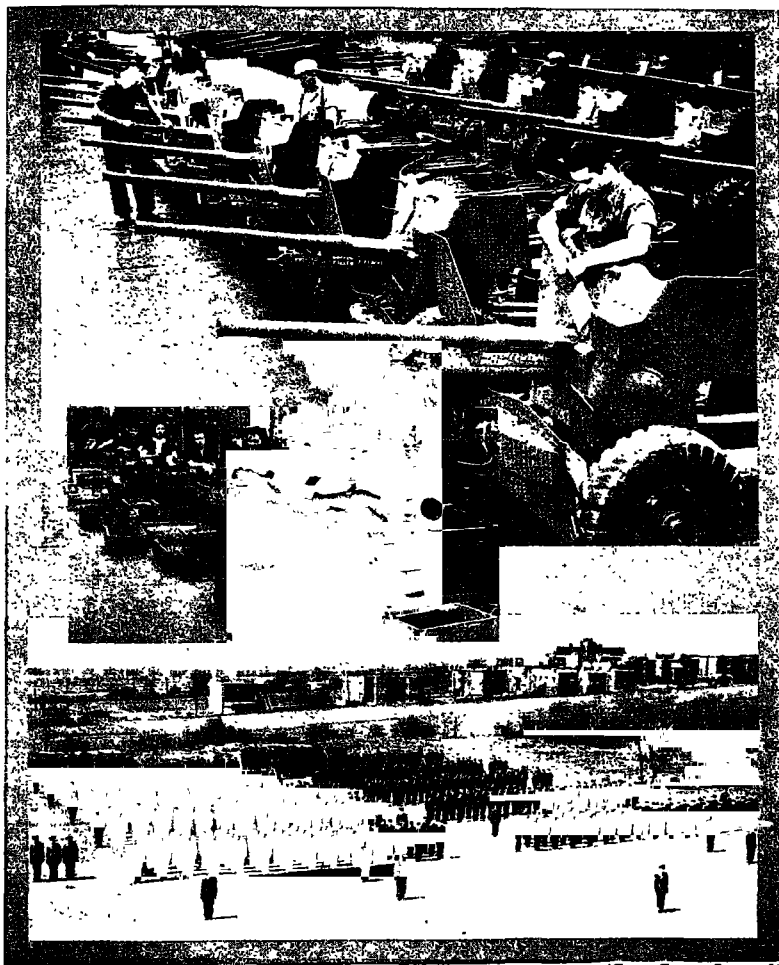


boasted that democracy was outworn, that the democratic nations were decadent, and that Germany had a divine right to enslave the people of "inferior" races. With growing concern Canadians had watched the menace of Nazi violence and terrorism sweeping across Europe; and when the storm broke, they had come to the deep conviction that nothing could withstand it but the united resistance of freedom-loving peoples throughout the world.

On September 10, 1939, Parliament, speedily summoned in full session at Ottawa, resolved that His Majesty the King declare a state of war between Canada and Germany. No more momentous decision is recorded in Canadian history. Shouldering her full responsibility as a nation, Canada ranged herself with Britain and other members of the Commonwealth in the defence of freedom. Alone among American nations, she entered the war at its beginning, firmly believing that not only her own future but the future of the entire world was at stake. Events were to prove that her instinct was correct.

**The Course of the Global War.** The Second World War has been well named the Global War, but the events of the first few months gave little hint of the course which it was soon to take. After the German war machine had rolled through unhappy Poland, there followed a period of apparent inactivity. It was the calm before the storm. In the early spring of 1940 German troops occupied Denmark and invaded Norway who resisted heroically, although after more than a century of peace she was completely surprised and almost wholly unprepared. A few weeks' lull followed; then in May, the hurricane broke.

Bringing the full weight of her war machine into action Germany smashed through the defences of Holland, Belgium, and France. In five days she overran Holland, whose royal family and government escaped to Britain. In a few days more Belgium was prostrate; and within six weeks France was crushed,—her army which had been thought by many the best in Europe, completely captured, and her government, which might have escaped with its fleet to Northern Africa, forced into abject surrender. Germany was master of the entire west coast of Europe from Spain to the Arctic circle. She had, also, gained an ally. Italy, long in close co-



(Can. Geog. Journal)

The upper pictures show men and women at work in Canadian factories. Below is a parade of cadets at one of the schools operating under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

operation with Germany, now joined her openly, stabbing France in the back in the last hours of her struggle.

One sign only of promise stood out against the blackness of these crushing disasters—the rescue of the British army. After days of desperate rear-guard fighting it reached the sands of Dunkirk. Pressed on every side by Germany's mechanized divisions and overwhelmed in the air, its plight seemed hopeless. Then came an exploit unmatched in history. Thousands of boats, big and little, swarmed out from the shores of England, and aided by calm and fog, which seemed miraculously to come to their help, they carried back across the channel's waters nearly three hundred thousand men.

Between the lines of the Medway buoys  
They steamed and sailed and rowed,  
Back to the roadsteads, back to the piers  
Inside the vigilant booms,  
Back to the harbours,  
Back to the River of London, to England,  
Saved once again by the tread of her keels.<sup>1</sup>

"So long as the English tongue survives," wrote the *New York Times*, "the word Dunkerque will be spoken with reverence. . . . It was not so simple a thing as discipline, which can be hammered into men by a drill sergeant. It was not the result of careful planning, for there could have been little. It was the common man of the free countries, rising in all his glory out of mill, office, mine, farm and ship, applying to war the lessons learned when he went down the shaft to bring out trapped comrades, when he hurled the lifeboats through the surf, when he endured poverty and hard work for his children's sake.

"This shining thing in the souls of men Hitler cannot command, or attain, or conquer. He has crushed it where he could from German hearts.

"It is the great tradition of democracy. It is the future. It is victory!"

<sup>1</sup> From the poem *Dunkirk* by the Canadian poet, E. J. Pratt. By permission of the author and the Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited.

In spite of Dunkirk, Britain's position was desperate. During the last days of wild confusion as France was falling, Churchill came to power as Prime Minister. "I have nothing," he said, "to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat." "Let us brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'" Never was challenging leadership more needed. Alone with the nations of the Commonwealth, whose resources were not yet mobilized, Britain was left facing the combined might of Germany and Italy.

Why Hitler did not invade immediately may be one of the unexplained mysteries of the war. Perhaps the very speed of his victories had left him insufficient time



(Star Newspaper Service)

Carrying On in Bomb-Scarred London.

to prepare. At any rate he resolved to reduce Britain by air, and so began the Battle of Britain which raged for almost three months from the eighth of August to the end of October. Ports and shipping, towns and cities, were attacked by thousands of planes. Then after a month the onslaught was turned against London. Docks, historic buildings, homes, hospitals, and churches were bombed. Fires raged incessantly, thousands were killed and wounded. Through all these weeks, Britain's small but magnificent Air Force bore the full fury of the German attack. By official count it destroyed 2375 German planes, and disabled many others which never succeeded in limping back across the channel. "Never," said Churchill, "in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." Scarcely less heroic were the rank and file of Britain's men, women, and children. Organizing themselves in every city and at every crossroads, they showed what could be done

by an inspired democracy, and threw back into Hitler's teeth his oft-repeated jibe that the democracies were decadent.

By late autumn of 1940 the threat of invasion had slackened, and the British government had even taken the initiative by sending sorely needed equipment to Egypt and by striking westward into Libya in a swift offensive against the Italian army of North Africa.

Meanwhile, the never-ending Battle of the Atlantic was rising to a new intensity. Master of Europe's west coast, with unlimited bases at his disposal, and with bombers as well as U-boats to attack merchant ships far out on the Atlantic, Hitler seemed in a far better position to strangle the British Isles by sea than Germany had been in 1917. Britain was severely handicapped by the neutrality of Eire; new weapons such as the magnetic mine were brought into play; and losses of merchant ships mounted to alarming heights. But, just as in the First World War, counter measures were found to help the gallant men of the merchant service. Aero-plane escorts went far to sea, the magnetic mine was conquered, new boats like the corvette were built, and gradually as the months passed signs of encouragement appeared. The life lines of ocean commerce remained open.

Early in 1941 the war began to spread with startling rapidity, first into the Balkans. Rumania, which had been wavering, gave in to German threats. The Serbs with invincible courage defied Germany; and, although Belgrade was bombed with inhuman cruelty, thousands of Serbs took to their mountains to continue a formidable guerilla warfare. Gallant little Greece, which had been fighting Italy for months, also refused to bend the knee. Britain threw in what she could when the call for help came, but in spite of prodigies of valour the cause was hopeless. The German war machine rolled through Greece and on across the island of Crete.

Then it turned. On June 22 Hitler hurled his army against Russia. Two years earlier Russia and Germany had made a pact promising not to attack each other. This agreement had been possible because Britain and France mistrusted Russia, while Russia on her part feared that Britain and France might encourage Ger-

many to turn eastward. Hitler had made the pact to serve his own purposes and to free his hands in the east; but now, having failed to invade England, he could not afford to leave a powerful enemy in his rear. Without warning, therefore, he tore up his promise and started on the road to Moscow. He believed it would be a matter of a few weeks, but the Russian people, men, women, and children, defending their homes and soil, fought with reckless determination. When winter came, Moscow and Leningrad still held; the German army had suffered its first major set-back.

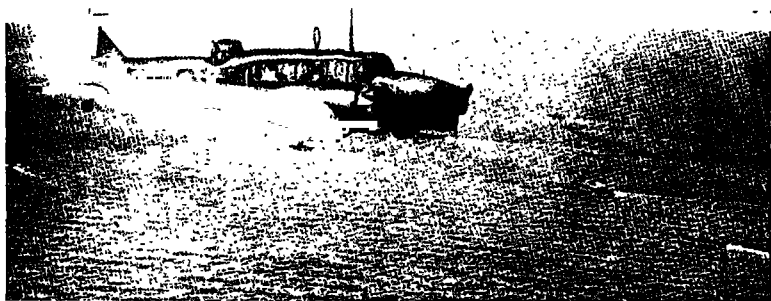
At this moment came one of the war's great turning points. On December 7, 1941, with a treachery unexcelled even by Hitler, Japan bombed the United States naval and air bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Hoping by surprise to win a swift victory, she launched at the same time a series of smashing attacks into the South Pacific against Hong Kong, Singapore, Burma, the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, and Australia. Two days after Pearl Harbor, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

The conflict thus became, in the literal sense of the term, a global war. China's struggle for freedom, carried on against Japan with matchless determination for over five years, was fully merged into it. Bridging the oceans and spanning the continents, the strategy of armies, navies, and air warfare now embraced the world, and the future of every nation was involved.

**Canada's War Effort.** Canada in 1939 had small, but well organized, military and naval forces which could be quickly expanded. With this exception, however, she was virtually unprepared, and was faced, like other democracies, with the tremendous task of organizing a normally unmilitary people for the crisis of war. In contrast with 1914, the first months of the war produced no demand for men on the Western Front, but with the fall of France the future course of events became utterly unpredictable. The military effort was speeded up; the Home Defence forces, which were manned by a compulsory system, were rapidly increased; and, in addition, Canada had, in her Active Service Force by the spring of 1942 more than 265,000 volunteers who had enlisted for service anywhere in the world, and approximately half of whom were overseas. Canadian detachments served in Newfoundland, Iceland,

the British West Indies, and Hong Kong, but the bulk of the force overseas was stationed in the British Isles whose defence was essential to victory and whose shores were the only base from which an invasion could be launched into Northern Europe.

At the beginning of the war, Canada was prepared to patrol her coastal waters by sea and air, and six days after war was declared she co-operated in the protection of the first convoy which left for Britain. From that point, the expansion of Canada's navy became one of the notable achievements of her war effort. Within



*(Star Newspaper Service)*

#### A COASTAL COMMAND PLANE ON CONVOY DUTY

three years, it was increased from a force of less than 2,000 to almost 30,000 officers and men. Training schools were established on the coasts and at inland points. Boys who had never smelt salt water went down to the sea in ships; and Canada, which had been one of the world's leading maritime countries in the years following Confederation, seemed likely once again to discover her sense of the sea. During the first three years of the war, Canadian naval operations extended not only to home waters and the Battle of the Atlantic, but to the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and the waters around Britain. Canadian ships shared in the evacuation after the fall of France, and Canadians attached to the British navy took part in the brief but desperate exploits off the coasts of Greece and Crete.

Canada's most striking contribution has been associated with

the Royal Canadian Air Force. In the autumn of 1939, at the suggestion of the British government, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was established for the training of airmen from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. The plan was placed under the administration of Canada's National Defense for Air, and Canada was chosen as the scene of operations, not only because her broad boundaries and clear skies provided far more extensive facilities for flying than Britain had available, but also because her geographical position removed her as far as possible



A CORVETTE

from the threat of enemy bombers. Canada also undertook to provide eighty per cent of the recruits, about one-tenth of whom came in the first years of the war from the United States. From the start the project grew rapidly; but, following the disasters of 1940, it was enlarged and forced to completion with the utmost speed. In less than two years, six months earlier than expected, the plan was in full operation with ninety-three schools and about one hundred air fields. It had become Canada's greatest single war enterprise, and gave every promise of being a major factor in determining the course of the conflict.

Meanwhile Canadian airmen were fighting on widely scattered fronts all the way from the Tropics to the Arctic circle. Large numbers attached to British squadrons fought over Britain, Europe, the Mediterranean areas and Russia; and, in addition, at least



seventeen R.C.A.F. squadrons were in action overseas by the spring of 1942. Canadian pilots, many of them veterans of Canada's northern air lines and most of them not attached to the Air Force, also had a share in one of the war's modern miracles—the transatlantic bomber ferry. Within two years of the war's beginning, hundreds of American built bombers were being flown as a matter of course from Newfoundland to the British Isles. Nothing could more startlingly illustrate the developments in transportation which turned the conflict into a global war.



*(Associated Screen News, Montreal)*

Bombers at a Newfoundland airport ready to take off for England.

On the home front, Canada also mobilized her resources of men and materials. Being much more highly industrialized in 1939 than in 1914, she was expected from the beginning to contribute industrially far more than in the First World War. Not until after Dunkirk, however, was the full importance of Canadian industry realized. The fall of France showed that this war, contrary to many prophecies, was a contest of machines and speed in which offence outstripped defence. Britain and the other nations of the Commonwealth were almost wholly unprepared for this new type of warfare. Tanks, aeroplanes, and a thousand other articles of mechanized equipment were needed immediately. From this point began a transformation which within two years completely geared Canadian industry to the war effort. Thousands of women went into factories. New factories were built and old ones were turned to war purposes. Tanks, aeroplanes, guns, munitions, and a multitude of other articles were produced in a volume unprecedented

in the country's history. On East and West Coasts and in the Great Lakes ports, a ship-building programme was undertaken to produce hundreds of vessels of all sizes from motor torpedo boats to large freighters. The corvette, seaworthy, fast, and well armed, was the special answer of Canada's ship yards to Hitler's submarine threat.

Other parts of Canadian life were gradually but no less surely tied to the war effort. Agriculture, as in the First World War, took up the essential task of meeting Britain's requirements of food. Canadian scientists, schools, and universities turned to problems of re-



CANADIAN WAR SAVINGS STAMPS

search and the training of men in a conflict which demanded, as never before, every ounce of scientific skill and mechanical ability. Canadian finance was mobilized completely to meet an enormously increased burden. Its resources were far greater than in 1914; and, through the Bank of Canada, which had been established in 1935, it was much better organized to meet the emergency of war. By the summer of 1941 Canadians, through taxes and war loans, were contributing forty per cent of their income to war purposes.

The changes brought by the war were accompanied, as in every country, by a great increase in national planning and by an enormous extension of the powers of the government in business and in the daily life of the people. One of the principal government agencies established at the beginning of the war was the War Time Prices and Trade Board, whose duty it was to regulate the supply of goods, other than war goods, and to prevent an unreasonable rise in prices which would soon upset the whole economic life of the country. As the conflict lengthened, the effects of the war

steadily increased. In 1942 income taxes were again sharply raised, rationing was begun, and compulsory savings were introduced. Canadians realized, however, that heavy though their burden might be, it was little compared to the sacrifices imposed on millions of people in less fortunate lands.

**Britain-Canada-The United States.** On August 18, 1940, a holiday crowd curiously watched a railway car which had been drawn to a siding on the bank of the St. Lawrence at Ogdensburg, N.Y. They knew that President Roosevelt and Premier King were meeting in it, but not until afternoon, when newspaper men were handed a brief statement, was it realized that an event of importance had taken place. In five short sentences Canada and the United States announced that they were creating immediately a Permanent

Joint Board of Defence, and by so doing they declared to the world their determination to co-operate fully in "the defence of the north half of the Western Hemisphere."

The Ogdensburg Agreement marked a new stage not only in the relations of Canada and the United States but in the relations of the United States with the British Commonwealth. For the first time in her history the United States had signed a permanent military agreement with a member of the Commonwealth, and had recognized Canada as her

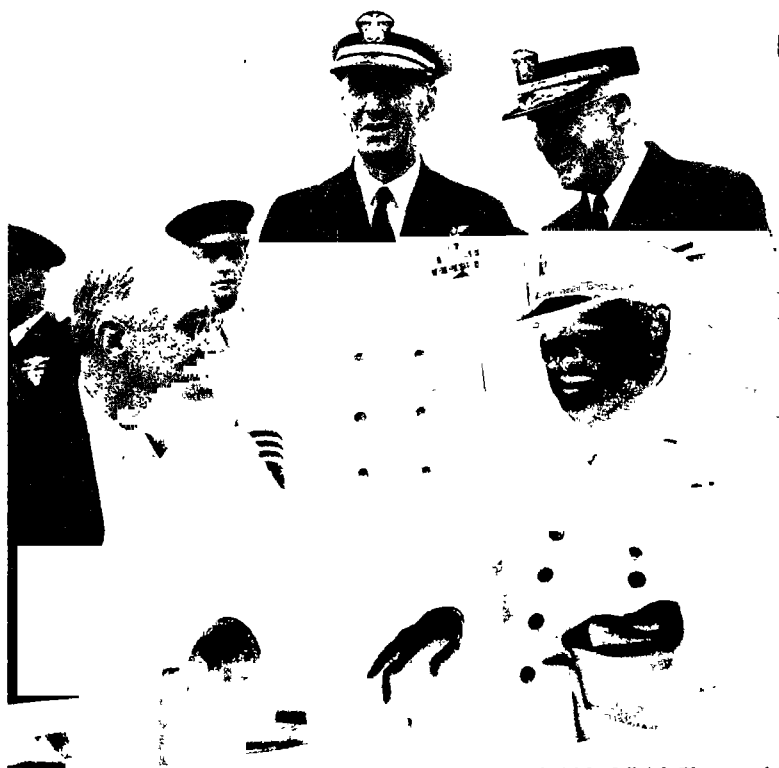
"HOLD YOUR BREATH"



This cartoon, printed in March 1941 when the Lease-Lend Act was passed, shows John Bull at the home plate catching the ball "Aid to Britain", which Uncle Sam has thrown just in time to stop Hitler's wild dash. The prevailing opinion in the United States in the spring of 1941 still was that the United States should go no further in the war than providing aid to Britain.

closest friend and associate. For the first time Canada, in turn, had shown that she was bound to join with her neighbour in defence of the common continent, while she was free also to stand by other British nations overseas.

The new understanding had been long in growing, but the war hastened it as nothing else could have done. When France fell, American nations were shocked into a sense of peril as never before in their history. The French fleet seemed to lie within Hitler's grasp. Britain alone stood in Germany's path. If Britain



*(British Official Photograph)*

President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at the  
Atlantic Conference, August 1941.

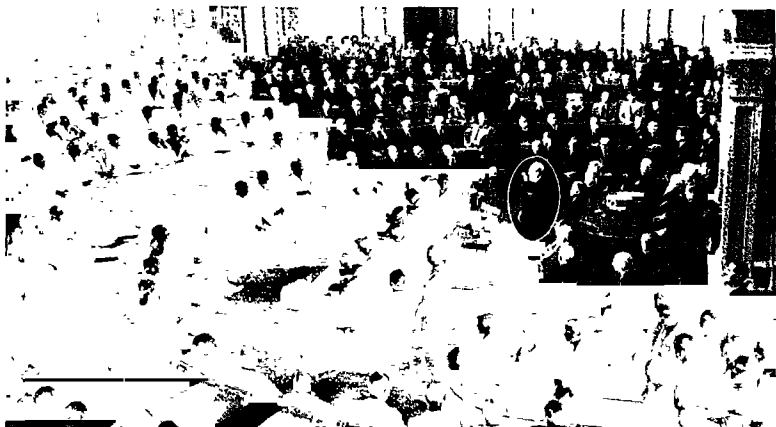
were crushed and the British fleet lost control of the sea, Iceland, Greenland, and Africa's west coast would be stepping stones by which an invasion could be launched into the Western Hemisphere. Germany's fantastic dream of dominating the world became for the first time a stark possibility. So great was the danger that many people in the United States felt that Britain's cause was hopeless; that the United States should give up any idea of helping her, and should concentrate all efforts on the defence of the American continents. President Roosevelt was convinced, however, that the United States, for its own defence, should support Britain while at the same time it rushed the defences of North America to completion. The example of Canada was a powerful argument in favour of this view.

To the double policy of aiding Britain and defending America, the Ogdensburg Agreement was essential, and through it Canada played a vital part in the forces which were rapidly drawing the United States and the British Commonwealth into fuller co-operation. It fitted in with Canada's conviction from the beginning of the war, that Britain and the British fleet were America's first line of defence.

Events were moving swiftly. The Battle of Britain was raging, and in both Atlantic and Pacific there was need of haste. Two weeks after Ogdensburg, an agreement was announced by which the United States turned over to Britain fifty destroyers, built during the First World War and now sorely needed by the British navy, while Britain leased to the United States for ninety-nine years eight naval and air bases stretching from British Guiana to Newfoundland. Other preparations went speedily forward. Bases were established by the United States in Greenland; Iceland was garrisoned by troops from Britain, Canada, and the United States; and the Permanent Joint Board of Defence rushed the plans for a network of air and naval bases which would make the northern half of the continent impregnable.

Meanwhile, aid to Britain was mounting as supplies were poured from Canada across the North Atlantic; and in March, 1941, with the Battle of the Atlantic at its height, another great step forward was taken by the United States when the Lease-Lend Act was

passed. By this Act the previous policy of the United States, which had prevented the sending of war supplies to countries engaged in war, was radically altered so that supplies could not only be sent in unlimited quantities but also could be paid for by special financial arrangements made by the American government. At the same time, President Roosevelt defied Germany by declaring that these goods would be delivered and that the life line of the North



*(British Information Services)*

Prime Minister Churchill addressing the Congress of the United States during his historic visit to Washington in December 1941, just after the United States had entered the Second World War.

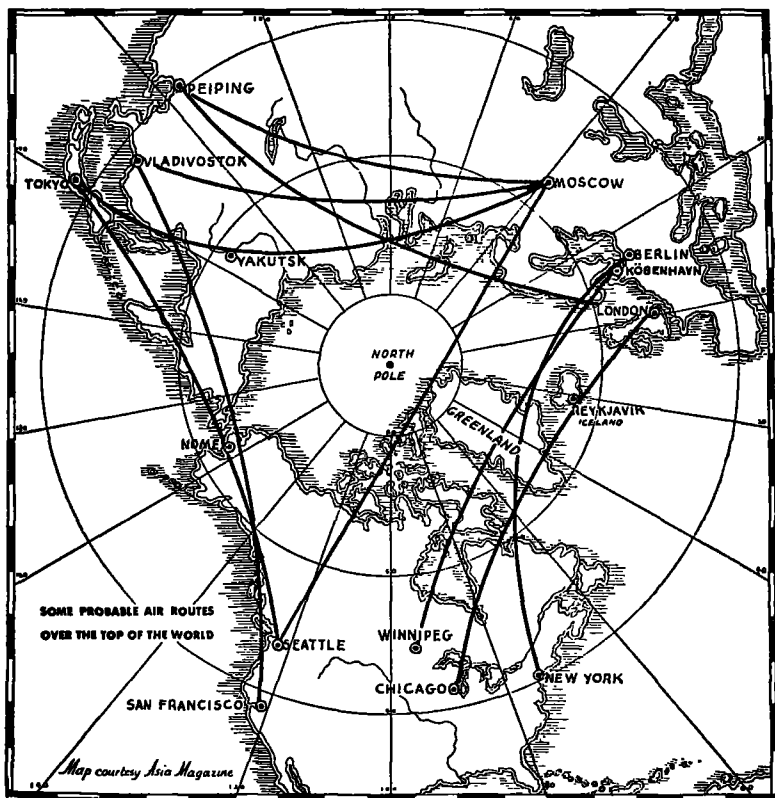
Atlantic would be kept open. A month after the Lend-Lease Act, Canada and the United States, in the Hyde Park Declaration, announced that they were making arrangements to co-operate fully in the production of defence materials.

The next events, like the scenes in the climax of a great drama were full of mounting interest. In August of 1941, just a year after the Ogdensburg Agreement, Churchill and Roosevelt met at a point "somewhere" off the east coast of Canada, and drew up a general statement of the aims of Britain and the United States. This Atlantic Charter, as it has been appropriately called, declared that peoples of all nations should have the right to choose their own forms of government and live without fear within their own



the United States as to whether the conflict was a world war, was swept away by Japan's treachery. Two weeks later Churchill came to Washington and then to Ottawa for the discussion of plans which, in the words of the Atlantic Charter, would bring "the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny."

**Canada in the Post-War World.** It is no part of a book such as this to indulge in prophecy, and yet one cannot but feel that the vivid panorama of Canadian history points forward as well as back.



certain cases have been suspended by the war. The map on the right, from the magazine *ASIA*, suggests some long distance air routes in the future when Arctic flying is more fully developed. Both maps indicate Canada's important relation to the world's great land masses.



For Canada the road to nationhood has been long and difficult. Geographical obstacles and differences of race have beset it at every turn. At no time has unity seemed sure; at some points, it has seemed impossible. Nevertheless, through every discouragement, the dream of a Canadian nation has persisted, and grown stronger.

Canada has come to nationhood in one of the crucial periods of history. A new world order is in the making, and she will share in its creation. Her place on the world's air routes and among its great land masses gives her a position of strategic importance. But it is not only through geography that she may play her part. As a country with two main groups, French and English, and representatives also from many other lands, she may be able to contribute something in solving the world's problems of language and race which are becoming increasingly difficult. And, finally, as a nation which has grown up in a family of nations encircling the globe, she can help in realizing the ideal of international co-operation toward which, with infinite difficulty, the world is today struggling.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

The best reading material for this chapter is to be found in pamphlets, magazines and newspapers, too numerous to be listed here. The Canadian Geographical Journal has many excellent articles, all well illustrated.



*I would end with a special word of greeting to those of my listeners who are young. It is true—and I deplore it deeply—that the skies are overcast in more than one quarter at the present time. Do not on that account lose heart. Life is a great adventure, and every one of you can be a pioneer, blazing by thought and service a trail to better things. Hold fast to all that is just and of good report in the heritage which your fathers have left to you, but strive also to improve and equalize that heritage for all men and women in the years to come. Remember, too, that the key to all true progress lies in faith, hope, and love. May God give you their support, and may God help them to prevail.*

*From the address broadcast by His Majesty  
King George VI at Winnipeg on  
May 24, 1939.*

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