



**Unfamiliar
History:
Canada @ 150**

**From the files of
Earle Gray**

Unfamiliar history

Canada @ 150

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To Desmond Morton,
for encouragment and inspiration.

*“The night is far spent, the day is at hand...
let us put on the armour of light.”*
King James Bible, Romans xiii:12.

Author's books

Impact of Oil: Developing Canada's Oil Resources.

The Great Canadian Oil Patch.

The Great Uranium Cartel.

Free Trade, Free Canada (editor, lead contributor.)

Wildcatters: The Story of Pacific Petroleums and Westcoast Transmission.

Super Pipe.

Forty Years in the Public Interest: A History of the National Energy Board.

How to Make a Dynamite Speech.

The Great Canadian Oil Patch, second edition. The Petroleum Era from Birth to Peak.

Ontario's Petroleum Legacy; The birth, evolution and challenges of a global industry.

About Canada: "My God, this is a great country,"

Anthologies. A little book about Love. A little book about friends. A little book about life.

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PREFACE

Is there anywhere on the face of the earth a country as fortunate as Canada?

As we celebrate our country's 150th anniversary, it hardly seems feasible. Europe is riven by economic distress, xenophobia, racial and ethnic tensions, and the rise of autocratic governments—echoes of conditions that gave rise to fascism in the 1930s. The Middle East is awash with the blood of genocide. Russia is under the heels of a tyrant, guilty of war crimes in arming his ally Bashar al-Assad in the slaughter of Syria. Refugees are streaming out of Africa, impelled by hunger from global-warming drought, petty tyrants and assorted terrorists. China, with its its oppressive dictatorship, will soon be the world's largest and most powerful economy.

“Nationalism is on the march across the Western World, feeding on the terrors it seeks to inflame,” J.K. Rowling wrote in a fit of non-fiction, on the eve of this year's U.S. election of a president she calls “a man who is fascist in all but name.”¹ Deep animosities and too many voters too ready to believe incredulous lies and fake news such as the claim that Hillary Clinton “ran a child sex ring out of a pizza parlour,” add to factors poisoning American democracy.

Canada stands out as one of the few islands of vibrant democracy. It is “today the most successful pluralist society on the face of the globe,” claims Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, spiritual leader and co-founder, in partnership with the Government of Canada, of the Ottawa-based Global Centre for Pluralism.

We have much to celebrate—but no room for complacency and enough cause for humility. We have a history to be proud of but we must also acknowledge the bigotry, racism, and other flaws that have blotted some of it. Our democratic institutions are as robust as the best in the world and we are a peaceful and generous people—but we cannot be blind to stains of bigotry, racism, greed, and ruthlessness.

A word about Unfamiliar History. It is really not a proper history. It is an assemblage of items I've collected over decades—most of which I've annotated—and items I've written during a writing life that spans more than six-and-half decades. It does not completely ignore a major section of my corpus, when I was editor of Canada's leading petroleum industry trade journal, although the great bulk of it comes from elsewhere. Some of it comes from columns I wrote for the Lindsay *Daily Post*, now deceased, as are so many small town newspapers.

Selected items offer a few eclectic and totally random glimpses into the life and times of our Confederation. I hope they prove of at least passing interest to anyone with at least a passing interest in our past, students and teachers, and even historians who might find some slivers of additional insight.

A word about style. Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other aspects of style have all changed over the years. Phrases have become single words: business men are now businessmen in the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, and while business women were virtually unknown 150 years ago, today we benefit greatly from the rising prominence of Canada's businesswomen.

The major issue of style involves the “or” versus “our”

spelling, as in color or colour. John A. Macdonald despised the “or” spelling as an American abomination. Some agreed with him; many did not. Government, the business world, and academic publishers favoured the “our” spelling. Almost every newspaper and most periodicals favoured “or” spelling. The oldest dictionary I still have is the *Dictionary of Canadian English*, published in 1967 by W.J. Gage Limited, of which Professor W.S. Avis of the Royal Military College was senior editor. It gave preference to the “or” spelling. The 1992 edition of *The Canadian Press Stylebook*, a biblical authority in the world of journalism, contained a lengthy and spirited defence of the “or” spelling. The 1993 edition abruptly adopted the “our” spelling. With much initial grumbling by journalists, the Oxford preference now prevails wherever English words are written in Canada.

I mention all this for two reasons. First as a matter of interesting Canadian historical trivia. I also mention these style aspects to explain why you might find such variations as travelled and traveled, theater and theatre, businessmen and business men in *Unfamiliar History*. In any item I’ve quoted, or reprinted, the varying styles of the different source have been retained. In anything I’ve written, or in my annotations, I’ve followed the Canadian Oxford style. I’ve even grown to favour it.

A. Earle Gray

Lindsay, Ontario, January, 2017

Endnotes

1 J.K. Rowling, “On Monsters, Villains and the UK Referendum.” http://mobile.jkrowling.com/en_US/timeline/on-monsters-villains-and-the-EU-referendum

Darwin's missing link discovered in Ontario



Portrait by George Richmond (1809-18967), Wikimedia Commons.

If his theory of evolution was true, the world must have “swarmed with living creatures” more than 540 million years ago, Charles Darwin wrote. But lack of evidence of early life remained the missing link in Darwin’s theory for more than 100 years, until discovered in Ontario on the shores of Lake Superior.

A discussion of fossil fuels should start with a discussion of fossils. To begin at the beginning, we need to go back billions of years in search of the missing fossils in Darwin’s theory of evolution. When Charles Dar-

Excerpt from my current work in progress, *Fossil Fire: A social history of the fuels that imperil.*

win published *On the Origin of Species, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* on November 24, 1859 it became an instant bestseller. It also triggered a social upheaval, roiling Christendom ever since. Yet even Darwin acknowledged the missing fossils threatened the credibility of his theory. It took 95 years to find the first recognized missing fossils—at a remote site in Ontario on the northern shore of Lake Superior—and

Darwin was tormented by the challenge to religious belief posed by his theory. He referred to himself as “the Devil’s Chaplain” and said talking about it “felt like confessing to a murder.”

another decade before the discovery was widely confirmed and acknowledged.

At age 22, Darwin clambered aboard *HMS Beagle* at London for a five-year voyage around the world. An embryonic naturalist, he was charged with exploring the flora, fauna and geology of the lesser-known coastal regions of the world, most notably South America, the islands of the Pacific, and, famously, the Galapagos Archipelago. The *Beagle*’s captain, 25-year-old Robert

FitzRoy, was an ardent Christian fundamentalist who hoped the expedition would conclusively confirm the Biblical account of creation. After the voyage, and for the rest of his life FitzRoy was one of the most strident and persistent critics of Darwin and his theory.

Darwin arrived home on the *Beagle* with new botanical and geological insights, including a breakthrough theory on the formation of coral reef atolls, and a bounty of natural specimens—birds, plants, animals, and fossils, among others. Twenty-three more years would elapse before he would publish *On the Origin*. He spent several years sorting and examining his collection, developing his theory of evolution, and penning the first of six drafts of his opus. But for most of the 23 years since his return from the Galapagos, he kept his manuscript under lock and key.

Darwin knew the distress and fury his book would create among millions of devout Christians to whom the Biblical account of creation was sacred. Even most naturalists believed animal life, humans in particular, first appeared on Earth fully developed. Not that the idea of evolution was entirely new; several writers had already thought of it, including his grandfather Erasmus. Edinburgh publisher Robert Chambers, carefully hiding behind an anonymously published book, had suggested that humans were evolved from apes.

Chambers' book caused fury enough. The manuscript that Darwin kept under lock and key would be far more explosive. His book would provide the first fully developed and well-documented theory of evolution, supported by a plethora of scientific evidence. Darwin was "tormented" by the upheaval his idea would create, accord-

ing to author Bill Bryson, since his wife was a devout Christian believer. Darwin “referred to himself as ‘the Devil’s Chaplain,’ and said that disclosing his theory ‘felt like confessing a murder.’”²

Another reason for Darwin’s hesitation in publishing his theory may have been the missing fossils. For at least 2,500 years, people have collected and written about animal fossils, from giant reptiles to the smallest fossilized seashells. All the known fossils found by 1859

***Lack of fossils more than
half a billion years old
“may be truly argued against”
his theory, Darwin admitted.***

once existed as fully developed organisms, whether plants, clams, dinosaurs, or apes. Such complex life forms, Darwin argued, evolved from very simple organisms. The core of Darwin’s theory is that life evolved from primitive, much less developed organisms. Darwin insisted that ancient oceans had once been alive with early, primitive ancestors. But where was the evidence?

Darwin faced the problem in his first 1859 edition of *On the Origin*, and more explicitly in his subsequent five editions:

“If the theory [of evolution] be true, it is indisputable that before the lowest Cambrian stratum was deposit-

ed... the world swarmed with living creatures. To the question why we do not find rich fossiliferous deposits belonging to these earliest periods I can give no satisfactory answer. The case at present must remain inexplicable, and may be truly urged as a valid argument against the views here entertained.”

All known fossils when Darwin wrote came from little more than one-tenth of the Earth’s history. The oldest came from the Cambrian, a brief period from about 540 million to 485 million years ago, marked by the sudden appearance of a wide-ranging great number of marine critters, living on, in, or swimming above shallow beds of the seas. The missing fossils of earlier forms would apparently have to be discovered somewhere in the rocks of the first four billion years of Earth preceding the Cambrian, in the rocks of the Precambrian eon. The search was already underway.

Looking for Precambrian life

The century-long search for Darwin’s answer brims with wrong turns, mistakes, and disputes. One of the first in the field was Scottish-born John William Dawson (1820-1899), a protégé of Charles Lyell, the most famous geologist of his time. Dawson himself later became recognized as one of the world’s leading geologists and scientists, serving as principal of Montreal’s McGill University, the only person to have served terms as president of the Royal Society of Canada, the Geological Society of America, the American Association for the Advancement of Society, and its British counterpart. He was a devout Presbyterian and, like FitzRoy, a staunch believer in the Biblical account of creation. He saw no contradiction between the possibility of Precambrian life and his reli-

gious beliefs, and no reason to suppose any Precambrian life would be the progenitor of a more evolved form of life. He believed simple forms of life may have existed from earliest times, but under the Biblical account of creation, they could not change or evolve.

From the Banks of the Ottawa River, Dawson collected and examined specimens of limestone rock, later determined to be 1.1 billion years old.³ He concluded the unusual green and white thin markings were the first discovered Precambrian fossils, a claim immediately disputed. Dawson stuck to his guns, and expounded his claim in an 1875 book, *The Dawn of Life; Being the History of the Oldest Known Fossil Remains, and their Relations to Geological Time and to the Development of the Animal Kingdom*. Dawson vigorously defended his claim to his dying day, but he was mistaken. “Dawson’s famous and now infamous ‘dawn animal’ was nothing more than a curiously layered mineral deposit formed when hot molten rocks intruded into Laurentian limestone,” J. William Schopf writes in *Cradle of Life*, his first-hand account of the study of Precambrian life.⁴

On the other hand, Charles Doolittle Walcott (1850-1927), “Founder of Precambrian Paleobiology,”⁵ really did find Precambrian fossils, but his discovery was dismissed and ignored for more than half a century. A high school dropout and largely self-educated “rock hound,” Walcott pursued his passion for finding and studying fossils to become the most acclaimed American geologist of his time. He served variously as director of the U.S. Geological Survey, secretary of the Carnegie and Smithsonian Institutions, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the

National Academy of Science, and science advisor to President Theodore Roosevelt. Walcott remains the reputed discoverer, and first major collector, of “the world’s most important animals fossils,”⁶ found high in the Canadian Rockies.

In 1883, Walcott found algae fossils in exposed Cambrian rocks in the Grand Canyon, and in the Montana mountains. Sixteen years later he made a more startling find, also in the Grand Canyon, of small animal fossils in the much older “Precambrian carbon-rich shales... the first true cellularly preserved Precambrian organisms ever recorded.”⁷ The skeptics were quick to pounce. The authenticity of the Precambrian fossils was disputed four years after Walcott’s death, with seeming finality, by Sir Albert Charles Seward of Cambridge University, considered the final authority on the matter. “We can hardly expect to find in Precambrian rocks any actual proof of the existence of bacteria,” Seward wrote in 1931.⁸ Two decades later, it would be up to geologist Stanley A. Taylor and his associates, to prove Seward wrong.

The trail to Schreiber

Stanley Tyler discovered the first fully formed and acknowledged Precambrian fossils—microscopic algae and fungi bacteria—while on a Sunday fishing trip in August 1953. A mineral, or “hard rock,” geologist with the University of Wisconsin, Tyler was funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation to study the geology of a 500-kilometre stretch of Gunflint chert rock, so-labelled because it was once used to spark the fire of ancient flintlock guns. The iron-bearing Gunflint stretched from then active iron mines in northern Minnesota, up 175

kilometres into Ontario along the north shore of Lake Superior to Thunder Bay, with isolated remnants farther east for another 100 kilometres, to the lake shore near the small town of Schreiber, where the “best preserved”⁹ fossils lay waiting.

For his fishing trip, Tyler rented a dingy with an outboard motor, as recounted by Schopf in *Cradle of Life*.¹⁰ As he cast his line near the shore at Schreiber Beach, the jet-black rock of the Gunflint outcrop and the large stromatolites were clearly visible. Tyler scrambled ashore for a closer look. The rock was certainly Gunflint chert but not the red colour that would indicate the presence of iron. The stromatolites interested him, but were they as old as this Precambrian rock? He picked up a few specimens to add to the collection of Gunflint rocks he would soon take back to Madison and the University of Minnesota after completing his season’s fieldwork.

In his Madison laboratory, Tyler used a high-powered microscope to examine his sliced, paper-thin stromatolite samples. He saw that this section of rock somehow escaped millions of years of pressure and heat to remain close to its original condition when laid down as sediment on an ancient ocean bed, thereby “providing a glimpse through the Precambrian metamorphic veil,” as Tyler put it.¹¹ What really astounded Tyler was the presence of tens of thousands of microscopic, dark brown networks that looked like fossils—two-billion-year-old organic fossils. The fossils contained thin filament strands, bulb-shaped at one end and star-shaped at the other.

As a mineralogist, Tyler needed some expert advice from a paleobotanist. He hooked up with Elso Barghoorn at

Harvard University. Tyler and Barghoorn returned to collect more samples at several locations near Schreiber. Barghoorn confirmed these were, indeed, fossils of organisms that lived some two billion years ago. These were primitive blue-green algae, “the oldest structurally preserved organisms... which have yet been discovered in Precambrian sediments,” they wrote in a “preliminary statement” of their findings. As such, they said the fossils were “of great interest in the evolutionary scheme of primitive life.”¹² The world of science shrugged and dismissed them: too much had already been heard about supposed Precambrian fossils. Nothing more would be said about the Schreiber fossils for the next 11 years.

Tyler and Barghoorn prepared a draft for a much more detailed and longer article about their Precambrian fossils. But, preoccupied with one thing or another, they left the draft manuscript, much like Darwin’s *On The Origin of Species*, sitting idle in a desk draw for six years. In 1963, eight months shy of the tenth anniversary of his discovery at Schreiber, Tyler unexpectedly died at age 57. That year 21-year-old Bill Schopf, an honours graduate of tiny Oberlin College in Ohio, with a degree in geology and a burning ambition to find out more about the mysterious life of the Precambrian, entered Harvard as Elso Barghoorn’s student and assistant.

Barghoorn and his new assistant were rushed into reviving the idle manuscript by another geologist, Preston Cloud, head of the Department of Geology at Tyler’s alma mater, the University of Minnesota. In their 1954 preliminary statement in *Science*, Tyler and Barghoorn intentionally omitted a precise location of the Precambrian

fossil bed, other than marking it “near” Schreiber. Their statement even misspelled the name of the town as “Schrieber.” Cloud, however, managed to find the site, and spent three days carefully examining the outcrop. Now he was about to publish a detailed article in *Science* about what Tyler and Barghoorn had found and first examined a decade earlier. Barghoorn and Schopf spent a frantic two weeks preparing the draft manuscript and photos of the fossils for publication in *Science*, in advance of the Cloud article that threatened to steal the recognition of Barghoorn’s and Tyler’s earlier ground-breaking work.

“Micro-organisms from the Gunflint Chert,”¹³ by Elso S. Barghoorn and Stanley A. Tyler was published in 1965 in *Science*, a 10,000-word, 15-page article, with a substantial selection of the enlarged photos. They reiterated earlier claims of their preliminary statement. “These structurally preserved Precambrian fossils from Ontario,” they wrote, “are the most ancient organisms known... of unusual interest in the study of the history of life.” This time the world of science sat up. With the evidence in this article, there could no longer be any doubt about the existence of Precambrian life, and, moreover, life much older than that of the real but unacknowledged Precambrian fossils found earlier in the Grand Canyon and elsewhere by Walcott, as well as possible findings by others. “The Barghoorn-Tyler paper is a classic,” Schopf wrote 40 years later. “For all time it will probably stand as the most important article ever written in the field.”¹⁴

Still older Precambrian fossils were later found, particularly in Australia where Schopf played a leading role

in the discovery and evaluation of larger stromatolites with their algae and fungi fossils—1.5 billion years older, and within one billion years of the birth of Earth. Yet the little-known, isolated and restricted area in the Schreiber Channel Provincial Nature Reserve where the outcrop of Gunflint cherts slopes into the placid blue water of Lake Superior is where the seeds for all life on Earth today were first found. It is difficult to envision a more historic world site than this neglected piece of Precambrian rock, in this isolated corner of Ontario.

Endnotes)

²Bill Bryson. *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2003, p.388.

³William J. Schopf. *Cradle of Life: The Discovery of the Earth's Earliest Fossils*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 19.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶Stephen J. Gould. *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989, p. 23.

⁷Schopf. pp. 27-28.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

⁹Stanley A. Tyler and Elso S. Barghoorn. "Occurrence of Structurally Preserved Plants in Pre-Cambrian Rocks of the Canadian Shield. *Science*, New Series, Vol. 119, No. 3096 (Apr. 30, 1954), pp. 606-608. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1682018>. Accessed: 02/03.2014.

¹⁰Schopf. p. 37.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹²*Ibid*, p.606.

¹³Barghoorn and Tyler.

"Microorganisms from the Gunflint Chert." *Science*, New Series, Vol. 147, No.3658, Feb. 5, 1965, pp 563-577. <http://jstor.org/stable/171562>. Accessed March 2, 2014.

¹⁴Schopf. p. 59.

— Canada @ 150 —

Wolfe loses Canada on Plains of Abraham



Richard Short. Library and Archives Canada C-000357.

Devastation of Quebec by Wolfe's artillery during the siege of 1759.

British General James Wolfe is widely proclaimed to have cast the destiny of Canada with the defeat of Louis-Joseph Montcalm and the French on the Plains of Abraham, September 13, 1759. Not so. The destiny not only of Canada but North America was cast on the far side of the Atlantic, in a pair of events that many histories have ignored or overlooked.

With periodic outbreaks of peace, the French and English began fighting each other for control of North America almost as soon as their first settlers landed. The shooting started in 1613 when Virginia Company sea

Excerpt from my book, About Canada, Civil Sector Press, Toronto, 2012.

captain Samuel Argall and Virginia colonials attacked the French Jesuit Mission on the Île Monte Désert, off the northern end of Maine. In a second attack that year, Argall sacked every building in Port Royal—seven years after the first French settlers arrived there; six years after the first English settled at Jamestown; five years after the French at Quebec.

Now, 141 years later, the stage is set for the final conflict.

It is 1754, and the French claim the most territory. New France sprawls over the heart and length of the continent, from Labrador and the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico. It is home for possibly 80,000 people: half of them in Canada, straddling either side of the St. Lawrence for a distance of 400 kilometres; the rest in Acadia, mostly present day New Brunswick; and in Louisiana with its New Orleans. The English have far more people, 1.2 million in colonies on the Atlantic seaboard between Acadia and Spanish Florida.

“A volley fired by a young Virginian in the backwoods of America, set the world on fire,” as Horace Walpole noticed. The young Virginian was 22-year-old militia captain George Washington. He came to the Ohio Valley on behalf of land speculators and their Ohio Company, which had been granted 200,000 acres, nominally by generous King George II, in territory the French claimed lay within their New France. To protect their fur traders and prospective settlers, the Virginians built a small fort at what is now Pittsburgh. The French sent troops to stop the English trading with the Indians and establish settlements. Washington was dispatched with a small troop and orders to restrain French obstruction, “and

in case of resistance to make prisoners of or kill and destroy them.” At daybreak on May 28, the future U.S. president, his troops, and a few warriors swept down on a camp of 31 sleeping Canadian militia, killing 10.

Two years of undeclared war in North America had started. This was the first phase of the global Seven Years’ War that pitted England and its allies against France and its allies. By the time it was over, 1.4 million people were killed in fighting in North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, India, and the West Indies. Winston Churchill called it the first world war.

England and France sent shiploads of soldiers across the Atlantic to join the fight in North America. The certain losers were the First Nations. Mohawk Chief Hendrick told a conference of colonial governors at Albany:

The Governor of Virginia and the Governor of Canada are both quarrelling about land which belongs to us, and such a quarrel as this may end in our destruction: they fight who shall have the land.

The Europeans took no heed.

We need not detail all the North American battles—Oswego, Fort William Henry, Monongahela, Ticonderoga, Fort Frontenac (Kingston), Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh), and more—before the shooting stopped, except to briefly note two. At the instigation of New England land speculator, the British captured what remained of French Acadia (i.e., present day New Brunswick) and began the historic expulsion of more than 11,000 Acadians to distant lands. In 1758, the British captured Louisbourg,

the French fortress on Cape Breton Island that guarded the St. Lawrence gateway to Canada. James Wolfe was in the thick of that action, leading the Fraser Highlanders. Wolfe and the Highlanders sailed the next year for what historian D. Peter Macleod has called, “The battle that would decide the fate of Canada and the French and British Empires in North America.”

Quebec, the key to New France, might have fallen without a shot if a British fleet had acted more promptly to cut off a daring exploit by a Canadian butcher.

“We could perish from lack of food without firing a shot,” Louis-Joseph Montcalm, New France’s military leader warned in early 1759 as Quebec prepared for an anticipated British invasion. Food shortages seemed a graver threat than the British. Heavy rains and cold weather had yielded poor crops. There was not enough food to feed Quebec’s civilians and armed forces until more might come in the summer from the more fertile fields of Montreal, 130 kilometres upstream. Pierre de Vaudreuil, the first Canadian-born governor of New France, asked France for a large shipment of provisions and arms. France was too preoccupied with the British navy, on the other side of the Atlantic, to offer much help.

Joseph-Michel Cadet secured the needed provisions in France, and chartered a private fleet of supply ships and two armed frigates to bring them to Quebec. Cadet learned the butcher trade from his uncle; started a butcher shop, added wheat, flour, peas, and biscuits to his business; won a nine-year contract as purveyor general of Canada. With a string of warehouses and 4,000 employees, he was possibly the wealthiest man in New France, and seemingly undeterred by any risk.

While Cadet was organizing his food convoy, British Rear Admiral Philip Durell was ordered to sail with his fleet, harboured at Halifax, to blockade the St. Lawrence as soon as the breakup of ice permitted. Wolfe was less than pleased when he learned that Durell would be in charge of the blockade, describing the admiral as “vastly unequal to the weight of the business.”

In late March, Durell sent small ships to survey ice conditions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. By April 8, his warships were ready to sail. Ostensibly because of ice conditions and bad weather, it was a month later, May 5, before Durell and his fleet set sail from Halifax.

Too late!

By the time Durell’s fleet was in position to block the river, Cadet’s navy had delivered their provisions to Quebec. The French navy came through with at least token support: one supply ship and two frigates. With short rations, Quebec had enough food to last until August. Food remained on short rations and lack of supplies a constant threat, but Cadet overcame formidable obstacles to keep Quebec on life support.

The fortress city

For a fortified city, a more impregnable site than Quebec is difficult to imagine. It perches at the apex of a 15-kilometre plateau, edged by steep banks that rise 50 to 90 metres from three rivers: the mighty St. Lawrence, along the length of the plateau, narrowed at Quebec to little more than two kilometres; the smaller St. Charles to the north and Cap Rouge to the south. Only the western edge of the city lacked the barrier of a steep bank. In its place was the wall, six metres of solid stone and mortar, 12 metres high, stretching

across the plateau. Upper Quebec, housing most of the city, its army, its administrative and business buildings, its splendid cathedral, looks down on Lower Quebec, hugging a narrow shoreline.

Across the St. Charles River the Beauport Flats shoreline stretches invitingly for 10 kilometres. Montcalm is convinced that the Beauport shore is “the only place where the enemy can, and must, make their landing.” He has built his defence here: entrenchments for thousands of soldiers backed by artillery batteries, well positioned to fire muskets and cannons on any force foolhardy enough to try a landing. He dismissed the possibility of an attack landing against the steep banks upstream from the city. “We don’t have to believe that the enemy has wings that allow him to cross [the river], disembark, and climb over the city walls,” he assures Governor Pierre Vaudreuil. Throughout the coming three-month siege, few of Montcalm’s forces guard 60 kilometres of upstream river bank; most remain entrenched along the Beauport Flats, with a garrison behind the city wall, in case an enemy should ever reach that far. Montcalm has made his first mistake.

The St. Lawrence south shore, opposite Quebec, is left unguarded. Montcalm did not believe the British could bombard the city from a distance of close to two kilometres. Another mistake.

With tricky navigation in the narrowed St. Lawrence opposite Quebec, planted with false navigation aids, Montcalm felt confident that no large British warships could get upstream past the city, between Quebec and its vital food supplies from Montreal, and to where a large cache of guns and ammunition had

been stockpiled for safe keeping. Yet another miscalculation.

The armies

There were more armed forces than unarmed civilians in Canada at the start of the prolonged conquest: 48,000 soldiers and sailors, as estimated by the National Battlefields Commission, close to double the number of children, old folks, men, and women.

Montcalm had an armed force of about 19,000, double Wolfe's 9,000 troops, although estimates of Montcalm's forces vary significantly. The British also had 20,000 sailors aboard 320 large and small ships. More than half of Montcalm's forces were part-time soldiers, poorly trained and ill equipped. Wolfe's troops were full-time professionals, well equipped, tightly disciplined, and endlessly trained and drilled whenever not fighting.

Montcalm had about 6,000 full-time armed forces: 2,400 regular troops from France; 2,000 land-based navy artillery and infantry; 1,000 or more Troupes de la Marine. Montcalm also had 11,000 part-time militia soldiers and as many as 1,800 First Nations warriors. Montcalm had no faith in the effectiveness of the militia, and not much more in the incongruously named "Troops of the Navy." They had long since ceased to be an active party of any navy; they were land-based companies of full-time guerrilla and bush fighters, led by Canadian-born officers and largely staffed by Canadiens. Despite Montcalm's misgivings, they were skilled and highly effective in ambushing and harassing the flanks of British armies.

Montcalm's militia supposedly embraced every able-bodied male civilian in Canada between ages 16 and

60. But if the Battlefield Commission's estimate of 11,000 is near the mark, the ranks most likely included younger teenagers and perhaps some older than 60.

The English, who formed the bulk of Wolfe's troops, likely included many who were there through "sheer necessity." Gloucestershire was one of five "shires" from which the English troops were recruited. Three years earlier, Wolfe had been sent to Gloucester to quell rioting weavers. He hoped, he wrote, to secure "a good recruiting party, for the people are so oppressed, so poor and so wretched, that they will perhaps... turn soldiers through sheer necessity." Gloucester was not the only pocket of poverty in England.

Many of the Scots who formed Wolfe's largest regiment, the 78th Fraser Highlanders, were likely there for the same reason as the English. Their commanding officer, Simon Fraser was chieftain of the clan from which he recruited 1,500 members for the regiment. He was there to further his own interests. Twelve years earlier, his clansmen fought the English in the Battle of Culloden that killed the hope of an independent Scotland. Now—reduced to 1,200 after serving in the siege of Louisbourg—they were in Canada to fight for the English, whom they had so recently fought at Culloden.

American colonists, from the seaboard south of Acadia, were 3,000 strong, one-third of Wolfe's army. They were natural allies of the British: they did not like the prospect of being ruled by a French-speaking, Catholic monarchy, especially one which stood athwart their territorial ambitions, and they had inducements of pay and the prospect of land grants. Once the French were kicked out of North America, the colonists would be free to kick

out the English, which they set out to do 16 years after the Conquest of Canada.

The long siege

The British armada arrived in mid-June, carrying troops, guns, ammunition, and enough food—including 591 cattle—to feed some 29,000 men. They set up their first camp within sight of the city, on the evacuated Île d’Orléans, commandeering the church for their field hospital.

“I propose to set the town on fire with Shells, to destroy Harvest, Houses & Cattle... to leave famine and desolation behind me.”

Wolfe vows to terrorize Quebec if he can’t capture the city.

The first three months of the siege were a stalemate. For the British it was a frustrating time of failure to entice the French into an open-field pitched battle; a failed attack at Montmorency Falls; of searching for another point of attack; of disease and sickness that thinned the ranks; of ceaseless artillery pounding of Quebec; and a terror campaign of burning and pillage along the undefended south shore. Montcalm remained largely ensconced behind his fortifications.

When Wolfe found that his plan of launching an attack at the Beauport Flats had been rendered impossible by Montcalm’s defence, he vowed a campaign of terror. “[If]

we find that Quebec is not likely to fall into our hands... I propose to set the town on fire with Shells, to destroy the Harvest, Houses & cattle, both above and below, to send off as many Canadians as possible to Europe, & to leave famine and desolation behind me," Wolfe wrote to General Jeffrey Amherst, commander of British forces in North America.

Artillery commander George Williamson established a large battery of guns on the south shore at the closest point to Quebec: 20 cannons that shot solid iron balls weighing up to 14.5 kilogram (32 pounds), and 13 mortars that shot flaming firebombs to burn the city. Only about a fifth of Quebec's buildings was made of wood, but the stone buildings had wooden roofs. The shelling began in mid-July. By the time it was over, most of the city lay in rubble. The city was evacuated. A few remained to stop looting, put out fires, and safeguard stores and provisions. The evacuees did not have far to go. The artillery range was 1,200 to 1,800 yards, according to Williamson. The stone wall on the far side of the city was 2,200 yards away. It remained intact. Safe, too, was the general hospital, more than a kilometre past the city wall, a haven for civilians and soldiers alike, and later for British soldiers.

Under cover of darkness and heavy bombardment by Williamson's artillery, five British warships, commanded by Rear Admiral Charles Holmes, slipped upstream past Quebec, undetected. Soldiers marched along the south shore to join the fleet. The British now stood athwart Quebec and its Montreal food supply. Wolfe is positioned to launch an amphibious attack either upstream or downstream from Quebec. Montcalm is com-



Water colour, C.W. Jeffreys, Wikimedia Commons.



Louis Bombled, 1770. Wikimedia Commons.

The deaths of generals Wolfe (top) and Montcalm at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Wolfe died on the battlefield. The wounded Montcalm was moved within the walls of Quebec, but died the next day.

pelled to pay more attention to guarding the upstream shoreline. As many as 2,000 are sent to patrol it, marching up and down along the banks, following the movement of British warships that were not supposed to be there. Some of the upstream forces are later sent back to the Beauport Flats, where Montcalm remains convinced the attack must come.

Wolfe's first amphibious attack comes from the downstream side of Quebec, at Montmorency Falls, on the flank of the fortifications along the Beauport Flats. It is a disaster. The British charge uphill, to be mowed down by entrenched French forces. The British suffer 210 killed; 233 wounded. The French suffer 60 casualties.

The terror campaign on undefended villages begins upstream from Quebec when Admiral Charles Holmes launches small amphibious attacks on four villages on either side of the river. The first attack is repelled with British losses. On the other attacks, his forces burn a storehouse of weapons and ammunition, disperse a few warriors, and slaughter more than 100 cattle and sheep. Two villages on the south shore that pose no military threat are torched; every house in the parish of Saint-Croix is burned.

Wolfe assigns American Major George Scott to a much greater terror campaign, with orders to "burn all the country" along 120 kilometres of the south shore until it "is totally destroyed." Scott leads a force of 600 American Rangers and 1,000 light infantry, supported by a small fleet of warships. They burn crops, houses, barns and almost every building in sight, kill cattle and horses, imprison old men, women and children. At Rivière Ouelle, the manor house, flourmill, sawmill and fishing

boats of a prosperous seignior are turned to charred wrecks and ashes. At another site, a woman nine months pregnant was forced to flee into the forest where she gave birth to a baby on a bed of leaves. Not surprisingly, Canadiens who had not been conscripted into the militia fired pot shots with their farm muskets, causing a few casualties. One Ranger was scalped.

With hot summer days and poor camp sanitation, diarrhea, dysentery, and typhus claimed numerous lives and left more than 1,000 too sick to fight. That, plus fighting casualties at Montmorency Falls and 1,600 troops marauding the south shore, left Wolfe with just 6,000 of his original 9,000 available for the siege of Quebec. Wolfe, too, was laid low with a fever, fell into despair and despondency, while his generals and brigadiers fell to arguing and criticizing his military leadership. But Wolfe recovered to take firm control. There was general agreement that an attack should be made upstream from Quebec, but no agreement just where that should be. Wolfe finally made the decision. It would be “where the enemy seems least to expect it.”

The Anse au Foulon lies at the foot of a steep, 53-metre, heavily-wooded bank, a little more than two kilometres from Quebec. A road from the cove runs diagonally across the bank up to the Plains of Abraham. A barrier of sorts has been placed across the road: a trench and a bramble barricade of logs and sharp, pointed branches. It is lightly guarded. Thirty gunners man the Samos battery of three small cannon and one mortar overlooking the cove from the upstream side. No more than 100 troops guard

the landing site and the barricade, and patrol the top of the bank.

September 12 finds many of the French confident that they have withstood the siege, “invincible” behind the entrenched Beauport Flats. The British have been noted moving about. The camp at Montmorency has been removed. The British must be preparing to leave. “Everyone considered the campaign to have finished, and finished gloriously for us, the enemy up until then had done nothing but make useless attacks,” a senior staff officer later recalled.

Not quite so. Time and tide can turn fortune or misfortune. At Cap Rouge, 15 kilometres upstream from Quebec, two parties awaited an ebb tide that will turn on the first hours of September 13 to carry their craft silently downstream. Close to shore are 19 bateaux, loaded with 4,500 litres of flour and wheat that Cadet has brought from Montreal. They are urgently needed at Quebec. Ready to weigh anchor midstream are 30 British landing craft, three sloops and four battleships, scheduled to carry 4,400 troops, field cannons, and ammunition to Anse au Foulon.

The British are informed of the planned food shipment, reportedly by a pair of French deserters, or possibly captives. In the event, the food bateaux never leave Cap Rouge. No matter. The British put their knowledge of the planned shipment to good use.

The 30 landing craft, crammed with the troops, start out at 2:20 a.m., the other vessels following during the next hour. It is 4 a.m. and dimly light when the first landing craft comes abreast of the Samos Battery. It is challenged by a French sentry. A Scot with the Fraser

Highlanders replies in perfect French that these are the vessels with the food for Quebec. The reply comes from either Captain Donald MacDonald or Captain Simon Fraser; historians differ. It does not come from Lieutenant Colonel Simon Fraser, the regiment commander who missed the Battle of Culloden 12 years ago. He now misses the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. He is in the church at Saint Laurent on Île d'Orléans that serves as the British field hospital, convalescing.

The ebb tide sweeps the landing craft half a kilometre past the intended landing site—fortunately for the British. The first soldiers leap ashore at 4:07 a.m., under the fire of the guns at the Samos Battery and the muskets of the guard troops. The attackers suffer their first casualties, but are only a few steps from the forest where they are less exposed than if they had landed where originally intended. In fewer than 15 minutes the first troops have ascended the bank, attacked from the rear and silenced the Samos battery. The French troops continue to fire their muskets at the British. The shooting has started and is almost continuous throughout most of the day, even though the pitched battle lasts only minutes.

By early morning, Wolfe's army was established on the Plains of Abraham; the Foulon Road has been cleared; the first cannons hauled up for a field battery; entrenchments dug. Wolfe is positioned on a small hill with a view of the battlefield. He has 2,100 troops arranged two-abreast on the front battle line, across the width of the plain; others are shooting back at the militia and warriors who harass his flanks; the rest are held in reserve.

Facing the British, Montcalm stands on a wooded hill, the Buttes-À-Neveu, with 2,000 regular troops, about

to disobey an order from Governor Vaudreuil, who is also commander-in-chief of French forces in New France. Vaudreuil and Montcalm were seldom in agreement. Montcalm was a careful, methodical, somewhat cautious military leader. Vaudreuil, a seasoned soldier, was an aggressive fighter, constantly itching to be on the attack. Now the roles are somewhat reversed. Vaudreuil ordered Montcalm to wait on his hill for the arrival of reinforcements; 1,200 militia upstream at Cap Rouge under the command of Colonel Louis-Antoine de Bougainville; 1,500 from the Beauport Flats; 2,000 standing guard within the city gates, in case they are needed for a last-ditch stand. The British, claimed Vaudreuil, would thus “find themselves surrounded on all sides, and would have no alternative but to retreat or face certain defeat.”

Montcalm saw it differently. “We cannot avoid action,” he reportedly told an artillery officer. “The enemy is entrenching, he already has two pieces of cannon. If we give him time to establish himself, we shall never be able to attack him with the troops we have.” He placed little value on help from the militia; he relied on his regular troops from France, massed on the hill, and ready to go.

Montcalm gave the order at 10 a.m. It was not an orderly advance. Over-eager troops rushed pell-mell down the rugged hill, through bush and wheat fields, jumping over fences. They formed a ragged line, 120 metres from the British. Without waiting for an order, the French began firing. The range was too far. Most bullets fell to the ground, others hit with such little force that they caused no damage.

The two sides approach to within less than 35 yards, the French spread out in three clustered formations, the British in a solid line. They stand for as long as two minutes, each side waiting for the other to fire first. The French fire first, causing relatively few casualties. The British response is more deadly. In dense smoke from musket fire, the shooting continues for about another 10 minutes. The French fight against the overwhelming power of British cannon and musket firing, suffering heavy casualties before retreating in a route that becomes a panic. Wolfe and Montcalm are among the casualties. Wolfe dies on the battlefield; Montcalm dies the next morning inside the city gates.

While the French soldiers of the battle line broke and ran, the Canadian militia and the warriors continued to harass the British. From the big hill, they covered the fleeing French soldiers. On the northern edge of the battlefield, the militia inflicted heavy losses on the Fraser Highlanders. The British and the French each suffered about 600 casualties on the Plains of Abraham.

The French army lost the battle but the British had not yet taken Quebec. Fewer than 500 soldiers and sailors remained in the city to defend it, together with 2,700 refugees who fled there for safety. For four days, the British prepare to launch an attack. The French fire back, but to little effect. The British dig their entrenchments and mount their batteries. They were preparing to bomb an opening through the city's wall, then pour in for a fight that would cause great casualties on both sides. It would be a bloodbath that neither the British nor the French really wanted.

From his camp at the Jacque Cartier River, 50 kilometres

upstream from Quebec, Vaudreuil planned a two-day march back to Quebec, with the forces that escaped the battlefield, overwhelm the British, and save the city. They marched only one day before word reached them that the garrison, faced with hunger and the threat of an imminent fight in which hundreds of militia and their families would be killed, had reached a negotiated surrender.

Artillery commander George Williamson was the first British soldier to march into Quebec. He found that “535 houses are burned down, besides we have greatly shattered most of the rest.”

During the winter 2,312 British soldiers lay in hospital within the walls of Quebec, while the bodies of 682 lay stacked like firewood on the frozen ground.

Two days after the surrender, Major George Scott returned from ravaging the south shore, with large herds of cattle and sheep and “an immense deal of plunder, such as household stuff, books, and apparel.” He reported to Brigadier Robert Monckton, now in command of the British forces, that his Rangers and infantry had “burnt nine hundred and ninety eight good buildings, two sloops, two schooners, ten shallops, and several bateaus and small craft, took fifteen prisoners (six of them women and five of them children) killed five enemy,” with three of his troops killed and five wounded.

The first Battle of the Plains of Abraham was over, but

not the conquest of Canada. The French forces retreated to Montreal to fight another day.

Throughout the summer, the sisters at the Hôpital Général, beyond the range of the British south shore artillery, cared for Montcalm's sick and wounded fighters, and refugees from the city. Throughout the fall and winter, they now gave the same devoted care to the British.

With the capture of the city, Monckton, wounded, and other officers returned with the fleet to Britain. Brigadier James Murray, formerly Wolfe's fourth in command, was left in charge, to face a grim winter.

The British garrison slept in hastily repaired houses and other buildings that did little to keep out the cold.

Fuel was a problem. Murray sent 800 troops to cut firewood and rationed its use. Yet cold and scurvy took a bigger toll than all the shooting. When liquor could be found, soldiers too often drank to excess for a feeling of warmth that only hastened their death. "By April 24," writes historian D. Peter MacLeod, "2,312 members of the garrison had been hospitalized and 682 lay stacked like firewood on the frozen ground," awaiting the spring thaw and burial.

Spring would also bring the second Battle of the Plains of Abraham, aka the Battle of Sainte-Foy. At Montreal, Vaudreuil and Francois-Gaston de Lévis, now New France's military commander, assembled their forces for a campaign to retake Quebec. On April 28, 3,800 soldiers led by Lévis marched out of the woods, two kilometres southwest of the city. In a three-hour bloodbath, 558 are killed, 1,610 are wound, both French and British. The outnumbered British are forced to retreat

beyond the city gates. The French have won the second battle, but like the British less than eight months earlier, they have not yet captured Quebec. Both sides await the breakup of St. Lawrence ice and the arrival of ships from the across the Atlantic.

After the first Plains of Abraham Battle, Vaudreuil and Lévis sent a joint letter to Paris requesting provisions, 10,000 troops, and, perhaps most importantly, heavy artillery. With this, the French recapture of Quebec, control of Canada, and all New France, would seem almost assured.

The first battleship is sighted May 9. Is it French? Is it British? Upon that ship, and others in its wake, rest the destiny of a continent.

Quebec is rocked by an explosion of joyous shouting and the welcoming boom of blank cannon fire. The ship is the British *HMS Lowestoft*. Two more British ships arrive May 15. “I think that the colony is lost,” Lévis writes. The siege is lifted. The English again hold Quebec. New France is doomed.

The French did send a token force to aid its colony: a frigate and three transport ships with 400 soldiers. None of these reached Quebec: all were either lost at sea or captured by the British. At Montreal, on September 8, after 147 years, two months and six days of shooting at each other, the English and French finally stop fighting for control of a continent. With their force of 3,000 surrounded by 17,000 British troops, Lévis and Vaudreuil had no choice but unconditional surrender. At least in North America, the Seven Years’ War was over.

— Canada @ 150 —

Britain wins Canada in Atlantic naval battle

It was not at the Plains of Abraham, in either the first or second battles in 1759 and 1760, that the destiny of the continent was determined. It was determined two months after Wolfe's forces won the first battle and more than five months before Vaudreuil and Lévis won the second battle at the gates of Quebec. It was determined by a pair of naval battles on the far side of the Atlantic. The ships that arrived in May to lift the siege of Quebec could not possibly have been French, because the French navy had been demolished.

While Wolfe was trying to figure out how to capture Quebec, in Europe the French were planning to invade Britain. A dozen battleships of the French Mediterranean fleet were to join 21 of the Atlantic fleet, stationed at Brest, on the western tip of France and the edge of the English Channel, the staging area for the invasion. The task of Britain's Mediterranean fleet was to keep the French ships blockaded at their Toulon base.

In August, the British Mediterranean fleet returned to Gibraltar for repairs and provisions. The French set sail for Brest. It took 12 days to reach the straits of Gibraltar, which they slipped past into the Atlantic under cover of night, but not undetected. The repaired and almost provisioned British fleet, 14 ships under the command of Vice-Admiral Edward Boscawen, gave chase, overtook-

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Painting by Richard Paton, Wikimedia Commons.

In the Battle of Quiberon Bay, November 20, 1759—“the Trafalgar of the Seven Years War”—the British annihilated the French navy, effectively winning Canada for Britain.

ing seven of the French ships off the coast of Portugal. In the ensuing Battle of Lagos, the British destroyed two of the French ships and captured three others.

The French navy suffered a major blow at Lagos, but not a knockout. An invasion was still planned. The knockout punch came three months later, at the Battle of Quiberon Bay, acclaimed as “One of the most brilliant pages in naval history,” by U.S. Navy Captain Alfred Thayer Mahon in his seminal book, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*.

Britain’s Atlantic fleet, under the command of Admiral Edward Hawke, joined by Boscawen’s Mediterranean fleet, attacked the French off the Bay of Quiberon in a

raging gale. The British sank six French ships, captured a seventh, and inflicted a devastating loss of 2,500 sailors, killed or drowned. Nearly all of what was left of the French navy was kept out of action for the rest of the Seven Years War by a tight British blockade. The British lost two ships and 400 sailors at Quiberon.

“The French fleet was annihilated,” Mahon wrote in his gripping account of the battle. “All possibility of an invasion of England passed away with the destruction of the Brest fleet. The battle of November 20, 1759, was the Trafalgar of this war...the English fleets were now free to act against the colonies of France, and later Spain.”

If there was such a thing as an English hero in the Conquest of Canada, it was Edward Hawke.

Had the French won the battles of Lagos and Quiberon Bay, annihilated the British navy, could send the 10,000 requested soldiers, provisions and guns, the history of the world would have turned out quite differently.

The Seven Years' War (it was actually fought for nine years) officially came to a close on February 10, 1763, with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. “No one triumphed,” historian William H. Fowler wrote. “Almost nothing changed.” Except in North America, where the French lost almost half a continent, the destiny of Canada was determined, the door was opened for the American Revolution, and English was entrenched as the language for most of the continent.

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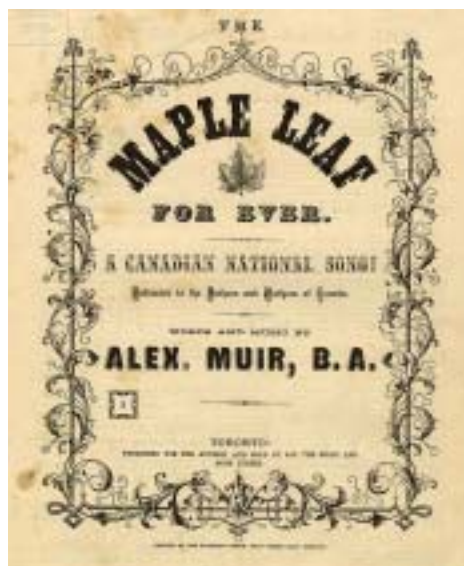
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Myth of Wolfe the conquering hero

We can blame Prime Minister William Pitt, in his efforts to whip up public support for Britain's Seven Years' War against France and its allies, for establishing the myth that James Wolfe conquered New France for Britain in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

"Nations adore military heroes, and none more so than the English, particularly when the idol falls in battle," historian William M. Fowler Jr. writes in *Empires at War: The Seven Years' War and the Struggle for North America*.

For Pitt, the battle on the Plains of Abraham and the death of Wolfe "was the best combination a politician could hope for." In Parliament, Pitt delivered "a eulogy to Wolfe and a paean to his victory." Then, "Writers, poets, sculptors and painters went to work fashioning monuments to Wolfe in words, stone, and on canvass."



The Maple Leaf Forever added to the myth of Wolfe, "the dauntless hero." Cover to the sheet music by Alex Muir, from one of 1,000 copies of the first printing, 1868. Toronto Public Library, Wikimedia Commons.

The lesson seems to be, if you want to be immortalized as a war hero, it's best to die in battle, like Nelson at Trafalgar, or Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham. Perhaps Edward Hawke would be better remembered had he died at the Battle of Quiberon Bay, where the destiny of Canada actually was determined.

Among the corpus inspired by Pitt, *The Maple Leaf Forever* was a latecomer, once considered a second national anthem, at least by English-speaking Canada.

"The thistle, shamrock, rose entwine..." That's it. Just the Scots, Irish and English. No place at the table in very British North America for the French; nor for First Nations, Ukrainians, Chinese, Africans, or any of the vastly varied threads that are the fabric of Canada. Discrimination meant lost job and career opportunities and social ostracism for millions of non-British throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Maple Leaf Forever was written by Alexander Muir, a veteran of Toronto's Queen's Own Rifles and the Battle of Ridgeway in the Fenian raids of 1866. He is said to have been inspired by a maple tree that stood in front of his house at Memory Lane and Laing Street in Toronto. The tree was still there in 2012, but later fell.

Muir revised his song to make it more acceptable, and later versions have been written to reflect the Canada of today. In Muir's first version, it was "Old England's flag," rather than Britannia's that Wolfe was said to have planted. He revised the song further with a version in which the French were represented by the Lilly. It was, however, the version embracing only the British that endured

and remained popular, until slowly fading from the scene in recent decades.

New lyrics by Vladimir Radian in the winning entry of a 1997 CBC contest excised any hint of colonial imperialism, and spoke of *Our land of peace, where proudly flies / The Maple Leaf forever.*

In another set of lyrics by former Canadian army chaplain D.E. Benton, our founding fathers are said to have come *In days of yore from splendid shores...*

And planted firm those rights of old.

Neither of the new versions made the hit parade, while the old version was wildly popular for decades. Today, its naked bigotry makes it largely shunned.

— Canada @ 150 —

Holy urine cure

Taken both as a drink and applied externally, urine has been called the world's oldest medicine. A 5,000-year-old religious Sanskrit text, the Damar Tantra, extolled its benefits. British actress Sarah Miles, in a 2007 newspaper interview, said she had been drinking her own urine for 30 years as immunization against allergies, among other supposed benefits. French ladies bathed in it, and the French wrapped around their necks stockings soaked in it to cure strep throat. Chinese bathed baby faces with it to protect their skin. Mexican farmers in the Sierra Madre prepared poultices of powdered charred corn and urine to help mend broken bones. John Strachan, an Anglican priest and future Bishop of Toronto, describes a rare instance of a Canadian prescription for urine, writing in the Kingston Gazette, March 3, 1812.



Ontario Archives

John Strachan, Anglican priest and future Toronto bishop, describes how he prescribed bark and urine for an ailing young woman.

The province [Upper Canada] is overrun with self-made physicians, who have no pretensions to knowledge of any kind...

I was lately visiting a young woman ill of a fever, the doctor came in, felt her pulse with much gravity, pronounced her near the crisis—She must take this dose, said the gentleman, pouring out as much calomel [a mildly toxic compound of mercury and chloride, once used as a purgative] on a piece of paper as would have killed two ploughmen. Pray what is this, said I, Doctor?

“A schrifudger.”

“Is it not calomel?”

“Yes.”

“You mean to divide this into several doses?”

“Not at all.”

“But the patient is weak.”

“No matter, I like to scour well.”

“Do you not weigh carefully so powerful a medicine before you give it?”

“No, sir, I know exactly.”

As the woman was evidently getting better, I threw the calomel out of the window after his departure, and sent her some bark and urine.

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Regulated life in old York



Unknown artist.City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231,F1231_it0897. Wikimedia Commons.

York, Upper Canada, the future Toronto, in 1830.

York (Toronto), bakers were required to “stamp each Loaf or Biscuit” with their initials, and homeowners were required to keep a ladder leaning against the eaves, as stipulated in “REGULATIONS for the POLICE,” published in the *Upper Canada Gazette*, September 11, 1817.

Life for the 800 people of muddy York, the capital of Upper Canada, was closely regulated.

In addition to initialing every loaf and biscuit, bakers had to obtain a licence to sell their products and post “sureties” of £200 to ensure conformity with regulations, which were to be maintained in a book by “the clerk of the Market.” The clerk was also required “to keep an account of the prices of Flour.”

No slaughterhouse could be erected in York without special permission.

“No Chips, Shaving or Rubbish of any description, to be thrown into the Street, or on the Front of the Town... No person to Gallop or Ride, or Drive a Horse or Horses, at an unreasonable rate in the Streets of the Town.”

“No Wagon, Cart or Carriage of any description, to be left standing in the Street, or any Fire Wood, or Timber, or other encumbrance to be allowed to remain in the Street for a longer period than twenty-four hours,” except that half the street could be blocked by building material during construction of new buildings, “leaving a clear passage on the Foot Way.”

Hogs or swine running at large were to be impounded, and after three days’ notice, sold at public auction, unless claimed by owners who were required to pay fines and fees charged by the Keeper of the Pound.

Fire fighting regulations were fairly extensive. In addition to a ladder extending two feet above the eaves, every house was to have “two or more roof ladders, suspended by iron fastenings from the ridge of the roof to the eaves.” Small ladders were required at chimneys rising more than three feet from the roof. Chimneys were to be swept clean every six weeks, under the direction of the Inspector of Chimneys; from November to April for chimneys used only for winter heating, but year-round for kitchen and other chimneys. Homeowners had to pay the Chimney Inspector “seven pence halfpenny for each chimney or flue so swept.”

Every house was to have “two or more good and serviceable Leathern Buckets capable of containing three gallons each which shall be hung up and exposed to view in the most convenient place nearest the front entrance

of the said house to be in readiness to assist in the extinguishing of Fires.” If Leathern Buckets were not available, “Wooden or Tin Pails” would do.

“Four discreet and active persons” were to be appointed Fire Wardens. The wardens were “authorized to command and enforce, with the help of the Constables and other Peace Officers, the aid and assistance of all the male inhabitants of the Town, between the years of 16 and 60, and to preserve as far as possible, order, regularity and dispatch in the lines, for the supply of water; to appoint and establish guards for the preservation of furniture and other effects, from injury and pillage.”

Varying fines were stipulated for any infractions of the police regulations.

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Peasants don't doff hats in doomed democracy

Liberty, democracy and freedom from want, hunger, and an oppressive aristocracy were said to prevail among peasants from Europe in the Upper Canada of 1821. That was just 16 years before the peasants mounted armed rebellions against the ruling aristocracies of the Family Compact in Upper Canada and the Chateau Clique in Lower Canada.

For immigrant peasants from Europe, a settler's life in Upper Canada in the first decades of the nineteenth century “means to sit at meals with one's hat on.” That was an observation of British travel writer John Howison,



Settlers' homestead, hacked from bush in Upper Canada ca. 1800.

author of *Sketches of Upper Canada, Domestic, Local and Characteristic*, Edinburgh, 1821. His sketches were mainly drawn from the large Talbot settlement bordering Lake Erie, about midway between present day London and Windsor.

The fact that a former peasant was no longer obliged to doff his hat also meant that he had escaped the tyranny of Europe's class system and aristocracy, and the "starving human wretchedness" of European cities. He had come to a life of independence, equality and civility and a state of democracy that "is hardly to be met with in any other part of the world."

Ninety percent of the settlers, Howison claimed, started out "extremely poor," and while they still lived in "wretched log huts," a few years of toil and perseverance had "placed them beyond the reach of want" with "abundant means of subsistence" and the prospect of "increasing comforts."

“There is a freedom, an independence, and joyousness connected with the country,” Howison wrote. “Beggary, want, and woe, never meet the eye. No care-worn countenances, or famished forms, are to be seen among its inhabitants.” He promised that immigrants “will not find themselves thrown in the shade by the false pretensions of rank, nor see the avenues of distinction closed, and their ambitious efforts defeated, by the influence of a presuming aristocracy.”

With this independence and freedom, Howison says the settlers began “to consider themselves as gentlemen” (the women, presumably, as ladies) and “to use the same kind of manners towards all men.” Thus “the utmost harmony prevails in the colony” and relations are “characterized by politeness, respect, and even ceremony.” The settlers were said to be hospitable and “extremely willing to assist each other in cases of difficulty.”

New arrivals were greeted warmly, and “any poor starving peasant, who comes into the settlement, will meet with nearly the same respect as the wealthiest person.”

The English and Scottish immigrants, however, accustomed to kow-towing to lords and lairds, were at first flummoxed on being addressed as “*sir, master or gentleman.*” Howison describes “some old Highland crone” mulling this over while “twitching his bonnet from one side of his weather-beaten brow to the other, and looking curiously around, as if suspicious that the people were *quizzing* him.”

For all the virtues of civil life that he found in Upper Canada, Howison fails to escape his own class conscious-

ness. He says the settlers are “offensively dirty, gross, and indolent,” as well as “very bad farmers” who could improve the productivity of their lands to the level of English farms if only they were not so lazy. He does not reconcile this alleged indolence with the daunting dawn-to-dusk back breaking labour in hacking out a farm from a dense forest. He sees an inevitable tendency of human beings—or at least the lower classes—to sink into “a state of natural and inexcusable depravity,” as much in the country as in the teeming cities:

“...for the inhabitants of the bountiful wilderness are as depraved in their morals, and as degraded in their ideas, as the refuse population of a large city. It will be found that the lower classes are never either virtuous, happy, or respectable unless they live in a state of subordination, and depend in some degree upon their superiors for occupation and subsistence.”

While Howson spent nearly three years in Upper Canada, he fails to say what he was doing there, other than touring and observing the locals. Clearly, he wasn't working at hacking out the forest or tilling the soil between the stumps and roots.

Perceived evils of democracy

While democracy flourished in a new land among those early settlers who declined to doff their caps, the colonial establishment was not enamoured. For British colonial administrators, their local Canadian supporters such as the Family Compact in Upper Canada, and official newspapers, democracy was an American practice that could lead only to mob rule, degradation of social standards, and collapse of civil society.

Nor was it just the British who feared that democracy would end in ruin. John Adams, the second U.S. president, warned in 1814, that “democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy that did not commit suicide.”

In lieu of democracy, colonial authorities preached the protection of British constitutional liberty and the beneficence of aristocracy. Even John A. Macdonald promised that Confederation and parliamentary government would provide Canadians with “constitutional liberty as opposed to democracy.”

The theory of aristocracy embraced by the Family Compact was that their supposed superior attributes endowed them with privileges, but also obligations to elevate society and promote the common welfare. Privilege invariably became exploitation and many obligations became myth.

While the United States had greater democracy than the British colonies, there was less liberty, at least for minorities. The very fullness of U.S. democracy tended too often to allow the majority to steamroll over the rights of Blacks, Indians, Catholics and other minorities, who generally enjoyed fewer liberties and suffered greater discrimination than in Canada. It was the tyranny of the majority. The most dramatic confirmation of this was the underground railway that delivered runaway U.S. black slaves to liberty in Canada.

Typical of the views on democracy expressed by the newspapers of the colonial authorities in the 1820s are a pair of items from the *Brockville Gazette*, and the *Upper Canada Gazette* in York.

Democracy, warned the Brockville paper, December 26, 1828, rests “upon the whim and caprice of a vain and arrogant people [and] has a tendency to blunt, and ultimately do away with the finer feelings of humanity.” It claimed that in the United States “the ideas and sentiments peculiar to what are emphatically styled gentlemen in England, are almost unknown... and in lieu of them little is to be found except an all absorbing thirst of gain.” Americans were said to be “cajoled by the rich, who do in fact despise the poor more than any aristocracy.” Believing that they had no superiors, Americans were said to “feel no inclination to respect any station more exalted than that to which a notorious slave dealer is eligible.”

The *Upper Canada Gazette*, on July 7, 1825, boldly forecast the failure of republican government in the United States:

“Viewing all republics, ancient as well as modern, as so many imperfect systems of government, differing only in their respective degrees of imperfection, we consider the growth and extension of the Federal Government of the United States, as a subject of deepest interest—as an experiment on a large scale of a system which, it appears to us is contrary to the universal order of nature, from the Divinity, downwards, to the communities of the meanest insects; and so satisfied are we of the impossibility of any long duration of the present order of things in the United States—that we have no doubt there are many now living who will see an entire disruption of the North American Federal Government.”

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You could be hanged for stealing turnips



Painting by John G. Howard, Archives of Ontario.

York (Toronto) jail, where a legislative committee in 1830 found a debtor with his wife and five children among the prisoners.

In early nineteenth century Canada, you could be hanged for stealing turnips. If you fell into debt, you could be imprisoned for life—in possibly the world’s worst prisons, perhaps together with your wife and children. Women were not sentenced to debtors’ prison, but if they lived on poverty street without means of support, they would join you in jail.

Unless your debts were paid or forgiven, you were in for life. There was no hope of earning money while in jail. Release depended on help from family or friends, or the

charity of your creditors—neither of which was invariably available.

The harsh conditions of family life in jail were portrayed by Charles Dickens (whose father served time in debtors' jail) in his 1857 novel *Little Dorrit*. Little Dorrit was born in jail, grew up in jail where she cared for her father, married in jail, and spent her life in jail.

If life in British jails was harsh, in Canadian jails it was brutal. Canadian jails, especially those in Upper Canada, were said to be much worse than those in Britain. Debtors and their families crowded the jails almost as much as the criminals.

A debtor might be in jail for life, but that was not necessarily very long. Lack of sanitation and ventilation, overcrowding, near starvation rations of sometimes-rotten food, illness, and diseases frequently shortened life in jail.

Editors courageous enough to defy the authorities assailed jail conditions, and the senseless imprisonment of debtors that helped neither debtors nor creditors.

Incubators of crime

Perhaps the first Canadian editor to tackle the issue was Henry Chubb, whose *New Brunswick Courier* on February 2, 1822 did so by reprinting *On the Imprisonment of Debtors*, by Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth century lexicographer, author and critic. It dealt with the issue in England—where 20,000 debtors out of a population of six million lingered in jail—but drew attention to the issue in Britain's North American colonies.

“When twenty thousand reasonable beings are heard

all groaning in unnecessary misery by.... the mistake or negligence of policy, who can forbear to pity and lament, to wonder and abhor,” Johnson wrote.

Johnson estimated the public cost of imprisoned debtors at £300,000 pounds a year, “in ten years to more than a sixth part of our circulating coin.”

He saw the debtor-filled jails as incubators of spiralling crime and evil. “The misery of gaols is not half their evil: they are filled with every corruption which poverty and wickedness can generate between them; with all the shameless and profligate enormities that can be produced by the impudence of ignominy, the rage of want, and the malignity of despair.”

World’s most barbaric jails

Reform editor Francis Collins was in York jail barely starting a prison term for libel against the authorities and members of the notorious Family Compact when he wrote this account of Canada’s treatment of insolvent debtors, published in the Canadian Freeman, December 11, 1828.

Of all the countries on earth, we believe there is none in which insolvent debtors are so barbarously treated as in Canada—the laws respecting them are a disgrace to British Jurisprudence—sufficient to put humanity to the blush— and call aloud for wholesale amendment.

In Canada, an unfortunate man who incurs a debt of a few dollars, without the means of liquidating it, is liable to be incarcerated, at the discretion of a merciless creditor, during his natural life! At home [i.e., England], no ordinary debt (except a fraud be proved) can deprive a man of his liberty longer than two or three months—in the U. States the term is still shorter, and they are threat-

ening to abolish the practice altogether. In Canada, they are cooped up in a filthy apartment, for life, without bed, bedding, victuals, or any other thing to support nature, save the bare walls that surround them.

Is this just? Is it honest? Is it Christian? Can Heathen persecution exceed it? We have at the moment above our heads *twelve* able-bodied stout men, committed to this gaol for paltry debts, endeavouring to pass away

***When a convicted murderer died
in his jail cell, an inquest jury
ruled death was caused “by the
visitation of God.”***

dull time in playing marbles, like children—without even the consoling ray of hope ourselves enjoy, that at a given period, however distant, an end will be put to their sufferings.

Death by suffocation

York was not the only jail in Upper Canada where conditions were miserable. An inquest jury in Niagara in the summer of 1830 blamed conditions in the jail there on the death of one Isaac Hoff.

Hoff had been convicted of assault. “A highly respectable and intelligent jury,” according to a local paper, *Spirit of the Times*, found that he “came by his death by suffocation, in consequence of being confined by the Magistrates in a cell not sufficiently ventilated.” Hoff had been confined to a jail “about 8 feet square, with-

out the light of Heaven,” at a time when the ambient temperature in the shade rose to 105 Fahrenheit. In York, the *Canadian Freeman* claimed the jury would have been justified in charging the magistrates with murder. The reports were cited in Montreal’s *Vindicator*, July 7, 1830.

In Brockville, when convicted murderer Henry Hamilton died in his prison cell three weeks before he was due to be hanged, an inquest jury concluded that it was a case of “Death by the visitation of God,” the *Upper Canada Gazette* reported on September 9, 1825.

And the *Bathurst Examiner*, in October 1829, facetiously noted that “There is not one prisoner now confined to the Jail in the Bathurst District, and the mice are starving.”

Starvation, stink and squalor

A report of a committee of the Upper Canada House of Assembly, signed by William Lyon Mackenzie as chairman, describes a living hell in the jail at York. Excerpts from the Colonial Advocate, February 25, 1830.

In the cells below the ground floor, your committee found three female lunatics confined. They are lodged in locked up cribs, on straw, two in one crib, and the other by herself. A gentleman confined for debt complained that the smell from the dungeon in which these poor lunatics are confined, which below the room was almost insupportable, and that their incessant howlings and groans were annoying in the extreme. Their confinement is severe beyond that of the most hardened criminal.

Your committee found 25 persons in this prison; twelve criminals on the ground floor, one criminal sick upstairs, one vagrant, three lunatics above mentioned, and nine debtors.

Thomas McMahan, a criminal, complained that he had only a jail allowance of three half pence worth, one pound of bread, and water; that soap, sufficient to keep the prisoners clean, was not given; that some of the prisoners are several weeks together, without changes of linen; that he had enough bed clothes, but that they had not been washed, he believed, for six or eight months. The smell of his dungeon was very noisome.

All the other prisoners in this ward complain of the scantiness of the jail allowance, only three half pence worth of bread per diem. Your committee think that although a place of imprisonment is not intended to be a place of comfort, it should not be a place of starvation. This allowance is too small; it is less, your committee understands, than the allowance in other Districts, and is especially hard towards those who have not friends to help them. The request of the prisoners is six pence a day, or its value in bread.

The cell of James McMahan, and that of John Wilson, stink so as scarcely to be fit to breathe in. The jail itself is ill constructed; and the jail privy being stopped up adds to the unwholesomeness of the atmosphere, in a degree, that even in winter, is almost intolerable. The water closets ought to be taken away, and proper substitutes provided; the chloride of lime, or some other salt, ought to be used from time to time, to purify the apartments, and such other means used as would render a residence within these walls less grievous.

The debtors are, with one exception, all on the upper floor, apart from the other prisoners. These are allowed no support from their creditors, and some of them say

they are entirely without the means of subsistence. James Colquhoun is in jail for a debt of three pounds; the creditor has forgiven the debt, but the lawyer has not thought proper to forgive his fees. Colquhoun subsists entirely on the humanity of the jailer and other debtors. One Murphy told your committee that he had nothing to eat and that both Colquhoun and himself had been for days together, without tasting a morsel. One debtor is in jail, together with his wife, and a family of five children.

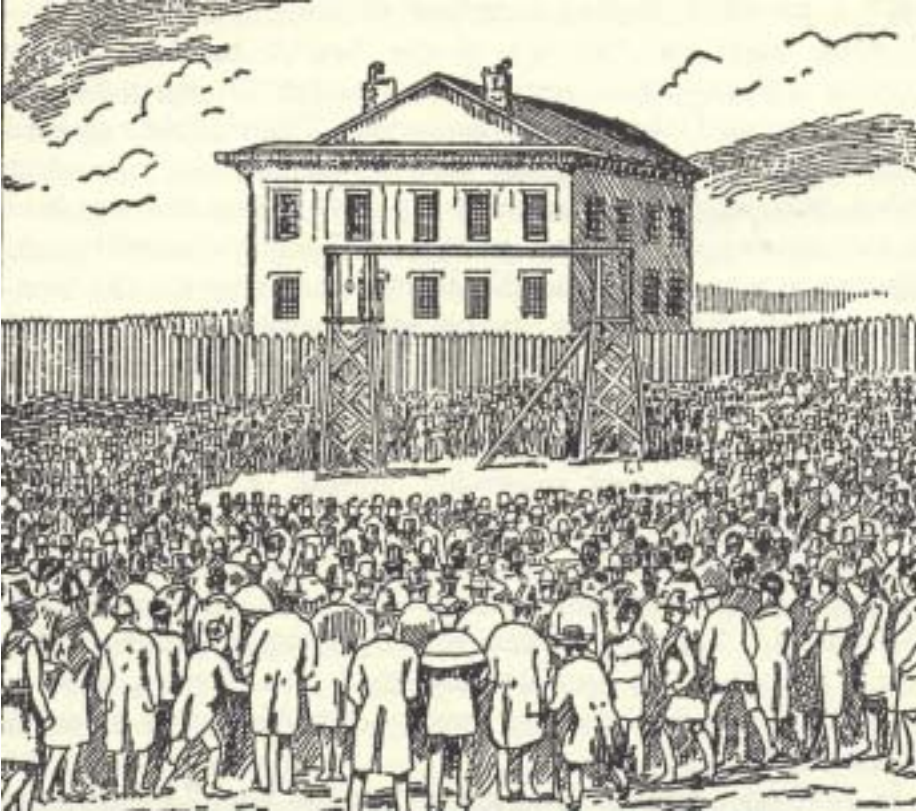
Lament for hanged 17-year-old murderer

The Peterborough Review laments the hanging of a youth, June 11, 1910.

The government says that Robert Henderson must die for killing Margaret McPherson. So the law will slay the child. Just 17, this unfortunate youth would have been better had he died a babe.

They took a life for a life in the days of Moses, but the Almighty is on record as leaving Cain alive. In building homes, we no longer live in tents, as the ancients. In battle we no longer use the ram. In all things we have progressed, exploring earth, air and sea. But we still hang, and on the 23rd of this month an irresponsible degenerate youth will be dispatched, not by the garrote, as in Spain, by the guillotine, or gun, as in war, but by the end of a rope, and this in a city of churches, in this civilized land, in the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and ten.

Grim hangings fascinate morbid female fans



J. Ross Robertson, Landmarks of Toronto, volume 1. Toronto: 1894, page 236.

Public hangings drew big crowds in the eighteenth century, as seen in this sketch of the hangings of Samuel Lount and Peter Mathews in Toronto, 1838, for their roles in the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837.

Women as well as men flocked to watch public hangings in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. That much is clear from photos and drawings of crowds of specta-

tors, although the men seem to somewhat outnumber the women. None appeared more fascinated by the gruesome sight of death than the eager women who pressed in close for a detailed look at the death features of a pair of men hanged in Cayuga, Ontario. The women were admonished by the Brantford Expositor, in this item republished in the Toronto Leader, May 26, 1855.

Stand back there boys, and give the ladies a chance to see. Where and by whom, think you, was this gallant, this considerate request made? Was it at a Charitable Show Bazaar or Floral Exhibition? Not a bit of it. T'was when Blowes and King, from the scaffold in the grove at Cayuga, dropped from time into eternity. When the murderer's cap that covered the Blowes' face was torn from crown to chin, exhibiting in all its horrible distortion the countenance of a strangled human being.

"Stand back and give the ladies a chance to see," shouted a constable from the scaffold, and he waved his stick, his badge of office, to render more expressive the words. "Make way for the ladies."

The crowd divided and the ladies, with eager eyes and hasty steps, approached the dead men. The hangman, black and ugly, steeled in heart and damnable as his vocation is, shuddered at the spectacle and drew himself away in loathing.

The ladies looked upon the bodies of the murderers, gazed upon the big veins well nigh bursting with blood, the tense muscles of the face, the protruding eyes staring in all their horror out beyond the lids. The ladies feasted on the loathsome sight, and departed gratified. The ladies will speak of what they saw at Cayuga for

many a day to come, and think nothing in their conduct unwomanly, bad, unfeeling or degrading.

Had we many of such mothers, daughters, sisters, we had many Kings and Blowes. Shame upon them. Thanks be to God, in Haldimand [county] there are few like them, though the few must make the many blush with shame. They have cast a stigma on the very name of woman; and every woman of feeling, tenderness, delicacy and refinement, cannot but mourn over their sisters' insensibility and shamelessness.

By all means advocate the policy of capital punishment. The Cayuga exhibition illustrates its wisdom, and establishes its effect.

Debtors can keep sheep, hog, stove and firewood

A cow, three sheep, a hog, a stove, and a cord of firewood were to be exempt from the goods that a creditor could seize from a debtor, under provisions of a bill before the Lower Canada House of Assembly. From debate in the Assembly, as reported in the Montreal Vindicator, February 2, 1831.

Mr. Lee looked upon this measure as one that would greatly tend to reduce the evils of mendacity, for which every means, direct and indirect, ought to be employed. He was mortified to find that the sordid spirit of mercantile avidity so strenuously opposed it... [All would benefit from the Bill], even the dealer who speculates upon the distress of his neighbours. He will learn more caution in giving credit.

This measure will greatly reduce the evils of poverty... But the greatest good would arise from it to wives and families of poor debtors, who often, by the profligacy and vices of their husbands, encouraged and promoted by the sordid expectations of gain of the shopkeepers they deal with, are reduced to the utmost distress and destitution, and see their last little property sold for next to nothing.

They will now at all events be able, with a cow and stove, to feed and warm their poor children; and their spirit of industry will be revived to retrieve the affairs of the little family. The women, the wives and mothers, were the most to be considered in the protection that was thus to be given; and he spoke not only in allusion to the families of Canadians, but the families of the Scotch and Irish settlers, who form so valuable a portion of our population.

Insolvent and bankrupt persons (the two are legally different) today still have some protection against creditor seizure of some assets or property, but the complex laws vary in each province.

— Canada @ 150 —

Death penalty abolished



Library and Archives Canada C-104078.

Spectators peered over prison walls to see the hanging of Stanislaw Lacroix at Hull, Quebec, March 21, 1902.

For some two centuries, the death penalty hung over the parts of North America that eventually became Canada.

Under British law, there were some 230 crimes that carried the death penalty, early in the nineteenth century. You could be hanged for stealing a horse or turnips, or for being found disguised in the forest.

Attitudes about such legal severity seemed mixed. When a convicted horse thief and two burglars were hanged

From my book, About Canada, Toronto, Civil Sector Press, 2012.

in Montreal, it was seen by the government organ in York (Toronto) as proper warning and a sense that “justice is satisfied.”

“The fate of these culprits will, we trust, prove a salutary lesson to those whom they have left behind, whose moral and religious conduct require a warning for the amendment of their lives,” said the *Upper Canada Gazette*, November 6, 1823.

Authorities in Lower Canada seemed more lenient, with perverse effect. Rather than upholding the death penalty, those convicted of crimes considered less serious than murder, were set free. The authorities, said a grand jury, were “Increasingly reluctant” to impose the law. “The parties offended refuse to prosecute; petty jurors are unwilling to convict; and his Majesty’s Representative is, in almost every capital case, petitioned by numbers to exercise the Royal prerogative of mercy.”

The result was that “Impunity is enjoyed by the most atrocious and hardened offenders,” the report, published in the Montreal *Herald* and reprinted in the Kingston *Chronicle*, September 29, 1826, declared. Some were said to have been convicted of capital crimes as many as six times, and pardoned each time. The jurors, however, claimed that the “public mind is ripe” for more humane laws that could afford “convicts some chance and encouragement to redeem their character” and “become useful members of society.”

It took 30 years, but reform did come in 1859 when the number of crimes subject to the death penalty was reduced to 10 under the Constituted Statutes of Canada (then comprising Lower and Upper Canada). It was now

confined to “murder, rape, treason, administering poison or wounding with the attempt to commit murder, unlawfully abusing a girl under ten, buggery with man or beast, robbery with wounding, burglary with assault, arson, casting away a ship and exhibiting a false signal endangering a ship.”

In 1865, capital punishment was further limited to cases of murder, treason and rape.

The abolition campaign

The most determined effort to fully abolish the death penalty was launched in Parliament in 1914 by Robert Bickerdike (1843-1928), businessman, Liberal politician, and social reformer.

Bickerdike left the family farm in Beauharnois County, Quebec, at age 17 to learn the butcher trade in Montreal. He soon established a meat packing business and later expanded his successful interests to embrace insurance, finance, and shipping. As a politician, he was a champion of minority rights—Jews in particular—an early advocate of women’s suffrage, and bent on an almost life-long mission to abolish the death penalty.

On February 5, 1914 the House of Commons spent “practically all day” debating Bickerdike’s private member’s bill to abolish the death penalty. “The House



Robert Bickerdike lead the Parliamentary campaign to abolish capital punishment in 1914, but did not live to see it accomplished.

seemed to be about evenly divided” on the issue, according to the *Toronto Star*.

Opponents of the bill argued that the death penalty was needed to deter murder. Frank Oliver, publisher of the *Edmonton Bulletin* (Alberta’s first newspaper) and former interior minister in the Laurier government, cited Judge Matthew Begbie as evidence. A London lawyer sent in 1858 to keep law and order in the gold mining camps of British Columbia, Begbie is reputed to have claimed, “Boys, if there is shooting, there will be hanging.” “There was shooting, and there was hanging after that,” Oliver told the House. “Then there was no more shooting.”

It was also claimed that capital punishment is “less degrading to society than the incarceration for life of a helpless prisoner.” One MP told the House: “If the choice were put before the convicts in Kingston Penitentiary, I am not sure that the majority... would not say, bring on the rope.”

Capital punishment, argued the bill’s supporters, is morally wrong, opposed by religious strictures, and does not deter murder or crime.

“We cannot atone for the loss of life by taking another life,” said Bickerdike. “No man who believes in his Creator dare vote against a bill to abolish legalized murder.”

As it turned out, no MP had to vote that year against abolishing the death penalty. Justice Minister and Attorney General Charles Doherty, who opposed the bill, adjourned the long debate at 10:30 in the evening, and it did not come up again until the following year, when it fared no better. Bickerdike introduced another ill-fated bill to abolish capital punishment in 1916.

Sitting on the editorial fence

When it came to taking a stand for or against capital punishment, newspapers generally appeared to be sitting on the editorial fence, apparently still undecided about the issue, as were most Canadians. Typical was the stand of the *Toronto Star* (February 9, 1920), which argued only “There should be one law for all. There is not now one law for all... The procedure by which a popular criminal escapes the gallows is not unlike that by which a popular fellow gets a comfortable office under government.”

Arguments for and against the death penalty erupted sporadically on newspaper pages during the next few decades. In the *Toronto Globe*, a clergyman implied a defence of capital punishment in 1920, while another cleric opposed it the following year.

On January 17, 1920, in his weekly “Sunday School Lesson” *Globe* columnist, Rev. G.C. Pidgeon implied that a very vengeful God was on the side of swift and decisive retribution. “God has always punished with exceptional severity sins of presumption,” Pidgeon wrote. When Arron’s two intoxicated sons, Nadab and Abihu, “offered fire on God’s altar, they were smitten with instant death.” When army sentinels fall asleep on the job, according to Pidgeon, it is “a capital offence for which men have deserved to die.”

On August 1, 1921, Rev. A. Mason hoped that Canadians would follow the example of the Swedish people who, he said, “rose up in their might and abolished the death penalty.” This was apparently accomplished in spite of Sweden’s executioner who, Mason noted, “has an axe to grind.”

Bikerdike did not live long enough to see the triumph of his cause. The last executions in Canada came more than half a century after he first urged abolition of the hangman's rope in Parliament.

The last two were Ronald Turpin and Arthur Lucas, hanged at the Don Jail in Toronto on December 11, 1962. Turpin had robbed the Red Rooster restaurant of \$632.84 and was driving from the scene when he was pulled over by a police officer for a broken taillight. He shot and killed the policeman. Lucas, an American, had left his Detroit home for a trip to Toronto where he killed a witness in the trial of a Michigan drug lord, and also the witness' girlfriend.

In 1967 Parliament passed a government bill to abolish capital punishment and impose life imprisonment for all murders, for a five-year trial, by a vote of 105 to 70. Excluded from the abolition were murders of on-duty police officers or prison guards. In 1973 MPs sustained the five-year trial by a margin of 13 votes. Three years later, they voted to abolish all forms of capital punishment—except under the Defence Act—by a scant margin of six votes. A bill to restore the death penalty was more decisively defeated in 1987 by a vote of 148 to 127. Under the Defence Act, however, the death penalty can still be imposed on military personnel for cowardice, desertion, unlawful surrender, and spying for the enemy.

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Shipwrecked cannibals



Photo by R.H. Hunter, Newcastle. Wreck of Barque 'Adolphe' on the Oyster Bank, Newcastle, September 30, 1904. Wikimedia Commons.

*Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the Nancy brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite
And the crew of the captain's gig.*

The elderly naval man in W.S. Gilbert's Yarn of the Nancy Bell, who survived by dining on his mates, was fictional, but survivors of another brig, the George, were not, according the following item from the British Colonist, Stanstead, Quebec, May 22, 1823.

The brig George, Capt. John M'Alpin, sailed from Quebec with a cargo of timber, for Greenock [Scotland], on the 12th of September, with a crew consisting of nine persons, besides three passengers.

Early in the morning of the 6th Oct. she was overtaken by a violent storm, which continued without intermission during the day; towards sunset the gale increased, and the vessel became quite unmanageable. At two o'clock the following morning a tremendous sea broke over her, and swept away three of her best hands, with the companion, binnacle, a cable and boom, and greatly damaged the hull; all hands were called to the pumps, but only three were able to render any assistance, nothing then remained but to endeavour to gain the maintop, which with immense difficulty they accomplished, carrying with them one bag of bread, about eight pounds of cheese, two dozen of wine, with a small quantity of brandy and rum.

Before they had time to secure themselves in their perilous situation, the vessel fell on her beam-ends; but within half an hour the hatches blew up and she again righted. Their scanty store were now examined, when, to their utter dismay, all had been washed away except the bag of bread.

At this period a distressing scene occurred in the midst of their afflictions: one of the passengers had his wife on board, and a child fifteen months old, which he carried in his arms; the infant, however, he was compelled to abandon to the merciless waves in the view of its distracted mother!

The mainsail was now let down to screen them from the

severity of the weather, which continued tempestuous until Friday, the 11th, when they were able once more to go upon deck.

Their thirst had now become excessive, and nothing but salt water to be procured. Having found the carpenter's axe, they cut a hole in the deck, near to where a water-cask had been stowed; but, alas! the cask had been stove, and nothing was to be found for support or convenience, but an empty pump-can, which they carried with them to the main top.

That night the female passenger became insensible, and next day, on Saturday, the 12th, she died. This poor woman, whose name was Joyce Rea, came with her husband from between Belfast and Larne, in Ireland.

The unhappy survivors were now reduced by raging thirst, to support nature by sucking the blood of their deceased companion, and shocking to relate the miserable husband was necessitated to partake of the unnatural and horrid beverage. Their sufferings, however, met with little allay from this temporary but dreadful relief; they were now assailed by the most acute and ungovernable hunger; and to preserve existence were compelled to distribute the flesh of the deceased among the famishing survivors!

While in the very scene of suffering, a ship hove in view; but this joyful sight was of short duration, for it being nearly dark, they remained unperceived by the vessel which continued her own course, and was soon out of reach.

These fresh misfortunes threw them into greater despair than they had yet experienced. From this time to the 23d the following died:—John Lamond, a boy; John

M'Key, carpenter; George M'Dowell, passenger; Colin M'Kechnie, and the Steward, Gilbert M'Gilvary. Part of the flesh of those wretched sufferers was also devoured like that of the woman.

The whole number was now reduced to the Captain and one of the seamen, who, by the help of the mainsail, and the can already mentioned, contrived to supply themselves with water till the 14th November (having been thirty-eight days on the wreck), when they were providentially discovered by Captain Hudson, of the *Saltom*, of Carlisle; but they were yet fated to suffer another ship wreck, though of minor importance.

On Tuesday, the 10th, instant this vessel, whilst riding off Beckfoot, on the Cumberland coast, it blowing a gale, broke her chain cable, when she drifted too near to Maryborough, and was considerably damaged, but all hands were saved, including the two unfortunate sufferers who arrived at Annen [on the west coast of Scotland] on Wednesday evening last and, what is very remarkable, apparently in good health.

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TALK, TALK, TALK. *The Ottawa Journal*, October 23, 1899, notes the political penchant for prolixity. “Sir Charles Tupper’s speech the other day contained about 25,000 words. Mr. Foster’s three-hour effort held about 17,000, or about as many as the gospel of St. John, which revolutionized the world. It will be observed that some of our political leaders talk many dozens of times as much matter every year as there is not merely in St. John, but in the whole New Testament, yet don’t revolutionize anything.”

God's profaners suffer fatal Sunday accidents

There would have been fewer fatal accidents in Upper Canada (Ontario) in 1825 if more people devoted Sunday to worship and rest, as commanded by the "highest authority," according to the York (now Toronto) Upper Canada Gazette, the voice of colonial authority and the notorious Family Company. The Gazette claimed that two-thirds of the colony's fatal accidents occurred on Sundays, and seemed to blame the drowning death of a 19-year-old man on "reprehensible" Sunday sports. From the Gazette, July 7, 1825.

We lament with others the untimely death of Mr. John Doyle, aged 19, who was unfortunately drowned in our bay on last Sunday-week; yet we cannot help here noticing the very reprehensible weekly practice, not in this Town only, but throughout the Province, of numbers of young men busying themselves in various sports—and particularly in the diversion of sailing boats, during those hours which should be appropriated, either to the private or public worship of the Supreme Being.

If in England, and in other well-ordered communities, those who tittle in Public Houses during the performance of divine service are punishable by fine and imprisonment, there can be no good reason urged why those who willfully profane the Sabbath, by other practices not less reprehensible, should not be mulcted in some adequate correction.—We have frequently had occasion to remark that fully two-thirds of the fatal accidents which have occurred in this country have happened on that day which has been appointed, from the highest authority, a day of sanctification and of rest.

Teach the Scots to read their Bibles

Instead of sending missionaries to spread the Christian gospel throughout the endless forests of Canada, a better and cheaper way would be to teach the illiterate highlanders who are leaving Scotland in the tens of thousands to read the Bible, a Reverend Mr. Mcleod tells the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. From the Novascotian, April 5, 1826.

Permit me to draw your attention to one other respect in which the Highlands and Isles must greatly interest every benevolent heart...From these counties... thousands have been emigrating yearly to our colonies in North America: men whose language and habits being distinct, will render them an admirable barrier against American and French principles; and carrying with them their ancient and established principles of loyalty and military value, will prove the most valuable settlers in those important colonies.

The numbers who have emigrated for the last forty years from the Highlands and Isles is absolutely incredible. Thousands and tens of thousands, until within the last few years, were totally uneducated, and ninety out of one hundred were unable to read the scriptures.

I have in my possession at this very moment a letter from the collector of customs in a small port in the west end of the Island of Mull, in which he tells me that during the past three years 4,288 have entered in that port alone, and emigrated to our colonies in North America;

and he adds, that being from some one or other of the more remote islands, they were unable to read either English or Gaelic, and unacquainted he believed, to a great extent, with the nature and design of the Christian religion. And this emigration proceeds from no temporary causes; it proceeds from peculiar circumstances connected with the country, for which no remedy can be applied.

To what quarter of the world, then, I would ask, can the friends of foreign missions direct their attention with so certain a prospect of promoting that great cause which they are labouring to advance, as to the Highlands and Isles of Scotland? Will not a few hundred pounds per annum expended in teaching these people to read their bibles before they leave the country, and instructing them in the elementary principles of Christianity, effect greater good than thousands spent in sending missionaries after them when they are scattered through these endless forests, where they have not a bible, nor the capacity of reading it? It will prove to them a moral wilderness where all the better traits of their natural character will soon and for ever be obliterated.

Sir, I appeal to every person who hears me, whether a few such families whom you have taught to read the bible and sent out with them this valuable light to comfort and guide them, will not prove a more valuable acquisition to that country, and have a more civilising influence in the districts to which they go, by spreading around them a moral and Christianizing influence than by any one missionary, however respectable, who at ten times the expense, you could send afterwards to teach them.

— Canada @ 150 —

When children drank whisky at breakfast



William, B. Edwards, Library and Archives Canada, PA-080920

For more than a century-and-a-half, Europeans had been killing North America's Indians by giving them firewater—whisky, brandy, rum, port, sherry—in exchange for furs. Now, in the first decades of the nine-

From my book, About Canada, Toronto, Civil Sector Press, 2012.

teenth century, Canada's pioneer settlers were killing themselves with their own medicine.

Alcohol consumption had reached epidemic proportions, and it was taking a terrible toll. At Ancaster, in Upper Canada, 11 of 13 accidental deaths in 1829 were attributed to excessive drinking. Inquests in the Bathurst District blamed all 20 accidental deaths on booze, according to a study on pioneer drinking habits by Rev. M.A. Garland and historian J.J. Talman.

With an abundant number of distilleries—the Bathurst District alone had six in 1836—whisky was plentiful and cheap. Farmers supplied the distilleries with grain. One bushel of grain made three or three-and-a-half gallons of whisky. The farmer received half the whisky as payment for his grain. Whatever he and his family didn't drink, was sold to inns, taverns and the many shops that served as drinking houses.¹

Whisky was a solace in the isolated log cabins where settlers lived harsh and lonely lives of incredible toil. "In many families," wrote Garland and Tallman, "whisky was served to each member of the household every morning, and thus from infancy, the children were accustomed to its taste." The whisky was often diluted with water, especially for young children. It was, however, considered a necessary protection against the winter's cold or the summer's heat, and an energizing tonic to help workers—men, women and children—meet their heavy task loads.

Whisky was also a principal product in many patent medicines. One such medicine is reported to have contained two ounces of Peruvian bark, half an ounce of

Virginia snake root, and more than 50 ounces (3-1/2 pints) of whisky.²

Aside from the log cabins, the country was thickly dotted with other drinking places, in towns, villages and along the rough roads. In Lower Canada, there were twice as many bars and taverns as there were schools, Montreal's *Vindicator* reported on March 27, 1832. There were reported to be 1,892 "taverns [and] shops licensed to retail spirituous liquors" in the province, compared with 937 schools. That was said to mean a tavern or sales outlet "for every 128 persons of a fit age to indulge in Intemperance," compared with one school "for every 164 persons of a fit age to receive instruction." There were, said the *Vindicator*, 154,000 children "who ought to be in school," but only 45,000 who were.

Upper Canada seemed equally well supplied with drinking places. In 1833, there were 20 taverns on the 40-mile stage road between York [Toronto] and Hamilton. Bathurst District, in 1836, had 65 inns and 35 shops that sold, and usually served liquor; London, with 1,300 people, had seven taverns.

"In travelling through the country, you will see every inn, tavern and beer shop filled at all hours with drunken, brawling fellows; and the quantity of ardent spirits consumed by them will truly astonish you," one anonymous "ex-settler" wrote.³

In many smaller villages and towns, taverns offered the only space large enough to accommodate even small crowds. They were used for weddings, funerals, meetings, elections, court proceedings (where juries were sometimes served whisky and even magistrates were

known to imbibe while administering justice), and religious services.

Every event was an occasion for drinking whisky, but none more notoriously so than the “bees” or raisings at which log houses and barns were built. At one three-day raising, no more than 30 men were reported to have consumed 15 gallons of whisky—60 ounces of whisky per man.

Not every pioneer settler, of course, was a drunkard. The most successful were invariably moderate drinkers or teetotalers. And the first temperance movements were gathering forces by the 1830s. But heavy drinking would remain a costly social Canadian problem for decades.

(Endnotes)

1 M.A. Garland and J.S. Talman. *Pioneer Drinking Habits and the Rise of Temperance Agitation in Upper Canada Prior to 1840*. Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, volume 27 (1931), pp. 341-64.

2 Craig Heron. *Booze: A Distilled History*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003.

3 Garland and Talman, *Pioneer Drinking Habits*.

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New house goes up as whisky goes down

William Thomson was unlike the troop of well-to-do, leisure class Britons who toured Canada in the early nineteenth century to write books about what they saw. A textile worker from the Aberdeen area of Scotland, Thomson supported himself during a three-year tour of the United States and Canada by working at whatever jobs he could find. One job was working at a “raising” of a log house in Vaughan township, north of Toronto, “for a poor Irishman and his family.” As the house went up, whisky went down. Excerpt from A Tradesman’s Travels in the United States and Canada, in the Years 1840, 41 & 42, Edinburgh, 1842.

I was on the ground early and found the settler and his wife busy cooking at a large fire, surrounded by fallen trees and brushwood. The neighbours came by twos and threes, from different quarters, with axes over their shoulders; and as they came up each got a drink of whisky out of a tin can. The stuff smelled most horribly, yet none of them made a wry face of it...

At first they went to work moderately and with quietness, but after the whisky had been handed about several times, they got very uproarious—swearing, shouting, tumbling down, and sometimes like to fight. I then left off working, thinking I would be as safe out of the way a little; but this would not do, as they would have no idlers there. The handing round of the whisky was offered to me, but I declined the honour, being a teetotaler. So I had no choice but commence working again, as I wished to see the end

of the matter. I was sick of it before this; for most of them were drunk and all of them excited. The manner in which they used their axes was a “caution.” Many accidents happen, and lives are frequently lost on these occasions, both from accidents and quarrels.

In all there were about twenty-four men, one half Irish; on the whole about the roughest specimens of humanity I have ever seen... The walls of a house, 15 by 26, and 12 feet high, were up before night, and some of the nearest neighbours were to return next day and cut out the doors and windows. When all was done they sat down, all about, eating bread and meat, and drinking whisky (I believe of the same quality as that known in Aberdeen by the name of “*Kill the carter*”).

The Mounties’ pain killer

John A. Macdonald in 1881 on reports of alcoholism in the Royal North West Mounted Police, as cited in the Winnipeg Free Press, July, 5, 1904.

As regards the habits of the men, I think, on the whole, they are in a very fair state, but there is still a good deal of drinking... there has been, I am afraid, a laxity in granting [liquor] permits. Besides... there has been a great deal of use of that most noxious alcoholic drink, Perry Davis’ Pain Killer. It contains a great quantity of alcohol, and has not only affected the physical health of the men, but the mental health of some of them. That has been used largely under the pretense of being medicinal, but, really, I am afraid, as a stimulant. There has been, and there will be hereafter a more rigid discipline preserved among the men.

Sober Macdonald and drunk reporter?

Newspapers still provided the only published reports of debates in the House of Commons when the Toronto Globe opposed a proposed Hansard, in which the words of members of Parliament would be published after officially recorded in shorthand by Parliamentary reporters. The Globe argued that politicians would be too inclined to sanitize and alter their speeches, citing an example that questions the sobriety of either the speaker or the reporter. Grattan O’Leary, long-time Ottawa Journal editor, writing in his autobiography, later identified the reporter in this article as P.D. Ross, also of the Journal, and the speaker, John A. Macdonald, known for an affinity to what the Scots called “the breath of life.” Macdonald at this time was a former prime minister who would soon be prime minister again. From the Toronto Globe, May 20, 1874.



John A. Macdonald depicted in *Grip* newspaper cartoon, August 16, 1873. McCord Museum 994x.5.273.73

No man is less fit to judge the report of a speech than the man who made it.

This sounds like a paradox, but it is an axiom of reporting experience. "I never said this. I never could have said it," is the cry frequently of an orator reading a verbatim account of what he said, done by a reporter with an ear and hand of infallible reliability. When an orator reads his own speeches in the coldness of common sense, and without the divine afflatus he felt when on his legs, it is like an appeal from Phillip drunk to Phillip sober.

There is a story told of a leading member of the great Tory part of Canada making a speech, which seemed to the reporter to be anything but surcharged with wisdom. The reporter waited on the great man the next day, and said he wished to read the speech to him.

"Good," cried the important politician, "that is the very thing I should like you to do. I'm glad you have not sent it off."

The reporter had not proceeded many sentences when he was stopped by the orator, who cried, "I never said that." "I assure you you did," replied the reporter. "Well, go on," cried the ruler of men. When the reporter had proceeded to the length of a few more sentences he was again stopped, with the exclamation, "I never said that."

At last they decided to throw over the report, and to have the reporter take down a speech, dictated there and then. This was done, and when the reporter was leaving with a satisfactory speech delivered to the bare walls of the room, he was called back, and the orator, with a good deal of wit, said to him, "Look here, young man, when you come down to report a cabinet minister's speech, don't get drunk."

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Teetotalers curb booze



C.H. Snider fonds, Archives of Ontario.

The 1820s temperance movement led to the prohibition era almost a century later. Police are shown here destroying whisky at Elk Lake, Ontario, 1925 during Ontario's 1916 to 1917 prohibition era. Elk Lake, a silver mining boom town, housed 10,000 people in 1907; just 400 in 2016. Prohibition ruled in every province in 1917, but repealed in most provinces in the 1920s. Prince Edward Island boasted the longest province-wide prohibition, from 1901 to 1948.

Curbed by a holy war waged by temperance advocates and teetotalers, Canada's nineteenth century booze pandemic peaked in the 1820 and 1830s. Hundreds of temperance societies sprang up within a few years. They were led mostly by Methodists, Baptists,

From my book, About Canada, Toronto, Civil Sector Press, 2012.

Presbyterians and assorted Bible pounders, preaching salvation from the grip of life-destroying “ardent spirits.” Largely standing on the sidelines—and sometimes in opposition to the teetotallers—were the two establishment churches, the Church of England (Anglican) and the Catholic Church of Rome.

The temperance warriors claimed great victories. Beyond doubt, they did much good. But they never achieved anything like a complete or lasting cure. The social curse remained a problem throughout at least the nineteenth century.

It was a war that would last almost a century, progressing through three phases: temperance, voluntary abstinence of all forms of booze, and law-enforced prohibition.

At first, the temperance societies were temperate in name and in fact. These were “societies of the temperate,” advocating only “abstaining from the use of distilled spirits,” wrote the Rev. John Edgar, Belfast professor of divinity, in a lengthy lead article on “Principles and Objects of Temperance Societies,” in the first issue of Montreal’s *Canada Temperance Advocate*, May 1835. “The Christian,” claimed Rev. Edgar, “is not forbidden the use of wine” and “does not consider the use of wine to be sinful.” Temperance meant the temperate consumption of fermented alcohol.

Before long, however, most anti-booze organizations, except in Quebec, required the long pledge, total abstinence of all alcoholic beverages.

It was not without a fight that total abstinence prevailed. Women were champion advocates. “Lips that touch wine

shall never touch mine,” chimed the most chaste maidens. Some might well have become old maids, since the available supply of eligible, teetotalling males was rather limited. It was one thing for a man to swear off whiskey. Thousands did, and some even managed to stay on the wagon. But for many, the thought of also giving up beer, wine, and cider, was a bridge too far.

The Anglican Church stood with opponents of the despised and ridiculed “cold water army,” if for no other reason than their members were required to sip a little wine at communion service.

It was in the United States that the first temperance societies sprang up, in the early 1820s. The first two in Canada were organized in 1828, at Pictou, Nova Scotia, and in Montreal. Ross Duncan, Presbyterian minister and educator (he also farmed in order to feed his large family) founded the Pictou Society in January. Founders of the Montreal Temperance Society included Jacob De Witt, one of Lower Canada’s most successful businessmen and financiers, a long-serving member of the House of Assembly, and an elder in the Presbyterian Church.

By 1832, according to historian Craig Heron, Upper Canada claimed 100 temperance societies with more than 10,000 members; Nova Scotia claimed 30,000 members by 1837.

Buckingham, in Lower Canada, was an example of the remarkable success claimed by temperance societies, according to a report in the May, 1835 premier issue of the *Canada Temperance Advocate*. The Buckingham society had been organized less than three years earlier, “under circumstances affording but slight prospect

of success,” the paper reported. Lumbering was the main industry, and employed some 150 men. Booze was “considered indispensably necessary to protect against the cold and heat, and afford strength for the performance of the severe labour required.” Despite this, the anti-booze preachers persuaded 120 men to take the pledge, and the lumbering firms stopped providing their workers with whisky. The result, it was said, was that lumbering had become much more productive without the former “riot, confusion and drunkenness.” Better yet, in the preceding year “no lives were lost, no limbs were broken, and no serious accident is known to have occurred.”

Despite the best efforts of the anti-boozers, teetotallers remained a minority and, although somewhat curbed, booze remained a nineteenth century problem, as evidenced by a few random reports.

- 1845. Peterborough, with a population of 2,000, has no more than 150 temperance members but supports a brewery, three distilleries, and, with 20 licenced taverns, it had a ratio of one drinking place for every 100 men, women and children.
- 1879. Winnipeg physicians claim that two-thirds of their male patients “suffer in some way or other from alcoholic poison,” the *Winnipeg Tribune* reports April 15.
- 1890. Canadians spent \$38 million for 22 million gallons of spirits, wine and beer, and almost \$800 million in the 25 years following Confederation, the *Toronto Farmer’s Sun* reported, May 17, 1892. The 1890 consumption amounted to more than nine gallons per adult over age 19.

- 1900. An advertisement in the Montreal *Family Herald and Weekly Sun*, October 3 tells wives how to avoid “the disgrace, suffering, misery, and privation” resulting from their “husband’s drinking habits.” The secret is to sneak a little of the advertised patent medicine into his food and coffee.
- 1904. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald notes that among the members of the Royal North West Mounted Police, “there is still a good deal of drinking,” the *Winnipeg Free Press* reports, July 5.
- 1919. Within about five years, prohibition has come and largely gone across Canada—except in Quebec, where prohibition lasted only a few months and prohibited only distilled liquor. The veterans are back from the Great War. Booze sales for the year included 4.8 million gallons of distilled liquor and 35 million gallons of beer—about eight gallons per adult, not counting wine or cider, according to Statistics Canada (*Historical Statistics of Canada, second edition*, 1983). The long-running U.S. prohibition followed immediately, on January 1, 1920. Production of Canadian whisky, and importation of Scotch, soared, to help slacken the thirst of dry Americans.

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Indians ask protection from bad drunk white men



Image from Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of my Life*. Toronto: W. Briggs, 1884.

Pen sketch of houses in the Credit Indian Village on the banks of the Credit River in what is now the City of Mississauga. Established in 1826, the village thrived for more than a dozen years, despite encroachment and harassment by white settlers, which eventually drove the people out.

In 1826, a group of Christian Mississauga First Nation people settled on a Methodist Church mission on the banks of the Credit River, in what is now Canada's sixth largest city. Their Credit Indian Village thrived for a dozen years, with as many as 50 homes, a school, hospital, church, board sidewalks, "two public stores, two saw mills, one blacksmith shop, [and] one carpenter shop." The villagers owned two-thirds of the company that developed the port at the mouth of the river, and were instrumental in laying out the town plot for Port Credit.¹ But they were eventually driven out by the harassment and encroachment of white settlers.

An early indication of their troubles is described in a petition to Upper Canada Lieutenant Governor John Colborne to protect their fishing grounds from the depredations of wicked, drunken white men. Colborne recommended to the House of Assembly "that an act may be made to protect the fishery at that place." Here is the petition, as published in the Colonial Advocate, York (Toronto), November 12, 1829.

FATHER!

Your children who now petition to you are a remnant of the great nations who owned and inhabited the country in which you now live and make laws. The ground on which you and your children stand covers the bones of our fathers, of many generations.

When your fathers came over the great waters we received them as friends, and gave them land to live upon. We have always been friends to our great father the King and his white children.

When the white men came they made us sick and drunken, and as they increased we grew less and less, till we are now very small. We sold a great deal of land to our great father the King for very little, and we became poorer and poorer.

We reserved all the hunting and fishing, but the white men soon grew so many that they took all. When all the rest was gone we kept the 16 mile creek, the 12 mile creek, and the river Credit. The first two are gone from us, but we are wishing to keep the Credit. We reserved one mile on each side of the Credit where we now live.

About four years ago the Great Spirit sent to us good men with the great word of the gospel of our Saviour

Jesus Christ, and we became a new people; we have thrown away our sins; we live in houses in a village where we worship the Great Spirit and learn his word and keep his Sabbaths; our children and young men learn to read, and many of our people from a distance have joined us.

We now want the fish in our river that we may keep our children at home to go to school, and not go many miles back to hunt for provisions. We also catch salmon and sell them very cheap to industrious white men who bring us flour and other provisions and cattle; and they say it is much better than to fish themselves.

But now father, we will tell you how wicked white men will not work. They come in the fall and spring and encamp for many weeks close by our village. They burn and destroy our fences and boards in the night. They watch the salmon and take them as fast as they come up. They swear and get drunk and give a very bad example to our young people, and try to persuade them to be wicked like themselves, and particularly on the Sabbath, their wicked ways give us much trouble and make our hearts sorry.

Others go to the mouth of the river and catch all the salmon. They put the offals of salmon in the mouth of the river to keep the fish from passing up, that they may take them with a seine near the mouth of the river in the lake; and often in the dark they set gill nets in the river and stop all the fish. By those means we are much injured and our children are deprived of bread.

Now father, once all the fish in these rivers and lakes, and all the deer in the woods were ours, but your red

children only ask you to cause laws to be made to keep these bad men away from our fishery at the river Credit, and from Mr. Racey's shore one mile on each side of the river as far as our lands extend, and to punish those who attempt to fish on Saturday night, Sunday night, and Sunday, but will let the fish pass up to our white brothers up the river.

The villagers received little, if any, help from the Family Compact-dominated Upper Canada government, which pressured the Mississauga, unsuccessfully, to drop their Methodist and adopt the establishment's Anglican faith.

In the early 1840s, the Mississauga decided to leave. The salmon run in the Credit River had been almost completely depleted. Some of the trees on the land they occupied had been felled by encroaching settlers. The land they occupied and the homes and other properties they had built did not hold them back, because they had been unable to obtain title.

They had nowhere to go until 1847 when 266 left for the Grand River, where the Iroquois Six Nations Confederacy offered the Mississauga 4,800 acres of their reserve. The land they had held on the Credit River was surveyed into plots by federal government surveyor John S. Dennis the year before they left, and sold at auction as soon as they were gone. In 1906, the site of the Credit Indian Village became the Mississauga Golf and Country Club. No sign of the village remains, other than a small historic plaque

(Endnotes) 1 Meaghan FitzGibbon, *Journey to the Past: The Lost Villages of Mississauga*. Mississauga: Heritage Mississauga, 2010.

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Crime, sex, adultery fill immoral theatre



McCord Museum I-48408-11.

Montreal actresses, 1870.

Good Christian Canadians were warned in 1829 to avoid the wicked theatre. Nothing but immorality and ruin comes from it, Rev. J. Bromley of Newcastle-Upon Tyne declared in a speech published in The Christian Guardian, Toronto, December 12, 1829. Excerpts:

That lewd insinuations, immodest words, and more immodest action, are admitted upon the stage;—that scenes are exhibited shocking to female delicacy, and pestiferous to the minds of youth; and that these things

too often form the zest of entertainment, and the glory of the performance, is as notorious as that the sun shines at noon-day. And it is to be feared, that in this respect, the drama gets worse instead of better; for to see impiety in all its insolence and obscenity without a blush, we must not have recourse to the Grecian Euripides or the Roman Terence, but to the "Cain" of Lord Byron, to the "Tom and Jerry," of our own times.

On the stage, crimes of the deepest dye, intrigue, seduction, adultery, &c. are exhibited with such circumstances of music, poesy, scenery and costume, as to administer pleasure instead of pain, delight instead of horror. It is to be feared that he who connects his pleasures with the exhibition of a crime, will too soon look upon the crime itself with indulgence and desire.

The immodesty, impurity, and profaneness of the modern drama, would never be endured, only that the auditors are kept in countenance by their numbers. A lady, who in a polite and well-bred company, should speak what the heroines of the stage pour forth in such abundance, would be avoided: I presume there is not a gentleman present, but what would call for his hat, and wish her a good evening. But because these nauseating exhibitions are beheld by the multitude, the shame of them is lost sight of; and every sentiment of propriety and accuracy is buried in the presence and applauses of a crowd.

It is not only by wasting time, and endangering the health, that the amusements of the theatre prevent the improvement of the mind; but more especially by a high and preternatural excitement of the passions. The author of our being has given to the passions and appetites of our nature, sufficient energy in themselves, with-

out the excitement of those artificial and violent stimuli, which are furnished by the stage; and when once the mind resigns itself to the attractions and indulgences of the drama, study, diligence, and application are at an end; the sober pursuits of life become insipid, and the laborious paths of science uninteresting and dull.

Is it to be borne, that they who one day, in commerce or in law, or in medicine, or in the pulpit, are to serve society, should waste the best of their time, and enervate the noblest of their powers, amidst that lewdness and profanity of the theatre.

— Canada @ 150 —

Woman preacher silenced

A daring female preacher in Nova Scotia was “completely extinguished,” the Novascotian reported, April 3, 1828 in the following item.

We received by the Mail from Miramichi, a printed discourse, delivered at Newcastle, by a Mr. Coony, from the text “Let your women keep silence in the churches.” It was delivered for the purpose of putting down the Female Preacher, who has been fulminating fire and brimstone against the good folks at that place, and though somewhat overstrained as to style, contains much sound doctrine, and according to the preface, has completely extinguished the petticoat Luminary. Silence and modesty, particularly in the churches, Mr. C. contends, should be distinguished features of female character—to any of our fair but loquacious readers, who may doubt this assertion, we are ready to lend the Pamphlet.

Sodom and Gomorrah in old Toronto

Canadian Freeman, *York (Toronto), Upper Canada rails against the town's countless whore houses, one in a house controlled by a police magistrate, in this item published May 26, 1831.*

“And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Lord out of heaven. And he destroyed these cities, and all the country about, all the inhabitants of the cities, and all things that spring from the earth.”
Genesis.

We witnessed such scenes last week as induced us to think that more shameless and barefaced debauchery was never exhibited in Sodom and Gomorrah, than is carried on in this town at present.

Houses of infamy are scattered throo' every corner of the town—and one of them had the hardihood to commence operations next door to our office, last week, in a house under the control of a Police magistrate! Although this house was kept by a degraded negro family, so besotted are some of our would-be young gentlemen—so immune to shame and decency—and so dead to every feeling of Christianity—that they crowded to it at noon-day, and some of them that we know visited it in open daylight, last Sabbath!—Young lawyers, and others of respectable standing.

We had no idea before that such wretched and shameless depravity existed in our infant community—in any other place that we lived, such men would be viewed

as a walking pestilence and scouted out of all decent society.

It seems to us that some of our authorities, and heads of families too, connive at debauchery of this kind, which, if not checked, will be sufficient ere long to draw down the wrath of God upon the town, as in times of old upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

By some trouble and loss of time, we got our new neighbours ejected on Monday last—the Police are acquainted with the parties, and if they do not do their duty, we shall try the Executive.

— Canada @ 150 —

Rowboat romance

A romantic row around Toronto's harbour on a hot summer day might "make a young couple happy for the remainder of their days," according to this item from the Toronto Growler, August 12, 1864.

We recommend a turn about the Bay to all young ladies and gentlemen who are desirous of keeping clear of the heat, the dust and din of our city for a few hours. A couple in a small boat we have found to be quite sufficient — the gentleman at the oars and the fair one at the tiller. Sitting thus vis-a-vis, with cool breezes gently fanning your brow, the prospect of a quiet bit of lunch, and an odd snatch of some sweet melody, is not to be sneezed at. Such delightful little parties may be improved too, in a thousand ways likely to make a young couple happy for the remainder of their days.

Dead animals, manure litter Toronto water

A call to supply York, soon to be Toronto, with clean, safe water is issued by the Canadian Freeman, April 5, 1832.

York Bay. It is really astonishing how the magistrates can allow the horrible nuisance which now appears on the face of this Bay. All the filth of the town—dead horses, dogs, cats, manure, &c. heaped up together on the ice, to drop down, in a few days, into the water which is used by almost all the inhabitants on the Bay shore. If they have no regard for the health of their fellow-beings, are they not afraid to poison the fish that supply their own tables?

We hope His Excellency will take cognizance of the state of the Bay from the Garrison down, and see the carrion-broth to which the worshipful magistracy are about to treat the inhabitants when they dissolve.

There is not a drop of good well-water about the Market square, and the people are obliged to use the Bay water however rotten.—Instead therefore of corrupting the present bad supply, we think the authorities ought rather adopt measures to supply the town from the pure fountain that springs from the Spadina and Davenport Hill, which could be done at a trifling expense. There is nothing more conducive to health than good water—nothing more destructive than bad—and what ought the authorities to watch over and protect before the health of the community

Weeks later, much differently contaminated water began to kill North Americans by the tens of thousands.

Killer cholera enters North America at Quebec



Immigrant ships from Britain brought waves of cholera to North America, first to Quebec in 1832, later to U.S. ports, as depicted in this *New York Punch* drawing, July 18, 1883.

Some 52,000 immigrants, mostly destitute Irish, arrived at Quebec in 1832, carrying with them the cholera pandemic to first reach North America. An estimated 9,000 people died of cholera in Lower and Upper Canada in the first pandemic. By 1872, an estimated 20,000 had died in later cholera epidemics. Cholera could have been stopped in its tracks if medical science then knew it was spread in cholera-contaminated water that people drank, or more rarely, in food they ate. Clean, safe drinking water would have stopped the disease. But it was thought that

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cholera was spread in the polluted air of early nineteenth century towns. Thus cannons shot blank charges skyward and great fires of tar and rosins were lit in efforts to clean the air.

On August 28, 1817, the government of Bengal, India, reported the outbreak of a cholera epidemic at its capital, Jessor. Ten thousand people perished within a few weeks. Twenty-four years and ten months later it would reach North America, landing at the port of Quebec, and from there it spread west as far as Niagara, and south into the United States.

From Jessor, the cholera crawled across Asia and China, reaching Russia in the summer of 1831. With reports from British papers that were two months old, Canadian newspapers in late 1831 began reporting cholera's march across Europe. At St. Petersburg, there were 4,694 cholera deaths within four months; at Moscow, 2,908 deaths within six weeks, according to Montreal's *Canadian Courant*.

Cholera reached Britain, at Sunderland, on October 26, causing "great alarm... throughout England," the *Courant* reported on January 4, 1832. The Montreal *Vindicator*, March 23, said 44 had been killed in Scotland by January 24. The *Niagara Gleaner*, March 31, said the cholera victims in Edinburgh and Glasgow were mostly from "the lowest ranks of life."

Police were stationed at all the entrances to Edinburgh to "prevent the admission of beggars and other characters," while within the city, orders had been issued "for the arrest of all beggars and vagrants," who were to be temporarily confined. A month later, April 29, a *Gleaner*

report estimated the death toll in Paris at 20,000 to 30,000. “By orders of the Government, the funerals are conducted by night, and trenches, instead of graves, are dug for the reception of bodies, which were brought in cartloads” by army horses. “Riots and insurrections are occurring almost every day... multitudes are thrown out of employment.”

The newspaper reports were warning flags, raising fears about the record number of immigrants from Britain and Ireland that were expected to start arriving in Canada by late spring, and the danger that cholera could come with them.

Preparing for the bug

It was from the Canadian newspapers that Matthew Whitworth-Aylmer, fifth Baron Aylmer, governor general of both Lower and Upper Canada, learned that cholera had reached Britain. The ships that had carried Canadian timber to Britain in their holds, would soon be returning with immigrants crammed in their holds, more immigrants sandwiched between decks in steerage class, and a few in the relative comfort of cabins above deck. Aylmer called on his executive council to prepare for a cholera invasion.

Britain had prepared for a cholera invasion by establishing local boards of health. The British plans had been sent to officials in the Empire’s far-flung colonies. Canada would follow the British pattern. The House of Assembly on February 25 passed an Act to establish a quarantine station at Grosse Île (Grosse Isle in the newspapers of the time), 50 kilometres downstream from Quebec on the St. Lawrence, and local health boards at Quebec and Montreal, with provision for boards at oth-

er centres as needed. The Act provided £10,000 to fund the health boards and the quarantine station.

In March, another controversial act imposed a head tax of five shillings per immigrant, to be paid by ships' captains, with the money used to assist sick and indigent immigrants, and to assist those who needed help in reaching their final destinations. Most of the immigrants would be heading for Upper Canada, some for the United States.

Grosse Île and its harbour "form one of the prettiest spots in the river," the *Quebec Gazette* wrote. The harbour, three miles in length and four hundred to six hundred yards wide, bounded by Grosse and three other small islands, was said to be capable of accommodating more than 100 vessels. Troops arrived at Grosse Île in April to set up the quarantine station, and temporarily occupied the only farmhouse on the island, "to the terror of the farmer and his family." A hospital and sheds were hastily built to accommodate immigrants. The inspection station was staffed with three doctors, a marine boarding officer, nurses, clerks, labourers, and troops.

Every ship sailing up the Saint Lawrence from across the Atlantic was to stop at Grosse Île. If no sickness was found among the crew and passengers, and if it was declared that there had been none during the voyage, a ship could then proceed to Quebec. If there were sickness, a ship was to be quarantined for anywhere from three to 30 days, depending on the nature of the illness. Immigrants from the hold and steerage of the quarantined ships were to be put ashore to wash themselves and their luggage, and be fumigated. The ship was also

to be fumigated. Cabin passengers, if there was no illness among them, were allowed to remain on board. It was felt that they did not present a risk because they had not been exposed to the damp, dark, airless filth, stench, sickness and astoundingly overcrowded conditions of those below deck.

At Quebec, and more belatedly at Montreal, the health boards set up further defences. At Quebec, health wardens were appointed for each of the town's 14 wards, with power to enforce the board's regulations. Every house was to be inspected three times a week. Householders were required to "scrape, wash and cleanse their premises and carry away all the filth" that had accumulated during the winter. Buildings were to be purified with lime and whitewash.

Overwhelmed by ships bringing hundreds, and sometimes thousands of immigrants almost every day, the defences broke down. Some ships landed at Quebec without stopping at Grosse Île. Sickness went unreported, undetected, sometimes deliberately hidden. It did not matter in any event, because the procedures were powerless to stop the arrival and spread of cholera. They were futile because no one knew how the cholera was carried and spread.

Medical authorities strongly disagreed about whether cholera was contagious. There seemed more agreement that it was spread in the fetid, warm summer air, the miasma, as it was called. That seemed logical, since the summer air in the towns of Canada was typically ripe with the mixed scent from outdoor privies, garbage, and manure. At Montreal, a notice posted by the Board of Health described "Low and marshy ground, stagnant

waters filled with all the elements of miasma,” and even in the centre of town “all manner of impurity, animal and vegetable substances in a state of putrescence, and acted on by all the fiercest power of a burning sun.” In Toronto (then York), dead horses, dogs, cats and manure littered the drinking water (see item *Dead Animals, manure in Toronto’s drinking water, page 106*).

No one knew that it was not in this foul air that the disease was spread, but in drinking water. No one then knew that the cholera bug, a bacterium called *Vibrio cholerae*, resided in the stool of those infected and, like such bugs, prospered in the warmth of summer. The stool, and sometimes the vomit, of the carriers infected drinking water. It is only by drinking infected water or, more rarely at the time, by eating infected food that people are stricken with cholera. That is the only way this bug enters the human body. With outhouses crowded in the towns of the early nineteenth century, and drinking water drawn from shallow wells that were easily contaminated, it seems hardly surprising that the water became infected. And perhaps even less surprising that drinking water on the notorious coffin ships was also contaminated, causing sickness and often death even before the ships reached shore.

Another important thing the medical authorities did not know is that there were seemingly healthy carriers, people whose feces carried *Vibrio cholerae*, but who showed no cholera symptoms. Thus checking for sick people at Grosse Île provided no defence.

The bug lands

The quarantine facilities at Grosse Île were still being

set up when the first immigrant ship of 1832 arrived on April 28. She was the *Constantia*, and brought 141 Irish from Limerick, having lost 29 who died of cholera on the voyage. Six weeks later, 400 ships brought 20,000 immigrants, some of them illegally bypassing Grosse Île to land their passengers at Quebec, according to historian Geoffrey Bilson in *A Darkened House: Cholera in Nineteenth-Century Canada*. In just four days, June 2 to 5, a total of 7,151 passed through Grosse Île. Not all had been inspected before proceeding to Quebec. By late Fall, a record 52,000 arrived at Quebec, most from Ireland.

No one really knows which ship first brought cholera to North America, or exactly when. Many histories give that credit to the brig *Carricks*, which arrived at Grosse Île from Dublin on Sunday, June 3, with 104 immigrants, after having lost 42 passengers to cholera on the voyage. But was it *Carricks*?

On May 8—24 days before *Carricks* reached Grosse Île—the *Quebec Gazette* stated: “An idle report was circulated this morning that some cases of cholera had appeared in the vessels recently arrived at Grosse Île. The rumour, we are happy to say, is groundless.” Or was it? A similar rumour was later also denied, only to be proven correct.

On Wednesday, June 6, three days after *Carricks* arrived at Grosse Île, Quebec “was thrown into a great alarm this morning by a report of two persons having died at Grosse Île of cholera,” the Montreal *Vindicator* reported. Quebec Health Commissioner Dr. Joseph Morrin, and Health Board Secretary T.A. Young, went to Grosse Île that day to investigate. Morin concluded

that “the fever” at Grosse Île was “in no particular different from many now in the Emigrant Hospital” in Quebec, and that in neither case was the fever cholera. The rumour of three cholera patients at Grosse Île “is entirely without foundation,” declared the *Gazette* the next day, while the rumoured cholera death at Quebec “is also entirely without foundation.” But the rumours were right.

The next day, Thursday, June 7, *Europe*, landed 371 Irish immigrants at Quebec, some of them said to be “labouring under the small pox.” *Europe* had not stopped at Grosse Île. A Quebec medical officer, on assurance from the ship’s captain that there was no cholera aboard, had issued a licence for *Europe* to enter the harbour and discharge her passengers. “We have heard it stated,” said the *Quebec Gazette*, “that a committee of the board of health has been appointed to report on the conduct of the Health Officer in that respect.”

On Friday, the steamboat *Voyageur*, landed at Quebec some of the passengers that *Carricks* had brought to Grosse Île four days earlier. The rest of the *Carricks* immigrants continued on the *Voyageur* to Montreal. Two patients died at the Immigrant Hospital in Quebec that Friday. It would soon be confirmed that they had died of cholera. They were the first acknowledged—if not the first actual—cholera deaths in North America. Had they come to North America aboard the *Carricks*? Or aboard the *Europe*? Or were they among the “many” fever patients whom Morrin had said were at the Immigrant Hospital before either *Carricks* or *Europe* reached Quebec?

On Sunday, three days after Morrin and Young visited

Grosse Île and denied the existence of cholera, Dr. John Skey, chief military medical officer for Lower Canada, and other doctors, visited the sick at the Immigrant Hospital. “The truth flashed through our minds,” Dr. Skey stated, that these were indeed cholera sufferers. The number of reported cholera deaths at Quebec jumped from two on Friday to 12 on Monday, and 161 within a week.

The bug bites

“No building for the sick is yet provided in the lower town,” the *Gazette* noted in reporting Skey’s confirmation of cholera at Quebec. “Enormous rents have been asked.” The *Gazette* offered Quebecers a word of advice: “Cleanliness about house and about the person, temperance in drinking, the moderate use of food, no excess of any kind, warm clothing, *and perhaps above all a manful determination to meet the worst, and indeed, a kind of heedlessness about the disease.*”

Voyageur—“a pestilent steamer,” according to Montreal Health Commissioner Dr. Robert Nelson—continued her trip from Quebec, bringing the cholera to Montreal, on Sunday, the same day that it had finally been confirmed at Quebec. At Montreal, a sick immigrant from the *Voyageur* “was carried to a tavern on the wharf, where he died,” Dr. Nelson, recalled in his 1866 book, *Asiatic Cholera*. “All that night and all the succeeding day, the body of this man was exposed to the gaze of the public, and, actuated by motives of curiosity, many people visited it.” The *Montreal Gazette* reported 23 deaths in three days, citing whisky and fear as causes. “The greater proportion of those who died, have been irregular in the habits, or have been guilty of some imprudence.” As for

milder cases, they were “attributed to the effects of fear operating to produce sickness among the timid.” Within two weeks, there were 56 deaths at just one boarding house, and hundreds of others throughout the city.

One day after its appearance at Montreal, the cholera reached Upper Canada, striking at Prescott where there were 16 deaths in two weeks. “Our village is in a dreadful state of consternation,” a Prescott correspondent

Cholera hit everywhere. Seven miles south of Brockville, “an intemperate man died in one of Mr. McKenzie’s out houses.”

wrote in the *Brockville Recorder* June 17. “Many are removing their families to a distance. The crews of the Government boats between here and Montreal... have deserted. Our Magistrates have purchased all the spare boards in this place, sent a bateau to Drummond’s Island, and a number of carpenters to erect sheds for the sick emigrants destined for the upper parts of the province.” It hit nearby towns almost immediately, and even country inns and taverns. Seven miles south of Brockville, reported the *Recorder*, “an intemperate man died in one of Mr. McKenzie’s out houses.”

By June 18, the cholera had reached York, and, with very few exceptions, was in every town and hamlet in Lower and Upper Canada, from Quebec to Niagara. Immigrants crossing from Lower Canada into Vermont

brought the disease into the United States, where it spread as far south as the Gulf of Mexico.

The disease struck with explosive energy, especially in Lower Canada. At Quebec, 440 deaths were reported within three weeks; at Montreal, the death rate was greater.

There was initially no accommodation at either Quebec or Montreal for thousands of sick and indigent immigrants. Few had money for hotels or boarding houses, and were unfit to travel to their planned destinations, mostly in Upper Canada. Cholera patients were not admitted to the existing hospitals and “emigrant” hospitals had to be hastily set up. At Montreal, sick immigrants were put in whatever sheds could be found, one offering little better than a roof with a dirt floor, covered with straw on which lay the sick, the dying and the dead.

The dead were buried as fast as possible. There was no time for prayers, mourning, or tombstones. There was fear that some were buried before they were actually dead. At the Catholic burying ground at the St. Antoine suburb, a trench “10 feet wide, 8 feet deep and over 100 feet long” was dug for as many as two hundred bodies, Nelson wrote. “The dead were closely packed there in tiers, three to four deep, and covered over with earth, leaving the remainder of a trench to receive newcomers.”

The cholera could have been stopped with clean, safe drinking water. But not knowing that, the great effort was made to clean the air. Hundreds of volunteers in both towns joined citizen committees to clean up the manure and filth that fouled the air. “On Saturday, the

Artillery went through the different streets of the town, with several pieces of cannon, and discharged blank cartridge, with the view, if possible, of disinfecting the atmosphere," the *Montreal Gazette* reported on June 19. "In the evening, fires of rosins and other bituminous matter were to be seen in every part of the town." At York, every household was ordered to burn, every day, "pitch, Tar, rosin, Sulphur and any other anti-contagious combustibles." A barrel of tar was provided at "the Court House Yard for the use of such as are too indigent to purchase it for themselves."

At first it was thought, or hoped, that the disease might be confined to the "lower orders," the impoverished immigrants from Ireland, not so much because they were in ill health, ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed, but because, it was felt, of riotous drinking and "irregular habits." But the disease knew no boundaries of race, social order or morality, striking the reputable and disreputable alike.

Doctors, clergy and others who attended the sick were particularly hard hit. There were too few doctors; in Montreal, only 15 for a population of 32,000. They were "almost completely exhausted by fatigue," noted the *Vindicator*. The *Quebec Mercury* reported the first doctor killed by cholera on June 16, Dr. C.N. Perrault, secretary of the town's Board of Health and said to be "one of the most skillful Canadian physicians." Brockville, too, lost its Board of Health secretary, the youthful Dr. Robert Gilmour. The first medical casualty in Montreal was reported by the *Gazette* June 19: "Mr. John Grant Struthers, student of medicine." Also noted at Montreal were the deaths of a member of the Legislative Council,

a road contractor, a chair maker, and a tavern keeper. In Quebec, the reported toll included a member of the House of Assembly, a judge, a lawyer, and a clock maker.

Dr. Daniel Tracey, physician, very recently elected member of the House of Assembly, and editor and publisher of the *Vindicator*, apologized for publishing only a “half-sheet... on account of the prevailing malady having attacked several of our hands.” Tracey wrote that he, too, had “but just recovered from an attack, which we were enabled, by early attention, to arrest.” That was published on June 19. Tracey had died June 18.

There was no precise count of the number of 1832 cholera deaths in Canada. The Quebec Board of Health recorded 3,451 in that town, and almost certainly missed some. Dr. Nelson estimated 4,000 at Montreal. Bishop John Strachan estimated 400 at York. There were lesser totals at each of dozens of smaller towns and hamlets. In the Atlantic Provinces, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland all escaped the disease, while only at Saint John, New Brunswick was it reported, with 32 deaths. A widely used estimate of 9,000 Canadian cholera deaths in 1832 seems reasonable.

There was a second, smaller cholera epidemic in 1834, and several more during a period of nearly four decades, with an estimated 20,000 deaths by 1871. But the 1832 pandemic, the first in Canada and North America, was the largest. Yet, 15 years later, far worse was to come when many more Irish immigrants, fleeing the great potato famine, would bring typhus with them.

— Canada @ 150 —

20,000 Irish famine refugees die in Canada



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A 46-foot granite Celtic Cross, the Irish Memorial Historic Site at Grosse Île, commemorates the Irish famine refugees who died in Canada during the Great Potato Famine. Erected by the Ancient Order of the Hibernians in America, 1909.

Ireland lost a quarter of her population to the great potato famine, from 1845 to 1850. There are no accurate figures, but as many as 1.5 million perished, including many of more than one million who emigrated to England, Scotland, North America and elsewhere in the famine years. Only the United States took more Irish refugees than

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Canada, and the United States took care to accept the healthiest and least distressed. One hundred thousand Irish sailed for Canada in 1847; as many as 20,000 perished, mostly from typhus. Canadian doctors, nurses, clergy and others sacrificed their lives in heroic efforts to save or help the refugees.

The plight of the Irish

Ireland, in the census year of 1841, was a country of at least 8.2 million people, “On the verge of starving, her population rapidly increasing, three-quarters of her labourers unemployed, housing conditions appalling, and the standard of living unbelievably low,” historian Cecil Woodham Smith writes in *The Great Hunger*. Two-thirds of the Irish, most of them tenants of the great landowners, lived on potatoes grown on small plots of land. Potatoes were fed to people, pigs and cows, providing, at best, a diet of potatoes, milk and meat.

“In many districts, their only food is the potato, their only beverage water,” William Courtenay, Earl of Devon, wrote in an 1845 Royal Commission report. “Their cabins are seldom a protection against the weather... a bed and a blanket is a rare luxury... and nearly in all their pig and a manure heap constitute their only property.”

Hunger was common, especially in the summer months when there were no old potatoes left and new ones not ready for picking. Then there were the famine years: 23 potato crop failures during a span of 118 years. None were as bad as the famine that struck with a potato blight on September 1845, and peaked in 1847. Before the blight hit, the fields were green with the promise of a bumper crop of potatoes. With great suddenness, “The

leaves were all scorched black,” a relief official wrote. “It was the work of a night.”

British Prime Minister Robert Peel averted tragedy in the first famine year. He paid £100,000 to buy corn from the United States and launched public works that employed half a million people. “No man died of famine during his administration,” acknowledged the Irish *Freeman’s Journal*. It was during the 1846-1852 administration of Prime Minister John Russell that 2.5 million Irish perished or emigrated.

“The judgment of God sent the calamity to teach the Irish a lesson.” Charles Trevelyan, English official in charge of Irish relief.

To feed themselves, the Irish sold or pawned whatever they could. “A stranger would wonder how these wretched beings find food,” a policeman wrote. “Clothes being in pawn, there is nothing to change. They sleep in their rags and have pawned their bedding.” But still they perished. “The people died by the roadside with grass in their mouths,” wrote Canadian Catholic historian John Gallagher.

Yet “Huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England throughout the period when the people of Ireland were starving,” Woodham Smith wrote. People starved because they had no money. “The face of the country is covered with ripe corn while the people dread

starvation,” wrote an official in Limerick. “The grain will go out of the country, sold to pay rent.”

The Russell government saw the answer to an over-populated and underfed Ireland in emigration, larger and more productive farms, and the unrestrained operation of free market capitalism. The policies were applied with criminal disregard of human life; fueled by racial and religious animosity; exacerbated by the ruthlessness of too many landlords, and an economic depression in England. Charles Trevelyan, the government official in charge of relief, despised the Irish. “The great evil with which we have to contend is not the physical evil of the famine,” he wrote, “but the moral evil of the selfish, perverse and turbulent character of the people.” He also claimed that “The judgment of God sent the calamity to teach the Irish a lesson.”

The Russell government cancelled the Peel program of public works and distribution of food. In their place it relied on workhouses and soup kitchens. Workhouses housed entire families in conditions not much better than jail, but could not begin to accommodate the bursting number of the destitute and hungry. The government soup kitchens lasted barely more than 18 months, shut down in the summer of 1847. The Irish were intended to live on the fall crop of potatoes. That fall crop was the smallest of the famine years, less than one-seventh the size of the 1844 crop, before the blight hit. The worst of the starvation started.

At the same time, the *Poor Law Amendment Act* placed the entire burden of relief on the shoulders of the landlords, who were now to collect not only their rents, but £10 million in taxes. It was utterly impossible. Money

could not be collected from millions of people who had none. Some landlords were still very wealthy, but with little or no rent, many were on the brink of bankruptcy.

To help landlords collect blood from stone, the government provided troops, and instructions. "Arrest, remand, do anything you can" to collect taxes, Charles Wood, chancellor of the Exchequer told George Villiers (Lord Clarendon), the top British official in Ireland. "Send horse, foot and dragoons," Wood added. "I should not be at all squeamish as to what I did, to the verge of the law and a little beyond." The tax collectors seized livestock, furniture, tools, even clothing, managing to collect property worth less than £1 million.

Government policies gave landlords every incentive to ship their destitute tenants far away. One of the first to do so was Denis Mahon, a major in the British cavalry who had inherited 9,000 acres and 28 tiny villages in County Roscommon. Mahon spent £4,000 to send 800 of his tenants to Canada. They were promised agents would meet them in Canada and provide money, clothing and assistance. Other landlords made the same promises. Almost all were lies.

When others tenants refused to leave, Mahon evicted 3,000. They were among the first of half a million torn from their homes, children screaming, mothers weeping, one woman still clinging to her torn-away doorpost. Cottages and cabins were torn down; pottery, beds and clothing confiscated. The homeless were left to survive in "scalps," holes dug two or three feet deep and roofed with twigs and turf, or bigger holes covered with the timber from tumbled homes. Troops hated evicting. A detachment of highlanders gave money to people they evicted.

Lord (Henry) Brougham, an acerbic Scot and former Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, defended the right of landlords to treat their tenants like cattle. “Property would be valueless and capital would no longer be invested in the cultivation of the land” if landlords could not do as they wished with their land and their tenants, he told the House of Lords in London.

Charity

Private charity, in Ireland and from around the world, tried to rectify the criminal conditions created by the public sector. In Ireland, everyone from school children to landlords either donated or helped raise funds—although one absentee landlord limited his kitchen soup donation to £1. A Church of Ireland minister gave a daily pint of soup to 1,149 people; a Belfast committee gave daily soup to more than 12,000. Queen Victoria, the Pope and the U.S. President made personal donations. Victoria issued two fund-raising appeals to the English, who responded with £200,000. Irish soldiers in Calcutta sent £14,000. Ottoman Sultan Abdülmecid sent £1,000 and three shiploads of food. The Choctaw Indians of Oklahoma, who had faced starvation 16 years earlier, sent \$710. The rector of the Irish College in Rome sold his horse and gig to make his donation. Catholic priests and parishioners alike sent large amounts of money.

The most effective relief organization was a special committee of the Friends of Society, the Quakers. Quaker aid amounted to £200,000, but more important were the Quaker volunteers who operated soup kitchens where they were most needed. At least 15 of the Quaker volunteers died of typhus. The Quakers neither preached nor proselytized, but

some Catholic priests condemned parishioners who accepted Protestant food.

Heroic though it was, private aid provided only buckets of help in an ocean of need. “The condition of our country has not improved in spite of the great exertions made by charitable bodies,” the Quaker committee wrote to Prime Minister Russell. The need, it said, was “...far beyond the reach of private exertion, the Government alone could raise the funds and carry the measures necessary in many districts to save the lives of the people.”

“The people sink,” wrote an Irish official; “they have no stamina left, they say, ‘It is the Will of God,’ and they die.”

Coffin ships

All the coffin ships were sailing vessels. Paddle wheel steamships plied rivers and coastal waters, and steamships were now starting to cross the Atlantic. Fourteen years earlier, the Canadian wooden paddle wheeler *Royal William*, was the first under steam alone, carrying Nova Scotia coal and seven passengers on a 25-day voyage to Gravesend on the Thames River, England. In 1840, Nova Scotia’s Sam Cunard, an investor in the *Royal William*, launched the British and North American Steam Packet Company, the ancestor of the Cunard line that dominated trans-Atlantic passenger service for a century, including the famous *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth* ships.

The coffin ships carried timber to Britain in their holds, and on the westward backhaul, in place of ballast, they carried as many as 600 refugees in their holds, the ship owners happy to get extra revenue from very low fares.

A few passengers sometimes travelled in the relative comfort and safety of deck cabins. Those in the holds died from typhus, dysentery, diarrhea, and malnutrition, but mostly typhus.

Typhus is carried by lice, which flourish in unsanitary conditions. More unsanitary conditions could hardly be found than in the grim holds of the coffin ships. Typhus was fatal to as many as half who caught the fever in the 1847 exodus to Canada.

The 300-ton barque *Elizabeth and Sarah* was typical. The 85-year-old tub carried 64 more passengers and crew than her legal limit of 212 on her voyage from Killala, Ireland, to Quebec. She had 32 bunks for 276 passengers. She was required by regulations to carry 12,532 gallons of water, but carried only, 8,700. The required weekly ration of seven pounds of bread, biscuits, flour or oatmeal for each steerage passenger was also short, as it was on many coffin ships. Below decks there were no sanitary facilities, little light or ventilation. Forty emigrants died on the voyage. The *Elizabeth and Sarah* broke down as it entered the broad St. Lawrence. Alexander Buchanan, Canada's chief emigration officer, had her towed to the Grosse Île quarantine station near Quebec, at his own expense.

A prominent Quebec resident and businessman, Buchanan was dedicated in his efforts to help emigrants with information about transportation, employment, land purchase, and protection against unscrupulous employers, merchants, and fraudsters. On occasion he paid the steamship fare to Montreal, Kingston or Toronto for emigrants intending to settle in Canada, rather than moving to the United States,

and provided additional food, until overwhelmed by the need.

If coffin-ship typhus wasn't bad enough, hundreds more perished in shipwrecks. One ship, sailing from Ireland, sank before it was out of sight of those on land. The *Exmouth*, bound from Londonderry to Quebec with 240 immigrants and 11 crew, sank after striking the Isle of Islay in the Scottish Hebrides during a gale, the *Quebec Morning Chronicle* reported May 17. All perished except three seamen who made it to a cleft in the rocky coast. The *Toronto Globe* reported the wreck of the *Crofton* off the west coast of Scotland, "...with the loss of 400 emigrants."

The *Globe*, with a tinge of tragic comedy, reported the story of the *Swatara*. She "was driven on the coast of the Isle of Man in a gale, and to save the ship the masts were cut away. Having refitted, she sailed for the United States. In a few days, off the south of Ireland, she again lost one of her masts, and, with several of the emigrants on board dead, put into an Irish port. Having again refitted, she recently sailed a second time for her destination. Intelligence has been received that the unfortunate ship has put into Derry, having lost her masts a third time, and with more of the passengers dead."

Emigration

The Irish who emigrated¹ to North America during the four famine years 1846-49 emigrated mostly to the United States. They may have been starving, but they'd had a bellyful of British rule, and wanted no more of it. Official British figures for those four years say that 632,076 people (mostly Irish) left the British Isles for

the United States, and 225,552 for British North America, i.e., the Maritime colonies and Canada. Emigration to British North America peaked at 109,680 in 1847, while 142,154 sailed to the United States. Probably 100,000 of those who emigrated to British North America that year were Irish. And of these, an estimated 15,000 sailed for Saint John, New Brunswick, and 85,000 for Grosse Île and Quebec's entry port to Canada.

But whether from New Brunswick or from Canada, many sought to flee to the United States as fast as they could. They were far from welcomed.

If the Irish, especially the Catholic Irish, were detested by many in England, they were hardly less so in the United States. Antipathy rose from a perceived burden and risk imposed by destitute people; from sectarian conflict; from ethnic bigotry; and from fear that cheap foreign labour posed a threat to American workers. In Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love, a church, a seminary and houses were burned in three days of anti-Irish rioting in 1844. Thirteen people were killed, and a greater number wounded.

At the crest of the tide of famine refugees, the United States sought to prevent the most destitute both from sailing to U.S. ports, and from crossing from British North America to American soil. When an 1847 law reduced by one-third the number of passengers permitted on ships sailing for U.S. ports, the *Quebec Chronicle*, May 5, 1847 presciently saw it as an effort "to check the influx of emigrants to the states. The immediate effect will be to raise fares and divert a larger portion of the multitude from the Union to British America."

And that's what happened. American ships were more

comfortable, healthier and safer than the British coffin ships, but the fare was more than three times as great. U.S. state and port authorities also took measures aimed at preventing the aged, sick and destitute from disembarking on U.S. soil. "To the United States go the people of good character and in comfortable circumstances; to British North America, the evil and ill-disposed," wrote the U.S. consul in Londonderry. "They go to Canada either because the fare is cheaper or their landlords are getting rid of them."

Equally stern were the efforts to prevent the famine refugees in Canada and New Brunswick from crossing the border. They were refused aboard ships heading to U.S. ports from Saint John, and from Canada through Lake Champlain. Officials at U.S. border customs turned the Irish back. At Lewiston, New York, an official who allowed Irish ferry passengers to disembark on American soil was jailed.

It was all to no avail. There were hundreds of miles of border where even the destitute and sick could enter the United States undetected, and many thousands did. Some men left their wives and children in Canada, promising to send for them once there were established in the United States. Some wives never heard from them.

CANADA 1847

Grosse Île

From the start of 1847 there was widespread apprehension in both Quebec and Montreal that the year would bring a deluge of famine refugees, with a risk of typhus, the fever, as it was generally called. In March, a Quebec

citizens' committee sent a petition to colonial secretary Earl Grey in London, seeking help to prepare for the deluge. The *Montreal Gazette* warned that Canada was about to be "inundated with an enormous crowd of poor and destitute emigrants." Yet the government did almost nothing to prepare the ill-equipped Grosse Île quarantine station.

Dr. George Mellis Douglas knew about crises at Grosse Île. During the 1832 cholera panic he was assistant to the station's medical director, and four years later he was the medical director. On February 19, Douglas asked Governor General Lord Elgin (James Bruce) for £3,000 to prepare the station for a record number of emigrants. He was given £300, the use of a small steamer, the *St. George*, to ply between Grosse Île and Quebec, and authority to hire a sailing vessel for not more than £25.

The first emigrant ship of the year, the *Syria* from Liverpool, dropped anchor at Grosse Île at 4:30 p.m. on May 14. She arrived with 241 passengers, all Irish, nine having died on the voyage. Douglas found 84 typhus patients aboard the *Syria*, and expected another 20 to 24 to come down with the fever.

The number of patients from the first ship approached the station hospital's intended capacity of 150. Ten thousand more were already on their way. Three days before the *Syria* arrived, Buchanan issued a list of vessels that had left for Quebec between April 3 and 17. "It appears there are now on their way to this port, 34 vessels, having on board 10,636 passengers," the *Morning Chronicle* summarized. All but one of the ships, the *Favourite* from Glasgow, came from Irish ports or from Liverpool, a major port of embarkation for the Irish. Almost all

would be Irish. The number of passengers on each ship varied from 80 aboard the *Favourite* to 580 aboard the *John Bolton* from Liverpool.

If 241 emigrants and a little more than 100 fever patients represented about half the Grosse Île hospital capacity, how could it handle ten thousand? It couldn't. Yet more than twice that number would crowd the island.

By the end of May there were 40 vessels lined up at Grosse Île, with some 13,000 passengers. In a letter dated June 2 published in the *Quebec Mercury*, Dr. Douglas says there were 1,100 patients housed in "hospitals, schools, churches and tents," with "six medical men in attendance." There had been 116 deaths, while "The number of orphans does not exceed twenty." The orphans, he said, were "...specially cared for, and receive milk and nourishment... There is no distress from want of food," with the daily ration of one pound per person. In addition, the ever helpful Alexander Buchanan sent a steamer with additional biscuits, oatmeal, soft bread, tea, sugar and pork for "the most unfortunate."

Matters, however, were rapidly worsening. Grosse Île became crowded with as many as 25,000 emigrants. The line of waiting ships grew longer. The ships were quarantined for as long as 12 weeks. The longer the refugees were held on the waiting ships, the more the fever spread. Despite a prohibition, many bodies were said to have been dumped overboard, while other bodies from the ships were among the 5,424 buried on Grosse Île.

It was impossible to hold 25,000 people for an effective four-week quarantine period. Many were released early; 4,000 to 5,000 on one particular Sunday in June; 2,000 of whom Dr. Douglas expected to fall ill within three weeks. “Good God!” he wrote in a letter, warning authorities. “What evils will befall the city wherever they alight?”

The last of 398 emigrant ships to stop at Grosse Île in 1847 was the *Richard Watson* on November 7. Forty-three ships are thought to have unloaded their passengers at Quebec without stopping at Grosse Île. The quarantine station was able to offer but little help to the sick immigrants, and no effective quarantine protection to Canada.

Up the river

From Grosse Île, up the river and across Lake Ontario, came tens of thousands of the unfortunate Irish, thousands of them to die at Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, Niagara, and elsewhere.

In Quebec, the *Morning Chronicle*, July 27 warned, “Something must be done by ourselves, and that immediately, or else the whole city will be one general hospital.”

While the great majority of the Irish who left Grosse Île sailed directly for Montreal, Quebec had its ample share of sickness, death, and stench. In addition to the refugees who did land at Quebec, there was constant travel between the city and the quarantine station during the entire quarantine period. It started the day after the first quarantine ship, the *Syria*, arrived, when the ship’s captain and a passenger visited Quebec.

What was needed at Quebec was a hospital for its own

patients. The city's Marine and Emigrant Hospital, by late July, was crammed full of Irish refugees, Quebec patients had been turned away, and the city had no other hospital. "The disease is spreading in the suburbs and coves, and will soon reach the heart of the city," said the *Chronicle*.

In one week at Quebec, three children age 2.5 to five years, died on the city's wharves. One man arrived with his dead wife wrapped in a blanket.

At a citizens' meeting the day before, the mayor, doctors, clergy, and merchants clamoured for use of the city's parliament building for a hospital. The building had housed the legislature of Lower Canada until 1841 when Lower and Upper Canada were combined under one government. The capital of what was now officially called Canada East and Canada West was, in 1847, located in Montreal. (Two year's later, Montreal's parliament building was burned down in two days of rioting and the peripatetic capital moved again, eventually to Ottawa).

The day after the *Chronicle* sounded its plea for a hospital for Quebec citizens, word from Montreal was reached that Governor General Bruce had approved the use of one of the buildings of the Cavalry Barracks, lying outside of the barrack gates on the Plains of Abraham, for

a city hospital. “The citizens will be provided with a temporary receptacle for their sick poor, in an excellent location,” said the *Chronicle*.

Still the crisis grew. By August 16, no more burials were to be allowed at the burying ground near the Emigrant and Marine hospital since the grounds were “full of bodies, emitting a most noisome effluvia, highly dangerous to the health of the citizens.” During the week, three children—two aged five and one 2-1/2 years—died on the city’s wharves. One man from Grosse Île arrived with his dead wife, wrapped in a blanket.

On July 21, a soup kitchen was busy feeding some 200 emigrant families, but two kitchen employees “have fallen sick from the fever.”

In Montreal, an apparently healthy Irish baby was placed in a hospital room with 18 other orphans. It came down with typhus, and 10 of the 19 orphans died.

The *Chronicle* appealed for help for the growing number of orphans at Grosse Île: “We are confident that these helpless little wanderers... will be cared for and protected by those of our citizens who have been blessed with enough to spare of this world’s goods.”

Montreal

Some 80,000 Irish landed at Montreal, most of them later moving farther up the river and across lake Ontario.

They were doctored by Montreal doctors, nursed by the Order of Grey Nuns, attended by Catholic and Protestant clergy. Housed at first in emigrant sheds in the heart of the city, leftover from the 1832 cholera epidemic, they were moved in August to a new hospital and more extensive sheds at Point St. Charles, a short distance upstream.

When an Irish woman gave birth to a baby in Montreal, the Grey Nuns placed it in a hospital room with 18 other orphans. The mother may have perished, or very possibly, struggling to keep herself alive, was unable to support her infant. It was “apparently healthy,” the *Montreal Pilot* reported. Yet it came down with the fever, affected others, and 10 of the 19 orphans died.

Typhus claimed 3,579 victims in Montreal according to the official count of the Executive Council. In the chaotic situation, the official count likely missed a good many deaths. An inscription on Montreal’s “Black Rock” claims a much higher total. Irish workers building the Victoria Bridge across the St. Lawrence 12 years later, were unnerved by the discovery of a mass grave in Windmill Point, near where the Point St. Charles emigration hospital and sheds had stood. On December 1, 1859, they inscribed on the boulder: “To Preserve from Desecration the Remains of 6,000 Immigrants Who died of Ship Fever A.D. 1847-48 This Stone is erected by the Workmen of Messrs. Peto, Brassey and Betts Employed in the Construction of the Victoria Bridge A.D. 1859.”

Toronto

A city of some 20,000 bordered by forest and Lake Ontario, Toronto received, from May to November, 38,560 Irish emigrants at Reese’s Wharf, as noted by

historians Mark McGowan and Michael Chard. Most passed through Toronto for scattered settlements, as near as Hamilton or as far as London or Niagara, where many fled to the United States (including the grandfather of car maker Henry Ford). Of fewer than 3,000 that remained in the city by year's end, more than 1,100 lay buried in three graveyards.

Toronto set up a Board of Health to care for the emigrants and protect Torontonians from their diseases. Cabs and carters were told not to move into the city any who appeared ill; local residents, hotels and even the General Hospital were prohibited from accommodating them. A new hospital was prepared for Torontonians and the General Hospital became the Emigrant Hospital.

Jane Black, from Limerick, was the year's first emigrant ship to dock at Toronto, on May 23. The tide of emigrants quickly swelled. On June 8, the *City of Toronto* brought 700 to its namesake city. One thousand were reported to have arrived aboard the *Sovereign* on July 6. The facilities at Reese's Wharf were soon overwhelmed, and the new emigrant hospital had to be enlarged. By August, almost 700 patients crowded the Emigrant Hospital and many more sat in 14 sheds hastily built (by a contractor for \$250 each) on the hospital grounds. The sheds were open-sided roofs, some 50 by 10 feet, most 75 by 20 feet. With rows of benches, they were shelters from summer heat and rain for emigrants who waited for admittance to the hospital, to the burying grounds, or to be hustled out of Toronto.

Among emigrant stories, none are more poignant than that of the Willis family, related by McGowan and Chard. Parents and five children boarded the *Jessie* at Limer-

ick, Ireland on April 18. Before the ship weighed anchor, one son fell ill, and was left behind for an early death. An 18-year-old-son and a 10-year-old daughter died on the 56-day Atlantic crossing. Another daughter died at Grosse Île. At Brantford, their final destination, 90 kilometres southwest of Toronto, typhus claimed the father and the remaining son. Only the mother survived.

In the 1848 census, the Irish were 39 percent of Toronto's 23,505 people, the largest ethnic group, more than the English and Scots combined, according to Catholic historian D.S. Shea. By now, some of the Irish who had passed through in 1847 had returned to establish their homes in Toronto. Not all Toronto welcomed them. Among those who did not was George Brown, the Scottish journalist and politician, a leading crusader for "responsible government," founder and editor of the powerful *Globe* newspaper, and an undoubted bigot. "Irish beggars are to be met everywhere, and they are as ignorant and vicious as they are poor," he wailed in the *Globe*. "They are lazy, improvident, and unthankful; they fill our poorhouses and our prisons, and are as brutish in their superstitions as Hindoos."

Saint John

Of the 15,000 who sailed for Saint John, 800 died aboard their coffin ships, 600 died and were buried on Partridge Isle quarantine station, and 595 died in the city's poorhouse, Catholic historian Rev. John A. Gallagher reported.

When the first ship, the *Eliza Liddell*, arrived in July, it was greeted with storms of protests about the conditions of the refugees, widows, small children, and the elderly, destitute and sick. The *Aeolus* was the last to

arrive, in November. She was one of nine ships that carried displaced Irish tenants from the Sligo estate of a future British prime minister, Lord Palmerston (John Temple).

The city council wrote to Palmerston to “deeply regret” that he “...or his authorized agent should have exposed such a numerous and distressed portion of his tenantry to the severity and privations of a New Brunswick winter... unprovided with the common means of support, with broken down constitutions, and almost in a state of nudity.” It is doubtful, wrote Woodham Smith, that Palmerston was aware of the conditions in which his tenants were shipped by his agents.

Those who gave their lives

The scores of Canadian doctors, nurses, clergy and other who gave their lives trying to save or help the famine refugees varied from a bishop to at least one immigration officer.

Dr. Benson of Dublin, where he had worked with typhus patients, was probably the first. He arrived as a cabin passenger on aboard the *Wandsworth* on May 21, volunteered to help the doctors on Grosse Île, and died six days later. Among the deaths of other caregivers reported by the *Chronicle*, on July 16 there was “Rev. W. Chaderston, who has worked 12 hours a day “in attendance upon the sea faring men and emigrants” at Quebec’s Marine and Emigrant hospital. The next day, in Montreal, it was Dr. McGale, an assistant physician who left “a widow and a large family of children, entirely destitute.”

Historian John Gallagher says 44 Catholic priests and 17 Anglican ministers served on Grosse Île, and seven

of them died. At Montreal, three priests and 17 Grey Nuns working in the hospitals perished. “There are at the present moment 48 nuns sick from exposure, fatigue and attacks of the disease,” the Montreal *Pilot* reported July 8. The fever claimed the life of Montreal’s popular mayor, John Mills, who visited the fever hospital and sheds regularly. A priest and a nun perished at Kingston.

Prominent among those who fell in Toronto were Roman Catholic Bishop Michael Power; Dr. George Grassett, chief medical officer at the Emigrant Hospital; and Edward McElderry, the emigration agent who met all the arriving refugees at Reese’s Wharf.

Many seamen caught the fever on the coffin ships and perished—including at least two captains reported by the *Chronicle*, the skippers of the *Sisters* and *Paragon*. Also, “The lady of the doctor of the *Goliath* died.”

Was this genocide?

The British treatment of the Irish has been described as genocide, not only by the Irish but also by others, including some American historians. Judged by today’s international rules there can be little doubt that Britain would have at least been investigated by the Canadian-initiated International Criminal Court. But if genocide it was, it was no greater than the genocide of American Indians by American settlers, among scores of genocides from the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries.

It was little enough, but the continuing impoverishment of the Irish was somewhat alleviated in the decades following the famine. Ireland’s population fell from 8.2 million in the 1841 census to 6.5 million a decade later,

some larger farms became more productive, “In some respects, death and clearance improved,” Woodham Smith writes after 400 pages chronicling details of the disaster. Even housing conditions improved: “Nearly 300,000 mud huts disappeared.”

This could have been accomplished, and much greater achieved by the government’s vaunted free market capitalism, without the death of more than a million Irish—were it not for the disregard of human life, the greed of landlords, sectarian persecution, ethnic animosity, and ignorance. Capitalism may be like the fire that heats our homes, drives our cars and flies our planes. Both fuel great benefits, but only when controlled.

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— Canada @ 150 —

Girls want leap year every year

An anonymous letter writer to Toronto's Mail, October 24, 1894, suggests every year be leap year.

Society is still in a pretty benighted condition, or else it would not forbid ladies to propose to young men to whom they feel disposed to offer their hands, hearts and milliners' bills. This is a sore point with spinsters. Why are they still condemned to passivity and invested at the very most with a mere veto, instead of being endowed the right of initiative in this, as in all things else? Why not extend the precious privilege of leap years to all the years of the century and all the days of the year? These are important questions, which are occasionally asked in England, but have little chance of finding a satisfactory solution here.

Bloomers cause a fit of misogyny



A pair of Bloomers, champions of women's rights and alcoholic temperance, as depicted by Charles L. Graves in *Mr. Punch's History of Modern England*, London: Cassels and Company, 1921.

Women who wore trousers in the mid-nineteenth century were known as Bloomers, after Amelia Jenks Bloomer, U.S. campaigner for temperance and women's rights. The impending arrival of Mrs. Bloomer in Toronto caused the Daily Leader to suffer this apoplectic fit of misogyny, September 12, 1853.

Bloomerism, women's rights ism! and the Maine Law ism are the *triajuncta in uno* of New England fanaticism. They spring from the same root, flourish in the same soil, and yield the same quality of fruit. They are bitter apples, all of them.

The convention with which New York has been dishonored within the last few days bear out the remark. The females who mounted platforms to unsex themselves were champions of the united causes. Mrs. Bloomer, Antoinette Brown, Lucy Stone, and the whole tribe of unwomanly women who disgraced themselves, their progenitors, and associates by lecturing noisy audiences night after night, are the prime movers and the proper representatives of these disorganizing developments of modern folly and wickedness.

They figure in the morning, in Bloomer costume, as the advocates of woman's right to the breeches — of course, with the franchise, the right of divorce at will, and all the other *et cetera* of what passes under the phrase, women's rights, crammed into the pockets. In the evenings they elbowed their way through crowds of men, to mix with Negroes of either sex, and to join with practical Mormons in insisting upon the adoption and enforcement of the Maine Law. The last heard of them was the pithy telegraphic statement that "the women's rights convention broke up in a row." How else could it end? And what but a general row can follow the practical application of their pestiferous notions?

Hunted from New York, it seems that they are to find refuge in Toronto. The head of all the Bloomers — their pattern, instructress, and editorial advocate — is to show herself, too, not as a fugitive from outraged decency of

the Empire City, but as the petted guest, the invited teacher, of the Toronto promoters of the Prohibitory Liquor Law. Mrs. Bloomer is to be brought to prove to our citizens, their wives and daughters, the folly of Paul's injunction, and the infinite superiority of Neal Dow and Lucy Stone...

Evil communications corrupt good manners.

— Canada @ 150 —

Fatal blast dampens vile Compact meeting

A reform newspaper unleashes its most vitriolic prose in a report of a meeting by supporters of Upper Canada's Family Compact. The meeting, however, comes to a shattering end. From the Hamilton Free Press, April 12, 1832, reprinted in the Brockville Recorder, April 26.

We understand a meeting was called at the Village of Victoria, in the London District, some time last week, by the officials lurking in that district, to approve of the abuses in the Government, and to send forth their praises in favor of corruption—family compact with sycophantic triumph endeavoring to get the farmers to affix their names to addresses in praise of those very men who will, ere long, ride in aristocratic pride, unearned wealth and vaunting splendor over the fair land of our fathers—polluting the alter of liberty with the viperous crown of vice and iron rule of power.

A friend of reform, a Mr. MacMichael, we are told, addressed the meeting at some length, in an able manner,

and was encouragingly backed by the independent yeomanry of London, many of whom, however, owing to the Sheriff's having taken the Chair, and being surrounded by the Magistrates, were unwilling to come forward...

Towards the close of this Meeting, a small cannon having been procured by the Magistrates, in a similar manner to that lately brought to the Hamilton Meeting in the dead of night, by a learned Chairman of the Gore Quarter Sessions, they commenced firing in praise of corruption and official triumph. But lamentable to say, the echo of the first shot hurried into an untimely eternity Mr. Donald Ross, a Merchant of that place—the gun having burst, tore off one of his legs and shattered his skull. This sudden misfortune, as if to warn them of their bad cause and needless huzza, threw a damp over the whole assemblage and closed the scene of the day.

— Canada @ 150 —

Militia officers may be safely laughed at

Service in the militia of Upper Canada in September 1853 was compulsory, but the law had become a mockery, according to this account, reprinted from the Guelph Advertiser.

Galt has long been a place of notoriety in the petty annals of the neighborhood, and when nothing else has been available, even a court martial to try delinquent militia men has not been too small an affair for the

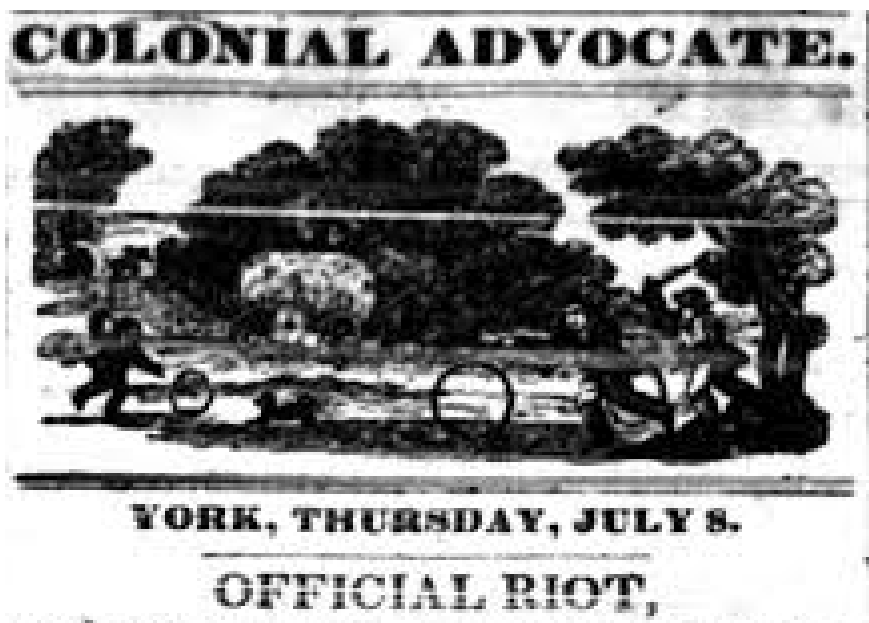
amusement of men dressed in a little brief authority. The enrolment and annual training have become such a farce that in few places has there been any attempt to enforce them. On a previous occasion a Court was held at Galt, and quite a number of persons fined for non-attendance or non-enrolment, and so generally did the affair excite disgust that the Press from one end of the Province to the other condemned the proceedings. This year the same farce has been re-enacted, nearly fifty persons having been fined for non-enrolment.

The uselessness of the thing, the sacrifice of time requisite to attend the training, and the nondescript character of the officers, all tend to bring the affairs into disrepute, and two or three such proceedings as have been enacted in Galt will kill off the law entirely. At the next training day let every company assembled join in petitioning the Legislator [sic] for the repeal of so useless a measure, and the thing will be accomplished.

A correspondent of the *Reformer* asks if it is not necessary that the members of the Court Martial should be in uniform. On referring to the militia law we will learn that unless each officer furnishes himself and appears on the parade ground with regimentals and sword, his commission is superseded. Taking our stand on this, we presume that the Court Martial was formed of men, at least nine-tenths of whom had no commission in law, and whose decisions may be safely laughed at.

— Canada @ 150 —

More papers than people in 1836 Upper Canada



Journalist and reformer William Lyon Mackenzie used his *Colonial Advocate* to voice fierce criticism of the Family Company, which essentially ruled Upper Canada throughout much of the nineteenth century. Published from May 1824 to November 1834, it was one of the most influential papers of its time. The July 8, 1830 issue, shown here, reported a chaotic public meeting from which Mackenzie was forcibly ejected by supporters of the oligarch.

Almost 430,000 copies of newspapers were circulated in Upper Canada in 1836 among a population of 370,000, of whom it was claimed perhaps one in 50 could read, according to Anna Brownell Jameson in her celebrated travel book, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in

Canada. *Despite their shortcomings, Jameson found the Upper Canada newspapers more beneficial than harmful. Mrs. Jameson was in Upper Canada only nine months, from December 1836 to September 1837, to visit her estranged husband, Attorney General Robert Jameson, possibly a failed attempt at reconciliation. Newspapers still received outside news by slow-traveling mail; in the next decade, news began to travel much faster by telegraph. Jameson's book was published in London in 1839, with the latest edition published in Toronto in 1965 by McClelland and Stewart, from which the following excerpt is taken.*

Apropos to newspapers—my table is covered with them. In the absence or scarcity of books, they are the principal medium of knowledge and communications in Upper Canada. There is no stamp-act here—no duty on paper; and I have sometimes thought that the great number of local newspapers, which do not circulate beyond their own little town or district, must, from the vulgar, narrow tone of many of them, do mischief; but on the whole, perhaps, they do more good.

Paragraphs printed from English or American papers, on subjects of general interest, the summary of political events, extracts from books or magazines, are copied from one paper into another, till they have travelled round the country. It is true that a great deal of base, vulgar, inflammatory party feeling is also circulated by the same means; but, on the whole, I should not like to see the number or circulation of the district papers checked. There are about forty published in Upper Canada...

The newspapers of Lower Canada and the United States

are circulated in great numbers; and, as they pay postage, it is no inconsiderable item in the revenue of the post-office. In some of these provincial papers I have seen articles written with considerable talent; amongst other things, I have remarked a series of letters signed Evans, addressed to the Canadians on the subject of an education fitted for an agricultural people, and written with infinite good sense and kindly feeling; these have been copied from one paper into another, and circulated widely; no doubt they will do good.

Last year [1836] the number of newspapers circulated through the post-office, and paying postage, was: Provincial papers 178,065; United States and foreign papers 149,502.

Add 100,000 papers stamped or free, here are 427,567 papers circulated yearly among a population of 370,000, of whom, perhaps, one in fifty can read... It is rather affecting to see the long lists of unclaimed letters lying at the post-office, and read the advertisements in the Canada and American journals for husbands, relatives, friends, lost or strayed.

There is a commercial news-room in the city of Toronto, and this is absolutely the only place of assembly or amusement, except the taverns and low drinking-houses.

— Canada @ 150 —

Dangerous lamp fuel kills 50 in Quebec theatre fire

Camphene, an explosive mixture of alcohol and re-distilled turpentine, was a popular but dangerous lamp fuel in mid-nineteenth century. Whale oil had been the universal lamp fuel for decades, but it had become expensive as whales were hunted almost to extinction. Camphene was not only cheaper but burned brighter and cleaner. It also tended to explode if burned in the wrong lamps, or violently burst into dangerous flames if a camphene lamp was accidentally tipped — as when a theatre fire at Quebec City killed 50 people in 1846.

Twenty years later, camphene was displaced by kerosene — aka coal oil — a cheaper, better, safer product that fuelled most of the world's lamps for more than half a century and gave birth to the petroleum industry. Kerosene was produced first from coal and then from crude oil by a refining process developed by Canadian physician-geologist-chemist Abraham Gesner.

But there was no kerosene when Quebec's Theatre Royal, on the site of today's Chateau Frontenac hotel, was burned to the ground, as reported in the *Montreal Gazette*, June 15, 1846:

“Quebec has again been visited with a recurrence of the awful calamities to which it was subjected last year; and although the destruction of property is, in this instance, comparatively trifling, yet the fearful loss of human life, with which this dreadful catastrophe has

been attended, renders it by far the most grievous affliction that has yet fallen on that unfortunate city.

“The Theatre Royal, Saint Lewis [street], took fire from the overturning of a camphene lamp, at the close of the exhibition of Mr. Harlean’s Chemical Dioramas, and the whole interior of the building was almost instantly in a blaze.”

The fire occurred about 10 pm, Friday, June 12, the *Gazette’s* correspondent wrote:

“While I write, forty-six bodies have been withdrawn from the ruins. It is said that others are as yet to be accounted for. [Later reports claimed 50 deaths].

“The staircase down which the throng attempted to escape was a narrow one, and the first to descend seem to have been hurled forward head first, and as they fell at the foot, and there became jammed. These, in their tens, prevented the escape of those behind them, with whom they became intertwined, and thus, while all might have escaped from the building, all perished! Several gentlemen stood by them to the last, endeavoured to extricate them, and, at the risk of their own lives, asserted their utmost strength to save a few, but in vain.

“The city may be said to be in mourning, and deep gloom hangs over all. The brother of the proprietor of the exhibition is among those lost.”

— Canada @ 150 —

Victoria's capital secret



Library and Archives Canada 1992-675-2.

Ottawa before 1857, when Queen Victoria quietly named it the capital of Canada (present-day Ontario and Quebec until Confederation, 10 years later).

In London, on the last day of 1857, Queen Victoria chose a new capital for Canada. Five cities had fought fiercely for the honour and economic benefits. Four—Toronto, Kingston, Montreal and Quebec City—had at one time or another served as a capital in what was

then called Canada East (Quebec) and Canada West (Ontario). Only forest-shrouded Ottawa, the newest, smallest and most remote, had never been a capital city.

The decision was undoubtedly less a choice by the Queen than a confirmation of advice from Her Majesty's advisors.

For John A. Macdonald's Conservative (then called Liberal-Conservative) government, it was an awkward time for news of a decision that would disappoint voters in four major cities, and raise controversy and criticism. Elections for Canada's sixth Parliament had started December 16, and voting would continue into early January. Macdonald's party faced a stiff fight from George Brown's Reform (i.e., Liberal) Party.

December 31 is a great day for a hot political decision to escape reporting. Not even the great London *Times* reported Victoria's decision. And, although there were rumours and speculation, it was four weeks before the decision was disclosed in Canada—well after Macdonald's government had been re-elected, albeit with somewhat fewer seats.

The choice of Ottawa produced the expected controversy.

In Toronto, George Brown's *Globe* never missed a chance to attack Macdonald and the Conservatives. The people of Montreal and Kingston, said the *Globe*, "have received the late intelligence with the utmost indignation, because either place had a better title to the capital than that which has been selected. The Kingstonses bitterly complain that John A. Macdonald has deceived him—as he has all who ever trusted him—and the Montrealers

upbraid the members who... professed... to be the friends of their city.”

The Montreal *Argus* alleged that the government was “well informed” of Victoria’s secret, but “the elections were coming on, and it did not then answer to let the truth be known” and reveal “how egregiously each location had been ‘tricked’ by false expectations of being made the choice... Now that the elections are over, the necessity for silence no longer exists, and the secret, so well hitherto kept, is revealed.”

The Montreal *Herald* alleged that friends of the government had advance inside information with which to speculate on the purchase of Ottawa property.

“We have the very best ground for saying that gentlemen now closely connected with the ministry, and we have no personal doubt members of the ministry themselves, were aware so early as the month of October, that Ottawa had been chosen; and we have every reason, arising from concurrent and respectable testimony, to believe that speculations, with a view to this decision, have been entered into.”

There were calls for Parliament to make the final choice of a capital for what would soon be a new, Confederated nation. But construction of expansive parliamentary buildings was soon underway, and what had been termed the “Nomad Parliament,” moving from city to city, had found its lasting home.

— Canada @ 150 —

Victoria insulted

An American magazine has called Queen Victoria and her family “dull, coarse and illiterate.” This is “a gross and indecent attack on Her Majesty” by *Harper’s* magazine, protests the *Nova Scotia Yarmouth Herald*, December 16, 1857. It adds that *Harper’s* has been “expelled from several colonial libraries and reading rooms.”

The incident arose from a minor brouhaha involving a company of amateur actors organized by Charles Dickens and a performance of the *Frozen Deep*, a play by Dickens’ friend Wilkie Collins.



She was probably not amused.

Queen Victoria “invited them to the Castle to give a performance of the piece,” the *Herald* states. “But Dickens replied that he and the gentlemen associated with him would comply with her Majesty’s wish with great pleasure, only the ladies who assisted them, not being professional players, he could not take them to the Castle unless the Queen chose to receive them as her guests. This her Majesty could not do because they had never been presented to her in a regular way at a ‘drawing room.’” The protocol problem was eventually resolved

when the Queen agreed to accept an invitation to witness the performance at a small public theatre, “and all parties saved their honour.”

The incident, said the *Herald*, “strangely stirred up the bile of the *Harper*’s... in the following ungentlemanly strain.

“The Queen of England comes of a family notoriously dull, coarse and illiterate. The Hanoverian court of England has never been renowned for a solitary thrill for what is noblest and best in England. Her present fruitless Majesty frowned to death the Lady Fiona Hastings [a court attendant who died of cancer but who had been rumoured to be pregnant while unwed], tied a garter around the leg of Louis Napoleon—the uncertain son of an uncertain mother—and now declines to receive as gentlemen the men who do more for the glory of England than any other class of Englishmen.”

— Canada @ 150 —

PERILOUS FAST TRAINS. *Trains race through Toronto at speeds up to 30 or 40 miles per hour “to the imminent peril of life and limb,” complains The Growler, August 12, 1864.* If a cabman or a farmer be caught driving at a dangerous pace through our streets, he is instantly and properly taken up, and punished by the Police Magistrate; but, strange to say, we have [railway] engines driving along the esplanade, sometimes at the rate of 30 or 40 miles an hour, and not one sentence do we hear about it. Now, from morning to night, the esplanade is used as a busy and common thoroughfare, and it is not right that trains should be driven along at such a rate, to the imminent peril of life and limb.

Trans-continental railroad race



Canada Science and Technology Museum, photo MAT 001292.

“The Toronto,” first railway locomotive built in Canada, by James Good for the Northern Railway of Canada, 1853.

North West Transportation, Navigation, and Railway Company has a plan to beat the United States with the first railroad across the continent to the Pacific coast, the *Ottawa Citizen* reports, September 28, 1858.

Backed by Toronto investors, the plan is the brainchild of Toronto lawyer and mining and transportation promoter Alan McDonnell. Initially, transportation would be by steamboat from Georgian Bay, the western terminus of the existing railway, to the head of Lake Superi-

or. From there, transportation would be by river steamboats with a series of connecting roads.

“Some three, or at the most four, links of road will be necessary to connect the comparatively long navigable reaches between Lake Superior and the Red River” settlement, the site of the future Winnipeg, says the *Citizen*. From Red River, only one connecting road of three or four miles would be needed for 800 miles of navigable water, “which comes within about 200 miles of the Fraser River and near some of the best passes of the Rocky Mountains.

“It is impossible to over estimate the importance to be attached to the success of this company, by means of which passengers would be enabled to reach Fraser River, through Canada, in about half the time they could by any other route; nor is it the least important consideration that such a result must almost immediately lead to the construction of a railway to the Pacific Coast.” And a railway to the Pacific, adds the *Citizen*, “is most practicable on British territory on account of the sandy desert and the greater difficulty of the mountain passes on the American side.”

It all seemed so simple on paper. Northwest Transportation did achieve steamboat and road transportation as far as Red River, but this Canadian route could not begin to compete with the railway to St. Paul, Minnesota and steamboat from there to Red River. “It took one month for the Hudson’s Bay Company to get a letter from Red River to Montreal via the United States, five months through Canada,” historian Michael Bliss notes in *Northern Enterprise*. It was

estimated to cost £100 for each letter that got through on the Canadian route.

Northwest Transportation collapsed in 1860. The first American railroad to the Pacific was completed in 1869. Canada's railroad to the Pacific followed 14 years later with the driving of the last spike on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

— Canada @ 150 —

A paper war on patent medicine

The fact that it relies on patent medicine advertisements for a substantial portion of its revenue does not stop the *Toronto Telegram*, November 3, 1885 from warning its readers to shun such snake oil.

Six patent medicine ads in this four-page issue included those for Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor; Burdock Blood Bitters, which promise "the secret of beauty;" and St. Jacobs Oil, which "relieves and cures" rheumatism, neuralgia, sciatica, lumbago, headache, toothache, sore throat, swelling, cuts, bruises, burns, scalds, and all other aches and pains," for 50 cents a bottle.

They were all mostly useless, the *Telegram* warned. But people flocked to patent medicine because medical doctors "frequently fail to effect cures." Medical science was said to be "a dark science" groping on "the outskirts of absolutely knowledge."

— Canada @ 150 —

Uproar as U.S. seeks “fugitive slave”



Engraving, from “The Story of the Life of John Anderson,” 1863.

John Anderson, an escaped slave in Toronto, wanted by the U.S. in 1860.

“It was an anxious moment, as the Chief Justice produced his papers and began to read. The life or death of a human being hung on a thread; the liberties of hundreds of freeman depended on the opinion of three fallible men. Was this fellow who had, after by desperate adventures, achieved his liberty and enjoyed with his wife the sweets of home for seven years, to be sent back to certain sla-

very, if not death? Were the hundreds of fugitives in the province, who have committed what the slave states describe as felonies in effecting their escape, to be henceforth at the mercy of the man-stealers?" From the *Toronto Globe*, Monday, December 17, 1860.

The *Globe* was clearly sympathetic in its report of Saturday's extradition hearing of John Anderson, an escaped slave from Missouri who, seven years earlier travelled to Windsor on the underground railway, changed his name from Jack Burton to Anderson, and worked as a labourer and plasterer.

Before his escape, Anderson was sold to a new slave owner, and removed 30 miles from his wife, owned by another slave owner. He was on his way to join his wife on their flight to Canada when he was chased by slave owner Seneca P.T. Diggs, and four of Diggs' slaves. Diggs promised his slaves they would share in the reward if they helped capture Anderson. Anderson turned on his pursuers and stabbed Diggs, who died, reputedly of his wounds, "two or three weeks later," according to the *Toronto Leader*.

The year after his arrival at Windsor, the U.S. government requested Anderson's extradition, but Governor General James Bruce (Lord Elgin) refused to issue the warrant. Another six years later, Brantford magistrate William Matthews had Anderson arrested on a charge of murder. He was moved to Toronto for extradition hearings before Canada West Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson, and Justices MacLean and Burns.

Their verdict was to be announced that Saturday at Osgoode Hall, 10 am. A crowd of about 200 awaited the

opening of the court. The possibility that “violence would be resorted to by the less reflecting of the coloured people;” by a crowd inflamed by “designing politicians who hesitate at nothing” to serve “their own selfish ends;” and by “the violent and evil disposed,” was expressed by the Toronto *Leader*, which almost alone supported Anderson’s extradition.

The entire police force of 50 men—20 armed with rifles and bayonets—was on hand outside Osgoode Hall, while a company of soldiers was posted five minutes away, on ready standby.

The judgments were deferred until noon, when Osgoode Hall was again packed to capacity. There was a “profound silence” when the judgments were read, said the *Globe*. “The people could not believe that the judges would decide against the slave.” But Robinson and Burns did. Then, when Justice Archibald McLean finished reading his dissenting judgment, arguing for Anderson’s release, “there was a burst of applause.”

There was no violence. Anderson was escorted from the courthouse to the jail by soldiers with “bristling bayonets,” the police returned to city hall, the soldiers to their garrison, “and the crowd quietly dispersed.”

Yet feelings ran high. Next morning, reported the *Leader*, the “walls of the city” were plastered with an “inflammatory” placard calling on Torontonians to rally to an evening meeting called “to induce the government to prevent Anderson being returned to a state of slavery.”

“Show that you know what British Freedom is, and that no manstealer shall be permitted to defile Free Canadian Soil,” read the placards. “No surrender of a Freeman

at the dictation of Slaveholders. Let death or Liberty be Your watchword.”

St. Lawrence Hall was crowded to capacity for the meeting, chaired by Mayor James Dougall. Twenty prominent Torontonians crowded the platform, five clergymen, the member of Parliament and a city councilor among them. In less inflammatory language, a parade of speakers echoed the call of the placards. The echo reached Britain where the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society obtained a writ of *habeas corpus*, widely denounced in Canada as British interference in the constitutional powers of Canadian courts, even though it was intended to help Anderson’s cause.

Anderson was spared immediate extradition by the court’s statement that it would vigorously facilitate any appeal that might be made to its split decision. William Draper, chief justice of Toronto’s Court of Commons Pleas, ruled on February 16, 1861 on the appeal, discharging Anderson to his freedom.

Anderson went to England that year, spoke before at least 25 anti-slavery meetings, spent a year studying at the British Training Institution, then sailed for Liberia, where “nothing more is known about him,” according to historian Robert C. Reinders.

Two constitutional changes resulted from the Anderson epic. An 1861 Canadian law prohibited magistrates from hearing extradition cases. And an 1862 British law ruled that *habeas corpus* writs could no longer be sent to any British colony that had concurrent legal jurisdiction.

— Canada @ 150 —

A cold welcome for runaway U.S. slaves

Canada was the North Star, the haven, the sanctuary for American black slaves who ran north to freedom on the celebrated underground railroad. But not everyone in Upper Canada held out the welcome mat, as shown in this item from the Colonial Advocate, York, February 18, 1832.

The inhabitants of Colchester and Gosfield, in the Western District, have petitioned the House of Assembly, complaining that several thousand coloured people are coming into that part of the Province to settle, and that several hundred have come already, “to the very great annoyance and injury of the community at large—as it most evidently appears, by several years’ experience, that by far the greater proportion of these people are void of truth, virtue, or industry; witness the repeated thefts, robberies, and murders committed by them—inasmuch that our courts are upon all occasion filled with them—and we seriously apprehend that if legislative aid is not afford to put those already here, under some restrictions, and to prevent their further emigration, that many of the white populations will be induced to leave the Province, or to take violent measures to rid themselves of the injuries complained of.”

— Canada @ 150 —

Quebecers cling to the soil

Two examples of the tenacity with which French Canadians clung to the soil of family farms and homes are cited in news reports.

The Montreal *Herald*, February 10, 1863 tells about the family that had farmed the same soil at Ancienne Lorette, a village and later a suburb that was merged with Quebec City in 2002:

Louis Bureau, a cooper from Nantes, in Brittany, France was one of the earliest settlers in France's new colony on the St. Lawrence River. Bureau is reported to have obtained title to his plot of land at Ancienne Lorette in 1683, and farmed it for 29 years before passing it on to son Jean Baptist Bureau in 1712. Jean Baptist Bureau farmed it for 28 years; a second Jean Baptist held it for another 29 years, and Louis Bureau for 42 years. Jean Bureau inherited it in 1838, and still farmed it 28 years later.

"It will thus be seen," said the *Herald*, "that the farm has remained since its first occupation, a period of nearly two centuries, in the possession of the same family. This will serve to illustrate the tenacity with which the rural French Canadian population cling to their paternal homes."

The Montreal *Star*, January 27, 1904, reports the loss of a home occupied by the same family for almost three centuries."

"The oldest house in Longueuil, Quebec, the home of a French Canadian farm family for almost 300 years, has been completely demolished by fire. The occupants, 73-

year-old Francis St. Mars and a daughter, were uninjured. Mr. St. Mars was born, grew up, married, and raised a family in the old house. The loss is estimated at \$4,000. The house is believed to have been built about 1612.

— Canada @ 150 —

Police raid stops dogfight

Hundreds of spectators from as far as Albany and Montreal gathered near a tavern east of Hamilton, Canada West, to witness a dogfight when the mayor and 20 police dashed up on sleighs to put a stop to things, as reported in the Hamilton Spectator, February 2, 1857.

It had been rumoured for a long time past that a great dog fight was about to come off near Hamilton, for \$500 a side, but those interested had to keep the affair as secret as possible. It appears that a barn and shed near King Alfred's Tavern, about 2-1/2 miles east of this city, had been thrown into one for the occasion and a regular pit constructed with seat, &c., like a regular amphitheater.

Yesterday afternoon the dogs, one brought to this city from Buffalo, and the other from Toronto, were taken to the spot and several hundreds of the fancy, from Buffalo, Albany, Montreal, Toronto, London &c., were gathered together. The price of admission to the expected battle was 50 cents, and about two hundred had paid their money to take their places, impatient to behold the fray—there being about as many more yet to come in when, lo! a most unexpected and unwelcomed sight forced itself on the astonished optics of canine admirers. Several sleighs—containing the Mayor, Captain

Armstrong, and about twenty of the police force—dashed up to the scene, and of course, put a stop to the whole proceedings.

A more ill-favored, “hard” looking set than some of those gentry from a distance, could not well be imagined. They were evidently the off-scouring of humanity.

Another attempt was made later in the day, to get up the projected canine demonstration, and for that purpose large numbers wended their way in the direction of Burlington Heights. The commotion again excited the curiosity of the Police, and, as a matter of course, the fun was spoiled. Credit is certainly due to the County and Police Magistrates for their conduct in preventing the affair. Probably Hamilton will not be chosen for the champ de Bastille on any similar occasion for some time.

— Canada @ 150

BAG DIRTY BREAD. *Bread bags, to avoid dirty bread, are proposed in this item from the Montreal Witness, reprinted in the Regina Standard, March 3, 1898.* The bread-man who delivers his loaves in hands discolored, let us suppose, by his reins and clasped against a coat which has for months battled with the splatterings of city streets, possibly, knows enough about the earlier history of his wares to make him look upon any squeamishness with regard to his handlings of the dry loaf with amused contempt. Certainly his indifference to the sensibilities of bread-eaters in things seen suggests alarming possibilities as to things unseen. The baker who first adopts the paper bag will, we think, be the gainer by it, much as custom and habit have inured us to the present practice.

Grave robbing medical students



University of Pennsylvania, University Archives Digital Collection, UARC 20050613004.

Six first-year medical students dissecting a cadaver at the University of Pennsylvania, circa 1890.

No more \$15 bodies shipped in pork barrels from New York. The end of the four-year U.S. Civil War, in April, 1865, robbed the medical students at Montreal's McGill University of a source of cadavers for their anatomical studies. During at least the later part of the war, bodies were reportedly purchased in New York for \$15 each, and shipped to Montreal in pork barrels. The end of the war marked a revival in body snatching, a practice that had not been entirely stamped out during at least the first years of the war.

The Ottawa Times reports a post-war incident of body

snatching, while the Montreal Herald reports an aborted graveyard theft more than two years earlier. The first item, a dispatch from Montreal, is from the Ottawa Times, January 27, 1866.

Two cases, marked glass-ware and containing the bodies of two men and five women, packed in snow, were seized by the police on a freight train from Point Levi. They were intended for the McGill College dissecting room, and taken from the cemetery in the vicinity of Quebec [City], the authorities of which city telegraphed to our [Montreal] police about them. They were re-packed in the cases and will go back again to-night. The students have much difficulty in obtaining subjects just now, and can no longer obtain them from New York as formerly, owing to the close of the war.

The acclaimed heroics of a couple of rural young men in thwarting an attempted snatch of a woman's body from a secluded country grave was reported by the Montreal Herald, November 7, 1863.

In the night of Sunday the 1st inst., a party of young men, some of whom at least are said to be known, were interrupted in carrying off the dead and buried the body of a married woman from the Cemetery of Grace church, Mascouche. This is a very retired and secluded spot, some five or six miles behind Terrebonne, having a place of worship, with a parsonage and burying ground, in connection with the United Church of England and Ireland; and here had been interred, the same Sabbath morning, the remains just mentioned. As the relations of the deceased lived ten miles away, no watch (as had been usual) had been instituted over the grave. Under cover, therefore, of a dark night, the moon not yet being

up, a party of at least five hardy adventurers had completed their appalling enterprise, so far as to have got the body into a cart, which they had in readiness, on the side of the cemetery adjoining the bush.

But the northern lights were playing, and there was an eye or two upon the marauders, at this juncture, which eventually disconcerted the whole proceeding. A youth — and we have only to put ourselves into the place of the widower or the children of the deceased, to say, a noble youth — Richard Robinson, one of the numerous family of a most worthy and respectable farmer at Mascouche, was seeing a friend part of the way home — it was now approaching 9 o'clock — when suspicion was aroused by the continual barking of the dog at the parsonage and there seeing two figures glide away from, as it seemed, points of lookout on either side of the road. Young Robinson followed these men into the bush, at a discrete distance, accompanied by his friend; and was soon convinced by, besides other signs, the apparition of the aforesaid cart in which, as he believed — *horrible vision* — he discerned the limbs of a corpse, while he was unperceived by those daring lifters of the dead, though he had now crept up so near that he could have touched the cart, it being dark among the trees, and the party on the start in front.

His first object now, after procuring a light, was to go to the grave itself to make assurance doubly sure; and there the whole dreadful secret was revealed; the coffin lay in the hollow pit, the lid burst open and only at the upper end through which the body has been dragged up — the body of a woman who left married daughters behind her.

He then set forth in pursuit, followed by his friend, who had conceived some strong ideas that they would both be shot; and, knowing the country, and also having his suspicions of their rendezvous, he came again upon the party, about a mile and a half off, having crossed the rough open ground in the dark night and at the top of his speed.

Three were in advance; two brought up the ghastly rear. Here, then, our young brave made his demand, seizing the reins, and challenging by name the one, who had just come with straw from a barn hard by, while he called on his friend to stand manfully up to the other.

Little altercation ensued; but a blow was menaced from the cart at our *cour-de lion*, with what appeared to be a heavy twisted instrument, by which he lost his cap; when they threw the corpse upon the ground, and immediately drove off at the heels of their fleeing comrades.

A rope was round the neck [of the corpse] and through the mouth of the body, which, according to established rules, had been divested of every particle of clothing; and thus the pale moon rose upon a sight which may be more easily conceived than described. Besides the rope, other tangible evidence exists — the invaders had left a shovel behind them, that at least can be sworn to, &c.

How they proceeded to restore the remains to the grave, calling up friends, sending for the relations, calling at the parsonage for help, lighting a fire in the church, composing the mutilated frame, keeping watch and ward all night, decently burying the corpse at breaking day, may be gathered from the particulars already given, and

we have only to add, that however much we may and do appreciate the interests of a noble and humane science, still we must congratulate the Church of England and Ireland that the hallowed repose of the grave found so brave and unflinching defence, on this occasion, rendered by the two young men who bore no affinity to the departed; especially the one — a youth scarcely out of his teens — whose name we have felt it our duty to place on public record.

— Canada @ 150 —

BOSSES AND WORKERS

Should convict labour be abolished?

Should convict labour be abolished because it is said to rob honest workers of jobs or should it be maintained to help ease the burden on taxpayers? Workers at Kingston wanted it abolished but businessmen, at an annual meeting, thought otherwise. From the Kingston Daily News, January 30, 1860.

The mechanics of Kingston memorialized this Board with the object of obtaining its assistance in abolishing the employment of convict labor in manufactures which are also carried on by honest labor in Canada.

This Council strongly sympathizes with the views of the mechanics. They think it a grievous thing that the honest man should be deprived of employment because the labor of the felon is substituted for his. While expressing this view the Council feel that great difficulties are

presented in any alteration of the system, unless the public are prepared to bear the whole expense of the convict establishment and to get no return whatever on the felon's labor. It must be borne in mind that whatever result is derived from the labor of the convict is so much increase to the wealth of the country, and it thereby reduces the cost of the maintenance of the prisoners, and thus decreases the amount of taxation which would otherwise be borne by the honest labor of the community.

No doubt under the present system individual suffering may often be considerable, but your council are inclined to think that the general interests of the labouring class throughout Canada are more promoted by the absence of the taxation which the maintenance of the prisoners in idleness would entail than the occasional interference with the industry of the Province by the labor of the convicts.

— Canada @ 150 —

7-day work week just isn't Christian

The normal six-days-a-week of work (usually 12 hours a day) is fine, but seven-days-a-week just isn't Christian, according to this item in the London Advertiser, February 6, 1902.

Most of us have to work in this country, and practically all of us feel and respond to that need. It is in working that we learn the need of resting; rest is just as much a law of life as work. A preacher in Australia, recently

expounding the fourth commandment, laid emphasis on working six days of the seven, and pointed out that those who did not keep that part, did not deserve the blessing of the other part. There is something in that. The idlers in society are often those who do not appreciate the needed blessing of the day of rest. The toiler appreciates his rest and is the man who ought to have his rest guarded. The demands of modern civilization make inroads into the day of rest, and it will require determination on the part of all classes of citizens to keep them within proper bounds, that, is keep Sunday labor at the lowest point.

We have a lesson from Belgium now; there and in other continental nations, there is a desire on the part of public-spirited men to win back part at least of Sunday for the workingman. It is becoming very hard to do even that; when once a precious boon has been lost or given up to carelessness or selfishness, it is not easy to regain.

In many places it has been shown that the final result of Sunday labor is seven days work for six days' pay, an increase of slavery and of degradation. The man who is kept at unnecessary toil has no time to attend to his higher needs, and is reduced to the level of a beast of burden. Apart from the religious reason which many of us regard as fundamental, from the mere physical point of view, the day of rest is one of the blessings of a Christian civilization, for which men should be willing to make some sacrifice. The men who care for their noble, better self will do better work in every sphere.

— Canada @ 150 —

Business fears eight-hour work day

British Columbia would be crippled by a mandatory eight-hour work day, proposed by an independent member of the Legislature, a delegation of 20 businessmen warns in a meeting with Premier John Oliver and his cabinet, the *Victoria Times* reports, November 11, 1921.

A resolution passed by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and endorsed by the business delegation "sets forth the serious plight in which an eight-hour law would place B.C. industry."

"Our province would be placed at a distinct disadvantage in competition with other provinces where similar industries are working longer hours." Also, "Our ability as manufacturers and producers to meeting competition in foreign markets would be materially lessened."

The business leaders point out that few of the nations that committed to the eight-hour day under the terms of the 1919 Versailles Treaty that formally ended the First World War are "today abiding by its terms." Neither are any of Canada's provinces. This, says the statement is "The best proof of the impracticality of the uniform application of an eight-hour day."

"Any legislation which governs the hours of labor must be national in character or you will handicap the industrial development of British Columbia."

The fact that farm, forestry and fisheries workers must

make hay when the sun shines, was said to militate against the eight-hour day. Farm workers have to work long hours at harvest time; so do fisheries workers at the peak of fish runs; loggers have to make up for the periods they can't work because the woods are covered with snow, or fire danger is too high in the summer, or it's raining too heavily.

It was, apparently, not just the eight-hour day that was still to be generally attained, but also the five-day work week, or even the six-day work week. B.C.'s labour department reported that more than half of the province's industry employees worked more than 48-hours a week in 1920. And from Geneva, Canadian Press reported that "The International Labor Conference had adopted the draft of the international convention establishing the general rule of one day's rest in seven."

— Canada @ 150 —

NEW CANADIANS

Work hard or stay home

Be prepared to work hard or stay home, the Winnipeg Daily Times warn prospective immigrants, April 15, 1879

Immigrants and adventurers. The people we need and those we don't want. A floating population who find it hard to float.

The eyes of all Canada are upon Manitoba. Our young province is already known throughout Britain and Europe. Never was there a new country as well advertised, but with the rush of European farmers and businessmen, we have had our quota of ne'er-do-wells and adventurers who come here to better their finances, if possible, and forget the past.

At the present time there are in the different hotels in this city, men who have come to this country without any definite plans whatever, without energy, capital or experience, young men who have never had a dollar in their lives, middle-aged men who have wasted a youth and expect, simply because it is a new country, to live without work and drop into some wonderful speculation by which they will become independently wealthy.

Undoubtedly there may be found among the throng of unemployed laborers, many honest workers who have met disappointment in one shape or another since they came here. Unfortunately there can be only sympathy extended to them; but to the others, who came here without an object save that of speculation, or who squandered the means which should have been invested in some one of the many safe enterprises which Manitoba holds forth, no consideration should be shown.

To the man who is willing to labor, labor should be given; and, although in a new country where there are so many men looking for employment it is difficult to distinguish between the worthy and unworthy; yet there should be no encouragement given to the willfully, helpless though genteel vagabond. It is difficult to tell who is who, it is hard to discriminate between the rascal and the unfortunate, but we strongly advise those who expect to come here to have an easy time of it, who hope for luck and that sort of thing, to remain where they are.

Shelter at police station

Scottish immigrants evicted from their crofts to make way for sheep during the highland clearances of the nineteenth century, flooded into Canada. In Toronto, their first accommodation was sometimes a police station, and sometimes on the streets, according to this item from the Toronto Leader, July 7, 1864.

About a hundred Scotch immigrants arrived in this city by the Grand Trunk last evening, but only eighty-five of them could find shelter at the immigrant office, Toronto Street, where they were huddled almost to suffocation. The remainder of the party were admitted into the police station, where they slept on boards all night.

It was lamentable to see little children—even babies—lying on the hard boards without covering or even a pillow under their heads. It is to be hoped that a successful effort will be made immediately to provide suitable accommodations for this class of strangers who frequently arrive late at night, and have to remain in too many cases on the streets till the next day, without food and shelter.

NEW CANADIANS

Land of opportunity for sober hard workers

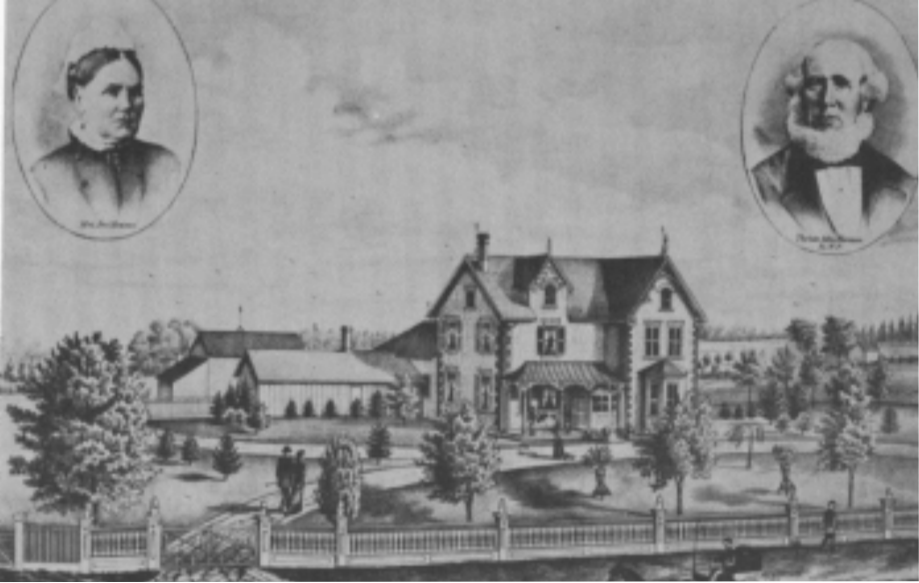


Image from Freda Ramsay, *John Ramsay of Kildalton*, Toronto, 1970, page 106.

The Woodville, Ontario home of John Morrison, a member of the first Parliament of Canada. In 1870, in a crowded room in Morrison's home, Scottish laird John Ramsay visited some of his 400 former tenants who had emigrated from the Island of Islay on the west coast of Scotland.

James Jamieson “thinks it an excellent country for any intelligent sober working-man who is willing to work and turn his hand to anything which he can find to do,” writes John Ramsay (1815-92) in a diary of an 1870 visit to Ontario.¹

Jamieson was a Highlander from the Island of Islay off the west coast of Scotland who settled near Beaverton,

Ontario (then Canada West) about 1850 or earlier. Ramsay was a member of the British parliament who made a fortune distilling Scotch whisky, and the laird of a substantial estate on Islay.

“We are all reformers here,” an elder sister wrote about the family of seven siblings, of which John was the youngest. John Ramsay was, indeed, one of the most progressive nineteenth century Scottish landowners. He spent some of his whisky money building roads across a rugged trackless island; a number of schools for Gaelic-speaking and often illiterate Islay Highlanders; and improved housing for his tenants, who had traditionally lived in one-room hovels with a fire in the middle of the dirt floor and a hole in the thatched roof through which escaped some of the smoke (called “reek” by the Scots).

Islay was overcrowded with more crofters than the land could support, attempts to establish job-providing industry were sporadic failures, island opportunities were non-existent, and hunger had become a frequent visitor. Some of the many Scots who earlier settled in Canada sent back glowing accounts of opportunities in their new homeland. Many of Ramsay’s crofter tenants were eager to go. He assisted them by purchasing their livestock and whatever other property they wished to sell, and by helping pay their steamship fare across the Atlantic. Some 400 of his tenants left to settle mostly near the villages of Woodville and Beaverton in central Ontario.

Ramsay writes of his 1870 visit to Canada that he had come “for the purpose of seeing, in their adopted home, as many as I could of those who had for long been my own neighbors in Islay,” and to judge “whether the

removal is really an advantage to the emigrants themselves.” As Ramsay describes it, most of his former tenants and others from Islay prospered as they never could have on their former island home. James Jamieson was one of the Islay emigrants he visited.

Jamieson was a mate on the steamer *S.S. Emily May*, which sailed Lake Simcoe out of Beaverton. “I learned from James that he receives 35 dollars a month (with his food and room) for his services as mate,” Ramsay writes. “He lives at home during the winter when the navigation is closed, employed in chopping and preparing the land for receiving the seed in spring—having acquired 200 acres of land, which is all paid, and of which he has about 45 acres cleared and under cultivation of grass, with two yoke of oxen, three horses, five cows, and twelve sheep. He had about 20 acres this year under crop, all of which is now secured, and was of good quality.” He was married, with three young boys and one girl.

It was a common pattern for successful Scottish settlers: work for wages, save money, buy land. Then, work for wages half the year, and on the land the other half. Jobs were usually plentiful, and wages good. The first log homes offered little, if any, improvement over those left on Islay, but in time they were replaced by two-storey wood-framed houses.

“James expressed himself as being highly pleased with Canada, and thinks he never could have attained the same independent position if he had remained at home,” Ramsay writes.

(Footnotes)

1 Freda Ramsay, *John Ramsay of Kildalton*. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1970.

Shiploads of new Canadians



Library and Archives Canada PA-10270

Immigrants at Port of Arrival, Quebec City, 1911.

“Seventeen special trains from Halifax and Saint John are due in Montreal” Saturday and Sunday, carrying 6,000 immigrants,” the Halifax *Herald* reported April 2, 1910. More than 12,000 arrived during the week. It has been “the biggest week in the immigration line that Canada has had for a good many years,” says the *Herald*.

NEW CANADIANS

Most of the immigrants were homesteaders, heading for the prairie provinces.

The first 14 years of the twentieth century marked Canada's biggest immigration period. A total of 2,758,851 arrived before the First World War stemmed the flow in late 1914, according to official figures. From the 1901 census to 1921, Canada's population increased from less than 5.4 million to almost eight million. In Saskatchewan and Alberta, population increased more than eight-fold; from 91,000 to 757,000 in Saskatchewan, and from 73,000 to 588,000 in Alberta.

— Canada @ 150 —

Those settlers in sheepskin coats

They were called filthy, ignorant, lazy, immoral drunkards, a threat to the racial character and social stability of Canada. They were the peasants from Eastern Europe brought to Canada under Interior Minister Clifford Sifton's aggressive quest for immigrants. To Sifton, they were "stalwart peasants in sheepskin coats," precisely the type of good, hard-working farmers needed to settle the vast expanse of Canadian prairie. To critics, they were undesirables.

One professed critic, in a lengthy letter in the *Toronto Globe*, October 22, 1898, takes a second look at the peasant farmers in the Edmonton area and is astounded at their progress. They might, he confesses, even



Miriam Elstor, 1911, British Library, HS 85/10/23668. Wikimedia Commons.

Ruthenians settlers in central Alberta, 1911.

become “our fellow-Canadians and a source of strength to our common country.”

“I was very strongly prejudiced against them and was outspoken in condemnation,” of them, C. Dew MacDonald of Edmonton writes. But visiting some 20

farms of the Ruthenian¹ immigrants—accompanied by Edmonton *Bulletin* publisher and future Interior Minister Frank Oliver—“taught me that it is very dangerous to rely upon first impressions.”

When the peasant settlers first arrived, he says, they were in utter poverty, had a strong aversion to soap and water, and lacked the “admirable” character, “manliness and strength” of the British and French. But “what else is to be expected of people who have always been treated like dogs?” And “a change of environment works wonderful improvement... in the character of a people.”

The farms had been settled for only a very few years when MacDonald visited them. He expected “to find my prejudices strengthened, but found a degree of material progress simply astounding.” He found large haystacks, good horses, good buildings, good machinery and good crops—improvements as good “as any class of settlers.”

He also found the Ruthenians enjoying undreamt of comfort, the blessings of “free men in a free land;” less adverse to soap and water; more thrifty than the Scots; self-reliant (they made all their own clothes); and industrious “but not very intelligent” workers. With “all their faults and imperfections, they have strength, endurance, industry, and thrift.” Even greater than this, they were happy to hack their farms out of bush land distant from markets and railroads, in an area where none of “our people... would dream of burying himself.”

Unstated was another attribute of the sheepskin settlers: they had none of the condescending superiority of Anglo Saxon Canadians.

— Canada @ 150 —

Lonesome gold miners pine for preachers

The Hollywood image of the old west gold mining camps as lawless, lustful and licentious did not apply to peaceful, law-abiding Canada, judging by a report on September 19, 1864 in the Vancouver Times (Victoria, Vancouver Island). The biggest complaint of Vancouver Island miners appeared to be a lack of clergymen on Sundays. The editor had just returned from a visit to 22 mining camps (including the Wake-Up-Jake, and the Wide Awake) where five or six men at each camp were sluicing out gold at rates of about \$10 to \$100 a day. He reported:

The first impression which strikes a visitor who has seen other mining camps, is the quiet and respectable demeanor of the miners on Sunday. Yesterday there was no minister on the creek, and consequently no religious service; and it was evident that a large number of men felt disappointed that no one had remembered them.

The day seemed principally to be spent in visiting their friends' camps, cleaning up their habitations, giving a little more attention than usual to their ablutions — some to the care of their underclothing, others balancing accounts and dividing the week's dust, while some were doing a little shopping. In a few camps cards were in requisition, but generally those who were not employed at domestic labors or receiving and making calls, were reading or sleeping. In only one case were there any men employed in actual mining, and the neighboring claim owners deprecated the system of working on Sundays...

The quiet and peaceable conduct of the miners generally, the marked abstinence from quarrelling, drunkenness and fighting, speaks highly for the character of the men on Leech River. The duties of the magistrate, beyond the friendly settlement of disputes arising out of mining arrangements, are of the lightest description. Not one arrest has been made on the creek, nor one crime committed, since the diggings were discovered... The number of substantial buildings erected or in the course of construction is very great; both storekeepers and miners look forward to living on the creek the whole winter through.

They tote guns in Victoria

Vancouver Island was the scene of a gold rush in the 1860s, although the colony's mountain streams never panned out as well as the richer and more spectacular diggings on the Fraser River and in the Caribou country. Many of the prospectors who swarmed north were Americans. Carrying revolvers was illegal but such gun toting was apparently common, as indicated by this item in Victoria's Vancouver Times, September 13, 1864.

This morning two men were sitting together in a saloon in Waddington alley, talking of their claims on Leech River. Upon a remark made by one that the other's claim might be jumped if he stayed away much longer, he drew a revolver from his breast and said, "This is the way I would treat anyone who jumped my claim."

The revolver was on full cock and went off. The ball grazed the inside of one man's hand and entered the knee of another below the kneecap and flattened itself

against the bone. The ball was extracted by Dr. Haggin. We are happy to say the man is not seriously hurt, as he walked away after the operation.

The regulations against carrying firearms, though stringent enough, are not sufficiently enforced. It is true that this was an accident, but that accident would not have occurred had the man not had the loaded pistol with him, contrary to law.

There are a large number of men now in Victoria who have always loaded revolvers with them. This should be looked into by the police.

Doff hat to honour dead

The London, Ontario Advertiser July 22, 1905, laments the fading of the custom.

The other day as a funeral was passing down the streets of our city a man who was driving a cart stopped till the funeral had passed, and as the hearse went by reverently lifted his hat. One felt a feeling of respect for that man, and wished it was a common custom in London. But it is not... Apparently the boys are not taught to do so, and the men do not take the trouble. In some towns in Canada you will see every man lift his hat as a funeral passes. It doesn't matter who it is; he doesn't know. He only knows it is some brother mortal who has gone to his long home, and out of an instinctive pity and respect for the departed, he honors himself by honoring the dead. Would not a word from our ministers and Sunday school superintendents and parents help our boys and young men to begin a custom, which at the very lowest estimate is a beautiful tribute to our common humanity?

Bank robbers try to rope Canada in U.S. Civil War



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, New York, November 12, 1864.

During the U.S. Civil War, Confederate spies, based in Montreal, raided St. Albans, Vermont, robbed three banks, and returned with their loot to Montreal. Their intent was to embroil Canada and Britain in the war.

During the U.S. civil war (1861-1865), Canadians were divided about which side their sympathies—and sometimes covert support—lay. Those who supported the Confederate south thought that breaking up the United States would lessen the danger of a bigger, stronger neighbour responding to the American cry of “Manifest Destiny,” the doctrine that called for absorption of

Canada under a U.S. flag flying as far as the North Pole. Those whose sympathies lay with the Union favoured the abolition of slavery.

Conflicting interests, alliances and passions threatened to drag Britain, Canada (present day Quebec and Ontario) and the Maritime colonies (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) into the American war, as the Union forces of the north battled the Confederate forces of the south, in the bloodiest war that history had yet seen.

Tensions were stretched tight. A Union warship hijacked Confederate delegates from a British mail ship sailing for England. British shipyards built and outfitted warships for the Confederates, including the *Alabama*, which captured more than two dozen Union ships, burning most of them, before it was sunk by the Union. Canadian sympathizers helped Confederates capture a passenger steamship that plied coastal waters between New York and Portland, Maine. Operating from a Canadian base in Windsor, Confederates captured two American merchant ships on Lake Erie, and attempted to free Confederate soldiers imprisoned on Johnson's Island.

But it was the St. Albans raid that posed the greatest threat, a daring Confederate ploy, John A. MacDonald later told the Canadian legislature. "The south," said Macdonald, "had made it part of their plan of operations to make Canada the basis of incursions upon their enemy for the purpose of embroiling the United States and Great Britain in war," as the Montreal *Herald*, reported February 18, 1865.

The St. Albans raid story starts on October 10, 1864, a

day of coincidence. In Quebec City's ornate St. Louis Hotel, where the imposing Chateau Frontenac now stands, delegates from Canada and the Maritimes assembled for a second conference seeking to unite in confederation, spurred in part by the U.S. Civil war. At the small Vermont town of St. Albans, 15 miles south of Canada, three young men arrived that day from Montreal, claiming they had come from New Brunswick on a sporting vacation. Eighteen more friendly men arrived from Montreal during the next seven days, with accents that sounded more like Kentucky bluegrass than Maritime bluenose. They were, indeed all 21 from Kentucky, Confederate soldiers who had escaped after capture by Union forces to find refuge in neutral Canada, where they had been recruited by their leader, Bennett Young, to strike a blow against the North.

On October 19, they donned their Confederate uniforms; held up three St. Albans banks, collected \$208,000; tried to set the town on fire but managed to burn down only a woodshed; stole a group of horses, and high-tailed it back to Canada (where they changed again into civilian clothes), pursued by a few of the braver men of the town. One of the raiders was shot and killed; two of the pursuers were shot, one fatally.

In Canada, the police captured 13 of the raiders and \$80,000 of the stolen money, in a shoot-out in which one of the police was killed. The captured raiders were held in a Montreal jail, pending extradition hearings before a police magistrate.

Into this explosive situation came a Montreal police court magistrate, C.J. Courson, who freed the bank robbers and gave them back their stolen money, to the great

alarm and dismay of John A. Macdonald and his government. After the bank raid, extradition hearings, in which the United States sought to have the robbers sent south to face American justice, dragged on interminably before Magistrate Courson. The government expected the robbers to be extradited, and government lawyers argued in support of the American request. But Courson—whom Macdonald called “this wretched pig of a police magistrate”—ruled that his court had no jurisdiction, and set the robbers free.

“The raiders then left the Court, surrounded by their friends, who of course were loud in their congratulations,” the Montreal *Herald* reported December 13, 1864. Apparently the raiders enjoyed the support of at least some Montrealers.

At least a week before his decision, Courson advised Police Chief Guillaume Leamothe that if the robbers were discharged, the stolen money would have to be promptly returned to them, according to testimony at a hearing the day after Courson released the prisoners, the *Herald* reported.

The U.S. Union roared with anger and threats. In the aftermath of the St. Albans raid, Canada formed the country’s first secret service, the forerunner of the North West Mounted Police, and recruited 400 young Canadians to patrol the border. The young recruits had much time on their hands, and to keep them out of trouble they were equipped with “morally-approved” reading material.

— Canada @ 150 —

The first Canada Day



Queen's University Archives

Reading the Proclamation of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, July 1, 1868. Toronto celebrated with a roasted ox, but in Nova Scotia, a Father of Confederation was burned in effigy, together with a live rat.

As midnight broke on July 1, 1867, there was neither peace nor quiet across the land. From Halifax to Windsor, guns boomed, bells chimed, rifles, pistols, and muskets were fired, bonfires were lit, as millions of Canadians poured out into the streets of towns and villages to celebrate the birth of their new country. Scant hours later, there were parades, military reviews, speeches, picnics, cricket and lacrosse matches, special railway and steamship excursions. In Toronto, a fat ox was

From my book, About Canada, Toronto, Civil Sector Press, 2012.

roasted for the benefit of the poor, but in Nova Scotia an effigy of one of the Fathers of Confederation was burned together with a live rat.

The enthusiastic rejoicing on that first Canada Day when Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East and Canada West were officially forged into a new nation was not universally shared. For some in the two Maritime provinces there was bitter resentment at perceived loss of independence—and for some politicians, a loss of power and privileges.

In Canada East, there were mixed feelings. Unionists saw Confederation as a bulwark against the threat of American annexation and the obliteration of French language, culture, customs, and institutions. Others feared that the British North America Act, the new constitution for the new country, gave too much power to the federal government, and not enough for Quebec to protect its interests.

From that first Confederation conference at Charlottetown in 1864, it had taken almost three years to put Canada together, and at times the whole idea was in danger of collapsing. The vision of a new nation from sea to sea to sea was far from complete. Prince Edward Island had opted out, and would stay out for another seven years. Newfoundland, too, had rejected Canada, and would not join for another 82 years. Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, and British Columbia were still to join the four million people of Canada.

NEWSPAPER PISS AND VINEGAR

Less than two months before Dominion Day, the *British Colonist* and the *Acadian Recorder* had somewhat dif-

fering accounts of a Halifax meeting called to nominate candidates for the impending new Parliament.

The April 30 meeting “broke up in the wildest uproar and confusion,” the anti-union *Acadian Recorder* reported the next day. The names of candidates were said to have been “called out amid great hissing,” while “disgust and distrust seemed to be the leading elements which animated the breasts of the audience. ‘Traitor’ was called out in every quarter of the Hall.” Confederation advocate Dr. Charles Tupper was said to have received “the loudest demonstration of disapproval,” but when the name of anti-Confederation leader Joseph Howe was mentioned, “a large majority of the audience arose and gave three hearty cheers for the Nova Scotia patriot.”

A pack of “low and disgusting falsehoods” and “unblushing lies” was how the *British Colonist* described the *Acadian* report. Temperance Hall, said the union paper, was filled to capacity and hundreds had to be turned away. The “few obstructive” anti-unionists, in this report, “were silenced by the enthusiastic demonstrations of the mass of the friends of Union, whose rapturous plaudits cheered on the able and eloquent speakers.” As for Dr. Tupper, far from being greeted with demonstrations of disapproval, he “was received with the wildest demonstrations of applause, and listened to with the most rapt attention.” Other anti-unionists were accused of even worse, of “downright lying” and “odious, cowardly, unspeakable manners.”

CHEERS AND BOOS

On Dominion Day itself, July 1, 1867, there was cheering across the continent, mixed with a few loud raspberries.

In Toronto, the *Leader* reported, “The New Dominion was hailed last night as the clock struck twelve by Mr. Rawlinson ringing a merry peel on the joy bells of St. James Cathedral... The bells had scarcely commenced when the firing of small arms was heard in every direction, so that both music and gunpowder were brought into requisition to usher in the great event. Large bonfires were lighted on various parts of the city... Large crowds also paraded the streets with fifes and drums, cheering in the heartiest manner.”

Great events were scheduled to start at the crack of dawn. All the troops in the city were to parade to the review grounds where they were to be “supplied with ale at the expense of Mr. Gzowski [Sir Casimir, former superintendent of public works]. In the evening there were to be military bands, fireworks and Chinese lanterns at Queen’s Park; “a picnic and festival” on the government grounds, while “A fat ox will be roasted and given away to the poor... by Capt. Woodhouse, of the schooner Lord Nelson.” An event held at the city’s Crystal Palace was characterized by the *Leader* as “a loathing band of so-called mothers exhibiting their offspring for prizes —a horrid and disgusting exhibition.”

In Peterborough, on the northern flank of Ontario settlement, midnight bell ringing “was a cause of alarm” to many citizens, according to the *Examiner*. “But very soon they found their fears were groundless; the cause was nothing more than introducing our citizens to Confederation.”

In Ottawa, thousands gathered as a match was struck at midnight to ignite a huge bonfire, all the city bells rang out, rockets flared, and 100 guns of the Ottawa

field battery boomed, the *Citizen* reported on July 4. There must have been little sleep for the players and spectators of four lacrosse games that started at 7 a.m. At the new Parliament Buildings, spectators and an honour guard awaited the arrival of the cabinet headed by John A. Macdonald, a gaggle of dignitaries, and Charles Monck, for his installation as Canada's first Governor General.

Confederation, predicted the *Ottawa Times* that day, will solve "a great problem" with which "the whole world is intimately concerned —whether British constitutional principles are to take root and flourish on the Western Hemisphere, or unbridled Democracy shall have a whole continent on which to erect the despotism of the mob. The issue is one of national existence combined with the enjoyment of national liberty, against the universal rule of an unrestrained Democracy."

In Quebec, the *Journal des Trois Rivières* viewed the bells and guns as a proud announcement that "we have taken our place among the nations of the earth."

Montreal greeted July 1 at 4 a.m. when the guns of the Montreal Field Battery "boomed forth a royal salute," followed two hours later by more salutes from the guns at St. Helen's Island. The *Gazette* called it "the greatest day in the history of the North American province since Jacques Cartier landed at Stadacona."

Far away from the new Dominion, at the tip of Vancouver Island, Victoria's *Daily Colonist* greeted July 1 as a "memorable day for British North America." Its publisher, Amor de Cosmos, was apparently breaking with his long-time mentor Joseph Howe. Canada, de Cosmos predicted,

will “play an important part in the world’s history,” guided by “a ministry composed of the best and greatest minds on the continent.” Confederation had “given the deathblow to Annexation.” All that remained to make the country complete was the construction of a railway to the Pacific coast and the admission of B.C. into confederation “as rapidly as possible.”

MOURNING IN THE MARITIMES

In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, there were a few muted cheers and some loud sobbing.

In Halifax, the *British Colonist* greeted the day with a rambling headline: “DOMINION DAY. UNIVERSAL REJOICING. Gorgeous Decorations. Enthusiastic Celebration of the Inauguration of the Dominion of Canada. Grand Display of Fireworks. Illumination, Bon Fires, &c. NAVAL AND MILITARY REVIEW.

The *Morning Chronicle* published this obituary:

“DIED.

“Last night, at twelve o’clock, the free and enlightened Province of Nova Scotia. Deceased was the offspring of Old English stock, and promised to have proved an honour and support to her parents in their declining years. Her death was occasioned by unnatural treatment received at the hands of some of her ungrateful sons, who, taking advantage of the position she afforded them, betrayed her to the enemy. Funeral will take place from the Grande Parade this day, Monday, at 9 o’clock. Friends are requested not to attend, as her enemies, with becoming scorn, intend to insult the occasion with rejoicing.”

In Saint John, “There was nothing uproarious about

the demonstrations” that marked July 1, the *Morning News* reported. “Everything was conducted in an orderly and becoming spirit, gratifying to the friends of the Union and at the same time not calculated to create an undue feeling of unpleasantness in the minds of those who have opposed the measure from a conviction of its unsuitability for our people.”

According to Timothy Anglin’s *Morning Freeman*, some of those politicians who had sought union for their own aggrandizement were rewarded, and some were disappointed. While Confederation Fathers James Mitchell and Leonard Tilley got cabinet posts “with salaries and pickings worth \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year,” “poor Dr. Tupper had to relinquish all idea of taking immediate possession of the seat in the cabinet of the new Dominion which was the prize he so coveted that he sold his country for the chance of winning it.”

Elsewhere in Nova Scotia, July 1 was “by no means a day of rejoicing,” in the view of the *Yarmouth Herald*. “There was a burlesque celebration in the morning,” but numerous flags were reportedly flown at half-mast. “In several localities, men wore black weeds on their hats,” while at Milton, an effigy of Tupper “was suspended by the neck all afternoon” and in the evening “burnt side by side with a live rat.”

— Canada @ 150 —

Great Imperial rowing race leaves Canada chop fallen



Canada Illustrated News. Library and Archives Canada C-56447.

Three fisherman and a lighthouse keeper, known as “the Paris crew,” won the world rowing championship in an upset victory in Paris in 1868; lost a race to an English crew two years later when their boat was swamped in rough weather, but beat the English crew the following year in calmer water.

“Canada is excited by the Boat race, which comes off today between the ‘Paris crew’ of Saint John, N.B., and the Tyne crew of England,” says the *Nova Scotia Yarmouth Herald*, September 15, 1870.

Regarded as country bumpkins—a lighthouse keeper and three fishermen—the Saint John crew won the world

rowing title at the 1868 Paris International Exhibition in a shocking upset, and later won the championship of the Americas.

Now, at the Montreal suburb of Lachine, before an estimated 30,000 to 45,000 spectators, victory again seemed certain. Well before the race began, "A stranger would suppose that we had won," said the Saint John *Globe*. Flags and streamers brought to celebrate the victory had already fluttered. A million dollars was said to have been waged, \$100,000 from Saint John. Odds of three-to-one went begging.

At 5:17, after a rough wind abated somewhat, the race was off. Saint John lead for the first 100 yards. Then, "A sudden gust of wind came sweeping down," reported the Saint John *Telegraph*. With a lower gunwale, the Saint John boat was not as well equipped as the English boat for the rough water. It took on water, its bow was driven under at one point and it was almost swamped. The Tyne crew crossed the six-mile finishing line first; the Saint John boat, 30 seconds later. Their boat was so laden that the crew had to turn it over and dump the water before they could lift it.

"The Saint John crew and most of the Saint John people leave for home tonight, all much chop-fallen," said the *Globe*. "Saint John is dead," reported the Halifax *Morning Chronicle*. "Everybody here, except sons of temperance, seemed to get intoxicated." Those who wore blue to honour the English crew were reportedly thrashed. "Business suspended yesterday, and today nothing has been done."

There was a rematch the following August, on the

smoother water of New Brunswick's Kennebecasis River. This time, the Saint John crew won, but the leader of the Tyne crew collapsed in his boat, apparently from heart failure, and died.

— Canada @ 150 —

Hanlan hot-dogs it to world rowing title



Library and Archives Canada C—025309.

Ned Hanlan, Canada's first world champion athlete.

It was the biggest race of his life, and Toronto's Edward "Ned" Hanlan was hot-dogging it. The single-sculls rowing champion of Canada, the United States, and Britain, the 5-foot-8-3/4-inch, 150-pound, 25-year-old Hanlan was competing on England's Thames River for the world title against Edward Trickett, the 6-foot-3-inch, 185-pound, 29-year-old Australia champion on November 15, 1880.

Hanlan was born on Toronto Island, a water baby who rowed across the harbour to school and—some say—transported bootleg booze for his hotelier father.

Rowing was a big nineteenth century spectator sport. Six months before the Thames race, 100,000 people lined the banks of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., to watch Hanlan beat the U.S. amateur champion, for the third time. It was also a big gambling sport. Punters swamped London bookmakers to wage “enormous” sums on the Hanlan-Trickett race, the *Toronto Globe* reported.

The London *Times* thought that Hanlan’s “superior skill and science” would “put him on an equality with the greater strength and weight of the Australian.” Trickett’s backers claimed—“perhaps not without good grounds,” according to the *Times*—that Hanlan lacked the strength to keep up on a long race.

After a rain delay, the racers were off at 12:22 p.m. Trickett took an early lead, rowing 40 or more strokes per minute to Hanlan’s 36. But Hanlan’s strokes were longer, and at the one-mile mark he was ahead by a length and a half; after 9 minutes and 35 seconds, he was ahead by 2-1/2 lengths, and “Trickett’s chance of success was evidently hopeless,” the *Times* reported. Hanlan began to hot-dog it, to the laughter and amusement of the crowd. He stopped rowing five times. When Trickett pulled up to within a length, Hanlan began to row again. At one point, he pulled alternately with each scull, “a water frolic which in many cases would lead to a capsized.” The race had now, said the *Times*, “become a mere farce.” Hanlan crossed the finish line at 26 minutes and 12 seconds, with the game but exhausted Trickett 10 second behind.

Hanlan was Canada's first world champion athlete. He successfully defended his title six times during the next four years, and continued to race for another 13 years. He was, says Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, "Canada's most prominent athlete of the nineteenth century."

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Wart off the lap of luxury

The remittance man, who received modest remittances from his family in England, was the butt of constant Canadian jokes and ridicule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was usually a younger son who failed to inherit a share of the family fortune under the rules of progenitor. From the Regina Standard, January 25, 1899, reprinted from Western Winks.

He is usually a wart off the lap of luxury. In his infancy his parents and relations nurtured him with such delicacy that his tears were never permitted to fall from cherished lids. His kingdom lasted until one day he found his way into the old man's pocket, and though he endeavored to attach himself to this vital part of the parental anatomy he wound up on the toe of the well-known shoe, and found himself in the West on an allowance. Sometimes he has acquired a knowledge of fiction and poetry which he thinks should enable him to make money anywhere, and he unhesitatingly attempts enterprises that would make a practical man shudder. Occasionally he succeeds, but never more than occasionally, and rarely does he attempt a second venture. He'll surely establish a horse ranch when horses are a drug on the market, or buy up cattle in the fall when he can get no hay for them.

Barnum blows a trans-Atlantic balloon

Phineas T. Barnum will build “the most magnificent balloon that ever soared aloft,” and sail it across the Atlantic to England, reports the *St. John’s Daily News*, October 9, 1873.

Barnum, wealthy showman, circus founder, author, publisher, publicist extraordinaire, and hoaxster had examined the problem of a trans-Atlantic balloon crossing. He hired a professor, Washington D. Donaldson, to make twice-weekly ascents in a circus hot air balloon. On his first ascent, Donaldson released thousand of Barnum business cards, which fluttered down on New York City “like a flock of insects.” The circus balloon was also used for performance of the world’s first wedding “above the clouds.”

Professor Donaldson was equipped with the very best



St. John’s Daily News thought P.T. Barnum was full of hot air, but it was not enough to blow a balloon across the Atlantic.

instruments to measure high altitude air temperature, wind speed and direction. After determining that prevailing winds blow from west to east, Barnum announced a balloon crossing to Europe could be “as easily and safely accomplished as a journey there in one of our best ocean steamers.”

Barnum’s monster trans-Atlantic balloon is to be “constructed in England of the strongest Chinese silk,” the *Daily News* reported. After exhibiting his balloon in England to hundreds of thousands of people, “in the exercise of his well known benevolence,” Barnum was to ship it to the United States for further exhibitions. Then, on its daring voyage to the Old World, “It will rise majestically to the level of the grand Eastward aerial current,” for a speedy crossing.

The *Daily News* wished Barnum success. “It is mainly a question of wind, and Barnum has been a great blower in his time. It seems, according to the fitness of things, that a favourable blast should aid his grand project. Let us hope success will crown his efforts. He is as worthy of it as any of his brother charlatans.”

As it turned out, the monster balloon was never built and the planned trans-Atlantic crossing was cancelled. It was probably just as well. Even a balloon flight over Lake Michigan proved fatal the following year. Barnum’s circus balloon, with professor Donaldson and a newspaper reporter took off from show grounds in Chicago and drifted over Lake Michigan, where it was met by an unexpected gale. Professor Donaldson’s body washed ashore a month later, but the reporter’s body was never found.

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The light of the Great Lone Land



Glenbow Archives NA-1138-1.

Patrick Gammie Laurie hauled printing press and equipment by ox cart across 600 miles of prairie and bush to establish the first Canadian newspaper between Winnipeg and Victoria, at Battleford.

It is “the light that is destined to dispel the gloom that has so long enveloped the Great Lone Land,” Patrick Gammie Laurie promises in the first issue of his *Saskatchewan Herald*, August 25, 1878, at Battleford, a fur-trading post and police station chosen as the cap-

ital of the North West Territories because it lay on the planned route of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It was the first newspaper between Winnipeg and Victoria B.C.

Laurie learned the printing trade where he grew up at Cobourg, Upper Canada, later publishing weekly newspapers at Owen Sound and Essex. A job as printer and editor of the *Nor'-Wester* took him to Fort Garry, soon to be Winnipeg, in 1869, in time for the first Riel Rebellion. With a \$200 reward on his head after he clandestinely printed a proclamation for the embattled Canadian authorities and refused to print for Louis Riel's provisional government, Laurie fled to Ontario, returning after the short-lived rebellion.

When Battleford was proclaimed a capital, 45-year-old Laurie loaded ox carts with press and type and set out on a 600-mile trek across prairie, bush, streams and rivers. It took 72 days.

The *Herald* first issued from a log building with a sod roof, a four-page, fortnightly paper set in tiny six-point type; "a little sheet," wrote Laurie, "to do away with everything that would needlessly increase the freight bill" for paper and ink hauled from Winnipeg by ox cart.

Laurie was editor, reporter, printer and salesman. With the second Riel Rebellion, Laurie divided his time between military duties and reporting the war.

"Progress" was the paper's motto, and for 50 years it ceaselessly promoted Battleford. But progress was arrested when the CPR was built far south of Battleford, not too far from the U.S. border, for better defence from any American invasion of Canada. Five years after publication began, the capital of the North West Territories

was moved to Regina. Laurie remained, publishing and editing the *Herald* at Battleford for 25 years until his death in 1903. His son Richard continued until his death in 1938, when publication ceased.

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Indian women's incredible 10-day winter walk

The Battleford *Saskatchewan Herald*, December 16, 1878, tells the story of an incredible 10-day journey of a young Indian woman, caught in an early winter.

Because of domestic troubles Meskacis decided to leave the home of her stepmother near Regina, where she and her husband had lived, and join her sister at Battleford. It was a walk of more than 100 miles across snow-swept plains, a journey of “privations such as few people could have endured and lived.”

Meskacis set out on November 5, with only the clothes she wore and a blanket. She spent the first night lost in a snowstorm, her only shelter the lee of a bush, with no means to light a fire. The weather was milder the second day. When her moccasins became water logged in slushy snow, she hugged them in her bosom in an effort to dry them. It turned colder on the third day. The moccasins froze so hard she could not wear them. She spent that day and night again trying to dry them. Wild rose buds, provided the only food she could find.

“Meskacis suffered indescribable agony from cold and hunger” on her 10-day walk, the *Herald* reported. “The

freezing of one heel and one of her toes made walking both slow and painful. Her shoes wore out, and she was forced to extemporize others out of pieces of her only blanket... Yet in spite of all this she never lost her reason, but walked straight along the route she undertook to follow, never once losing her bearings, or walking in a circle, as people general do when lost upon the plains.”

— Canada @ 150 —

Real women better than “old lady” Senators

Canadian women sought the right to vote and hold public office at least as early as 1883. It would be 35 years later before they won the vote in federal elections and 46 years before they could sit in the Senate. But the ladies had the support of at least the *Toronto Telegram*, which thought that real women would do just as well in the Senate as the men—derided as “old women.”



Wikimedia Commons.

The *Telegram*, October 16, 1883 was commenting on a delegation from the Women’s Suffrage Associ-

Oliver Mowat, Ontario premier 1872-96, knew how to sit on the fence, as comfortable as only a politician can be in that position.

ation that had invaded the office of Ontario's attorney general the day before, politely asking the right to vote. "Living as they did under the rule of our great and glorious Queen, it seemed to be an anomaly that women should be barred from all legislated rights," Association President Mrs. McEwan reportedly told Premier Oliver Mowat and several members of his cabinet.

The women had their supporters. Toronto Mayor Boswell presented a city council memorial supporting women suffrage, and added that he personally was strongly in favour of it. Other politicians at the session expressed varying views, pro and con.

Premier Mowat sat on the fence, as comfortable as only a politician can be in that position. There were, said the premier, intellectual and earnest women who had taken a deep interest in the subject, but only one in 10 or one in 20 had expressed their support. "He had no doubt that the time was coming when the women would have the vote," the *Telegram* reported, "but whether the time was near or far he could not tell. He would always remember the present interview with pleasure."

If ladies were allowed to vote, they could not logically be barred from political office, the *Telegram* said in its editorial comment. "It would look somewhat odd to see ladies sitting and voting on the School Board, in the City Council, in the Ontario Legislature and in the House of Commons at Ottawa. But the present is an age of innovation, and this would be no more remarkable than some others that have taken place. People will concede with very little hesitation that the duties discharged by the Senate, for instance, could be quite as efficiently discharged by ladies as by old women."

— Canada @ 150 —

Sam Hughes doesn't want Britain's fallen women here

Sam Hughes, publisher, politician and soldier, doesn't like the plan of Salvation Army founder General William Booth to help Britain's "fallen women" transform their lives and prospects by emigrating to Canada and the United States. He voices his opinion in this item from his newspaper, the *Lindsay, Ontario Victoria Warder*, September 4, 1885.

Booth, a Methodist preacher, began his work of social welfare, reform and religious salvation among London's poorest, including alcoholics, criminals and prostitutes. His Army offered food, housing, training and help in personal reformation founded on Christian ethics, along with salvation preaching. During



Library and Archives Canada PA-202396.

Sir Sam Hughes and his patented First World War shovel with a hole in the middle, intended shield shooters in the First World War. When Hughes was minister of defence, his department purchased thousands, but they were never used.

his tenure as leader, from 1878 until his death in 1912, he expanded the Salvation Army to 58 countries. Today it is one of the world's largest distributors of humanitarian aid.

Booth's hope, says the *Warder*, is that, "removed from the scenes of their shame and degradation" to North America, the fallen women "will henceforth lead good and pure lives."

But the *Warder* is far from hopeful of that. It protests the plan as "a stain on the fair name of every honest British immigrant lass," warns about a risk of venereal diseases to the chaste Canadian men the women might marry, and deplors the use of Canada as a dumping ground.

The *Warder* notes the biblical injunction "that iniquities of parents are visited on the third and fourth generations. Every medical student knows the terrible effects in children of diseased parents. Already that form of disease is becoming one of the most common in our hospitals. In those of Europe and other long settled lands, its evil effects are alarmingly on the increase."

"The United States and Canada have for some years been made the dumping ground for the dirt of Europe. So far the older colonists have assimilated the foreign element, but we fear the strain has been great. It is doubtful if such a dose as General Booth proposes to give us would not be too much."

— Canada @ 150 —

Vancouver rises from the ashes of its great fire



Photo by H.T. Devine, Vancouver Public Library #1090.

When fire destroyed Vancouver in 1886, city hall moved to new air-conditioned premises.

Vancouver began in the 1860's as a logging and lumbering community on the south shore near the mouth of Burrard Inlet. Giant Douglas fir and cedar logs were dragged by oxen along skid roads to tidewater, where Hasting's mill cut them into timbers and lumber. Loaded aboard the tall-mast sailing ships, the sawn lumber and spars were shipped to markets in Australia, South America, Mexico, China, England, the Hawaiian Islands, and California.

In mockery of incessant rain, the future city was a dry

camp—there was no liquor—until Captain John “Gassy Jack” Deighton arrived in 1867. He brought with him a wife and a barrel of whisky. Within 24 hours, lumberjacks built Deighton’s saloon, followed later by the Deighton hotel.

The growing community was fondly known as Gastown until April 6, 1886, when it was incorporated as the City of Vancouver, named after George Vancouver, the British naval explorer who had entered Burrard Inlet 94 years before.

Barely two months after it was incorporated, Vancouver was demolished within two hours, as fire roared through its one thousand wooden framed buildings while its 3,000 residents ran for safety to the water of Burrard Inlet, throwing themselves on rafts, boats, anything that would float in a stormy sea. Indians of the Coast Salish Squamish arrived in their dugout canoes to help rescue people, sheltering them in their nearby village church. Before dusk on that Sunday afternoon, June 13, 1886, only seven buildings remained among the ashes—a saw mill, a planing mill, a hotel, and a few shacks. No one knows how many perished; estimates range from 20 to 50.

Among the ashes were the former offices and plants of the city’s three newspapers: the *Weekly Herald*, *Daily Advertiser*, and *Daily News*, which had first appeared June 1, less than two weeks before the fire. *Daily News* publishers James Ross, his wife and child found safety on a wharf at the Hasting’s saw mill, before they were taken by boat to the north shore of the inlet, where they spent the night at a fisherman’s shack. Mrs. Ross is said to have later died as the result of exposure to the

fire. The day after the fire, Ross dashed to Victoria to buy a secondhand replacement press, then to nearby New Westminster, where he produced a small, single-page issue at the *Columbian* newspaper. The following excerpt from his *Daily News*, dated June 17, 1886, provides a vivid firsthand account of The Great Fire.

“Probably never since the days of Pompeii and Herculaneum was a town wiped out of existence so completely and suddenly as was Vancouver on Sunday. All the morning the usual pleasant breeze from the ocean was spoiled by smoke from fires in the portion of the townsite owned by the C.P.R. Co., west of the part of the town already built, but no alarm was felt in consequence.

“The place wherein these fires existed was until two or three months ago covered with forest. A large force of men had been engaged in clearing it. The trees were felled, and the fallen trees, stumps, etc., were disposed of by burning here and there in separate heaps. A few weeks ago, during a gale from the west, the city was filled with smoke and cinders from these fires, and fire reached close to several outlying buildings, but after some fighting danger was averted. This, doubtless, tended to lull the people into a sense of security on Sunday.

“It was about two o’clock in the afternoon that the breeze, which had been blowing from the west, became a gale, and flames surrounded a cabin near a large dwelling to the west of the part of the city solidly built up. A few score men had been on guard with water and buckets, between this dwelling and the cabin, but when the wind became a gale they were forced to flee for their lives, and in a few minutes the dwelling was a mass of flames

and the whole city was filled with flying cinders and dense clouds of smoke. The flames spread from this building to adjoining ones with amazing rapidity. The whole city was in flames in less than forty minutes after the first house was afire.

“Of course, this being the case, a number inevitably perished in the flames. It is to be feared that the seven whose bodies were recovered constitute only a fraction of the whole number who perished. The total number of victims and their identity will probably never be known.

“With the exception of Mrs. Nash and Mr. Craswell, the bodies recovered were all burned to a crisp and barely recognizable as human remains. Mr. Craswell’s body was found in a well where he took refuge and died of suffocation. A young man named Johnson, and his mother were found in the same well. Johnson was dead and Mrs. Johnson has since died.

“Persons living near the Harbor and in the eastern part of the city hurried toward the wharves at the Hasting’s Mill, and crowded upon the steamers moored to the wharves. On the streams and wharves, while the city was a mass of roaring flame, were gathered hundreds of frightened and excited men and sobbing women and children.

‘Anon there emerged from the dense some one and another, gasping and blinded, with singed hair and blistered hands and faces, who had struggled almost too long to save property.

“A considerable number of people were surrounded by the fire and cornered near the J.M. Clute & Co’s store,

and their only means of escape was to make rafts of the planking in a wharf at the place, and push out into the harbor. The wind was blowing fiercely, making the water rough, and the party were in no little peril of drowning. They made their way to a vessel which was at anchor in the harbor, and the watchman on the vessel, with all the proverbial insolence and stupidity of 'insect authority,' refused to let the party come aboard. He very soon perceived, however, that his refusal 'did not count,' and that his very life would "not count" for much if he attempted to keep the people off the vessel, and surrendered unconditionally.

"Those who witnessed the conflagration from the water describe the sight as appalling and wonderful beyond description.

"Many of the large number who lived nearer False Creek than the harbor made their way toward that body of water, and had a hard struggle to escape with their lives. Mr. Joseph Templeton got through only with the assistance of others. Mr. Martin, of the Burrard hotel, barely escaped with his life, and was prostrated when he reached a place of safety. John Boulton and C.G. Johnson saved their lives by lying down and burrowing their faces in the earth. Both are still suffering from the injuries.

Everyone suffered not a little from the blinding and suffocating smoke. Families were separated, and agonized women ran wildly about crying for missing children or husbands. Many men were completely crazed and did not recover their senses for hours. The disaster was one of the most sudden and terrible which even in the history of the earth has overtaken a community."

Rebuilding the city

Undaunted by the great fire, Vancouverites began rebuilding before the ashes had hardly cooled.

“The general sentiment of the people appears to be one of hopefulness and determination to begin at once the reconstruction of the city,” Toronto’s *Globe* reported in a dispatch dated two days after the fire. “Some had already got building material on the ground.”

“For the city as a whole, it is not a very serious matter; in fact it can scarcely impede the progress of Vancouver at all.”

Mayor Malcolm MacLean assembled his council in a new city hall—a hastily erected tent.

James Ross, who found “not even a scrap of paper” to save, assured his readers that the fire was no impediment to the city’s progress. In a brief editorial note in his special *Daily News* June 17 edition on the fire, he wrote:

“Like nearly all others who had started in business in the new city, however, we perceive that the fire, whatever may be its effect upon individuals, is to the city as a whole, not a very serious matter; in fact it can scarcely impede the progress of Vancouver at all. A few months, or even a few weeks, will restore the city to as good a basis as it was on before the fire. We have therefore determined to continue the publication of the *Daily News*.”

The optimists were right. “With the first rays of light” on the morning after the fire, “workmen began to reconstruct the city,” writes historian Margaret A. Ormsby. “By Wednesday evening, a three-storey hotel was open for business, and within a month, fourteen new hotels and hundreds of new stores were erected.”

Vancouver seems to have been growing ever since, and downtown, near the waterfront, an area pock-marked with restaurants, bars, offices, and a statue of Captain John Deighton, is still known as “Gastown.”

Sources: The Daily News, Vancouver, June 17, 1896; the Globe, Toronto, June 16, 1886; Bessie Lamb, “From ‘Tickler’ to ‘Telegram’: Notes on Early Vancouver Newspapers, British Columbia Historical Review, Vol. IX, No. 3; Margaret A. Ormsby, “British Columbia: a History,” Toronto: Macmillan, 1958; “Vancouver’s Great Fire in 1886, The Beaver, No. 84 No. 4, August-September 2004.

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Boys as young as eight toil in coal mines

Boys as young as eight toiled in the coal mines of Nova Scotia and British Columbia in the nineteenth century. Nova Scotia set the first minimum age requirement at 10 in 1873, raising to 12 in 1891, while British Columbia set 12 years as the minimum in 1877. The laws were not always enforced. Men did the actual mining, but young boys worked both at the surface, and in the mines. Cleaning miners’ lamps and running errands were among their



Photo by Lewis Hines (1874-1940), Wikimedia Commons.

Young boy coal miner doesn't look like he is "having a high old time," ascribed to him by a Halifax paper.

lightest chores. They loaded and unloaded the coal tubs that were hoisted to the surface, drove horse and mule teams that hauled the tubs, among other demanding jobs.

Despite dirty and sometimes heavy work, and frequently long hours, the boy miners were portrayed as a happy, carefree lot in this item from the Halifax Morning Chronicle, December 4, 1890.

Long before your city boys are astir the pit boy is awakened by the steam whistles, which blow three long blasts

at half-past five o'clock every morning, thus warning him that it is time to get up. Breakfast partken of, he dons his pit clothes, usually a pair of indifferent fitting duck trousers, generously patched, an old coat, and with a lighted tin lamp on the front of his cap, his tea and dinner cans securely fastened on his back, he is ready for work. He must be at his post at 7 o'clock. Off he goes, and in a few minutes with a number of others, he is engaged in animated conversation, and having a high old time generally, as he is lowered on a riding rake to the bottom of the slope.

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Chinese massacre attempt

Canada's festering racism, under which Chinese suffered for decades, came dangerously close to mass murder claiming 120 lives before an attempt to dynamite two railway cars at Vancouver was foiled, Canadian Press reported May 20, 1910. The Chinese had arrived on the *SS Empress of China* for a scheduled "trip across the continent."

"The plan to kill the Chinese was discovered by a CPR agent, who found a stick of dynamite inside the stove of each of the two cars." Ham Woo, a cook, was preparing to light the stove in one of the cars. The stove had been stuffed with paper, and Mr. Ham, not knowing what it was, had a stick of dynamite in his hand, when C.L. Corning, the railroad agent, stopped him and took the dynamite from his hand. A 60-pound explosive cap was found attached to the dynamite. Another stick of dynamite was later found in the second car.

— Canada @ 150 —

Lonesome life of a prairie missionary



Glenbow Archives NA614-21.

An Alberta settler's log cabin in 1898. Settlers were few and far between on the parish of an Anglican missionary that stretched across 100 miles of prairie in southern Alberta.

A young Anglican missionary, 14 months out from England, talks to a *Regina Standard* reporter about the challenges of his parish, a prairie wilderness that extends from Calgary to the American border, September 11, 1891.

“My parish is 100 miles long and forty miles wide, and at least once a year I am expected to visit every person

in it,” he says in the interview. “It is a pretty hard life, and sometimes I wish I were in old England again.”

Under a broad-brimmed, black felt hat, he spends much of his time in his saddle, visiting his few parishioners. He lives alone in a one-room shack with a leaky roof and dines largely on tinned meat. “Sometimes a hunter or an Indian gives me a bit of game, which is quite a treat.”

Few of the settlers in his big parish are Anglicans. “I often travel 10 miles to keep an appointment to preach, and not a soul comes out. Two weeks ago I travelled 18 miles, and only two men came to the meeting house. They said that as no one else had come it wasn’t worth while for me to preach, and so they went away.” His biggest audience was 100 people for a funeral. He had hoped to supplement his \$500 a year salary with wedding fees, but had not yet had a wedding to perform.

Still, he was determined to stick it out, hopeful of better times to come.

“Ranchmen are coming into the country, and its population before many years will be much greater than it is now. I shall not then pine, as I do now, for human society, and as I get better acquainted and little churches are started, my list of friends will increase, and I shall find missionary work more pleasant.”

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Last of the saddleback preachers

The passing of the fiery itinerant preachers, who galloped by horse throughout Canada, from hamlet to hamlet, to spread the gospel in the backwoods of the nineteenth century, is foretold by Toronto Saturday Night, June 15, 1901.

Methodist Conferences, not only in Canada, but in the United States, are discussing the abolition of the itinerant system as it has been generally remarked that the system which might have been thoroughly well adapted to the needs of Methodism fifty or a hundred years ago, may be quite out of date now. It is wise for the religious denominations to learn from experience with their pet devices that the world changed and new methods must be employed.



Glenbow Archives NA-101-13.

English-born Methodist minister Robert K. Peck, Alberta, 1910. "Wearing cowboy clothes, the Reverend Peck use to ride around the country preaching," notes Calgary's Glenbow Museum.

It seems strange that none of the virile and splendid specimens of mental and physical manhood who have played such important parts in the itinerary system, have ever written a history of how the communities of today were cared for when the century was young. Churches seem to demand a cultured and entertaining pastor, and are unwilling to tolerate in cities and large town those vociferous and mighty exhorters of the past. Methodism will have to drop into line with Presbyterianism, the Anglican Church, Baptist and Congregational organizations, and obtain and retain pastors who are pleasing to the people who are in the habit of assembling. The thunderous old message of the itinerant preacher is not welcome today, and those who hear it, and who advocate the itinerary system, are, in the course of nature, gone out of fashion.

We cannot believe that the Gospel message itself is tiresome to the listener who is looking forward to an eternity which may be changed for him by the class of preaching he hears, but we must remember that culture and education and the lack of emotionalism which the busy world induces, demand a different treatment from that which was the custom of the rampant orator of the past. A man or woman living in a backwoods who lacked excitement and wished to be carried away by religious enthusiasm, could appreciate the stentorian tones of the old Methodist itinerant pastor, but those who get excitement all day and all week long, and who year in and year out are looking for peace, do not wish to be disturbed by this class of preacher.

— Canada @ 150 —

Life in the public library



Toronto Public Library Ref, #TRL,X71.

Despite violent opposition from critics, columnist Faith Fenton finds virtue even in the “trashy novels” of Toronto’s controversial public library.

Toronto’s Mechanics’ Institute, with its lecture, study and library facilities, became the Toronto Public Library in March 1884. It immediately met with “violent opposition manifested against it by an influential section of the city authorities, and the lamentable dissensions among the Library Board,” as reported by contemporary historian C. Pelham Mulvany. It was still controversial six years later, when columnist Faith Fenton defended it from critics, “chiefly of the well-to-do classes, [who] are altogether opposed to the institution,” because they say it is a

burden on taxpayers and encourages reading trashy novels. But Fenton finds virtue in fiction, and in a reading room that shelters loafers, tramps, and out-of-work men, as well as omnivorous readers. From The Empire, Toronto, January 18, 1890. Abridged.

That there is a strong basis for the assertion of these anti-novelists is undoubted; for of the 310,000 books that the report shows to have been issued during the past year, over eighty per cent were works of fiction, and, official information assures me, the lightest kind of fiction.

The Toronto Public Library is not unique in this respect. In American cities a similar high percentage of demand for fiction prevails. The people's taste is plainly declared, while the wisdom of gratifying it remains an open discussion.

Those who object to the free library and the taxation it entails do so upon the grounds that it is chiefly a disseminator of a light literature that is in no way beneficial, and with some show of reason assert that readers of trashy fiction should pay for their amusement, and not be provided out of the public purse.

But if it can be shown that light literature, such at least as is found upon the shelves of the Toronto library, is not altogether harmful, and infinitely better than no literature at all; if we decide that it has educational influence, however weak; if we agree with Dr. Holmes that "the foolish book is a leaky boat upon a sea of wisdom—some of the wisdom will get in anyhow," then these grave guardians of the public weal may safely withdraw their objections and grant the public's right to unlimited fiction if they so desire.

Little complaints, not unreasonable, find their way occasionally into the daily papers concerning the conduct of the reading-room.

“It is a place for loafers and tramps, a respectable man has no comfort there,” says the indignant citizen. True enough and sad enough it is—the loafers being in many cases men out of work; the tramps, men miserable and destitute, who find within the library precincts quiet-

Outside of a barroom, the library is the one place unemployed men can find a degree of warmth and comfort.

ness, warmth and some degree of comfort. Where the men are cleanly, which is not always the case; quiet and inoffensive in manner, occupying themselves with gazing at the journals or magazines, if not reading them; what cause of complaint can be lodged, and where is the line to be drawn?

When it was discovered that the chairs were being occupied by an undesirable class of citizen they were taken away and reading stands substituted, so that there should be less inducement to the loafer. This is hard upon a tired man who has worked all day and would like to sit down and consult the papers; but he has the comfort of knowing that he can buy his paper and read it where he will.

As long as the library is a public one, free to all classes of citizens, the tough, the tramp, the loafer have a right to the privileges, provided always that they conform to its regulations. And, indeed, who shall discriminate between one man and another in this respect? If the Toronto Library is for all classes of citizens, then all are equally privileged, and none can be aggrieved if the class who need it worst use it most frequently.

Passing through the building it seems a quiet, orderly place, filled with busy readers; yet strange revelations await the keen-eyed, and pathetic bits of character study repay the interested observer.

At a far reading desk a man stands motionless before a paper—a German paper it is—his eyes down-dropped, expressionless; for an hour he will stand thus nor ever scan a column nor turn a page. Reading? No. Thinking? His face is hardly intelligent enough to warrant the supposition—just passing away the idle hours.

Among a group of readers, another frequenter attracts our notice; a man of heavy, homely countenance, whose jaws are incessantly in motion as he scans the many columns. Hour after hour, day after day, he haunts the paper-filled desks, and the iron underjaw keeps up its ceaseless movement, till wearied with its monotony we withdraw our gaze.

A figure sits at a magazine table with a number of the *Century* lying open before him. He is not reading, for the magazine is upside down. His keen, shifty eyes move restlessly about till they encounter those of an official, when they are instantly bent upon the inverted volume.

A nicely dressed, dark-eyed young man sits listlessly at

a far table. It is a busy, bright morning and all the world is working, but the young, weary face shows that there at least is one who has no place in it.

Then there are the omnivorous readers, chiefly elderly men who have retired from business; the compiler who, with note book and pencil, searches volumes of reference; the business man who consults the world's stock markets; to all these the reading room is a place of convenience. But to men out of work it is more than this; it is the one place outside of a bar-room, where they can find warmth and a degree of comfort and opportunity to peruse the news of the day without payment of fee or proffer of password.

— Canada @ 150 —

In praise of washerwomen

Lillie Langtry (nee Emille Charlotte Breton, 1853-1929) was considered one of the stunning beauties of her time. An actress, she attracted the attention of Britain's King Edward VII and became his mistress. But on a visit to Toronto, she failed to impress the editor of The Week magazine, who professed a greater attraction to hard-working washerwomen. From The Week, April 12, 1895.

Mrs. Langtry's portrait as plastered around the city on walls and boards seems to be an admirable presentation of the characteristics of that much talked of woman. But I have seen many washerwomen whose faces were far pleasanter to the discerning eye. Why don't we plaster drawings of these on our vacant spaces? I stand up for the good old, hard-working washerwoman.

Tumbleweeds



Singing cowboy movie actor Gene Autry made a noxious weed a romantic western image.

Gene Autry made them a romantic image of the Old West in his 1935 movie and hit song “Tumbling Tumbleweeds.” The first singing cowboy movie, it cost just \$12,500 to make but grossed a reported \$1 million, a big sum in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Best known on the prairies, the weed can be seen tumbling across open spaces almost anywhere in North

America, or across screens in countless movies and television shows.

Also called Russian thistles, they arrived not from Russia but the Ukraine and they are not thistles. *Salsola iberica*, as it is properly known, is classed as a noxious weed that can spread rapidly as it is blown along; a single plant can produce up to 20,000 seeds. It causes, farmers have been warned, “serious production problems in crop, following harvest, and during summer fallow.” It can also spread a disease that is deadly to tomatoes, sugar plants and many other crops.

It arrived in South Dakota about 1877, a stowaway in flax seed brought in by Ukrainian farmers.

“It attracted but little attention at first; but of late it has spread so rapidly that last year [1892] it inflicted a loss of \$4,000,000 on the farmers of the United States,” reports the *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 24, 1893. And now, the paper warns, “It will soon commence to invade the Canadian Northwest.”

“To get rid of this pest the farmers of the American Northwest are petitioning Congress to give the secretary of the department of agriculture power to take vigorous measures. They say a judicious expenditure of \$2,000,000 would probably exterminate the thistle, and, as it did double that amount of damage last year, and if not checked, will do still more this [year], it would be money well spent.”

More than a century later, the weed is still tumbling along and farmers have to fight to keep it under control. Almost as enduring as the weed has been the 1935 Autry movie. It is now available on DVD.

— Canada @ 150 —

Kayoed by a blizzard



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly Newspaper, January, 1888. Wikimedia Commons.

Prairie blizzards were so fierce and blinding that a life-line was once necessary between the farmhouse and the outhouse. Things were sometimes not much better in town. Shortly after his arrival at Regina, North West Territories Lieutenant-Governor Charles Mackintosh, penned a letter about his experience in a knock-down street brawl with a howling blizzard. First published in the Ottawa Citizen, reprinted in the Regina Standard, January 25, 1894.

I have seen it, felt it, suffered from it—a real life blizzard.

Today I drove down to the office as artillery and came back the most crestfallen infantry that ever stampeded from a Yankee battle field. The horses could not face it, but a jackass undertook to do so,—sheer bravado, because everyone said it could not be done.

Out I started, and in five minutes my nose was frozen—first blood for the blizzard. I countered by throwing up my right hand to guard my cheek from several severe lunges, receiving a couple of sharp twinges on my right jaw bone. The brute then attacked the vital parts, getting in several body blows and catching me also on the right ear. I went to my corner just behind a telegraph pole, and time being called got my chin well down and ran at him head and shoulders, when he got me on the neck, and I went down on my knees, floundered a little, and shortly after went over on my back.

Contrary to all Queensberry regulations, he fell upon me heavily: but appeared pretty well winded, because I had been dodging about a good deal in a vain attempt to exhaust him. Again I faced him but he appeared a little weary.

This was a mere trick, and all the old buffers say he plays it regularly,—for no sooner had I straightened up than he attacked me fiercely again, giving it to me right and left, first the nose, then the ear, and then a smasher in the ribs, and then right and left in concert on my bread trap.

This lasted for half an hour. I waited, for it was getting dark, and just when I thought the sponge would go I espied the Government House fence, and got behind it, and sneaked home sadder but wiser. The big braggart and bully howled and stormed and dared me to come out again, but important business detained me, my only solace being a large quantity of unanswered official correspondence—and a very small drop of champagne brandy.

— Canada @ 150 —

What good girls must do

Regina Standard, January 3, 1895.

Girls, we tell you, that you have to “double half sole” your better ways; to be seen less upon the streets at night; you have to use less lip service; you have to be more refined in your language and manners; you have to cease using so much vulgar slang; you have to stop going to every dance given; you have to help your parents in housework; you have to stop being seen in company with every Tom, Dick and Harry; you have to use less artificial means to improve your shape and beauty; you have to learn the ways of your mothers and good old grandmothers when they were girls; you have to learn the “art” of constructing an ‘eatable’ meal’s victuals; you have to learn how to make a shirt and how to make pants without putting the pockets at the knee; you have to take better care of yourselves; you have to cast all your pride, conceit and deceit to the four winds; you have to be found four times at home to your absence once; you have to learn to read fluently and write sensibly; you have to use no vulgarity at any time or place; you have to get it into your shapely and darling heads that young men of sense are watching your every move in life; you have to be saving to the extreme end, but not stingy; you have to take and heed good advice, especially from your parents; you have to shun everything that will create gossip about yourselves; you have to be ladies; you have to be social, kind, polite, agreeable, amiable and sensible; you have to do all these things and many more or your chances for husbands will be very slim indeed, and your names will be “Miss Dennis” in single wretchedness all your days.

— Canada @ 150 —

The stink of dirty money

Dirty money was once more than a metaphor. It had a horrible stench, according to this letter published in the London, Ontario Advertiser, April 4, 1902.

An open letter to the Hon. W.S. Fielding, minister of finance, and to all the general managers of the Canadian banks:

Gentlemen — Are you willing, by a single stroke of the pen, to contribute largely to the comfort of the entire population of Canada? Are you willing, by such a simple method, to do away with, very largely, one of the methods by which infectious disease is undoubtedly spread? Surely, if a simple order can do these things, you will not refuse to give it?

Give orders, then, that all the bills which are soiled are to be called in, and sent out no more. It is just as easy to issue clean bills as dirty ones. Everyone who handles money is constantly disgusted at the filthy conditions of our bills, the stench from which is often literally horrible. Why continue such a state of affairs? There is not a person living, I presume, who would not rather handle a clean bill than a dirty one. Unquestionably, also, disease is spread by handling of dirty money. And when, by simple order, you can obviate daily discomfort to hundreds of thousands of people, why not give the order?

Will you not, in the interests of the whole Canadian people, do what I ask.

Yours faithfully, Max Liebech, principal of the Grammar School, Berthier, P.Q.

— Canada @ 150 —

First woman lawyer trumps misogynists



Archives of Ontario, S.17703.

Clara Brett Martin, the first woman lawyer in the British Empire.

Among the pantheon of leaders who crashed the doors and shattered the glass ceiling that held women back from the professions and business, few have done as much crashing and shattering as Clara Brett Martin (1874-1923) of Toronto. A member of a prominent Anglican-Irish family, Martin was an iconoclast even as a teenager. At a time when it was almost unheard for women to enroll in university science or technical programs, Martin won a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics from Toronto's Trinity College, at age 16. Three years later, she petitioned the Law Society of Upper Canada for per-

mission to become a student lawyer. The big wigs ruled that the law did not permit women lawyers. With the support of such people as Lady Aberdeen and Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat, that was changed by a new law passed by the Ontario legislature on April 13, 1892. Martin became a student lawyer. In 1897, she became the first woman lawyer in the globe-spanning British Empire—the trail blazer for probably more than a million women lawyers in more than a score of countries.

Martin's first court case as a student lawyer is told by columnist Faith Fenton in The Empire, Toronto, September 22, 1894.

Miss Clara Brett Martin won her first case one day this week down in that musty old room assigned to the Division Court.

It may not mean much in the eyes of an old lawyer to win a case in the Division Court, but it means a good deal to the young student who is making her first public appearance and conducting her first examination. When the student happens to be the first woman lawyer in the country, it means even more.

The difficulties Miss Martin encountered and overcame before entering upon her law course are fresh in the minds of Toronto citizens. The opposition she met with from high legal lights, who were determined that the law school of Ontario should not be thrown open to women—not because it was wrong, or even especially unfitting, but simply because it never had been, and, therefore, never should be—all this we remember too well.

But having won what was really her first case—and prob-

ably she will never have so brilliant an array of legal talent against her again—Miss Martin entered as an articled clerk with Mulock, Miller, Crowther & Montgomery—and during the past year has been quietly at work in the office of this well-known firm, sharing with the male students in all the studies and delving assigned. In less than two years she will pass her examination as solicitor, by which time she hopes to have induced the law society to go the length of admitting her to the full-fledged honors of barrister.

To permit a woman to become a solicitor and prevent her from attaining the higher degree of barrister, simply because she is a woman, is too funny. Yet that is exactly the present state of affairs.

Oh, you men, you men! You are not half as generous or chivalrous as you would like us to think. You're afraid, as the small boy would say—afraid that once the door is opened women will crowd in and minimize your profits and displace you altogether. Can't you give her a chance, and work out the problem on equal terms?

She has no business to want to be a lawyer, you say. What right have you to decide what she shall or shall not want?

She should be in a home, you assert. Of course she should be, but if she hasn't got a home, and you are not prepared to supply her with one, what then?

She should study medicine, or nursing; it's more feminine.

Is it? I tell you, my friend of the law, there are things more hardening to a woman in either of these professions than may be found in all your musty law tomes.

There are situations in either far more distressing to a women's refined feeling than any that the practice of law knows. The doctors have much more reason in their objection than you have.

But the woman won the case, just as she won her first little case this week; just as she will probably win many more in the years to come.

Yet I do not think there is much reason to fear that the gates of the law courts will be broken down by women clamoring for admission. There has been no woman applicant, I believe, since Miss Martin's entrance: the study is too dry, too costly, too slow in bringing return, for many women to be attracted by it. Only those who feel really drawn toward it by consciousness of mental fitness, are likely to follow law.

I was present in the Division Court this week, on the morning when Miss Martin won her case, having heard incidentally that she would appear. My knowledge of law courts is of the slimmest, and I was curious to see just how unwomanly her position would be.

It was not her first appearance: that occurred a week or two ago, when the case was adjourned that she might secure a needful witness. At that time I was told by a lawyer who attended the court that the young men present, the majority being themselves of the profession, indulged in open smiling and underbreath comment.

That was gentlemanly conduct toward a young girl whose sole offence was that she had to ask a quiet question or two in the conduct of a case for her firm—wasn't it? Remember it was a man who told me, one who rather condoned than disapproved of the discourtesy.

On this morning I entered and sat quietly down below the railing among a few onlookers interested in one or two other cases. There were a few expectant witnesses, one or two women amongst them, a group of young lawyers or students about a table, a clerk within a railing and the judge in a dress suit up in his chair. There is nothing of official pomp or show about a Division Court.

A young lady, gowned in a pretty brown walking suit, came in quietly and took her seat up within the rail.

The judge swept several cases rapidly off the docket. Then came one of disputed rent. The young lady removed her hat, stepped down before the stand, and in the quietest of voices asked that two witnesses be called, to each of which she put one or two questions bringing out the fact that the defendant had admitted the debt which he now denied.

GARNISHEE AND COST

“Garnishee and cost,” said the judge, briefly, and the young lady put on her hat and walked out. But it was pretty to see the color spring into her cheeks when she heard the judge’s words and knew that she had won this, her first, case for her firm.

Judge Morson’s manner was the perfection of quiet, unmarked courtesy, that the young lawyers would do well to emulate.

It had been so brief a thing that I hardly realized its significant to this young girl, and through her to Canadian women in general, inasmuch as Ontario’s first young woman lawyer had won her first case.

— Canada @ 150 —

Mackenzie guards public treasury from the greedy

The early years of Confederation both appalled and titillated Canadians with perhaps the country's most sensational—or sensationalized—political corruption and scandals. John A. Macdonald urgently called on industrialized Hugh Allen for “another ten thousand” dollars in secret election campaign funds (the total came to \$350,000) before awarding Allen's syndicate the contract to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. Promoter Owen E. Murphy revealed the secret in winning government railway contracts: “We bribed them all, and generally acquired nearly everything in sight.”

The new broom elected to clean out the stable was Alexander Mackenzie, whose Liberal administration of 1874 to 1878 did in fact provide a period of clean government. It wasn't easy. In a letter to Liberal member of Parliament Thomas Hodgins, Mackenzie bemoaned the



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Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie felt besieged by “friends” wanting appointments they were not fit for, contracts they were not entitled to, and advances not earned.

endless pleas for favours from suspect friends. The letter wasn't published until nearly a decade later, after Mackenzie's death.

“Every guardian of a public treasure-box, whether municipal, provincial or Federal, finds itself surrounded by those who would fain get their hands on it,” the *Toronto Globe* quoted Mackenzie May 27, 1896 in publishing a portion of his letter. Mackenzie wrote:

“Friends (?) expect to be benefitted by offices they are unfit for, by contracts they are not entitled to, by advances not earned. Enemies ally themselves with friends and push the friends to the front. Some attempt to storm the office. I feel like the besieged lying on my arms night and day. I have offended at least twenty parliamentary friends by defence of the citadel. A weak minister here would ruin the party in a month and the country very soon.”

— Canada @ 150 —

Ban the loving cup

The *Peterborough Review*, July 23, 1910, applauds the state of Minnesota in its efforts to curb the use of “the old tin cup, the gourd and the cracked water glass” at “free drinking places.” A notice that the state intends to post at public wells and fountains reads: “Warning. Dangerous diseases, such as diphtheria, tuberculosis, etc., are frequently communicated by the use of the public drinking cup. Provide yourself with an individual drinking cup and thus avoid the possibilities of contamination.”

Sad decline of little towns



Illustrated Historical Atlas of the Country of Ontario, Toronto, 1877.

Reesor Mills, Ontario, 1877. The village grew to a little town, shrank, disappeared, its last few buildings demolished for an airport still to be built.

Altona, 25 miles north-northwest of Toronto, was one of many little Ontario towns drained of population by urbanization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Settled in 1850, it was first known as Reesor Mills. At its peak, it housed 256 people; grist and flour mills; blacksmith, millwright and pumper-maker shops; a large two-storey hotel, two schools, and post office. The population fell to 100 by 1910. In 1972, what remained of Altona was expropriated by the federal government as part of land required for a contemplated second major airport to serve Greater Toronto. Altona's remaining buildings were boarded up and later torn down. Nothing remains of the town. The land is still held by the government for the possible Pickering Airport.

The railroads and industrialization began to shift Canada's population from rural farm areas to the big cities in the late 1800s. The Weekly Sun, a leading Ontario farm newspaper published in Toronto, lamented the decline of little towns in its issue of January 21, 1897.

A rather melancholy part of our present situation is the stagnation or decline of business and population in most of our little towns. A few of the little towns which happen to be surrounded with farming districts of exceptional excellence are doing well; but of most of them it

***Life in a great city is
very apt to be solitude
in a crowd.***

must be said that they are stationary, if not retrograding. The abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States [a free trade agreement in effect between 1854 and 1866], by breaking up the traffic between the two countries, ruined our lake shipping, and, with it, much of the business of the border towns. But the main cause of the change has been the tendency to centralization which, at the present day, everywhere prevails.

In former times most of the little towns could boast of small manufacturing industries, such as carriage, wagon and harness factories, where all the parts of the carriage or wagon were made. They had also foundries, boot and shoe shops, tanneries, taverns and other concerns, each of which employed a few workmen. Manu-

facturing on the larger scale is now everywhere the rule; and manufacturing on a large scale means centralization. Specialization, or manufacturing in lines, has the same effect. A carriage-maker in former times made all the parts of a carriage. Now, he buys his hubs, spokes and other parts from the city manufacturer, and simply puts them together, employing, of course, a far less amount of labor.

Centralization, with the decay of the little towns as its consequence, has been also promoted by our network of railways. Most of the roads, on one or two days of the week, carry passengers from the small towns to the cities at excursion rates, by which thousands from the country take advantage to buy where there is greater variety and competition. A taste for city pleasures and excitements is imbibed at the same time. Department stores now contribute to the tendency...

Besides, it is with towns and cities as it is with men; to those who have is given; and from those who have not, is taken even that which they have. Young men of energy and enterprise leave the decaying town and flock to the city, where there is a wider and more animating field. Thus, the small towns are always losing their best blood to the cities, and only those who are inferior in energy and enterprise, remain.

There is no struggling against economic tendencies. But the change is not without its evils. Life in the little town is more healthy and purer than it is in the great city. It is in reality more social; life in a great city is very apt to be solitude in a crowd.

— Canada @ 150 —

Angel ushers fluster papa, needle mama

Angelic young ushers are adept at wheedling extra money from pappas when they pass the offering plate at church, much to the consternation of mamas, notes Kit Coleman in the following item from the Toronto Mail and Empire, January 22, 1898.

The latest fad is Angel ushers. One Reverend already has them. They are charming. They glide around with the plate and stare that man out of countenance who presents them with petty coins. They have killed the waistcoat button. That no longer finds its way religiously into the church coffers.

The most stalwart become weak and flurried into great offerings when the plate is presented by a dear little gloved hand, and eyes brighter than diamonds are cast upon manly, bearded faces. Even pater familias grows flushed and flurried as he fumbles in his vest pocket for a larger coin than the one he had laid there for church offering in the morning.

And mater familias does not like it. She is not to be wheedled out of quarters by saucy young things in be-



Wikimedia Commons.

Kathleen (Kit) Blake Coleman.

witching fur toques and dainty sables. She presents a stiff and stony exterior when the plate is thrust at her. She will not see it. It is quite enough for pater to burst into religious extravagance. At his time of life, too! She looks at his flushed countenance with a grim eye. Pater will catch it presently. Such goings on in a church! It's not orthodox! It isn't even decent!

But the Angel usher smiles sweetly on mater and winks furtively at pater, and goes on her serene way, sure of shekels.

Irish-born Kit Coleman—Kathleen Blake Coleman, 1864-1915—was Canada's most widely read and influential newspaper reporter in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Widowed a second time at age 25, she turned to house cleaning to support herself and two small children before winning a job as a reporter with the Toronto Mail (later Mail and Empire). She wrote first about the domestic and social matters that editors deemed to be the only issues of interest to women, before winning her argument that women were just as interested in such matters as politics, science, business, and religion. In 1898, she covered the Spanish-American war in Cuba, as the world's first accredited female war correspondent. But Kit Coleman never lost her ability to write about everyday life with a sharp eye, keen perception, and eloquence.

— Canada @ 150 —

Fox hunting on the Saskatchewan prairie



Painting courtesy railway artist Bill Hobbs.

Didsbury mansion at Cannington Manor, Saskatchewan, where English gentlemen learned how to farm, when not busy fox hunting.

The *Moosomin Spectator*, October 13, 1898, provides an account of fox hunting on the Saskatchewan prairie at Cannington Manor. One rider falls in a well, two tangle with barbed wire, and a lady rider falls in a muddy field.

Cannington Manor, 25 miles south of Moosomin, is, at this time, a village of 200 people, the heart of a 2,600-acre colony with an agricultural college intended to teach affluent English gentlemen bachelors how to farm. It includes a church, hotel, general store, flour and grist mills, sawmill, meat packing plant, two cheese facto-

ries, and a two-storey 26-room stone mansion with hand-carved mantle fireplaces and gilt-framed oil paintings, ballroom, billiard room, and servants' quarters.

Farming was sandwiched between the activities of theatrical, literary, musical, and art societies, and cricket, polo, tennis, football and fox hunting. The hounds were imported from the Isle of Wight, while thoroughbred horses were housed in a fieldstone stable with mahogany stalls and brass nameplates. Hunters set out with correct top boots, breeches and red hunting coats. Still, it wasn't quite like England; the foxes were actually coyotes, referred to by the *Spectator* as wolves.

At a Monday hunt, two hunters were observed "running into their wolf in Mr. Daniel's pasture, where they killed him in the open after a well-hunted run of something like two hours' duration. Several casualties are reported, one eager and presumably thirsty sportsman being rescued with difficulty from the bottom of an old well. Two gentlemen of suicidal turn of mind forced their unfortunate gees at a gallop through Mr. Gruggen's barbed wire fence, and the mud-plastered condition of a lady's habit suggest a complete cropper in a soft spot."

On Saturday, hounds, horses and hunters trampled the brush on one farm. "In the end our friend saved his brush," said the *Spectator*, "but it must have been a sadly bedraggled one."

Cannington Manor did not prosper. In 1900, when the CPR by-passed it by seven miles in building a new branch line, Cannington Manor became a ghost town, less than two decades after it had been founded. Today, it is a provincial park. The sound of the hunter's horn no longer echoes on the prairies.

— Canada @ 150 —

Troubles with the Loyal Orange Order



Library and Archives Canada C-122938.

March of Orangemen near Metcalfe, Ontario, July. 12, 1900.

When the Orange Order rode into Upper Canada in 1822 with a parade through the streets of York, it was very much an establishment occasion, but eight months later a petition was moved in the House of Assembly to have the outfit outlawed.

The fraternal organization that commemorated the victory of William of Orange in the Battle of Boyne in 1690 was a bastion of Protestant privilege and a source of endless conflict with Irish Catholics.

The most prominent Orangeman when King Billy first rode his white horse in an Upper Canada Orange parade was an ultra establishment man, the Reverend John Strachan. He was a pillar of the Family Compact, a member of the Executive Council, the founder of the University of Toronto, the first Anglican Bishop of Toronto, and a fierce defender of the exclusive right of the Anglican Church to all the clergy lands that had been set aside to support protestant religion in Upper Canada, spurning all others, even his former Presbyterian church.

The first Orange parade in Upper Canada was briefly reported in the Family Compact organ, *The Upper Canada Gazette*, July 18, 1822:

“The Members of the York Lodge assembled at the Lodge Room on the 12th inst. to celebrate the anniversary of KING WILLIAM THE THIRD, PRINCE OF ORANGE. At Two O’clock they Marched in Procession to Church, accompanied by the Band of the West York Militia, where the Hon. and Rev. Dr. Strachan gave an elegant and appropriate Discourse on the occasion.—After Divine Service they returned to Mr. Phairs’ Tavern, where upwards of one hundred Members sat down to an elegant Dinner, prepared for their reception. They remained until a later hour.”

The motion in the Legislature for a petition to ban the Orange Order (published in the *Kingston Chronicle March 28, 1823*) was made by John Macdonnel, a Roman Catholic member of the House. “A political party, termed an Orange Association, has reared its head in the town of York, by a public parade, and display of party colours,” Macdonnel noted.

For the past 30 years in Ireland, Macdonell claimed, “the twelfth of July has never passed by without some deplorable Calamity occasioned by Orange processions—and that as often as the Orange Flag has been unfurled in that Country, it has almost uniformly been stained with blood.”

The troubles, he warned, had already broken out in Lower Canada with Irish labourers and seemed likely to spread to Upper Canada.

“It has also appeared, by the public Newspapers, that the LaChine Canal, and we believe, in other parts of this Country, some of these ignorant and misguided individuals have already commenced the work of riot and disorder.—The like proceedings may also be fairly anticipated in this province, as soon as our resources may enable us to prosecute the intended improvement of our inland navigation.”

The petition asked for the adoption of “such salutary measures as may, for ever, prevent the establishment of exclusive Societies, and party distinctions, in this heretofore peaceable and happy colony, and thereby suppress in its infancy an evil which, if allowed to arrive at maturity, will not only check emigration to, but, unquestionably drive many respectable and industrious inhabitants from this country—prove a scourge to those who may remain, and deluge the province with contentious riots, and bloodshed.”

The elected members of the Parliament of Upper Canada could petition Maitland and his Executive Council as often as they wished, but it was only advice, which could be—and frequently was—simply rejected. With

Orangemen of the stature of Strachan on the appointed Executive Council, the way was kept clear for King Billy to ride his white horse on thousands of July 12 parades in countless villages, towns and cities.

A plea for peace and harmony

The Brockville Recorder, July 20, 1830 in the following item, sounds a plea for religious liberty, peace and harmony between Orangemen and Roman Catholics.

This is not a country of intolerance and religious persecution—it is a land of civil and religious liberty—and those that think they can turn it into a theatre for party parade and party quarrels, be they Orangemen or Roman Catholics, will fail in the attempt, and only expose themselves to the censure and ridicule of the country at large.

Blind folly

Canadian Freeman, in York, June 23, 1831 (three years before it became Toronto), laments blind folly and animosity in a land of religious liberty.

This, thank God, is a land of religious liberty, where every man enjoys the freedom of conscience, and every Irishman whose blood has been by one or two Canadian winters must see the blind folly of party spirit and religious animosity, so long the scourge and degradation of his native land.—A day, then is approaching which has not passed by, in Ireland, for many years, without riot and bloodshed.

In this Province, too, some of our pious countrymen have attempted to butcher each other, *for the sake of religion*, at Kingston and elsewhere, on the memorable day of *Christian benevolence*, to the great edification of other Christians from all quarters of the globe. But we call



Canadian Illustrated News, July 27, 1878

Orangemen driven home under armed police escort after July 12, 1878 parade and threatened riot in Montreal.

upon every Irishman... Orangeman or Catholic, to aid and assist in putting down such folly as party processions, party quarrels, and religious animosity, which have long been the bane and ruin of our native land, and the reproach of Irishmen all over the world.

Troops called out

In Montreal, more than 2,000 troops and 500 special constables were called out to keep July 12 peaceful in 1878. Frequent violence marked earlier Montreal Orange Day parades during half a century. The 1877 parade ended with the fatal shoot of a young, armed Orangeman, John Hackett. "Everyone seemed to have a revolver," eye witnesses later testified.

Protestant clergy, including the Anglican bishop, appealed to Orangemen to forgo their 1878 demonstrations and parade. The Orangemen were having none of that. The local order planned not only to proceed, but was counting on outside participation from other chapters. They found support from the Montreal *Daily Star*, arguing, six days before the event, that Orangemen had every right to a peaceful parade, and if violence ensued, it would not be they who were to blame.

The mayor issued a proclamation “that no assemblage or gathering shall be allowed.” The troops encamped on Dominion Square July 11. A group of Orangemen defied the order, but the number of troops and police prevented violence. The Orange County Master and the Parade Marshall were both arrested. The rest of the Orange marchers were driven home in cabs, with armed police escort. It was rather anti-climatic.

10,000 Oranges

Forty-six years later, Toronto witnessed what is possibly Canada’s largest Orange parade. There was no hint of violence on that sunny Saturday, July 12, 1924. “Glorious weather favored the Glorious Twelfth,” the *Globe* reported. “... a bright and animated picture was presented when the huge procession, gay with many colors, and to the accompaniment of music provided by fifty bands, passed along the city streets on its way to the Exhibition Grounds.” The *Globe* estimated the Orange marchers at “nearly 10,000,” while 20,000 Torontonians turned out for Glorious Twelfth events at city parks.

English only

As late as 1929, the Orange Lodge in Prince Albert de-



Toronto Public Library, TRL-T13222. Wikimedia Commons.

Toronto Orange Order parade, East King Street, late 1860s.

mandated all the federal government's bilingual forms in Saskatchewan be printed in English only, the *Regina Leader Post* reported October 16. The Lodge also passed a resolution promising to “strenuously oppose and... frustrate all attempts” to place Oh Canada “on a parity with the Empire's national anthem, ‘God Save the King.’” For nearly a century and a half, the Orange order was one of the most powerful political forces in Canada, drawing membership from working men to politicians the stature of John A. Macdonald. With riots, broken bones and bloodshed, more would be heard of this controversial order before, in Canada at least, it finally faded into deserved obscurity by the late twentieth century.

— Canada @ 150 —

Travails of Yukon travel



Eric A. Hogg, Washington University Library, Wikimedia Commons.

First train on the White Pass and Yukon Railway, February, 1899.

Travel to Whitehorse and the goldfields of the Yukon was often an epic adventure. By rail, it was just 110 miles from Skagway, Alaska over the White Pass and Yukon Railway to the end of the line at Whitehorse, Yukon. Dawson City, at the centre of the Yukon gold rush, was more than 250 miles farther north. By water the route to Dawson was more than 1,200 miles along the Yukon River from its mouth in the Bering Sea. The river was a main highway, especially between Whitehorse and Dawson City, for canoes, rafts and steamboats in the summer,

and dogsleds and horse and carriage in the winter. But for several weeks each spring and fall, the river was a treacherous highway. And in winter, the short trip by train from Skagway must sometimes have seemed as long as the river route. A six-day journey is recorded in the Whitehorse Star, January 16, 1901.

The train arrived from Skagway after six long days' battle of snow and ice... A dozen bewhiskered and hungry passengers came through from Skagway and barber shops, bathrooms and restaurants did a thriving business for several hours.

The train left Skagway last Thursday morning... The big rotary plow with two engines started ahead and moved along with little or no trouble until the summit was reached where the difficulties commenced. It was stopping, digging out and starting, until late Thursday evening when... two drawheads were pulled out of the plow engine and they were compelled to lay up for the night. Some of the passengers mushed up to Log Cabin, a distance of three miles and waited there until Sunday when the train came along. With the broken drawbars replaced, they have been brought down from Skagway by the second rotary.

The dangers of travel on the river between Dawson City and Whitehorse were reported a few weeks earlier in this item from the Star, December 9.

Although several mushers have arrived from Dawson during the past week, the unsafe conditions of the ice on both river and lake was forcibly brought to mind on Saturday and Sunday by the loss of the Royal Mail stages and three horses.

On Saturday, about five miles this side of Lower La Barge, as the out bound mail team was coming over the lake, the whole outfit went through the ice. The driver managed to escape and saved the mail, but a span of \$700 horses and the stage were lost.

Last night a mail team was going down Fifty Mile River

***When about seven miles from
Whitehorse the shore ice
suddenly gave way and
precipitated three of the horses
and the stage into the river.***

with a lead horse in the rear. When about seven miles from Whitehorse the shore ice suddenly gave way and precipitated three of the horses and the stage into the river. As on the lake the day before, the driver escaped and also managed to rescue two of the horses, but the stage and one horse went down.

From the above it will be seen that while many people, unaware of the dangers of travelling over ice in the present unsafe condition, are kicking at the non-arrival of Dawson mail, Supt. Pulham is taking desperate chances to rush it through in as short a time as possible, and is deserving of much praise, instead of condemnation for his untiring efforts.

— Canada @ 150 —

Scandal. Lady Aberdeen drinks tea with servants



McCord Museum, MP-0000.25.935.

Lady Aberdeen, social reformer and Canada's first feminist—before that term was even coined.

Ishbel Maria Coutts Marjoribanks Gordon, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, was not governor-general, as Saturday Night states, but possibly it was just that she

was considered the power behind the throne. The governor general was her husband, Lord Aberdeen, a social crusader like his wife. Canada's first aristocratic feminist, Lady Aberdeen (1857-1939) did not endear herself to the social establishment by her efforts to promote women's rights, democratic attitudes, religious and ethnic tolerance, and more esteem and power for workers. She fought bitter opposition from the medical establishment to create the Victorian Order of Nurses and was instrumental in establishing the National Council of Women in Canada. From Saturday Night, October 26, 1903.

While Lady Aberdeen was Governor-General and reigned in Rideau Hall [1893-98], if reports current at the time were true, it was her custom to treat her servants with about the same degree of cordiality and intimacy as she showed to her guests. The ladies of the Capital, when they heard that the occupant of Rideau Hall occasionally took five o'clock tea with her servants, predicted disaster amongst their own domestics as a result.

When Lady Aberdeen, in Montreal and elsewhere, took it upon herself to champion the cause of the servant girl, those who understood the problem in this country better than the reformer who was only sojourning here, were much offended, and said to one another that it was all very well for a women who had a retinue of thirty or forty servants and attaches, to make fantastic rules, but the women of Canada who struggled along with one domestic, or perhaps had two or three, would find it impossible to live up to such an expensive and impractical ideal.

Many of Lady Aberdeen's efforts to establish societies to prevent something or to force people to do something,

were practically failures, but the movement she set on foot in Ottawa [the formation of associations or unions for servants] seems to have taken root. They now have an organization consisting of the kitchen ladies of the Capital known as the Houseworkers' Association, and at the present moment it is struggling to make itself felt in a way which will doubtless make its ex-vice-regal patroness glow with pride.

It has been so difficult to obtain female domestic help in the city that Hon. Mr. Blair, Minister of Railways, has consented to the employment of Chinese servants at his private residence. This has so scandalized Union No. 1 of the Amalgamated order of Cooks, Chambermaids and Laundresses that a resolution has been adopted protesting against a Minister of the Crown having aught to do with the "heathen Chinee." It is said that they will distribute a circular in all the leading cities of Canada in which their wail will be set forth, relying on the trade and labor associations to take the matter up and do the rest.

It is not a cheering thought to the householder that before long the walking delegates of servant girls' unions will be going from house to house making the none too content occupants of the kitchen more unsettled, and enquiring into the rules, regulations and habits of the people whose dinner is on the stove. It is hard enough now to obtain competent household help, but if unions of this sort ever become popular, the last vestige of discipline and contentment will disappear from those who have the peace and well-being of the family so much in charge. If the ranks of the labor unionists are recruited in the way proposed, the leaders of the organizations

representing workingmen should have enough foresight to see that nothing but disaster to their own cause can possibly result by added social discontent of the new movement.

Rescued by the Aberdeens

Earlier, the Aberdeens shocked society by inviting a divorcée to a state dinner, as Saturday Night reported in December, 1893.

The Aberdeens have shown their good sense once again in inviting the wife of the Hon. Geo. E. Foster to the state dinner at Rideau Hall. This is the first state dinner to which Mrs. Foster has been invited. Hitherto because she had been divorced in the United States prior to her marriage to the present Finance Minister, the doors of Rideau Hall have been closed against her. While cabinet ministers who were not only corrupt, but notoriously immoral, and politicians of the same stamp, have always been welcome at the vice-regal residence in New Edinburgh, poor Mrs. Foster has been rigorously excluded.

Coming from the Aberdeens whose Christianity or piety is probably much more substantial than that of the nifty and fastidious people who turn up their noses at Mrs. Foster, the welcome now accorded will be doubly valued.

— Canada @ 150 —

Joyous death of Sunday blue laws



Glenbow Archives na-450-1.

Bob (Robert Chambers) Edwards (1864-1922) proclaimed “tidings of great joy,” over an apparent end to Sunday Blue Laws. Edwards is Western Canada’s best known humourist and satirist.

Many of the more dour of Canada’s early Scottish settlers “scotched” such Sunday activities as cards, games, music and even whistling or singing (except hymns in church). Theatres were shuttered and streetcars and railways came to a stop. Many sports were also prohibited

under Lords Day Profanation Acts passed by several provincial and territorial governments. But when in 1903 Britain's Privy Council declared such Acts null and void Bob Edwards proclaimed "tidings of great joy." At least until a new federal Act could be passed. From The Eye Opener, High River, Alberta, August 8, 1903.

The little tinpot enforcers of a dull Sunday will now have to take a back seat until a special Act applicable to the Sabbath is passed by the Dominion Parliament...

There is now happily nothing to prevent the boys from indulging in baseball, football, cricket, polo or any rational form of recreation on a Sunday. Of course, we would not recommend the playing of games anywhere near a church while service was going on, but we think it will be freely admitted by all but the narrowest-minded bigots that this wretched custom of mooning about in black clothes and a long face by way of pretending to keep the Sabbath day holy (for it is only "make-believe" in nine cases out of ten) is the variest of rot.

Sunday was intended as a day of rest for people who work hard during the week, to most of whom indulgence in healthful outdoor sports would be the truest rest. Nor would it interfere materially with church attendance. There are always people anxious to hear how the Israelites crossed the Red Sea thousands of years ago. The craving for the latest news will always exist.

Out, then, with your polo sticks and baseball bats, ye sons of toil, and every fine Sunday look cheerful and sally forth for a good time. Better healthy exercise in God's free air than moping at home reading Pilgrim's Progress and talking about your neighbors.

— Canada @ 150 —

Barnardo's waifs in Britain and Canada



Wellcome Images, Wellcome Trust, Wikimedia Commons.

Boys from the slums of English cities, sheltered on an unknown date by Dr. Barnardo's Homes. By 1939, some 30,000 Barnardo children were brought to Canada, the boys working on farms and the girls working as domestic servants.

“The August-September issue of the *National Waif's Magazine*, the official organ of Dr. Barnardo's Homes, contains the 37th report of this national and philanthropic work,” reports the *Regina Standard*, November 5, 1904.

The man behind the Barnardo Homes, Thomas John Barnardo, probably did more to rescue British waifs—abandoned and destitute children—from lives of hunger, sickness and often crime, than any other individual. Many found new lives in Canada.

An argumentative and rebellious student, Barnardo never graduated from grammar school in his native

Dublin but at age 17 suddenly became an evangelic convert and taught Bible classes at a ragged school. Ragged schools were independent schools that offered free education to waifs, and usually free food, clothing and lodging. A ragged school was Charles Dickens' inspiration for *A Christmas Carol*. Ragged school students, Dickens later wrote, "are too ragged, wretched, filthy and forlorn to enter any other place" (*London Daily News*, March 13, 1852).

At 21, Bernardo moved to London to study medicine, intent on becoming a medical missionary to China. It took him 14 years to become a doctor because he spent most of his time teaching, preaching, writing and raising money to aid waifs. Three years after he arrived in London, he had raised enough money to establish his first home for homeless children. By the time he died in 1905 at age 60, he had raised £3.25 million—equivalent to \$150 million in 2017 Canadian dollars— and Barnardo Homes had sheltered 60,000 waifs.

Better known in Canada are the Barnardo children who emigrated here. By 1903, their numbers totalled 13,657, according to the *Regina Standard*. When the last arrived in 1939, they totalled some 30,000. They were housed in homes established in Toronto, Peterborough and Winnipeg, before the boys were apprenticed as farm labourers and the girls as domestic servants. From 1887 to 1908, older Barnardo boys received an eight-month farming apprenticeship at the Industrial School for Barnardo Boys, near Russell Manitoba. Many later homesteaded in Western Canada.

There are thought to be more than a million descendants of Bernardo children now living in Canada.

— Canada @ 150 —

Dawson Nuggets' epic Stanley Cup journey



City of Ottawa Archives, Wikimedia Commons.

Dawson Nuggets at Ottawa January 1905. The team travelled 13,000 miles return trip, by trail, train, and ship, to play for the Stanley Cup in Ottawa and 10 exhibition games in Canada and the United States.

From Dawson City, capital of the Yukon gold fields, 10 men of the Dawson Nuggets hockey team set off on December 19, 1904 on a 4,000-mile, 24-day journey by bicycle, dog sled, train and ship for Ottawa, in quest of the world hockey championship, the Stanley Cup. They are to pick up one more team member in Winnipeg.

The epic has been promoted and financed by Jim Boyle, “King of the Klondike,” who climbed from barroom

bouncer to become the Yukon's leading gold miner.

"The run of 265 miles over the ice and snow to Whitehorse will put the boys in splendid condition for the trying work of the big matches," hailed the *Dawson News* as they departed.

Half the team started out on bicycles; half on dog sleds. After the first snowstorm, the bicyclists abandoned their machines and walked. It took the team 23 days to reach Whitehorse.

On the next leg to Skagway, the White Pass and Yukon Railway was delayed by an avalanche. The steamship that was to take them to Seattle had waited for two days, but left just hours before the team arrived. They waited five days in Skagway where the bars in the roaring town failed to improve the condition of the athletes. A freighter took them on a rough voyage to Seattle, followed by train to Vancouver and then to Ottawa. Crowds gathered at railway stations across Canada to greet them.

"There was a large attendance of friends and Ottawans" to greet the Klondikers when they finally arrived at the capital city at 4:45 in the afternoon on Tuesday, January 11, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported. It was "The most trying trip ever attempted by a Canadian athletic organizations," said the *Citizen*.

The Dawson Nuggets had two days to condition and prepare for the first game, on Friday the 13th. The Ottawa Silver Seven, their opponent, refused to defer the start of the two-game series.

The games are to be played at Dey's Rink, where the *Ottawa Citizen* says that "so much weed is consumed during the progress of a match that along about half

time the air space is full of dense smoke and even the lights are dimmed by the clouds.”

Dey’s rink is filled by a capacity crowd—2,500. Governor General Earl Grey drops the puck, and “sportsmanship deteriorated from that point on,” reported the *Whitehorse Star*.

It was a rough game, said the *Dawson Yukon World*. “Watt tripped Moore, who gave the Dawson man a stick across the mouth, putting him down. Watt then skated across the rink and struck Moore over the head, putting him out for 10 minutes.”

The score was 9-2 for the Ottawa Silver Seven.

The final game was played three days later. Jim Boyle wired the *Dawson News* with an account of what happened:

“Our team played gamely but was dead on its feet.” With a substitute filling in for an injured star player, “Our team was broken up and in no condition to play in such a game as was put up against them. While our men have been travelling, the Ottawans have been put through a course of training, and the players are, of course, in the condition of race horses. Our boys showed what was in them, for until lack of condition began to count the exhibition of the play was magnificent.”

The score was 22-2 for Ottawa.

The Dawson Nuggets continued on an exhibition tour through eastern Canada and the United States. They won 12 games, lost 10 and one was a draw. By the time they were back in Dawson, they had travelled 13,000 miles—by trail, train and ship.

— Canada @ 150 —

The whitecapping heroes of Wheatley



Wheatley, Ontario, circa 1910, where “whitecapping” vigilantes were hailed as local heroes when they flogged a prominent citizen and dunked him in a well. An earlier whitecapping victim, near close-by London, died after being walked in deep snow.

Those who misbehaved were once in danger of being “whitecapped” by their neighbours—dunked in a well, or walked in snow, and thrashed. When a group of vigilantes whitecapped a leading citizen in the town of Wheatley in southwestern Ontario, they were brought to trial in nearby Chatham. Penalties were urged. Instead, the whitecappers were acquitted and celebrated. The *Advertiser*, London, Ontario, reported on July 22, 1905 on the whitecapping of Thomas Dulmage:

“Dulmage, from all accounts, is a hard drinker, but it is said that he is not in other respects a bad citizen. He is a merchant, and was thought well enough of to be made president of the local Conservative association. While walking in the street the other evening, he was seized by a party of men, who dipped him several times in a well of cold water, and then flogged him.

“Many will say that this treatment served Dulmage right, and will applaud his punishers, but whoever they are, and they are said to be prominent residents of the town, they should be disciplined for having taken the law into their own hands. It was a resort to ‘whitecapping,’ a practice which must not be permitted in this country. Six or seven years ago a similar outrage occurred in a town not far north of London. The victim, who was accused of gross immorality, was walked in the deep snow on a bitterly cold night by a party of men in disguise, and died from the effects of the exposure... Local feeling is apt to run strong against any efforts to punish the perpetrators of these outrages, but the authorities should be made to do their duty.”

Three days later, it was revealed in the *Advertiser* that the whitecappers included a doctor, a police constable, and Mrs. Dulmage, all of whom were generally thought to have acted quite properly. Once again, the *Advertiser* called for punishment:

“Before applauding the chivalry of the Wheatley white-caps, it may be asked whether their example is one to be encouraged. If a man’s neighbors are to constitute themselves the judge of his manners and morals, and be allowed to carry out their sentence on him, who will be safe?... In this law-abiding province, it has no ex-

cuse or justification. The Wheatley vigilantes should be made to understand this.”

Alas, it was not to be. The final report on the incident, filed from Wheatley on August 5, noted that:

“The home coming from Chatham of the seven men acquitted of having taken part in the whitecapping of Thomas Dulmage was made the occasion of much rejoicing here. A large number of people met the party at the station and escorted them to the village, where supper was spread at the village hotel by the women of the place.”

— Canada @ 150 —

Billiards keep the upper class boys at home



Photo by Robert Fulton, Library of Congress, HABS CONN,2-HARF-16.

An upstairs billiards room in the Hartford, Conn., house of Mark Twain and his family from 1874 to 1891. Now a U.S. National Historic Landmark, this is where Mark Twain wrote his best known works.

An upstairs billiard room is an effective antidote to athletic sports that “disintegrate family life,” says the *Toronto Mail and Empire*, September 9, 1905. With athletic sports, “The boys are at baseball matches, the gymnasium, on the road bicycling. They are never at home, except to eat and sleep.”

If a man installs “a well-equipped billiard room near the

roof, with good air, adequate privacy, and satisfactory means of refreshment, his sons, after business hours, are much more likely to come home and bring their friends with them to play until dinner, rather than go to their clubs. It is a fact that billiard rooms, which used to be in the basement, have gone upstairs. Men will go upstairs to play billiards when they will not go down. In the basement they are too near the servants, whose ears are preternaturally acute. Upstairs there is greater freedom for conversation.”

The billiard table, says the *Mail and Empire*, must measure 4 by 9 or 5 by 10 feet, and have strong support. Billiard cues require special attention. The proper wood is ash, “with leather tips that are made by French peasants, and are not procured elsewhere.” For the heavy end of the cue, “Bead like mouldings that assist the hand in its grip are preferred. The most expensive cues are ornamented with successive curving bands of coloured wood inlays, and these are so perfectly joined that they look like enamels, the effect being that of peacock’s eyes.”

The billiard room should provide “plenty of clear space around the tables... no projections to imperil the arms and shoulders of enthusiastic players... raised seats conveniently out of the way for onlookers... recesses for cues and other things.” Enclosed within the mahogany walls of Cornelius Vanderbilt’s billiard room, it was noted, there are “niches for cues and cupboards for refreshments and cigars.”

— Canada @ 150 —

Modern times on Ontario farms, 1907

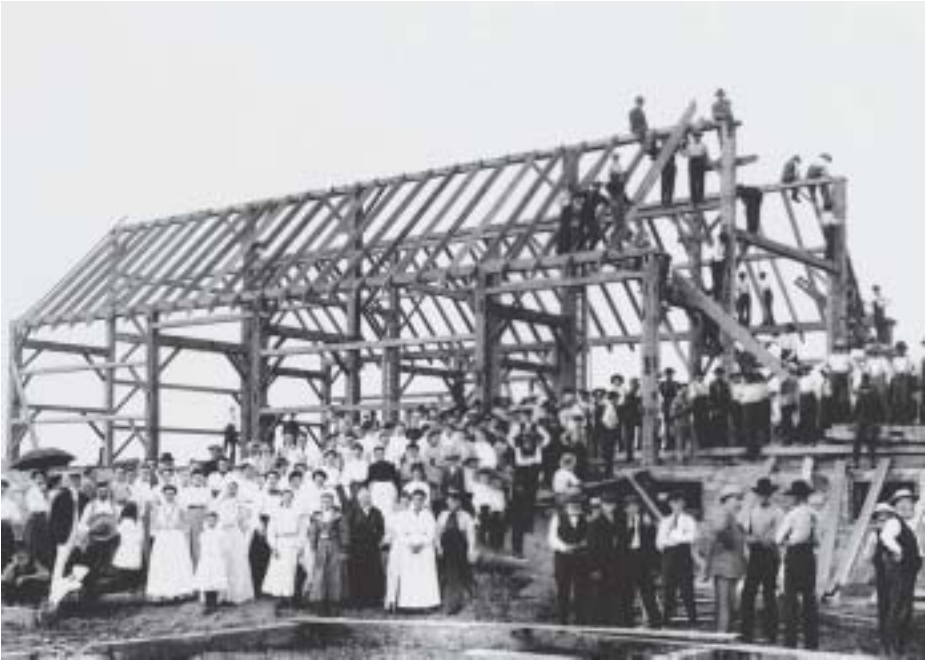


Photo by Alexander W. Galbraith, City of Toronto Archives (Fonds 1568, item 177), Wikimedia Commons.

A barn raising in Lansing (now North York), Ontario, circa 1900-1919.

Baker's bread, store-bought food and manufactured clothing were all part of the "changes that have taken place in farm life in Ontario within...[the] recollection" of its older readers, reflects Toronto's Weekly Sun, June 12, 1907.

These changes are scarcely noticed in the hurry and bustle of every day affairs, and yet they are nothing short of revolutionary.

The mothers of Ontario women of middle age would no

more have thought of bringing baker's bread into the house than they would have considered a proposition to buy their cooked meats at the nearest store; to-day, it may safely be asserted that in a majority of the farm homes in older Ontario, bakers' bread is in daily use. Even so recently as twenty years ago, practically every farm home was heated by wood cut in winter from the original forest still standing on the farm; in some counties of the Province 90 per cent of the farmers now depend wholly on coal, save for summer cooking, and there is scarcely a county in which more or less coal is not used in rural homes. So completely has the timber been removed in some cases that sons, or at least grandsons, of the men who cleared up the original bush could hardly do an hour's real chopping if their lives depended on it.

In the first decade of the latter half of the past century fresh meat was scarcely ever seen on a farm table in summer, save when an occasional lamb was killed; the number of such tables is now few which are not supplied either from the beef ring or nearby butcher. The fruit supply of the fathers of the present generation was limited to fresh wild berries in summer (dried for winter use), early apples in the fall, and dried apples in winter; their more fortunate sons begin the season with strawberries grown in the home garden, continue it with raspberries gathered from the same source, follow it up with cherries, plums, pears and grapes, and finally pick in fall applies which will keep fresh until apples come again.

Dresses for the women and coats and trousers for the men were within the recollection of those not yet past

the meridian made in the home from cloth manufactured by hand looms out of the farmers' own wool. In the matter of farm implements the change is even greater — from the hand rake to the horse rake, from scythe to the mower and the cradle in the binder, while the telephone is rapidly taking the place of the old-time road fence conversation. Still, even yet, it comes as something of a surprise to hear of soiled linen from the farm house going to the Chinese laundry. But we will grow accustomed to that in time, and to even greater changes which make for reduction of labor and increased comfort on the farm and in the farm home.

Let us at least pause long enough to remember with heartfelt thankfulness the pioneers who amid toil and privations laid the foundations of those comforts and conveniences which, but for the toil and privation of those who are gone, we would not be enjoying to-day.

— Canada @ 150—

Disease, chickens, and fleas in Toronto slum houses



Photo, Arthur S. Glass, City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, Subseries 32, item 505.

In the shadow of City Hall sat this Toronto slum house, September 28, 1917.

Chickens in the living room, nine children crowded in a single rag-covered bed, one outdoor water tap for 16 houses; these were among Toronto 1910 slum housing conditions described by Medical Director Dr. Charles Hasting in a talk to the Irish Benevolent Society. Six months later, Hastings spelled out more excruciating detail in a groundbreaking report.

The Toronto *Globe*, November 12, 1910, summarized Hastings's talk to the Irish:

“Fruit in the last stages of decay offered for sale, nine children huddled together in one bed under a heap of old clothes and rags because, as their mother pathetically explained, ‘It was the only way to keep them warm;’ houses overcrowded, adults of different sexes eating, sleeping and living in the same room— these were some of the examples... which would, he explained, ‘startle

“One 3-room shack was discovered in which were father, mother and 9 children, and in the filthy yard, 3 dogs, a horse and chickens. All except the horse had access to the living room.”

anyone who took the trouble to walk through the slums in our midst.’

“The problem was simple now, he stated, to what it would be twenty years hence, if not grappled with. ‘One person died each day in Canada from tuberculosis, and those slums breed filth and disease, moral and physical, which would devitalize the community unless steps were taken to prevent overcrowding in unsanitary and unhygienic houses.’”

Representatives of the city's Associated Charities spoke

of “certain missions, in which as many as fifty men were to be found of a night sleeping on wooden benches under unspeakable conditions in one unventilated room.”

“The truth is that one half not only does not know, they do not want their peace of mind disturbed by the unpleasant details of the life and sorrows of the lower classes,” Hastings wrote in his 1911 report on slum housing. With its publication, complete with graphic photos, they soon knew, and peace of mind was certainly disturbed.

Hastings, recently appointed medical director, was an obstetrician. He became a leading public health advocate after his infant daughter died from contaminated milk.

He and his medical officers examined 4,693 houses, shacks, basements, cellars and lean-tos. They condemned 390 of the housing units in which 2,133 people lived in unsanitary conditions. The inspectors found leaky roofs, water-covered cellars in which people lived, overflowing outdoor privies, shacks that offered scant protection from the cold, and shockingly high rental fees. “One 3-room shack was discovered in which were father, mother and 9 children, and in the filthy yard, 3 dogs, a horse and chickens,” Hastings wrote in the report. “All except the horse had access to the living room.”

Under Hastings’ advocacy, the report led to reforms, including stricter housing regulations, food safety, and education programs. By 1929, Toronto ranked among the world leaders in public health reform.

— Canada @ 150—

62 killed in Rogers Pass railroad avalanche



Revelstoke Museum and Archives, photograph #268. Wikimedia Commons.

Rescuers dig to uncover 62 workers buried in the 1910 avalanche at Rogers Pass, B.C.

On March 4, 1910, a work crew of 63 men, a 91-ton locomotive with a rotary snowplow, and railway cars to house the workers, were dispatched from Revelstoke to clear deep snow from an avalanche that buried a section of the Canadian Pacific Railway at Rogers Pass in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia. A second, sudden, unexpected avalanche killed 62 of the workers in one of Canada's worst railway disasters.

Rogers Pass, the highest and steepest on CPR's line through the Selkirks already had a deadly history. More than 100 people had been killed in earlier avalanches in the 26 years since the line opened, but never had so many been killed by one avalanche.

Four avalanches in five days had buried sections of the CPR line in and near Rogers Pass. It was to clear the snow from the fourth avalanche that the work party left Revelstoke early that Friday morning.

The rail tracks where the fatal disaster came were more than 100 feet above Bear Creek, in a narrow valley flanked by tall and steep mountains to the north and south.

No one expected an avalanche from the south. The south mountain slope was heavily timbered with tall pines that were thought to have been there for at least 50 years. The workers had nearly completed clearing the track by late evening. Then, out of the darkness at 11:30 that night, the avalanche from the south came roaring down the mountain, sweeping away all the tall pines like broken matchsticks, across the rail track to Bear Creek

From my book, About Canada, Toronto: Civil Sector Press, 2012.

and 700 feet up the side of the opposite mountain. Six hundred feet of a snowshed, built for protection from avalanches, was demolished. The locomotive and its rotary snowplow were hurled 500 feet, and landed upside down. The railway cars were smashed. The workers in its path were buried under 30 feet of snow, ice, rock and broken trees. All except one.

A wind that came in front of the avalanche with the force of a tornado saved the locomotive fireman, Billy

***A locomotive was hurled 500 feet
and landed upside down.***

***A blast of air carried a worker
100 feet through the air.***

Lachance. He was standing on the north bank, several hundred feet above Bear Creek, and opposite the path of the avalanche. The wind, reported the *Toronto Globe*, March 7, "whisked him a hundred feet through the air into the bush" beyond the path of the avalanche.

A rescue train rushed 40 miles from Revelstoke, with 200 workers and every available doctor and nurse. Another train with a rescue team of 125 left from Calgary. The Revelstoke rescue train safely passed a danger point

before a third blizzard buried the track. There were two more avalanches in the next two days. One, two miles from the disaster, buried the track under 60 feet of snow.

Rescue workers were hampered by a fierce blizzard, heavy snowfall, and the other avalanches that delayed the arrival of more help. But within days, there were 800 workers digging out the track at Rogers Pass and uncovering the bodies of the 62 workers, some of whom still stood upright, frozen in snow and ice.

The CPR eliminated the steep, costly, and deadly Rogers Pass section of its line by building what was then the longest railway tunnel in North America. The Connaught tunnel, five miles long and 9,492 feet under Mount Macdonald, was completed in December, 1916, after three years of construction. It eliminated the steepest part of the climb over the Selkirk Mountains, and shortened the distance by more than four miles. In 1988, the CPR completed a second, longer tunnel at Rogers Pass, the 10-mile Mount Macdonald tunnel, the longest railway tunnel in the Americas. West-bound CPR trains now go through the Mount Macdonald tunnel, and east-bound trains through the Connaught tunnel.

While trains no longer climb across the top of the Rogers Pass, cars and trucks on the Trans-Canada highway do. Across the pass, more miles of strong, steel and concrete snowsheds offer much greater protection than the wooden snowsheds of the railway era. Even so, there are times when avalanches close sections of the Trans-Canada highway across the Selkirk Mountains at Rogers Pass.

— Canada @ 150—

Shotgun wedding of an 80-year-old man

From the Lindsay, Ontario Post, May 20, 1910.

“The story of the courtship and marriage of Mr. Michael Fraser, of Midland, a man of 84 years and worth about \$100,000 [almost \$2 million in 2017], and Miss Hannah Margaret Robertson, aged 30, daughter of the Rev. William Robertson, formerly a Presbyterian minister, now editor of the Dundas *Banner*, was told before Mr. Justice Riddell, at Osgoode Hall [Toronto] Saturday.”

The case was brought before Justice Riddell by an application by Fraser’s family to have the marriage declared invalid because Fraser was claimed to be not mentally capable.

The court was told that Rev. Robertson, his daughter and other relatives and friends, broke into Fraser’s house, “armed with a marriage licence and a borrowed wedding ring. The happy couple was promptly married by the bride’s father, the bridegroom attired... in a shirt, a pair of trousers and slippers.”

A.L. Macdonnell, counsel for the Fraser family, had a question for Justice Riddell: “When a woman of 30 meets a man of 84 only twice in a fortnight, and then only in the presence of another man who has told her the man has money, may we not presume what is the attraction?”

“Why not?” responded the judge. “When a woman gets to that age she is entitled to look after herself and think of her future.”

— Canada @ 150—

Flowers for factory girls and street urchins



City of Toronto Archives.

Toronto's third Government House, home of Ontario's lieutenant-governors for 42 years, and the large landscaped grounds, in 1907. Five years later, the gates were opened to hundreds of factory girls and street urchins to pick thousands of flowers.

The expansive grounds of Toronto's third Government House provided a treasure trove of thousands of flowers for hundreds of factory girls and street urchins in 1912. Built in 1868 to 1870, the three-storey red-brick mansion was home to Ontario's lieutenant-governors for 42 years. Located at the southwest corner of King and Bay streets, the main entrance faced Simcoe while the large landscaped grounds looked south to the harbour, in what was

a quiet area at the time of construction. When railways and factories made this less than a desirable residential area, a new vice regal residence was built elsewhere in Toronto. The CPR purchased the abandoned mansion and grounds in 1912 and the mansion demolished three years later. What happened when Toronto children were given free reign to pick a sea of flowers is told in this item from the Toronto World, May 24, 1912.

All the wealth of the flower beds of the Old Government house was opened to tired factory girls and vagrant street urchins yesterday afternoon and hundreds of these girls, weary from a long day at bench and machine in the neighboring factories, rubbed elbows with the waifs of the sidewalks in a wild scramble for a nosegay to brighten whatever place stands for them as a home.

Many have passed the deserted house since the removal of the lieutenant governor and his family from the historic place and have wondered that such beautiful gardens should have been left unrobed. Yesterday they were turned to perhaps the most gracious use to which they could have been put. Many organizations see to it that the sick in home and hospital are provided with at least some small bouquet of flowers, but the poor who are deprived of the blessing of the flowers by the necessity of living in localities where gardens are impossible, must go without save for occasional visits to the public parks or glimpses caught thru iron railings at the gardens of the rich. To these was the wealth of a sea of flowers made free.

Hundreds of tired girls with white faces, and bright-

eyed eager urchins crowded into the heretofore sacred precincts, and, overrunning the beautiful lawns which are now being cleared of their sod, strove to carry off as much of the flowers as they could gather.

The invitation to the fete of the flowers was conveyed to several nearby factories, and when the employees were dismissed they hastened to avail themselves of the boon provided. At first they hung back at the gates as if fearing that it might not be true that they were to enter unmolested, but at last the mass of them followed the two or three adventurous spirits who led the march, and then the grounds were filled with the eager gleaners of the flowers.

It was a spectacle filled with human interest to scan the faces of these hundreds of children and grown girls as they came out with their treasures. The flowers were bright, but no brighter than the smiling eyes of those to whom they came as a blessing as great as it was unusual. When they left there was not a flower to be seen in all the gardens, but there were flowers in the homes and in the hearts of hundreds where such are all too rare.

— Canada @ 150—

WORLD WAR I

Busy Bugger Billy Bishop and the air aces who shot down the Red Baron



Wikimedia Commons.

World War I Canadian air ace Billy Bishop and his Nieuport 17 aircraft, France, 1917.

“You have been a busy bugger, haven’t you?” King George V, said on awarding the Victoria Cross, Britain’s highest military award, to Billy (William Avery) Bishop (1894-1956), Canadian First World War flying ace, July 1917.

Bishop is officially credited with destroying 72 German air-

craft, exceeded among allied pilots in the First World War only by French aviator Rene Fonck, who shot down 75.

Not all Bishop's victories were witnessed, and some historians say the total was less than claimed. Yet there is no doubt that Bishop was one of the top aerial dog fighters, and Canada's best-known. Ernest Udet, second only to the Red Baron among Germany's air aces, called Bishop "the greatest English scouting ace." Other Germans called him "Hell's Handmaiden."

In the First World War, Canadians almost dominated the air aces of Britain's Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service, which became the Royal Air Force for the final seven months of the war. Among their victims was Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron.

In the final year-and-a-half of the War, Canadians mostly piloted the famed Sopwith Camel, the bi-wing, single-seater, open cockpit, machine gun-mounted crate of wood and canvass, flying at 115 miles per hour, as low as 100 feet above the ground, or as high as 20,000. Bishop's scouting and fighter aircraft, however, was a French machine, the Nieuport 17, also a bi-wing, single seater.

That British witnesses were not always on the scene of Bishop's action is not surprising since he often flew lone-wolf missions behind enemy lines. On his return from one flight, a mechanic counted 210 bullet holes in his aircraft.

The son of a Toronto lawyer, Bishop was 18 when he joined a cavalry regiment when war started in 1914. Less than two years later, he was an observer and aerial photographer in a two-seater scouting plane, flying over

German lines in France. Injured in a crash, he was out of action for an extended recovery, but a year later he was a trained pilot flying his first Nieuport 17. He crash landed on his first flight but shot down his first enemy aircraft the next day. His rank and his victories climbed. The solo flight that won him the VC (in addition to five other British and two French military awards) was on June 2, 1917, when he attacked a German airfield, reportedly shooting down three aircraft that were taking off to attack him, and destroying several more on the ground.

Two years later. June 19, 1918, Bishop made his last combat flight. He had been ordered to leave France that day for England to organize the new Canadian Flying Corps, and he was more than unhappy about leaving the action. "I've never been so furious in my life," he wrote to his wife. Before leaving for England that day, he took off for one last, early morning flight. In 15 minutes of combat, he shot down three German aircraft and caused two others to crash.

In addition to Bishop, among the best-known First War Canadian air aces were Bill Barker, a farm boy born in a Manitoba log house; Andrew (Hank) McKeever, bank teller; Wilfrid (Wop) May, son of a Manitoba carriage maker; Stan Rosevear, university student; Roy Brown, business school student. They were young, still just 22 to 25 years old at the end of the four-year war.

Stan Rosevear

All except, Rosevear, who didn't make it to the end. A "very skillful and dashing fighter pilot," according to the citation that won him the Distinguished Service Cross for a flight in which he shot down four German planes

and attacked infantry from a height of 100 feet. In nine months, he won 23 victories. Seven months before the war ended, he was shot down in his Sopwith Camel, and killed. He was 22.

Billy Barker

Barker was the wild colonial boy. A pain in the side of authority, he buzzed London's Piccadilly Circus with his Sopwith Camel in a display of aerial acrobats. Like Bishop, he disobeyed orders for solo flights behind enemy lines. On one flight, he strafed a German airfield, *à la* Bishop. In a dog fight with 15 German Fokker aircraft, he shot down four before—wounded three times, bleeding profusely, barely conscious—he safely crash landed back in allied territory and was evacuated to hospital. His left elbow destroyed, he would later fly as a one-armed pilot, but never again as a fighter pilot. He had already shot down 50 enemy aircraft. Still Canada's most decorated military man, he won a chestful of medals from Britain (including the Victoria Cross), France, and Italy. He was "The deadliest air fighter that ever lived," claimed his friend Billy Bishop.

Hank McKeever

After winning his wings, McKeever began piloting Bristol Fighters in April 1917, flying long-range reconnaissance over enemy territory. British newspapers soon dubbed him King of the Two-Seaters, in which the pilot in front and the observer in the rear cockpit each manned machineguns. The Bristol Fighter 2A was said to be the only British two-seater capable of holding its own against the German fighters—but it was a McKeever technique that made it a much more effective fighter. Instead of more or less floating aloft as a shooting platform for the observer and his gun in the rear cockpit, McKeever flew

the Bristol like a Sopwith Camel, diving into dogfights, both pilot and observer blazing their guns.

On a solo reconnaissance flight behind enemy lines, McKeever and his observer attacked a pack of nine German fighters, shooting down two. Over a five-month period, they destroyed 31 enemy aircraft.

Posted back to England, McKeever spent the final 11 months of the war training pilots for a putative Canadian Air Force, which didn't get off the ground until two years after the war.

Death of the red baron

Roy Brown and Wop May were the key figures in the dogfight that killed the Red Baron, Manfred von Richthofen.

Brown was one of the very few British flight commanders who never lost a pilot during combat. That was due in part to his custom of instructing new pilots in his squadron to refrain from dogfights, to fly high above the action, to observe and learn. On patrol on April 21, 1918,

Brown's newest pilot was Wop May. The Sopwith Camels attacked a group of 15 to 20 German triplanes. Wop was not the only novice pilot watching and learning from above the fray. There was also a German fighter, piloted, as it turned out, by Wolfram von Richtofen, cousin of the Red Baron. Wop attacked the new German pilot, chasing him down toward the dogfight, until Wop's gun jammed. Seeing his cousin chased, the Red Baron chased Wop. Then Brown, seeing Wop chased, chased the Red Baron. In his combat report, Wop wrote:

“...came out with red triplane on my tail, which followed me down to the ground and over the

line on my tail all the time got several bursts into me but didn't hit me. When we got across the line, he was shot down by Capt. Brown. I saw him crash into the side of the hill. Came back with Capt. We found afterwards that the triplane (red) was the famous German airman Baron Richtofen. He was killed."

Some historians have questioned whether it was Brown who shot and severely wounded Richtofen, causing him to crash. He was also fired on by the machine guns of Australian infantry, who might have hit and wounded him.

With Canadian modesty, Brown wrote in his combat report that the effect of his fight with the Red Baron was "indecisive." His commanding officer changed that to "decisive," and Brown was officially recorded as having shot down the Red Baron.

In the post-war years, Wop May became one of the best known of Canada's bush pilots, flying out of Edmonton into the Northwest Territories. Brown left the RAF in 1919 for a varied career as an accountant; founder of a small, ill-fated airline; editor of *Canadian Aviation*; an unsuccessful candidate for the Ontario legislature, and finally, a farmer. He died of a heart attack at age 50.

— Canada @ 150—

WORLD WAR I

Wartime Christmas, the saddest of all



Canadian War Museum

“There is scarcely a home from sea to sea... where there will not be a vacant place, and an empty chair,” in Canada on Christmas Day, 1917. Canadian forces won key battles in the First World War, but suffered heavy losses. At the Second Battle of Ypres, Belgium, April 22-May 25, 1915, depicted here by artist Richard Jack, Canadian troops defeated the German army, Canada’s first defeat of a European power in Europe. Image, Canadian War Museum.

December 25, 1917 was the fourth Christmas of the First World War, and the war was not going well. “There is no prospect of ending it at any early date,” said the *Vancouver Sun*. Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II threatened that if peace was not accepted on Germa-

ny's terms, "Then we must bring peace to the world by battering it with the iron first and shining sword." It will last another five years, predicted military author Frank Simonds.

"The Saddest Christmas of all," said Toronto's *Weekly Sun*, a farm paper. "The Christmas of 1917 will long remain in the calendar as the blackest day of all in the memories of suffering millions."

Across Canada "There is scarcely a home from sea to sea... where today there will not be a vacant place, and an empty chair," noted the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The empty chair, the vacant place will be kept "in loving remembrance of the one far away."

Nowhere in Canada was there more sadness than in Halifax, where the explosion of the French munitions ship *Mont Blanc* on December 6 had demolished much of the city. Known deaths, reported the *Halifax Herald* December 24, had reached 1,158, of which 304 were unidentified. Bodies were still being buried. "All of the bodies at the Chebuetco mortuary to be buried today."

In the crisis of relief work, "10,000 homeless children came dangerously near to being forgotten," said the *Herald*. An 11th-hour volunteer effort resulted in the delivery of gifts to the homeless children on Christmas Eve.

"Today Canada mourns the loss of over 35,000 of her gallant sons, and twice that many are maimed, or blind, or partially disabled," noted Toronto's *Christian Guardian*. But "for all time men shall admire the valor and emulate the spirit of Canada's peace-loving yet heroic sons."

The *Victoria Colonist* sounded the ill-fated hope that would echo constantly in the coming years, that this would be the war to end all war. “No matter how unfavourable the signs,” said the *Colonist*, “this fourth Christmas day of the war finds us nearer to the era of peace and goodwill among mankind.”

Rev. R.G. MacBeth, in the *Vancouver Sun*, saw in war the defeat of atheism. “Atheistic philosophy has failed to convince the human soul and it has never failed more thoroughly than in these days of terrible war when hearts cry out for a strength and a comfort which this passing world cannot give.”

Amid the gloom, the *Montreal Star*, a bastion of British patriotism, sounded an overblown note of glory. British forces had captured a string of towns in Palestine. “Wonderful glory, the British flag is floating” over Jerusalem and the Holy City “is in the keeping of our own people,” said the *Star*. “Surely, then, this is the most wonderful, solemn and impressive Christmas, not only in our own lives but even in all our history.”

— Canada @ 150—

Conscription triggers riots and attempted murder

As First World War military conscription became law on August 29, 1917, protesting rioters in Montreal smashed store windows. Arrests soon followed, including a group charged with attempting to murder *Montreal Star* publisher Hugh Graham, a strong conscription advocate, and his family, by dynamiting their summer home. The dynamiters also allegedly planned to blow up the Parliament buildings and assassinate Prime Minister Robert Borden.

On the evening after the law was passed, 50 policemen broke up a Montreal parade of protestors, Canadian Press reported. Some protestors were pushed through the windows of a furniture store. Elsewhere in Montreal, conscription opponents inflamed a reported crowd of 5,000 with thinly veiled threats of violence. “Revolver shots were the up-to-date method of applause,” said Canadian Press.

The next evening, the crowd at Sir George Etienne Cartier Square was larger—a reported 6,000 to 7,000—the rhetoric was more inflammatory, and the threatened violence broke out.

“This morning St. Catherine Street... looked as if it had been struck by a cyclone,” said Canadian Press. “The windows of over a dozen big stores have been willfully smashed,” four policemen were injured, and “a score or

more received cuts and bruises.” Women fled from stranded streetcars, frightened by the shouts and occasional pistol shots of rioters, just before a few of the streetcar windows were smashed.

A number of rioters were arrested. So were 10 alleged dynamiters. An 11th alleged dynamiter committed suicide while being hunted by the police. The 10 were charged with theft of dynamite, dynamiting the Graham summer house near Cartierville, and attempted murder of Graham, his wife, his son, his chauffeur, and a private detective.

The attempted murders occurred August 8. At about four in the morning, dynamite exploded under the sleeping quarters of the Graham house, ripping off a balcony, filling lower rooms with debris, and gouging a four-foot hole in the lawn. Lives were likely spared because the dynamite was placed incorrectly so that the main force of the explosion was directed outward, digging that big hole in the lawn instead of demolishing much of the house.

The trial dragged on into 1918, but in the end, no one was convicted of the dynamiting or attempted murders.

— Canada @ 150—

WORLD WAR I

The long odyssey of the Unknown Soldier



The body of Canada's Unknown Soldier from the First World War was buried at the foot of the National War Memorial, 92 years after the war.

Prime Minister Arthur Meighen, on August 25, 1921, announced that the body of an unknown Canadian soldier from the First World War was to be removed from his grave in France and buried under the Parliamentary buildings in Ottawa.

“It is proposed,” said the *Toronto Globe*, “that the body shall be placed in a vault excavated in solid rock under the great archway of the Victory Tower [now known as the Peace Tower] and between the two portals, which give entrance to the buildings. The grave will be set immediately below the altar in the memorial chamber overhead, and will be marked by a marble slab raised above the grave level. The slab will be suitably inscribed.”

The *Ottawa Citizen* noted that, “As the tower has not reached completion and as the arrangements which have to be made will take some time, it is unlikely that the ceremony [of dedication] will take place before Armistice Day, 1922.”

As it turned out, it was 79 years before the ceremony took place. And the body of the unknown soldier was not, as Meighen had planned, buried in a vault beneath the Peace Tower of the Parliament buildings, but at the foot of the National War Memorial, about a block away.

Less than two weeks after the plan for entombing the unknown Canadian soldier in Canada was announced, Meighen’s Conservative government fell in the national elections on December 6. The Liberal government of Mackenzie King never carried out the plan.

On May 16, 2000, the remains of an unknown Canadian soldier buried near the historic Vimy Ridge battlefield in France, were exhumed and the casket flown in a Canadian Forces Aircraft to Ottawa. The casket lay in state for three days in the Hall of Honour in Parliament’s Centre Block. On May 28, in a nationally-televised ceremony, the body was re-interred in the Canadian Tomb

of the Unknown Soldier in front of the National War Memorial in Confederation Square.

Almost 57,000 members of Canada's armed forces were killed in the four years of the First World War, while 141,000 were wounded, many with lifetime disabilities. The graves of the European battlefields of the First World War held the bodies of 1,603 unknown Canadians; one of them now lies in Canada.

— Canada @ 150—

Postal workers toil all night Christmas eve

In 1920, Montreal postal workers were on the job all night on Christmas eve, so that carriers could deliver the last of the Christmas mail on Christmas morning, as reported in the following item from the Montreal Star, December 23, 1920.

The real Christmas mail arrived from the Old Country this morning, when the *Empress of France*, with fourteen carloads of letters and packages, docked at St. John at 8 o'clock. The mail should reach Montreal about 8 p.m. Friday [December 24], say post office officials, and every member of the staff will do his best to have it delivered on Christmas morning. The mail, which consists of close on seven thousand bags, will be re-shipped from St. John on a special mail train of fourteen cars, which will leave that port tonight at 7 o'clock.

While the mail clerks are not assisted by extra hands, as instructing a beginner is considered more difficult

than doing the work themselves, they are working day and night to see that greetings and gifts reach their destination. As soon as the overseas mail arrives the men will rush through the sorting and will be at work on it all through Christmas Eve and until dawn Christmas morning, in order that it may be ready for the carriers to distribute in the morning.

The authorities also report that one of the largest mails ever shipped from Canada to Great Britain arrived on the 22nd, thus assuring friends here who had sent Christmas gifts back to relatives and acquaintances in the Old Country that their parcels would be delivered not later than the 24th. The speedy delivery is attributed to the fact that two of the best steamers, the *Empress of Britain* of the C.P.O.S. line, and the *Megantic* of the White Star line had been engaged to take the mail overseas. News has not yet been received of the arrival of letters which were mailed too late to be dispatched by these steamers and which were sent via New York, but officials are confident that they too will reach their destination in time.

— Canada @ 150—

Inflation soars after WWI

The weekly food bill for Canadian families averaged \$16.48 in July 1920, Canadian Press reported, October 1, 1920. Food costs more than doubled from \$7.75 per week in December 1913, thanks to rapid inflation induced by the First World War.

The average family budget in July totalled \$40.76 per week, according to data from the federal Department of

Labour. In addition to food, other items in the weekly budget included fuel, \$8.64; rent, \$8.38; clothing, \$7.38; sundries, \$6.50.

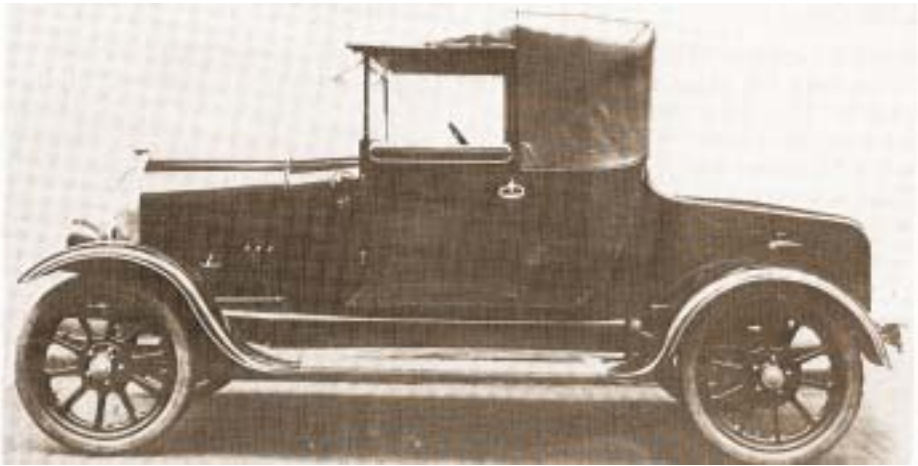
The hot pace of inflation, however, appeared to be cooling. In August, the weekly family budget declined by 33 cents.

Overall, the cost of living in both Canada and the United States increased by a reported 105 percent in less than seven years. Other countries were hit harder. In Britain, the cost of living had increased by 152 percent; in France, by more than 250 percent; and in Milan, Italy, by 348 percent. In Germany, the worst was yet to come, with perhaps the severest hyperinflation the industrial world has seen. From mid 1922-to mid 1923, the cost of living increased more than 100 times, and then exploded much higher. Before the end of the year, one Canadian dollar would buy about 380 million German marks; a loaf of bread cost three billion marks. A wheelbarrow would not hold enough single marks to buy a week's groceries.

Although nothing like the Germans, most Canadians were also hurt by inflation, as prices increased more than incomes. A decade later, there would be far greater pain and suffering from the opposite cause, disinflation. In the Great Depression of the 1930s, prices fell sharply but most incomes fell even more. At the peak of the Depression, nearly one in four Canadian workers was without a job and many others saw their earnings fall. Farmers, workers and business could not sell all they produced. Farmers used butter for axle grease.

— Canada @ 150—

Storing car for winter



The 1920 the MHV Dawson, Dawson Car Co. Ltd., Coventry, England.

Instructions for winter storage of the family car offered by the Winnipeg Evening Tribune, February 5, 1921, in this reprint from Motor Life.

Cold and dampness must be excluded so far as possible from the place in which one stores his car during the winter months. They will do great harm to the paint and to the mechanical features of the vehicle when it is left to their mercy for a long period. Therefore, it would be a good idea for anyone contemplating laying up his car first to line the inside of his garage with sheathing paper; or at least he should plug up all cracks to make the place as snug as possible.

Then the really thorough individual will follow out this procedure before locking the door on his car for its long sleep:

1. Wash and thoroughly clean the car and jack it up from under the frame. Do this by placing four wooden trestles under the frame, the best points of support be-

ing close up against the two front shackle bolt brackets of the front springs. Supporting the chassis in this manner relieves all weight from the springs and wheels.

1. Remove all tires from the rims and completely exhaust air from the inner tubes and rub them down well with soapstone, sprinkle with French chalk, fold them perfectly flat, care being taken not to crease them, and place them in inner-tube bags. The tires should be laid down flat. Store both tires and tubes in a dark place.

1. Clean and shellac all rims. Drain off water from the radiator and cylinder block. Flush out the radiator with hose. To insure that all water has been emptied from cylinder block and water pipes, start up motor and run slowly for a few minutes. This will convert any water into steam, which might have collected in the water jackets. Replace any plugs removed to drain off the water and close drain cocks.

1. Empty gas tank and drain carburetor. Disconnect electrical cables at battery and remove battery. Smear ends of cable with Vaseline. Fill with distilled water and store in a dry place where there is no danger of freezing. Release clutch by propping open with strips of wood between clutch pedal and floor board.

1. Wipe a machine's parts on motor and transmission, clutch and steering gear with an oil-soaked rag. Cover with canvas, burlap or old rag and replace bonnet.

Oil all steering joints and connections and wrap up with rag. Fill shackle bolt oil cups with oil and wrap up with rag. Fill and screw down all grease cups. Pry open spring leaves and inject graphite and bandage with rag or canvas. Put the top up and cover the whole car with a dust sheet which will completely cover the car.

— Canada @ 150 —

A call to cover up bare-naked knees

The 1920s were the Roaring Twenties, the decade of flappers, the Charleston, and bootleg booze, when women joined men in smoking in public and daring fashions revealed bare-naked knees. Older women were shocked. Some Alberta farm women wanted a law limiting the exposures of fashion. The Regina Leader comments in this editorial, January 19, 1923.



Flapper girls in the 1920s danced the Charleston, showed bare-naked knees, and shocked some older women. Publicity photo for 1928 film *Our Dancing Daughters*, starring Joan Crawford.

The United Farm Women of Alberta engaged in a warm debate over whether or not they should recommend that the Government fix by law what young women shall and shall not wear. Some of them would like to see Attorney General [John] Brownlee bustling around the province with a tape measure, checking up the length of skirts.

Others think that on the ground of economy alone it

might be dangerous for the Government to meddle in the question of young women's dress. The enforcement of the Alberta Temperance Act would probably be a simple matter compared with the enforcement of a law requiring girls to wear what they don't want to wear. Governments have enough to do now without trying to cope with the hornet's nest they would stir up by attempting to dictate in a matter of this sort.

Things have come to a pretty pass if the mothers of Alberta, or any province in Canada, have so far lost control of their offspring that they have to appeal to legislatures for assistance in regulating dress. Girls used to be brought up to dress modestly and becomingly. They can still be brought up that way if their parents will attend to their duties at home.

What the good women of Alberta apparently fear is that some of the extremes to which their daughters have recently carried the fashions threaten to undermine their moral fibre. We doubt if the danger is great, but even if it were the remedy is not to be found in state regulation of dress. The fair sex had just about as many slips to answer for as it has today, when it wore hooped skirts or gowns that swept the sidewalks.

Alberta undoubtedly already has sufficient legislation to prevent indecent exposure of the person in public; and that is as far it would seem wise to go.

— Canada @ 150—

Toronto Star spread bigotry misogyny, racism

Early twentieth-century bigotry, sectarianism and misogyny were on prominent display in the *Toronto Star*, August 30, 1924, with the reported teaching and preaching of a U.S. evangelist and self-styled “Texas Tornado,” J. Frank Norris (1872-1952).

“SAYS KU KLUX KLAN KEPT OUT MANY CATHOLIC IMMIGRANTS. Rev. J. Frank Norris Praises the Hooded Order,” proclaimed the *Star’s* headline above a 1,200-word, top-of the page report of a speech by Norris to the Catholic-bashing Orange Luncheon Club at Toronto’s posh King Edward hotel.

Among other things, Dr. Norris told the Toronto Orangemen that:

- In the Roman Catholic Church “we are facing a powerful enemy.”
- The Ku Klux Klan had “shut the gates” of American immigration “against the dregs of southern Europe” and stopped the “floods of Italians who were coming in, taking our institutions and making America the vassal of the Pope.”



Wikimedia Commons.

Evangelist Frank Norris, the most famous fundamentalist U.S. preacher in the 1920s.

- The influence of the Catholic Church had delayed for two years United States participation in the First World War on the side of Canada, Britain and their allies.
- The Roman Catholics had taken “millions out of the public treasury and put it into the treasury of the parochial schools.”
- Candidates in the up-coming U.S. presidential election “had made cheap bids for the Catholic vote.”
- The KKK “have accomplished a great educational result” in their anti-Catholic crusade, while “a lot of things said about the clans are absolutely malicious falsehoods.”

On the *Star's* editorial page, an unsigned column (“The Spotlight”) regurgitates an earlier misogyny blast from the past by the Texas Tornado. “The modern woman,” Dr. Norris predicted in 1922, “will bring on the next war... The flapper [women] will bring about this country’s [U.S.’s] downfall, just as surely as Delilah caused Samson’s. Every great war has been traced to the depravity of women; and they were never as bad as today... The modern girl is 100 times worse than the girl of the last century.”

Norris was the most famous fundamentalist U.S. preacher in the 1920s, the forerunner of TV evangelists. With his Fort Worth congregation, said to be the largest in the country, his newspaper and his radio station, Norris railed against sin, Catholics, Communism, and evolution, while defending the KKK, whose local leader was a member of his congregation. John Birch—later a Baptist missionary and namesake of the John Birch Soci-

ety, a radical, far-right organization— was another member.

Norris was the son of an alcoholic Texas sharecropper, by whom he is said to have been beaten. When Frank Norris was 14, he and his father were both shot by a neighbour. Frank survived, but he says it took him three years to recuperate.

Norris became pastor of a Baptist church in a small Texas town at age 20, later earned a degree in theology from a Baptist ministry, and became pastor of the Fort Worth Baptist church in 1909.

In 1912 his church auditorium was burned to the ground and his house damaged—possibly in retaliation for his preaching against the city's bars, brothels and gambling dens, from which city leaders reaped revenue. But it was Norris who was charged with arson and perjury. He was acquitted, but 12 years later his church was again burned down. Worse was still to come. Two years after his Toronto preaching, Norris was charged with murder, resulting in a trial that was the sensation of the nation.

In a 1926 sermon, Norris accused Fort Worth Mayor H.C. Meacham of misappropriating funds for Roman Catholic purposes. A reputedly belligerent friend of the mayor, lumberman Dexter Chipps, confronted Norris in Norris's church office. Norris shot and killed Chipps. Tried for the murder, he was acquitted on grounds of self defence, despite the fact Chipps was unarmed.

— Canada @ 150—

Flour sack dresses popular in Great Depression years



Wikimedia Commons.

A farm girl in a flour sack dress during the Great Depressions of the 1930s.

“Ask for Flour Sack to Use for Clothing For Farmer’s Family,” said the headline in the *Regina Leader Post*, January 5, 1925, in an appeal to help a distressed Saskatchewan farm family. “Three successive crops dried up, hailed out and burned by fire—children take turns to wear one set of clothes.”

Sack clothing was popular for hard-pressed prairie farmers, in both Canada and the United States, in the 1920’s, more so in the Great Depression of the 1930s, and even

into the 1950s. Sometimes referred to as “feedsack,” or even “chicken linen,” the most commonly used for clothing were cotton flour and sugar sacks. The sacks were used to make dresses, aprons, shirts, blouses, even underwear. A sack for 100 pounds of flour would make a shirt or blouse but a dress usually required three or more sacks.

While conditions were worst in the 1930s, farm distress was not unusual in the 1920s. “With agriculture all over the world suffering from prolonged depression, what is surprising is not that there is distress in some farming districts in Saskatchewan, but that distress is not far more widespread than it is,” the *Leader* reported three days before the appeal for flour sacks.

If farmers were distressed, so was all of Saskatchewan. Population on the prairie province by this time had risen to 815,000, of which 71 percent were located on 120,000 farms. On the farms, and in some cases in the towns, there was little money for clothing, and younger family members often made do with hand-me-downs from older siblings.

The first flour sack dresses of unbleached cotton were as plain as the bald-headed prairie. Then one of the sack manufacturers found a competitive edge by offering sacks in bright colours and attractive patterns. Flour sack cloth became popular, particularly in the United States. The sack makers helped by offering free booklets with dress patterns and advice on how to make them. For clever seamstresses, sack clothing became as attractive as most store-brought clothes

Cotton shortages in the Second World War brought a revival of sack clothing, particularly dresses. Lizzie

Bramlett, of North Carolina, in her web site, *Fuzzy Lizzy Vintage Clothing*, says her aunt, in 1945, made her wedding dress from feedsacks.

In the 1950s, sugar and flourmills began to package their products in less costly paper bags, bringing an end to sack clothing.

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Mussolini's mouthpiece

A bi-monthly Canadian edition of a New York paper is to be established to promote the fascist policies of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, as a bulwark against socialism, bolshevism and communism, the *Toronto Star* reported February 12, 1929.

Dr. Casare Maccari, editor of *Latin World*, announced plans for the Canadian edition during a visit in Toronto. The Canadian edition “is intended primarily to spread propaganda for Latin culture among the Latin races, particularly Italians,” the *Star* reported. “The idea of Fascism as a bulwark against bolshevism organized by Il Duce are to be stressed, particularly in the Canadian edition.”

Mussolini established Italy's Fascisti as militant nationalists to defeat socialism. His Black Shirts marched on Rome in 1922. With violence and murder, Il Duce established himself as dictator and set out to establish a new Roman Empire. Italy entered the Second World War on the side of Germany and Japan in 1940, one year after Germany launched the war. Italian patriots shot Mussolini and a group of Fascisti in 1945, near the end of the war. Their bodies were hung on public display.

Scandals and charity of Aimee Semple McPherson

“Los Angeles gasped at the costumes worn” by Ontario-born Pentecostal evangelist, radio preacher and faith healer Aimee Semple McPherson when she testified before a committee of the California legislature during impeachment hearings of state Supreme Court Judge Carlos Hardy, the *Vancouver Sun* reported, February 5, 1929.

McPherson had given Hardy a \$2,500 cheque, an alleged “love offering.” McPherson said it was payment for services to her International Church of the Four Square Gospel. But it was “Aimee’s” clothes that drew the *Sun’s* attention:

“From her tight-fitting dresses to her cloche hat to her snakeskin slippers, her outfits changed daily, and fairly



Photo: Four Square Church.

Stunning costumes of evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson are said to have made Los Angeles gasp.

shrieked ‘Paris.’ Spectators at the hearing were more interested in the fashion parade than the drab details of the cheque case.”

The charges against Hardy included more than allegedly accepting a loving offering. They sprang from an earlier headline case in which it was McPherson who was charged—with “corruption of public morals, obstruction of justice, and conspiracy to manufacture evidence.”

Born Aimee Elizabeth Kennedy in a farmhouse near Ingersoll, Ontario, October 9, 1890, she was reared in the Salvation Army faith and work of her mother. She preached the Christian gospel at 17 and at 18 married 50-year-old Pentecostal evangelist Robert J. Semple, accompanying him to China on missionary work until he died two years later. Another two years later, while working in New York with the Salvation Army and her mother, she married Harold S. McPherson.

In 1915, she preached her first official sermon at Mount Forest, Ontario, and left her husband. Clad in a white dress and military cape, she became a full-time revival preacher and faith healer. She prayed when she broke an ankle and tore leg ligaments. An electric shock caused her, she said, to “shake and tremble under the power of God. Instantly my foot was perfectly healed.”

She preached in a hundred cities across the United States. Her simple and compelling messages of hope and comfort for the distressed and afflicted, her flair for the dramatic, and her great showmanship, drew big crowds. In 1918, McPherson and her mother established their gospel church in Los Angeles. They called it the Angelus Temple. It seated 5,300 and was topped by a

revolving lighted cross that could be seen for 50 miles. They established a religious newspaper, a radio station to broadcast McPherson's sermon, and published books and magazines. A 50-piece orchestra and a choir backed her sermons. And the money rolled in.

In 1928, the International Church of the Four Square Gospel became international with the establishment of the Kingsway (implying God's way) Four Square Gospel Church on Vancouver's busy Kingsway thoroughfare.

Her glamour, scandals and notoriety helped make McPherson one of the most famous women in North America. There were charges of financial improprieties, none of them proven, and endless lawsuits. But the most scandalous was the kidnapping case.

On May 18, 1926 McPherson went for a swim at a Los Angeles area beach, and disappeared. She was thought drowned. Five weeks later, she dramatically re-appeared, as glamorous and stylish as ever. She had been kidnapped, she said, by two thugs and a woman she called Mexicali Rose, and held in a remote shack. She said she escaped by cutting her bonds with the jagged edge of a can, and walking 17 hours across the desert. There were skeptics. She looked as fresh as a daisy, her shoes were unscratched by a long desert march, she wore a wrist-watch that was not with her when she went for her swim, and the shack was never found. She was suspected of having disappeared for a tryst with her lover. The state's attorney general laid his charges. The trial drew front-page headlines. She was acquitted the following year.

It was the kidnapping case that snared Judge Hardy in the impeachment hearing. He was charged with having

accepted the \$2,500 love gift; illegally advising her on church matters while the kidnapping story was being investigated; attempting to prevent her from being brought to trial, and trying to intimidate a potential witness against her.

On a break in the Hardy hearings, McPherson travelled to Vancouver to preach at the Kingsway church. The following day—the same day it described McPherson’s fashion parade—the *Sun* also provided a vivid account of her Kingsway sermon before a crowd of some 2,600:

“Standing with the spotlight gleaming on the white satin facing of her cape, a striking figure in cream from head to foot, her tawny, coiffured head thrown back and her face bright with smiles, she led them while the huge orchestra chimed in.

“On the stage behind her, gleaming against a black velvet drape, stood the properties of her ‘illustrated’ sermon—a huge, blood-stained wooden cross with a blood-stained spear leaning against it, and a crown of thorns beside it; a golden throne with a royal robe drape, a shining sceptre alongside a golden crown. Her subject: ‘Crown or Crucify.’ And as she talked she added great spines to the crown of thorns, one-by-one, naming each, and fashioned jewels to the crown of gold.”

Like McPherson earlier in the kidnapping case, judge Hardy was acquitted. Only a minority of the legislative committee members voted for conviction.

In the Great Depression years of the 1930s, Angelus Temple, with hundreds of women volunteers, was one of the most effective and inclusive welfare agencies in Los Angeles. Hot meals were served to more than 1.5

million people. “Angelus Temples was the only place *anyone* could get a meal, clothing, and blankets, no questions asked,” writes biographer Daniel Mark Epstein in “The Life of Aimee Semple McPherson.” At a time when bitter racial discrimination was still rampant, Angelus Temple warmly welcomed both black members and visiting black preachers, to its pews and its pulpit.

At age 54, McPherson died in 1944, from an overdose of sleeping pills, an accident, it was said. Her church continued to grow. Headquarters of the Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada moved from Vancouver to nearby Port Coquitlam, and established churches across Canada. Internationally, the Four Square Church in 2015 embraced 66,000 churches in 140 countries with 8.9 million members and adherents, as reported in the church web site.

— Canada @ 150 —

Foreign titles laughed to death in Parliament



Wikimedia Commons.

Former newspaper publisher Conrad Black gave up his Canadian citizenship to accept a British title, but after serving a U.S. jail term for obstruction of justice and mail fraud, he sought the return of his Canadian citizenship.

“A proposal for a return to titles for Canadians seemed to have been laughed to a permanent death” during two days of heated debate in the House of Commons, according to the *Toronto Globe*, February 15, 1929.

Ten years earlier, on the heels of the First World War, the House passed a resolution asking Britain not to con-

fer Lordships or Knighthood on Canadians, declaring that the Canadian government would oppose any such foreign titles, honours or decorations.

Charles H. Cahan, a Montreal Conservative Member of Parliament, asked that the ban be rescinded. Most MPs opposed restoration of foreign titles.

During the First World War “they were conferring titles on the hog kings, the bacon kings, the jelly kings, tobacco manufacturers and cigarette millionaires, and all the rest of them, until the country got sick and tired of it, with men fighting in the trenches for \$1.10 a day and those at home conferring titles on themselves,” declared Toronto Conservative Member Thomas L. Church.

Progressive Party Member Agnes McPhail wanted such titles restricted to “farmers and labourers who made less than \$1,000 a year,” instead of such people as Lord Beaverbrook (Max Aitken), “a great Canadian who made tremendous amounts of money by making cement so dear that in Western Canada they had to lay board sidewalks.”

Alberta Labour member William Irvine said the proposal should be buried “in the way the old lady buried the cat—face and nose downwards, so that, if it comes to life again and starts to scratch, the more it scratches the deeper it will go.”

When it came to a vote, the Progressive and Labour members were solidly against it, but the issue split the Conservative and Liberal parties, and even the cabinet. Opposition Leader Richard Bennett supported the resolution, but a few of his Conservative members voted against it. Only Prime Minister Mackenzie King and two

other members of the cabinet voted against restoring titles, while seven cabinet members voted for it. The resolution to restore granting foreign titles to Canadians was defeated 114 to 60.

It was, however, far from the end of the matter. When the Conservatives were in power in 1930 to 1935 under Prime Minister Bennett, British titles were once more bestowed on Canadians. The 1919 ban, Bennett said, “was as ineffective in law as it is possible for any group of words to be.” In 1941, Bennett was rewarded with his British title, Viscount Bennett of Mickleham, Calgary and Hopewell.

The issue arose again in 2001 when British Prime Minister Tony Blair proposed to elevate publisher Conrad Black to the British House of Lords. Prime Minister Jean Chretien advised Britain that Canada would object, citing the 1919 resolution that had sought to ban such titles. Black renounced his Canadian citizenship to become Lord Black of Crossharbour. Later, after he had been sentenced in the United States to 78 months in jail for obstruction of justice and mail fraud, Black sought to regain his Canadian citizenship.

— Canada @ 150 —

Canada's father of modern human rights



Photo courtesy John Peters Humphrey Foundation

John Peters Humphrey

Three-and-a-half years after the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco, the nations of the world met in General Assembly in Paris to lay a foundation stone, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*. It is “the international Magna Carta of all mankind,” in the words of U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. “One of humanity’s most shining achievements,” in the words of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay. The principal drafter of this 30-article document was a Canadian lawyer, professor and

From my book, About Canada, Toronto: Civil Sector Press, 2012.

human rights advocate, John Peters Humphrey, “the father of the modern human rights system,” in the words of Nelson Mandela.

Born in the small New Brunswick town of Hampton, as a young child Humphrey lost both his parents to cancer and an arm to an accident while playing with fire; endured a boarding school education; enrolled in Mount Allison University at age 15; moved to Montreal and McGill University, where he earned degrees in commerce, arts, and law, with a Master’s in international law. He conducted a brief law practice in Montreal, before accepting a teaching post at McGill.

At McGill in the early 1940s, Humphrey met Henri Laugier, a Second World War refugee from German-occupied France who had worked for the Free French. When the British liberated North Africa, Laugier moved to Algeria to teach at the University of Algiers. Five weeks after Germany’s surrender ended the war in Europe on May, 1945, 51 founding nations signed the UN Charter in San Francisco. The UN’s first assistant secretary-general was Laugier. In 1946, Laugier hired Humphrey as the first director of the UN’s Division of Human Rights, a position he held for 20 years.

A UN Commission on Human Rights was formed, with Eleanor Roosevelt as chair, to prepare what was initially conceived as an International Bill of Rights, but emerged as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The rights in the declaration had to be acceptable to the varying racial, cultural and religious tenets of the commission members, from Australia, Belgium, Byelorussia, Chile, China, Egypt, France, India, Iran, Lebanon, Panama, Philippines, United Kingdom, United States, Sovi-

et Union, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. No small challenge. While the rights had to be universal, the idea was not. "Any attempt by the United Nations to formulate a Declaration of Human Rights in individualistic terms would quite inevitably fail," Harold Laski, considered one of the great political scientists of his time, predicted. Even the government of Canada was initially opposed, much to Humphrey's chagrin. Numerous objectors believed that an "attempt to reach a consensus on rights would only promote conflict and incite the kind of vapid moralizing which the Ottawa men disliked," Humphrey wrote.

It was in the face of this doubt and opposition that Humphrey tackled the task of preparing a draft declaration. His 408-page document was the basis on which, after two years of much debate, the Universal Declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly in Paris on December 8, 1948. December 8 is still observed in most of the world as Human Rights Day.

"The UDHR and the forces of moderation, tolerance and understanding that the text represents will probably in future history-writing be seen as one of the greatest steps forward in the process of global civilization," Asbjorn Eide, founder of the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights at the University of Oslo, wrote in 1992.

But Humphrey was not satisfied. "Human rights without economic and social rights have little meaning for most people, particularly on empty bellies," he wrote. It was an echo of one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous four freedoms, "freedom from want." The UN addressed this concern in 1966 with the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural

Rights, together with the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These two covenants and the UDHR now comprise the UN's International Bill of Human Rights.

The lofty goals of the UDHR are manifestly far from achieved. Billions of people are still deprived of the declared basic rights. Yet more people than ever now live with the freedom of those rights. And UDHR is a crucial instrument for the protection and promotion of those rights. It has been incorporated in the constitutions of more than one hundred countries; dozens of legally binding international treaties are based on its principles; and it has been cited as justification for numerous UN activities.

Perhaps the most powerful tool for establishing the rights espoused by the UDR will prove to be the International Criminal Court, charged with prosecuting perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes—another Canadian initiative.

During his term as UN Director of Human Rights, Humphrey guided the implementation of 67 international covenants as well as new constitutions for scores of countries; promoted press freedom and the status of women; fought racial discrimination; and proposed creation of the office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. He received the UN Human Rights Award in 1988, on the fortieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.

Humphrey returned to McGill University in 1966, where he taught while continuing to promote human rights in Canada and abroad until his retirement at age 89, the year before his death.

— Canada @ 150—

When logging life was work and whisky



McCord Museum, MP-0000.25.864.

West coast loggers falling a giant Douglas fir tree, circa 1895. They have chopped an undercut with their axes. With their seven-foot cross-cut saw, they will cut through the tree from the opposite side to intersect the top of the undercut. The tree will fall in the direction of the undercut.

Work and whisky comprised the cycle of life for many loggers on the coast of British Columbia in the first decade of the twentieth century. Following is one of my early magazine pieces, published in the magazine section of the Vancouver Sun, May 5, 1951.

The year was 1906.

“As you walk down the street (Cordova) you see how the shops are giving way to saloons and restaurants, and the price of beer decorates each building’s front. And you pass the blackboards of employment offices, and read chalked thereon: ‘50 axemen wanted at Alberni; 5 rigging slingers, \$4; buckers, \$3; swampers, \$3’.”

Today [1951] if you walk down Vancouver’s Cordova Street, and look at the blackboards of the employment offices, you are likely to note that even the lowly “whistle punk” receives more than double \$4 per day for his work, the price of beer no longer decorates the front of each building, and there are no saloons.

But Vancouver’s Cordova Street of about 1906 as described by M. Allerdale Grainger in *Woodsmen of the West*, published by Edward Arnold in 1908, is still much the same as Cordova Street in 1951. The buildings are older, shabbier; in the store windows, where the axes, wedges, sledge-hammers and augers are still displayed, only “the great seven-foot saws with enormous shark teeth,” have been replaced, giving way to the smaller, doubly efficient power saws.

“Mert” Grainger was a young Englishman with a spirit of adventure, who arrived in Vancouver around the turn of the century, as green of the ways of the woods as an English school boy, and who, in 1907 set down with the

hardened muscles and calloused hands of a logger to write “Woodsman of the West,” and give a few glimpses of what happened in between. The record is a story of men who worked until they dropped exhausted and, when not working, drank until they dropped exhausted. If you care to hunt around some dusty shelves you may still be able to find a well-thumbed copy of the book—you may even find it, along with axes, caulk boots, and augers, in a second-hand store along Cordova Street.

Logging in the time of “Woodsman of the West” was tough—and so were the loggers. Many were hand loggers who lived in isolated places, alone, or perhaps with one partner, for months on end, falling logs and rolling them into the “salt chuck,” laboriously with peaveys and jacks, pulling them into their crude booms with battered rowboats, rowing these same boats as far as 80 miles for supplies, and some solace from a bottle.

Let the “boss man” of today—the camp’s “push”—who must build his roads farther and farther inland to reach receding timber lines, read how one logger did it in those days, and weep with envy. “He worked close to the beach, cutting timber along the frontage of his leases... One thousand feet... was the farthest inland he ever went.”

And what a steam donkey the larger outfits used! You can talk of your diesel jobs, those colossal power plants—this “donk” performed miracles, and kept extra men employed splitting wood for fuel. When in operation, “the whole mechanism would rock and quiver upon its heavy sleigh; its different parts would seem to sway and slew, each after their own manner; steam would squirt from every joint... The engineer would keep tightening nuts and bolts that would keep loosening.”

If the steam donkey of that day bordered on the comical when compared with a modern donkey, the tugboat *Sonora* was not only comical, but ludicrous and pathetic as well, when compared with the sleek ocean going tugs that pull huge cigar-shaped Davis rafts into Vancouver today. She was the second tug built on the B.C. coast, constructed before the turn of the century, and was once the pride of the Westminster Steamship Company. She was 54 feet long, with a gross tonnage of 33 tons. Her decks were piled high with wood and bark, the fuel. In 1901, a government inspector, presumably as a safety measure, had placed her maximum boiler pressure at 80 pounds. Six years later, the discolored pipes in her engine room, despite the rags tied here and there, were squirting steam from several places. The pressure was kept at 80 pounds constantly, sometimes higher.

Grainger first saw the *Sonora* as a “blistered, dingy, disorderly junk, slowly sighing her way through the water... the faint throb of her engine... was like that of a dying man. You kept expecting her to die away and stop.” But the *Sonora*’s engine never “conked out,” and she could always be relied upon to keep the ship going forward in any kind of weather for as long as the bark and wood fuel supply lasted.

In those days, newly hired men were not expected to reach camp sober. One old-timer described the first few days in camp: “After a fellow’s got over the first two days and can begin to eat, life looks good enough to him. Of course, them first two days is tough.”

Then, as now, logging was risky business, and the camps were often a long way from medical assistance. “You

can bet it ain't no dressmaker's dream, getting hurt so far away from any doctor,'... without antiseptics, bandages, skill or the proper care of wounds, four to five or six days' journey (weather permitting) from a hospital." Fortune could be swept away with a gust of wind; a hand logger could lose a couple of thousand dollars when heavy seas would break his boom, and a year's labour would be in vain.

And then there was always the supreme risk: "... the log had slipped and caught Pete's boot and rolled upon him and pushed his body down before it to water; and Pete's arm alone stuck up above the surface. 'Squashed, he was, flat, like a squashed fruit, from his ribs down'."

After several years of a lonely life in an isolated logging camp, years of back-breaking labour, "Mert" Grainger left the woods to live near Victoria. Despite the high wages, like most loggers when he unlaced his caulk boots for the last time, he found himself a lot richer in experience, but not much richer financially.

— Canada @ 150 —

When real estate bubbles burst



City of Toronto Archives.

Toronto's King Street, Upper Canada's financial hub, in 1858 during "The great financial panic of 1857."

The Great Recession of 2008, as it became known, began with the collapse of the Lehman Brothers investment bank and the bursting of an eight trillion dollar real estate bubble. The great financial panic of 1857, as it was known, might have been a lesson. It began with the collapse of a bank in Ohio, railway failures and the burst of an associated real estate bubble. It all led to a three-year global depression.

A glimpse of the rise and bust of the bubble in Ontario (then called Canada West)—and the lessons that should have been learned— can be seen in items gleaned from the Toronto *Daily Leader*.

On August 29, 1853, the *Leader* reported that land prices are booming wherever railways are being built. A line being built from Peterborough is accompanied by “an enormous advance in the price of real estate.” At Hamilton, land recently “unsaleable at \$6 to \$8 [per acre] is now readily sold at from \$14 to \$20.” Small homesteads near Guelph, “which were a dead weight a couple of years ago at £200, have now realized £800 cash.” Two farms near Stratford, purchased for \$4 an acre in the fall of 1856 were reportedly sold the following spring for \$30 an acre, and in a few months, re-sold “at a corresponding advance over the second price.”

Even the University of Toronto cashed in on the craze. Auctioneers Wakefield, Coate & Co. appealed “To Speculators in Land,” in an ad in the *Leader* (January 2, 1856). The advertisement offered a large block of university land near the village of Otterville, promising “a very favourable opportunity for the formation of Village Lots.”

The end of the seemingly unending advances in real estate prices was noted by the *Leader* August 1, 1857: “Nor is it surprising, for it is evident that the natural advance occasioned by the inauguration of the railway system opened the door to speculations of a very doubtful character.” The “fairy villages” and “earthly paradises” that dotted promoters’ maps were gone, while “the original cedar swamps remain.”

Debt and ruin follow delusions of wealth

The *Leader* surveyed the burdens of debt that followed the delusions of wealth, in a final assessment on March 30, 1860. Thousands of speculators and their families were ruined, their homes and property lost, while debtors' prison beckoned. The debts were so numerous, said the *Leader*, "That there is no prospect of a tithe of them ever being liquidated." The report continued:

"In these years every other person thought he had found a royal road to riches. The recipe was so simple that it is astonishing it should have induced such widespread delusion; since there was hardly anybody who did not know all about it.

"The plan was to buy unproductive real estate—city, town, village or farm lots—almost wholly upon credit; to sell again at five hundred per cent profit, scrape your bags of gold together and live *en grand Seigneur* for the rest of your days.

"Nothing was talked about but the price of lots, the profits made, upon paper or in the imagination, the profits to be made; the good luck of the fabricator of this fancy 'city,' town or village. Surveyors, draughtsmen, lithographers were almost worked to death; such was the demand for 'plans' to present to a gaping audience at some famed auction mart, or better still, on the ground, where the real beauties of the earthly paradise could be seen with the eye, and where they might be heightened by the exhilarating assistance of champagne.

"Every new sale was a wonder; the rate per foot bid off—not infrequently by the aid of stool-pigeons in the midst

of the audience, whose ideas had expanded under the generous influence of sparkling wine—exceeded the most exaggerated expectations; and calculations were gravely made of what it would all come to in a few years. When fortunes could be made so easily, who would condescend to soil his fingers by wearisome labor? Half the community was in a state of phrenzied excitement; and untold debts were contracted with as little concern as men in their sober senses eat their breakfasts.

“The results of this popular epidemic of insanity soon began to reveal themselves. Debts were contracted out of all proportion to the ability of payment. Hardly a single purchaser ever thought of discharging the obligations he incurred out of his own proper resources. The general idea was a re-sale would bring, besides the original purchase money, a very handsome profit. But it was soon found that re-sales could not be effected, on any terms; and before the close of 1857 it would have been as hopeless to expect to obtain a solitary bid as to catch whales in a mill pond.”

The real lesson of history is nothing is too often learned.

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COMPULSORY SCHOOLING. There are five thousand children running around the streets of Montreal who never enter a school. It is now proposed that compulsory education shall be enforced in the great centre of mercantile life, and certainly the principle is necessary. These children are to be our future leaders, and they ought to know something. *Toronto Mail*, November 14, 1891.

Gentlemen prefer bonds: 1929 stock market crash



Investors crowd Wall street, October 25, 1929 during the stock market crash that heralded the Great Depression of the 1930s.

“Gentlemen prefer bonds,” said Andrew Mellon (1855-1937), wealthy American financier, banker, and U.S. Treasury Secretary. Common shares, or stock, were considered too speculative for gentlemen; best left to disreputable speculators. Had more investors heeded Mellon’s advice, the horrendous stock market crash of October, 1929, which ushered in the Great Depression of the 1930s, would likely have been much less severe. The *Montreal Gazette* October 19, chronicled the investment swing from bonds to stocks that preceded the crash.

The reason for the swing from stocks to bonds is obvious, says the *Gazette*. “Stocks have a speculative out-

look; and speculation today is rampant throughout the world to a degree wholly unprecedented.”

Figures are given to show the switch from bonds to stocks. In 1925, bonds accounted for 70 percent of capital raised by American corporations, and stocks, 30 percent. In the first nine months of 1929, stocks accounted for 73 percent of corporate financing—\$4.1 billion—with just \$1.5 billion raised from the sale of bonds. “While these figures speak decisively for themselves,” said the *Gazette*, there was an increase during the same period in the amount of outstanding loans by brokers to their customers who bought stock on margin, from about \$1 billion “to the staggering aggregate” of more than \$6.7 billion.”

The National City bank in New York observed:

“The extreme ease of money conditions in 1927 started the speculative ball rolling, and the movement gained in momentum with the prosperous business conditions of 1928 and 1929. The spectacle of huge profits made by stock speculation proved a magnet to draw more funds... Fast as new stock issues have been created, they have been unable to keep pace with demand, with the result that prices have been bid up to levels which discount the future for an unusually long period ahead.”

The *Gazette* concluded with a note of caution. Financing by stock to such an extent “has yet to be vindicated by the stern test of experience,” it stated. “Developments, therefore, will be watched with interest not unmingled with anxiety.”

If only investors had listened to Andrew Mellon.

— Canada @ 150 —

SS Manhattan signals open Northwest Passage



All photos by author

The onus is on Canada to assert control of shipping through the Northwest Passage, with patrol vessels, world-class icebreakers, deep sea ports, and search-and-rescue facilities.

“An open Northwest Passage means... an international trade route that will have a profound influence on...the patterns of worldwide trade... A year-round sea-route in this area could do what the railroads did for the United States, and might do it quicker.” Dr. Charles F. Jones,

President, Humble Oil and Refining Company, U.S. operating subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey (now ExxonMobil), 1969.

In 1969, the polar ice of the fabled—some said “delusional”—Northwest Passage (NWP), all but defeated Humble’s SS Manhattan icebreaking supertanker in its quest for commercial cargo shipping through the NWP, as it had for 500 years. I know, because I was aboard the Manhattan when it was gripped solid in a vice of ice, unable to move for 34 hours. From what I could see from the bridge of the Manhattan, this precursor of NWP shipping would still be there if the Canadian Coastguard icebreaker John A. Macdonald had not been on hand to free it.

Canada claims the Northwest Passage as “inland water,” subject to its full coastal state control; the United States and the European Union say it’s an international strait, open to vessels from any country that can make it through. Humble did not seek Canada’s permission to sail the passage, but Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s government granted permission without being asked. Neither did Humble ask accompanying assistance from the Macdonald, but that, too was made available

And a good thing it was. A U.S. Coastguard icebreaker, assigned to accompany the Manhattan, became stuck at the first challenge of ice, and had to be freed by the Macdonald. Accompanied by another Canadian icebreaker, the U.S. vessel limped home through a less challenging section of the Passage. That left it to the Macdonald to free an ice-bound (“becalmed,” in nautical terms) Manhattan a total of 12 times on the 4,500-mile return voyage from New York to the Prudhoe Bay oil field on the North Slope of Alaska.



Route of the SS Manhattan and CCGS John A. Macdonald, through the Northwest Passage, September 1969.

That was 1969. Thirty-five years later, a mini armada of vessels, from tiny to Titanic-size, pass through the Northwest Passage with no apparent difficulty during a short summer season of about six to eight weeks or so in August and September. The next decades may bring great fleets of commercial ships. That was hardly unexpected.

A viable northwest passage could reduce shipping distances between East Asia, the eastern seaboard of North America, and Europe by thousands of miles, and accommodate many cargo ships too large to pass through the Panama canal. But however large the economic rewards, they will be puny compared to global warming's already mounting economic and environmental costs, to say nothing of human suffering and loss of life.

The story behind the Manhattan voyage begins with a

well drilled on the flat, narrow Arctic coastal plain of Alaska, stretching 380 miles across the northwest corner of the continent. From 1963 to 1967, nine wildcat wells drilled in search of a new oil field on the coastal plain were all dry holes. Drilling started on a 10th wildcat in early 1967. Referring to this latest exploratory hole, the 1967 annual review of the Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists predicted: "little or no geophysical or geological work will be conducted on the North Slope

during 1968 unless the current drilling well is successful." In January 1968, Prudhoe Bay No. 1 well discovered the largest oil and gas field in North America. The purpose of the Manhattan voyage was to determine the feasibility of shipping Prudhoe Bay oil by tankers to refineries in the eastern United States and in Europe.

As editor of Oilweek, I was one of the journalists aboard the Macdonald for six days, and the Manhattan for two, on the toughest 900-mile leg of the voyage to Prudhoe Bay. I was aboard the Manhattan when it lay trapped in McClure Strait. I watched from the bridge as the Macdonald, alongside the Manhattan, rammed forward and aft to break the ice and finally release the big tanker.



Manhattan plowing through polar ice in Mellville Sound.

Following is my account of the voyage, adapted from my published reports in Oilweek, in September and November 1969.

In the middle of a Polynya—a sort of island of water in the middle of an ocean of ice—in the middle of Viscount Melville Sound set the supertanker *SS Manhattan*, on her trial voyage through the Northwest Passage. Moored alongside the *Manhattan* in this small patch of Mediterranean blue, and taking on diesel fuel from the tanker, lay the *John A. Macdonald*.

Parading along the deck of the *Manhattan* was a stubble-bearded young man, Bill Smith, petroleum writer for the *New York Times*. He was dressed in a red tartan shirt and a blue beret borrowed from the Canadian Coast Guard, lustily playing the Skye Boat Song on the bagpipes. It was an unofficial tribute from the *Manhattan* to the Canadian icebreaker and her crew for helping the *Manhattan* to bust through ice ridges. But the toughest ice challenges were still to come.

Planning for the icebreaker tanker trials began almost immediately after the discovery in January 1968, of North America's largest oil field at Prudhoe Bay. If economically feasible, tanker shipments might be a preferable alternative to a pipeline across Alaska to the open water of the Pacific Ocean, for the movement of Prudhoe Bay's five billion barrels of oil [which later turned out to be some 14 billion barrels of oil.]

Humble contracted a pair of Montreal firms, German & Milne, naval architects, and Northern Associates, Arctic environmental and logistics experts, for preliminary feasibility studies. Humble was looking at the possibility of using giant icebreaker tankers for oil shipments

not only through the Northwest Passage, but also across the centre of the polar icecap, passing close by the North Pole, to Western Europe and a port such as Rotterdam. The shipping distance would be 4,000 miles, compared with almost 13,000 miles for tanker shipments from the world's largest oil fields that border the Persian Gulf, in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq.

German and Milne envisioned 250,000-ton icebreaker tankers. "A six-foot sheet of ice may be a formidable barrier to a 10,000-ton ship with 20 feet of draught, but far less of a barrier to a 250,000-ton ship with 70 feet of draught," it reported. "The difference between the two is something like the difference between a tack hammer and a 16-pound sledge hammer."

Humble surveyed the world fleet of tankers for its test trials and selected the 115,000-ton *SS Manhattan*. With 43,000 shaft horsepower from the steam turbines for the twin propellers, the *Manhattan* had nearly twice the horsepower of other tankers of comparable size.

The *Manhattan* was sliced into four sections and spent seven months in four different dry docks. Two shipyards built a new 125-foot bow, designed by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to increase the ice-breaking capability by a projected 40 to 60 percent. Ice fenders made from 1-1/4-inch steel were added to the hull, extending from behind the bow to the stern. Nine thousand tons of steel was added, boosting the ship's fully-loaded weight to 151,000 tons with a draught of 54 feet. A vast array of the most sophisticated electronic gear was installed to monitor the ship's performance under varying ice conditions. Two large Sikorsky helicopters were aboard to ferry research-

ers out on the ice to core, sample and analyze ice conditions along the route. Aircraft of the Canadian Department of Transport and the U.S. Coast Guard would fly ice reconnaissance the for Manhattan, employing side scanning radar, infrared photography, and laser beams.

The *Manhattan* sailed out of Philadelphia on August 24 on her voyage to Prudhoe Bay. Fewer than a dozen crossings had been made through the Northwest Passage, hugging the narrow passes around the southern edge of the Arctic Islands, sheltered from the thickest of the ice, but too shallow for supertankers. No vessel had made the passage through the deeper waters where the ice cover is heavier and thicker, and where the Manhattan would sail.

It was John Cabot who had first set out in search of the Northwest Passage in 1497, five years after Columbus landed on the North American continent. Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen became the first to sail through the route with his 47-ton herring boat, the *Gjoa*, in 1903-06, and Sergeant H.A. Larsen in the 80-ton RCMP schooner *St. Roch* was the first to do it in a single year, 1944.

Big things were hoped for from the *Manhattan* voyage. “We believe the *Manhattan* has the power and design that will enable her to bull her way through most ice ridges like an immense ramrod,” Stanley B. Hass, Humble’s project commander, boasted as the ship prepared to sail. Before the voyage was over, he would admit that the *Manhattan* could not have made it through without the icebreaking assistance of the *Macdonald*.

On September 5, with a few other news media, I joined

the *Macdonald* at Resolute on Cornwallis Island, for the next leg of the journey, some 900 miles through the heart of the Northwest Passage to Sachs Harbour, near Inuvik and the Mackenzie River delta. It had so far been clear sailing from Philadelphia. The U.S. media aboard the *Manhattan* had reported encountering only bits of ice, “as big as grand pianos.” From Sachs Harbour to Prudhoe Bay would again be clear sailing through relatively open water. The challenges lay between Resolute and Sachs Harbour.

Beyond Resolute, the *Macdonald* was leading the convoy, followed by the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker, the *Northwind*, through heavy fog and relatively thin and scattered ice. As the ice pack grew heavier, Captain Paul Fournier on the *Macdonald* radioed back to the *Manhattan*: “The ice is a little heavier up ahead. We will take up our position astern of you.” It was time to see what the *Manhattan* could do.

An officer on the bridge of the *Macdonald* commented, “If we have any trouble it will likely be with the *Northwind*.” At its best, the *Northwind* was considered an underpowered icebreaker. Two years earlier, the *Macdonald* rescued both the *Northwind* and another U.S. icebreaker, the *Staten Island*, 500 miles north of Point Barrow where the *Northwind* was on a supply mission to an ice station. Earlier in the summer, the *Northwind* had crossed the Northwest Passage west to east to join the *Manhattan* at Thule, Greenland. One of its six engines was put out of commission by a broken shaft.

The first difficulties

The first difficulties started on the evening of September 8 in Viscount Melville Sound, when the *Northwind*

became stuck in the ice. Twice the *Macdonald* freed her by breaking up the ice that held the U.S. icebreaker. The *Northwind* was forced to abandon the convoy. She returned to Resolute, to make the run to Alaska going south through Coronation Strait, where the ice is thinner, accompanied by the Canadian icebreaker *D'Iberville*.

While the convoy was stopped to free the *Northwind*, the *Manhattan* hove to. In the morning she was caught in a solid cover of multi-year ice pack some eight to nine feet thick in the flat, and 15 to 20 feet thick in ridges. At a speed of six knots, the *Manhattan* was intended to break through ice ridges 40 to 50 feet thick. Breaking through from a standing start was another matter. She was unable to back up and run at the ridges, in part because she had only one-third as much power going astern.

The *Macdonald* was better equipped for the job of ramming through ice ridges. Until the arrival of the larger, more powerful Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker, the *St. Laurent*, then on its shakedown cruise, the *Macdonald* was North America's most powerful icebreaker. At 9,000 tons, the *Macdonald* has 15,000 horsepower to drive her propellers, with as much power available for going astern as going ahead. This gave her greater ability than the *Manhattan* to back up and make repeated runs to ram and break ice ridges.

It was up to the *Macdonald* to steam alongside the *Manhattan*, break up those ridges, and relieve the pressure that gripped the tanker. It was after that job was done that Bill Smith paraded the deck of the *Manhattan* playing the Skye Boat Song on the bagpipes in a salute to

the flagship of the Canadian Coast Guard. It was just the first of a dozen times that the *Macdonald* would rescue the big tanker. Another two days brought a new call for help. One of the *Manhattan*'s Sikorsky S-60 helicopters, providing support for an ice surface party, had partly broken through a patch of thin ice and lay damaged on its side, looking like a dead seagull with its feet sticking up in the air. In a tricky, skillfully executed operation, Captain Fournier managed to maneuver the *Macdonald* through the ice to within a few feet of the chopper, lowered a work party over the side, and hoisted the chopper onto the deck at the stern. Two hours later, the *Macdonald* transferred the damaged craft to the deck of the *Manhattan* and a Very Humble Oil Company.

Challenging McClure Strait

The *Manhattan* met its severest test, however, in McClure Strait, an almost solid block of ice between the northern end of Banks Island and Melville Island at the western edge of the Northwest Passage. Butting up against the edge of the permanent polar ice pack, McClure Strait is a formidable barrier. No ship had ever managed to sail through this strait. An easier route lay through Prince of Wales Strait, a narrow finger along the east coast of Banks Island and around the southern end of the big island.

There was very likely a political as well as a logistical reason for attempting to navigate McClure Strait, to bolster U.S. insistence that the NWP is an international strait. The route through McClure is wider, more distant from Canada's Arctic Islands, where the claim of an international strait might be stronger. The route through

Prince of Wales Strait lies much closer to Canadian land, where the claim of Canadian inland water would seem stronger.

I was able to observe the tanker's test of McLure Strait from a unique vantage point. Captain Roger Steward had invited members, of the Canadian press corps on the *Macdonald* to join the big tanker for a part of the journey. I was the only one who accepted. Was it because the *Manhattan* was a dry ship while the *Macdonald* had a bar, albeit open for only a very limited time each day?

From the bridge of the *Manhattan*, I saw how Captain Steward and his officers handled the test; I heard the conversation between the two ships; and I saw from a different perspective the manner in which the *Macdonald* freed the tanker when she was caught in a polar grip.

For 34 hours, the *Manhattan* and the *Macdonald* were beset in a polar ice flow. The position was directly on the route over which Captain Robert McLure and his crew of *HMS Investigator* had trekked 200 miles from Mercy Bay to Bridport Inlet in 1853 to become the first to make a complete crossing of the Northwest Passage, even if they did have to abandon their ship and complete part of the journey by foot (see accompanying sidebar story).

A thin skiff of snow covered the ice which stretched unbroken in all directions as far as the eye could detect. It looked like a prairie landscape, anywhere between Winnipeg and Edmonton, in the middle of the winter—a snow-covered prairie on which two ships had somehow got stuck. The temperature was 23 F., the



The bow of the *Manhatan* noses into McClure Strait, where she becomes trapped in the grip of polar ice for 34 hours. Alongside her, the *Macdonald* (below) rams back and forth, cracking the ice to release the big tanker.



wind was 30 miles per hour, and the combination produced a wind chill factor of -13 F. In Arctic winter, there would be continuous darkness, the temperature would be between -40 F. and -60 F., and the wind would blow at rates approaching 100 miles per hour.

For a day and a half, the two ships made but little headway in bashing through the polar pack, which had moved down to clog the eastern entrance of McLure Strait. Four hours of steady ramming through the ice produced less than a mile of progress.

Alongside the *Manhattan*, the *Macdonald* charged the ice like an angry bull. As the bow hit the unbroken edge of the pack, it would rise up out of the water, come crashing down and through the ice, and the whole ship would rumble and shake and shudder as it came to an abrupt halt. Then the "Johnny Mac" would roar full power astern, reverse props with another shudder, and come charging full speed again at the ice.

The massive *Manhattan*, which takes a good many miles to gain full speed, could never lift its 54-foot hull on top of the ice. Against the ice, the bow rose only slightly, gently. Nor did it rumble, nor shake, nor shudder. There were muffled bangs, like the sound of empty barrels hit with soft rubber hammers, as the ice clanged against the bow, and the ship cut through, gliding sedately forward as if nothing in the world could ever stop its awesome momentum. But when the ice got thicker and stronger and pressure greater, its speed became very gradually slower. It didn't seem to really stop; it was just that after awhile it was no longer moving. Motionless for a few minutes, it would then inch astern, imperceptibly at first, preparing for another run at the ice.

But sometimes it was not able to move astern, and that is when the *Johnny Mac* would come crashing alongside, breaking the ice and relieving the pressure which held the *Manhattan* fast.

The polar floe that held the *Manhattan* off Mercy Bay was a pan of ice, several miles across, thicker and stronger than most of the other ice that clogged McLure Strait. When it was flat, it was 10 feet thick, and in the pressure ridges, it was twice as thick. It was crystal blue ice, clear, sparkling, drained of its salt, seemingly as strong as concrete. In front of the bow, the impact of 151,000 tons caused the ice to buckle and fold in accordion pleats. Farther back, against the shoulders of the bow, massive chunks of ice were pushed down into the water, then swooshed up like whales at play.

Captain Steward, who had never broken through ice with a ship before, was learning the intricate techniques, with the advice of experienced Canadians. Ramming back and forth he dubbed the “yo-yo system,” declaring that “you just gotta keep a swinging.”

Thanks to the assistance of the *Macdonald*, the *Manhattan* kept swinging until it eventually broke through the polar ice floe, made a big U-turn, and, skirting around the floe this time, headed out of McLure Strait to take the easier way through the passage down Prince of Wales Strait.

But heading into the entrance of Prince of Wales, there were more problems. Here the ice pack, where it was flat, was only about six feet thick and easily handled by the *Manhattan*— except for row after row of pressure ridges, with more than 20 feet of ice. “The hedgerows of the Arctic landscape,” is how they were described in

McLure's journal. Thrust up by the pressure of sheets of ice pressing against each other, the pressure ridges were marked by jumbled blocks of ice, as large as automobiles, stretching for miles in straight, parallel rows. "It's like sailing through a rock quarry," commented Captain Fournier on the *Macdonald*, as he struggled for 2-1/2 hours to bash his ship through one ridge.

For the *Macdonald*, following the track of the *Manhattan* across this stretch was even tougher than breaking its own track. But in this area, once astern there was no way that the *Macdonald* could escape from the track of the big tanker. Plowing through the ice, the *Manhattan* cut a 150-foot swath. But all the ice it broke was left behind in its track. If, under pressure, the pack quickly closes to a narrow track of, say, 50 feet, then the broken off chunks of ice become piled up and the ice is thus thicker than it was. It was all the *Macdonald* could do to follow the icebreaker tanker.

The *Manhattan* had its problems, too. Before the stern had passed free of one pressure ridge, the bow, a thousand feet ahead, was already plowing into the next pressure ridge. To tackle the pressure ridges blocking the entrance to Prince of Wales Strait, the *Manhattan* stopped for adjustments. A relief valve, which was leaking steam, was repaired. Steam normally piped to the deck to operate winches and cranes, and steam used for the ship's desalination plant to provide fresh water was temporarily diverted to increase the horsepower available to the twin propellers by nearly five percent. The extra 2,000 horsepower thus gained resulted in the *Manhattan's* best performance on its western crossing of the Northwest Passage, enabling it to slice slowly but

steadily through ice as thick and tough as that which before had stopped it.

Out of the Northwest Passage, in open water 10 miles off Sachs Harbour, at the southwest tip of Banks Island, the two ships hove to on September 15. Helicopters lifted the Macdonald's press crew to Inuvik and flights home. The Northwest Passage had been licked. The rest of the distance from Sachs Harbour to Prudhoe Bay was open water. If there was difficulty on the return journey, assistance was available from the powerful *St. Laurent*, standing by at Resolute.

Aboard the *Macdonald*, Captain Fournier paid tribute to the Manhattan:

"We have all learned a lot from that icebreaker tanker. We learn every day up here. I really was impressed by the *Manhattan's* performance and the way she cut through the polar pack. I think they could have done it by themselves, but it would have taken much longer. When they were stuck, they may have had to wait until the ice conditions changed, and that could have been a day or a week, each time."

And Hass had a final summation to make:

"We have seen nothing which indicates that it will not be possible to operate commercial shipping through the Northwest Passage. Our objective is still commercial shipping on a year-round basis."

It has taken four decades, but regular cargo and passenger shipping through the NWP seems in sight, and a busy reality for a six- to-eight-week August and September period, as I write this in late 2016.

The Manhattan made a second NWP voyage in 1970,

before Humble and its Prudhoe Bay partners opted for an 800-mile trans-Alaska pipeline to move their oil to a Pacific coast harbour, rather than tanker shipping through the Arctic ocean.

Thirty-seven years after the Manhattan's first polar voyage, the Chinese seemed every bit as buoyant as Humble had been. "There will be Chinese flags sailing through" the Northwest Passage, Liu Pendfei, a spokesman for China's Maritime Safety Administration told the Toronto Globe and Mail, April 20, 2016. "Once this route is commonly used it will directly change global marine transportation and have a profound influence on international trade, the world economy, capital flow, and resource exploitation." To prepare for that pending day the Chinese government published a 365-page Chinese-language Arctic Navigation Guide (Northwest Passage) filled with "charts and detailed information on sea ice and weather."

More than 100 vessels passed through the NWP in the decade leading to 2017 during the short summer sailing season. The smallest appears to be an 18-foot open Boston Whaler. The most unique was a 25-foot catamaran that sailed over water and slid over ice, the first to make the crossing without an engine, during two summers. The largest was the Chinese-owned cruise ship Crystal Serenity. Towering 13 storeys high and 820 feet long, she left Seward, Alaska on August 16, 2016, carrying 1,700 passengers and crew for a 32-day cruise to New York City.

In September 2013, the ice-strengthened Danish bulk carrier MV Nordic Orion made the first complete crossing of the Northwest Passage by a cargo ship, accompa-

nied by a Canadian Coastguard breaker. She carried 15,000 metric tons of coking coal from Vancouver to the Finnish port of Pori on a route that was 1,000 miles shorter than via the Panama Canal, saving four days of shipping time and \$200,000 fuel costs.

Even more impressive in 2014 was the first unescorted crossing of the NWP by a commercial ship, cutting the distance from Deception Bay at the tip of northern Que-

The first unescorted passage of a commercial ship through the Northwest Passage, cut the distance to haul 13,000 tons of copper ore from northern Quebec to China by 5,000 miles.

bec to Bayuquan, China by 5,000 miles, the sailing time by 18 days, and the emission of greenhouse gasses by 1,300 tonnes. The M.V. Nunavik, described by the Fednav Group as “the most powerful ice-breaking bulk carrier in the world,” carried 13,000 tons of nickel ore from the Nunavik mine in northern Quebec to the Chinese port. Where the Nordic Orion and other vessels skirted south of three of the islands in the NWP, the Nunavik took the same more northerly, wider and deep route as the Manhattan: up Davis Strait and Baffin Bay, through Lancaster Sound, down the Prince of Wales Strait between Banks and Victoria Islands. Where the Manhattan struggled in

difficult ice 35 years earlier, the Nunavik encountered no significant ice challenges.

Big shippers: miners and oilers

Before the current summer flotillas of small boat and big ships, pleasure and cargo vessels, before the Manhattan voyage, mining and oil companies were shipping through sections of the NWP, bringing in thousands of tons of equipment and material, flying in thousands of workers and supplies, and shipping out greater quantities of ore. The first was the short-lived North Rankin Nickel Mine on Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, which shipped ore from 1957 to 1962 at a time of peak nickel prices. The town established at the mine housed 500 people when the mine came. The Nanisivik lead and zinc mine at the northern end of Baffin Island, shipped out ore during the summer seasons from 1976 to 2002, trucking the ore 1.5 miles from the mine to Nanisivik harbor.

The Polaris lead and zinc mine on Little Cornwallis Island, about a third of the way into the NWP from the eastern Lancaster Sound entrance, shipped out 21 million tons of ore with a market value of \$15 billion from 1981-2002. The ice-breaker MV Arctic carried the ore through the eastern third of the NWP for 22 years.

Not far from the abandoned Nanisivik mine on Baffin Island, Baffinland—owned 50-50 by ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steel producer, and a private investment firm—began shipping out ore in 2015 from its Mary River mine, one of the world's richest iron ore deposits.

Oil companies shipped and flew into the NWP the most equipment, spent the most money, found large accumulations of oil and gas, but shipped out only a token bar-

rels of oil. Following geological and seismic work, the first Arctic Islands well was drilled on Melville to 13,000 feet in 1961, a dry hole. The Panarctic consortium of oil companies spent nearly a billion dollars, to drill 120 wildcat and 40 development wells on and offshore from the Arctic Islands in an area twice the size of Texas from 1967 to 1987. Drilling rigs and equipment were brought in by cargo ships and tug and barge to the principal staging area, the Resolute harbour on Cornwallis Island. Panarctic found oil and gas that would have a market value of \$100 billion at 2016 prices, if it could be produced and transported at a cost less than the price.

The first wildcat in the Mackenzie River Delta was drilled in 1965. Ten years later drilling was extended into the adjacent Beaufort Sea, site of the greatest armada of NWP vessels. At its peak in 1985, wildcats had been drilled from 19 artificial islands dredged from the bottom of the Beaufort Sea. There were also six ice-reinforced drill ships; a number of innovative steel (or steel and concrete) drilling platforms, some portable; 14 icebreaker supply ships; a floating dry dock, and a supertanker with a supply of 650,000 of fuel oil.

The technically, if not economically, producible oil and gas discovered to date on and offshore from the Arctic Islands and the Mackenzie Delta-Beaufort Sea area, are estimated at some five billions barrels of oil and equivalent natural gas (referred to by the industry as “boe”). That compares to less than two billion barrels of oil in Canada’s largest conventional oilfield, the Pembina field in Alberta. The undiscovered petroleum accumulations in this Arctic region are vastly greater, but in 2016, no one was searching for them.

What Canada needs to assert control

As the polar ice recedes under the glare of global warming, other NWP issues emerge—political and safety issues.

Michael Byers, Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law at the University of British Columbia, writes in the Globe and Mail, August 12, 2016:

Designated shipping lanes are needed to prevent collisions and to route ships around environmentally sensitive areas. Speed limits are needed to reduce the effects of wakes onshore habitats and noise on marine animals. A ban on the use of heavy fuel is needed to reduce the “black carbon” that lands on snow and ice and accelerates its melting, along with a ban on the emptying of ballasts tanks to reduce the risk of introducing invasive species. Canada has these protections in the St. Lawrence Seaway; now, it needs them in the Arctic.”

In essence, Canada will need deep sea ports, search and rescue staging area, patrol vessels, and more icebreakers.

The need was dramatically illustrated in February, 2016, when the 220-foot Canadian trawler Saputi hit an ice in Davis Strait, near Iqaluit and the southern end of Baffin Island, and began taking on water faster than her pumps could bail it out. The nearest Canadian help was 1,300 miles away, at the Canadian Coast Guard base in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and the Canadian Forces Joint Rescue Centre in nearby Halifax. The Coastguard sent a helicopter, presumably to rescue the sailors. The Rescue

Centre airlifted a bilge pump. But it was the Danish Navy patrol vessel HDMS Knud Rasmussen that rescued the Canadian vessel, escorting her 500 miles to Nuuk, Greenland, with Saputi bailing water all the way.

There are no staging areas nor deep sea ports in the Canadian Arctic to serve shipping, aside from one privately-owned port to serve its own needs, Baffinland's port at the northern end of Baffin Island, used for summer shipments of iron ore from the nearby Mary River mine. The Canadian Coast Guard has six Arctic icebreakers. Two of them are rated as "Arctic class 4" icebreakers, more powerful and capable than the retired John A Macdonald. The four other icebreakers are rated Arctic Class, and can "navigate at three knots in ice that is one metre thick," the Coastguard states. They can handle ice at least as well as the Macdonald could.

More is coming. Work is either underway or scheduled for one deep sea port, a refuelling station, six armed Arctic patrol vessels, and Canada's most powerful icebreaker.

On March 16, 2016, the Nunavut legislature approved construction of an \$84 million seaport at Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, with a population of some 7,000, and near where the Saputi hit ice a year earlier. Most of the money is to come from the federal government, with completion scheduled for 2020.

At the northern end of Baffin Island, work started in 2015 on a \$116 million refueling station in Nanisivik harbour, refurbishing a dock and tank farm used by Nanisivik mines 1972-2003. Scheduled for completion in 2018, it will be used by the Coastguard, the navy's new patrol vessels, and will be available for use by others. It is a

scaled back version of a more extensive deep sea port that was estimated to cost \$258 million.

Logical sites for two more NWP deep sea ports and search-and-rescue bases include the harbors at Resolute, on Cornwallis Island, which served much of Panarctic's operations; Winter Harbour on Melville Island, to where a drilling and tons on equipment were shipped in 1961 for the first well drilled on the Arctic Islands; and at Tuktoyaktuk, a port for vessels used in Beaufort sea drilling.

In Halifax, work construction started in 2015 on the first two of six planned "Arctic Offshore Patrol" vessels for the navy, estimated to cost a combined \$3.5 billion. HMCS Harry De Wolf and HMCS Margaret Brooke are both scheduled for launching in 2018.

Work on construction of the \$1.3 billion CCGS John G. Diefenbaker was deferred in order to build the patrol vessels first. Now scheduled for launching in 2022, the Diefenbaker will have a planned ability of "unrestricted operations for a nine-month period" throughout the Northwest Passage.

Much more than has been announced will be needed if commercial shipping for more than two months a year is to become a reality within the next decade or two.

Prudhoe Bay and the Arctic's fading petroleum bonanza.

The drift of continents during millions of years once placed the Arctic near the equator. "Tropical plants and ferns," the raw material of oil and gas, "grew in great profusion," Standard Oil's chief geologist Wallace Pratt, noted in 1944. Thus the petroleum potential of the "lands that

edge the Polar Sea—the northern shores of Siberia, Alaska, and Canada,” were seen by Pratt to rival the world’s greatest oil regions.

The oil and gas field at Prudhoe is an indication. Its 16 billion barrels of economically recoverable oil is twice as much oil as the East Texas, the next largest oilfield in North America, and about equal to all the recovered and remaining recoverable conventional oil in all the oil fields of Alberta. Its peak daily production rate of 1.6 million barrels of oil in 1987 was as great as all the oil consumption in Canada. By 2016, the production rate had declined to about 300,000 barrels a day, and less than four million barrels remained to be produced.

Prudhoe Bay also has some 35 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, the equivalent energy of about six billion barrels of oil. But while most of Prudhoe Bay’s oil has been consumed, essential none of the gas has. And might never.

Three to four decades ago, a pipeline stretching thousands of miles to move gas from Prudhoe Bay and the Mackenzie River was seen by the U.S. and Canadian governments as an urgent necessity to meet the energy needs and security of the continent. “I will personally insist that this gas pipeline be built without further delay,” president Jimmy Carter promised in a nationally televised address in 1979. “We strongly favour prompt completion” of the Alaskan gas pipeline President Ronald Reagan told a joint session of Canada’s Parliament in 1981.

The unanticipated advent of horizon drilling and hydraulic fracturing released enormous volumes of both gas and oil trapped in shale rocks throughout much of the lower 48 U.S. states and Western Canada, revolutionizing the

continent's energy supplies and eliminating the need for costly distant transportation of gas from the Arctic.

The need to curb global warming catastrophe by slashing the use of fossil fuels adds further pressure to assign Arctic petroleum resources to oblivion. In the 20-year period to 2016, global weather disasters killed 600,000 people; four billion were injured, displaced, or required emergency assistance; and inflicted costs were well in excess of \$1.9 trillion (U.S.), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reductions reports in a November 2015 document, The Human Cost of Weather Related Disasters 1995-2015. Scientists can't calculate how much of this was caused by global warming, but here's a good clue: the number of global disasters in the 10-year period to 2016 was twice the number in the preceding 10 years, and the storms were more destructive. With the continuing, and now accelerating rise in global temperatures, "we will witness a continued upward trend in weather related disasters in the decades ahead," the UN agency warns.

First of the major oil companies to announce that it was abandoning its quest for oil and gas off the northern Arctic coasts of Alaska and Canada was Royal Dutch Shell, in 2015, following the abandonment of its most costly hole drilled 70 miles off the northwest coast of Alaska, and expenditures of \$7 billion (U.S.) Shell surrendered all its Arctic exploration permits, including some two million acres in Lancaster near the eastern end of the NWP. The surrendered Lancaster permits are expected to be included in a 13 million-acre National Marine Protected Area, in which no oil exploration will be permitted.

"Oil in the Arctic awaits the advance of civilization upon

this, the last of our geographical frontiers,” Wallace Pratt wrote in 1994. If the world is fortunate, it will wait forever. If it were needed, the undiscovered petroleum of the Arctic would be worth trillions of dollars, at current market prices. If it would simply add to a surplus storehouse of oil and gas energy, it’s global value would be nil. If finding, producing and using that energy added to global emissions of global-warming greenhouse gasses, the cost would be measured in untold trillions of dollars.

Up to Canada to control the Northwest Passage

Still unresolved is whether the NWP is “Canadian internal waters” or an “international strait.” With the United States and the European Union opposed, only Russia and other Arctic nations have supported Canada’s claim, asserting the same claim of ownership off its northern Arctic coast.

Less than a year after the Manhattan’s first NWP transit, the Trudeau government enacted the 1970 Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act, asserting jurisdiction for environmental purposes on all ships within 100 nautical miles of Canada’s Arctic Coast. The United States opposed the legislation, but the Act was effectively confirmed by the United Nations in its 1982 Convention of the Law of the Sea.

A ruckus arose in 1985 when the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Polar Sea sailed through the Passage from Greenland to Alaska. The U.S. notified Canada in advance, and Canada provided observers aboard the Polar Sea, but Canada’s permission was not requested. The Polar Sea created a storm of controversy in Parliament and the news media. The incident was resolved by a Canada-U.S. Agreement on Arctic Cooperation, signed

January 11, 1988, in which the United States “pledges that all navigation by U.S. icebreakers within waters claimed by Canada will be undertaken with the consent of the Government of Canada.” The agreement conforms with the UN’s Law of the Sea, under which any research work in the NWP does require Canadian permission. When U.S. Coastguard vessels enter Canada’s section of the NWP, they are now essentially considered research vessels.

Whatever the legal status, the United States could benefit from Canadian control of the NWP for more than just environmental purposes. No other nation can both patrol the Canadian section of the NWP to guard against smuggling, illegal immigration, or the infiltration of terrorists and terrorist activities, and also establish needed deep sea ports and search and rescue facilities. The onus is on Canada to assert control of shipping through the Northwest Passage, with patrol vessels, world-class icebreakers, deep sea ports, and search-and-rescue facilities.

— Canada @ 150 —

First across the Northwest Passage



Library and Archives Canada, from the W.H. Coverdale collection.

Sledge party leaving *HMS Investigator* at Mercy Bay, from a series of eight sketches by Lieutenant (later Captain) Samuel G. Cresswell, an officer with McClure's Franklin expedition. Cresswell was among the party that trekked from Mercy Bay to Resolute on Cornwallis Island back to Mercy Bay, then once more on foot across the ice.

It is September 1969 and I am aboard the SS Manhattan as she sits trapped in polar ice while attempting to complete a crossing of the Northwest Passage through McClure Strait, around the northern coast of Banks Island. The Manhattan is stuck in the polar ice grip for 34 hours before she is released by the Canadian Coastguard icebreaker John A. Macdonald to complete her crossing of the Passage, by sailing south of Banks

Island. I re-read the journal of Captain Robert John Le Mesurier McClure. From the Manhattan I can look across the expanse of ice to the steep, hazy banks of Banks Island, near Mercy Bay where McClure and his 60-man crew of HMS Investigator were also trapped by ice, not for days but for 18 months.

McClure and his crew were the first to find this final opening through the Northwest Passage, and made the first known complete crossing of the Passage, during a period of more than four years in the 1850s. But their ship, the *Investigator*, did not make it all the way. McClure and his men were compelled to escape starvation by completing the journey on foot.

It was little wonder that the 400-ton, wooden-hulled sailing ship was unable to make it through McLure Strait. Aboard the *Manhattan*, we sailed within 28 miles of Mercy Bay, where McClure, his men and the *Investigator* had been stranded for so long. Unable to break-through the ice, the *Manhattan* and Macdonald retreated from McLure Strait, but retreat had been impossible for the *Investigator*.

The McClure expedition was one of 40, which, during a period of 10 years, sailed the Arctic in search of Franklin and his lost men and ships. The *Investigator* left Plymouth, England, in January, 1850, sailed around Cape Horn, up the Pacific coast of the Americas, through Bering Strait, past Point Barrow, and into the legendary Northwest Passage, the hoped-for sea route between Europe and the Orient.

The *Investigator* passed south of Banks Island that Fall and northward along the Prince of Wales Strait, then

snuggled in behind Princess Royal Island to winter in. Exploring the route ahead, which they planned to sail the following summer, McLure and a party of men set out from the ship with ice sleds, each man pulling 200 pounds of supplies. On October 26, McClure climbed to the top of a hill near the north end of Banks Island, and discovered the final segment of the Northwest Passage. In the distance to the northeast, McClure could see Melville Island, which had been reached 30 years before by Edward Parry, who sailed from the east and spent the winter of 1819-1820 at Winter Harbour. Coming from the west, McClure was within 100 miles of Melville Island, and could see the final opening of the route across the northern end of the continent.

The following summer, the *Investigator* sought to burst through the northern end of Prince of Wales Strait, across to Melville Island, then eastward through the Northwest Passage, and home triumphantly to England. But the ice pack blocked the passage out of Prince of Wales, and the *Investigator* was forced to turn around, again crossing the southern end of Banks Island, and this time up the western coast and around the northern end. In open water, the *Investigator* hoisted sails and flew with a bone in her teeth, until gripped in ice, when she at times drifted aimlessly for weeks. In narrow leads, the crew scrambled over the ice to pull the ship behind them. Along the northern coast of Banks Island, the *Investigator* drifted along in a lead, barely wider than the ship, pressed on one side between vertical cliffs that rose as high as 1,000 feet, and the polar ice pack on the other side. A crushing death appeared to be their inevitable fate as they drifted day after day

until finally, that fall they found the sanctuary of a harbour—their Bay of Mercy—and here they stayed for 18 months.

From Mercy Bay (as it is now known), McLure led a sled party 170 miles over the ice to Winter Harbour. From where the *Manhattan* and *Macdonald* were beset I could see most of the route they had taken, across snow-covered ice and row after row of pressure ridges with their jumbled pile of ice blocks. At Winter Harbour, McLure had hoped to find another of the ships searching for Franklin, or at least some cached provisions. He found nothing. On the sandstone rock where Parry had earlier recorded his arrival, McClure left a document, giving the position of the *Investigator* and its state, then returned to Mercy Bay.

At Mercy Bay, the men of the *Investigator* augmented their depleting provision with game they shot—musk ox, caribou, rabbits and a few birds. Eventually another Franklin relief expedition found the McClure message at Winter Harbour, and sent a rescue party over the ice to Mercy Bay. They found the *Investigator* and its crew in critical condition. Three had already died (three more were to die before the party reached England); the survivors were weak and ill from malnutrition, scurvy, frostbite, and several were suffering from temporary insanity.

Abandoning the *Investigator* at Mercy Bay, the men walked 200 miles across the ice to their rescue ships at Bridport, not far from Winter Harbour, and spent yet one more winter in the Arctic before reaching England late in 1854, almost five years after they had started out. In locating the final opening, McLure completed

the work of others who had sailed for centuries in search of the Northwest Passage, men such as Cabot, Frobisher, Davis, Parry, and Franklin.

If icebreaker tankers ever do sail through McLure Strait, will they doff their caps, dip their flag, or toot their horn in salute as they pass Mercy Bay?

Before he abandoned the *Investigator*, McClure had the ship's stores cached on shore—1,000 pounds of biscuits, plus salt pork, sugar, flour, tea, rifles, ammunition, extra clothing, 20 gallons of brandy and 28 gallons of rum. While some remnants of the expedition remained at Mercy Bay more than a century and half later, they did not include these stores. Even the copper nails of a small boat left on the shore had been removed. The salvagers did a good job.

When the ice at Mercy Bay briefly cleared on July 25, 2010, researchers from Parks Canada towed a sonar scanner behind an inflatable boat. They found the wreck of the Investigator sitting up in 11 metres of water, and in "very good condition." Sonar images showed one of the missing masts lying on the deck. Upright, the main mast would have stood above the surface, except, of course, for the ice.

— Canada @ 150 —

Free trade 1840-1989

Spies, smugglers, bribes forge Can-Am free trade

***Trade war background:
140 years Canada-U.S. history***



Illustrated London News, 19 May 1849. Library and Archives Canada C2726.

Burning the House of Assembly at Montreal, 25 April 1849. Britain's adoption of free trade caused economic collapse in Canada, rioting in Montreal, and demands for union with the United States.

Proposed U.S. withdrawal from the North American Free Trade Agreement and buy-American infrastructure spending “could hurt Canada’s sales to its most important export market and hit economic growth hard... If President Trump imposes tariffs on goods from China and Mexico,

this could turn into an all-out trade war, threatening regional and global economic stability in which Canada also has a strong stake.” Danielle Goldfarb, director of the Global Commerce Centre at the Conference Board of Canada, Maclean’s, December 1, 2016.

“We’re living in protectionist times, perhaps the most protectionist I’ve ever seen,” Chrystia Freeland, Canada minister of international trade,” Toronto Star, January 6, 2017.

Dark clouds rim the economic sky at the dawn of Canada’s 150th year of Confederation. Critics of nominal free trade and its twenty-first century globalization had been loud in their denunciation. But as free trade becomes threatened by the rise of nationalism’s trade protections, other alarm bells ring even louder.

Little wonder. The record of history is decisive—in Canada no less than elsewhere: trade between nations brings prosperity; “protective” restrictions bring hard times and suffering. For confirmation, we need look no further than three of the most dramatic examples.

The industrial revolution, born in eighteenth century Britain, brought a rise in global human material welfare unprecedented in more than a thousand years. Free trade brought its benefits to bloom and lifted Britain to global domination. Its advocates were passionate. “The cause of free trade is the cause of peace; peace at home and peace abroad; peace between class and class, and between nation and nation,” British journalist and Unitarian minister Philip Harwood declared in typically excessive 1834 exuberance.¹

The Great Depression of the 1930s, the deepest and longest economic crash in the history of the Western industrialized world, was marked by exceedingly high trade-restricting import duties, nowhere more so than in Canada-U.S. trade, the world's largest. And nowhere was the suffering greater than in Canada.

Germany lay in ruins after the Second World War. In 1947, its food production was half that of 1938; its industrial production was one-third; one-fifth of its housing was destroyed; much of the working-age population was dead. "Yet 20 years later, its economy was envied by most of the world," writes noted U.S. economist and historian David R. Henderson.² That was the widely-acclaimed "German Economic Miracle." A policy of free trade and vigorous free market drove the miracle.

Opposition to free trade and globalization (the whole world a single market) arises in the face of hundreds of such historical example, in great part because the rewards and costs are not seen as fairly shared. The proverbial richest one percent are said to capture all the increased wealth; economic disparity increases; prevailing levels of poverty and hardship may for some time endure, if not increase; social tensions arise. Hardest hit are often those who lose their jobs where particular industries or businesses lose their protection. Workers can be left to pay the price of globalization adjustment with inadequate assistance. The problem is not free trade, but how rewards and costs are shared. "No sane person is opposed to globalization... in a form that attends to the rights of people," argues U.S. social critic Noam Chomsky.³

Canada's experience mirrors the world. The first Canada-U.S. free trade agreement, in 1854, brought prosperity. When the U.S. abrogated it, threatened economic difficulty compelled Confederation. When John A. Macdonald introduced his high-tariff National Policy, the economic costs were so great that in 20 years, two million people left Canada for the United States. Hardest hit were prairie farmers who paid higher prices for almost everything they bought, and received less for the grain they sold—planting seeds of western alienation that festered for a hundred years. In the Great Depression, when hunger was particularly acute in Saskatchewan, 1934 import duties cost each of the wheat-province residents as much as a two-month supply of food. The back of the Great Depression was broke in 1935 when Canada and the United States slashed their high import duties. In two years, Canada-U.S. free trade increased more than 50 percent.

A history of Canadian-American trade relations from 1840 to the 1988 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement follows. It is my lead chapter in Free Trade: Free Canada (Canadian Speeches, Woodville, Ontario, 1988). Edited.

A secret agent armed with bags of money to bribe politicians and newspaper publishers, lavish entertainment, and gunboat diplomacy—including the seizure of 400 American fishing boats—were among the means used to secure the first Canadian-American trade agreement, in 1854.

But long before this, the stage was set by the liberal economists, social reformers, politicians, and

manufacturers who set out to strike from Britain the shackles of protection by the salvation of free trade and the promised grace of prosperity and peace.

Such free traders as Adam Smith were joined by the rapidly expanding British manufacturers who wanted to conquer the world, not with armies and navies but with steel, china, and textiles. The corn laws that imposed duties on imported grains, they argued, kept cheap bread from the working classes and benefited only the landed aristocracy. Low-cost production in English factories was the way to wealth and power, but the way was blocked by the high costs of tariff protection.

The corn laws comforted not only the British aristocracy; they were also a great boon to farmers, millers, merchants and shippers in the four provinces, or colonies, of pre-confederation British North America—Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The preferential tariffs, with low rates for the colonies and higher duties for everyone else, meant that any British demand for wheat and flour that could not be supplied by the farms of the British aristocracy, was supplied by the farmers and millers of Canada.

Even more important to the BNA provinces were Britain's preferential timber tariffs, established not to protect Britain's land owners (most of the British oaks had already been felled) but for national security. The Napoleonic wars convinced British leaders their nation would be vulnerable if it relied on timber from the Baltic countries to keep its vital navy afloat. The high tariffs on Baltic wood meant that timber not only for the British navy but also for general construction, came primarily

from the provinces of British North America. By the 1840s this important protection cost the British, according to one estimate, £900,000 a year—a terrible burden on Britain but an enormous subsidy for the lumber operations in the provinces.

The most ardent British free traders were no great fans of colonialism. They viewed the defence of far-flung colonies as a burden and waste; their existence a cause of wars, and a part of the vested interests in maintaining a high level of tariffs. “I wish the British government would give you Canada at once,” Lord Ashburton told

A future prime minister of Canada was among 325 business and political leaders who demanded economic and political union with the United States in 1849.

the American Ambassador John Quincy Adams in 1827. “It is fit for nothing but to breed quarrels.”

It was not a liberal economist who ultimately demolished the tariffs and brought free trade to Britain, but a Tory prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, much to the bitter chagrin of his fellow land owners. At the beginning of 1846, Peel announced that the timber tariffs would be slashed, while the corn laws were to be repealed over a period of three years. But because of the great Irish potato famine that killed more than one million people,

the import duties on grains and flour were completely removed within 12 months.

In the provinces of pre-confederation Canada, the results were seen as the cause of unmitigated disaster.

Nowhere in the provinces did the slash in timber and wheat sales to Britain hit harder than in the business community of Montreal, where for nearly two years bankruptcy was just about the most active business. English-speaking people in French Montreal burned with other frustrations. They were burdened with the problems of looking after more than 100,000 refugees who arrived in 1847 from the Irish famine; destitute, disease ridden, and starving. They blamed England for oppressing these people, then dumping their problem on Canada. They resented legislation to pay compensation for damages suffered during the failed rebellion in 1837. And they were deeply concerned that the coming of responsible government would mean the loss of political control to the French-speaking majority of the province.

Their frustrations boiled over in a riot in April, 1849, in which Governor General James Bruce, Lord Elgin, was attacked on the steps of the legislature; the legislature was burned and ransacked, and an angry mob roamed the streets all night, looting and rioting. In October, the Annexation Manifesto was issued in Montreal, demanding both economic and political union with the United States. The petitioners claimed that joining the United States would increase farm prices, lower the cost of imports, achieve greater exports, provide them with a greater voice in the government at Washington than they had in the government at London, and perhaps most

importantly would swamp the French in a vast Anglo-Saxon nation.

Among the 325 people who signed the Manifesto were John Redpath, the sugar tycoon; the head of Canada's most powerful family, the Molsons; John Rose, later a cabinet minister and head of the Grand Trunk Railway; Alexander Tilloch Galt, who 18 years later would become one of the fathers of Confederation; and John Abbott, a future prime minister. It was no mere mob of radicals that saw Canada's best hope in joining the United States.

In Canada West, William Hamilton Merritt, a miller from St. Catherines and the man who had spearheaded construction of the Welland Canal to link Lakes Erie and Ontario for navigation, had a different vision. In pamphlets and on the platform, in pages of the St. Catherines *Standard*, and in the legislature where he sat as a Reformer (the predecessor of the Liberal Party), Merritt in 1846 became the leading advocate of free trade with the United States as the only possible alternative to annexation.

In 1846, Merritt persuaded the legislature to petition Britain, asking the English to negotiate a free trade treaty with the United States on Canada's behalf. The next year when the provinces of Canada assumed the responsibility of setting its own tariffs, Merritt persuaded the legislature to lower the duty on imports of American manufactured goods from 12 percent to 7.5 percent, while increasing the duty on British imports from five to seven percent. The legislature adopted an Act offering free trade—or reciprocity—in a list of natural products whenever the Americans were prepared to take similar action. Lobbying in Washington, he succeeded in having

a similar bill introduced in the U.S. Congress, but it was defeated in the Senate. Throughout all this, Merritt was in constant communication with the Governor General, Lord Elgin, who wrote to the Colonial office in London that “unless reciprocity with the United States be established, these colonies must be lost to England.”

The talks dragged on for eight years, and before they were concluded another factor had entered the equation: a dispute over fishing rights off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Nova Scotia claimed that its three-mile territorial limit of exclusive fishing rights extended across all bays, from headland to headland. The Americans claimed that the three-mile limit hugged the shoreline, enabling them to fish inside the wider bays. Partly to force the Americans to come to terms with the demands for a reciprocity treaty, Britain announced that it would send a naval force to protect the fisheries. The United States replied by sending a warship to protect its fishermen. Confrontation on the high seas was avoided—at least for a time—when Britain and the United States agreed to negotiate a treaty to settle both the fisheries dispute and trade with the BNA provinces. The elegant Elgin was sent to Washington as a special envoy to negotiate the treaty.

A pathway through the political undergrowth had already been hacked away by special agent Israel de Wolfe Andrew. A native of Eastport, Maine, Andrews had started his working career facilitating North American trade by engaging in the popular business of smuggling. Some historians would have us believe that by working throughout the night at this covert business, Andrews became a lifelong advocate of free trade. He certainly

became a fast talker. In 1849 he persuaded the American Secretary of State to assign him on a secret mission to gather statistical information and other data concerning the trade of the four BNA provinces. Then he persuaded the British Ambassador in Washington to give him a similar assignment concerning the U.S. economy, while still secretly working for the Americans.

In early 1853, after conferring with President Pierce and Secretary of State Marcy, Andrews was appointed “special agent” of the United States Government to cultivate support in both the United States and the provinces for approval of a reciprocity agreement. Next he persuaded the City of Boston and the government of Canada to provide further funds for the same cause. With offices in the Astor House in New York and the National Hotel in Washington, Andrews spent more than a year as an early-day lobbyist and public relations hit man, entertaining politicians and newspapermen on both sides of the border, writing pamphlets, arranging supportive editorials, and placing funds with influential people. He collected \$110,000 (millions in 2017 money) from his sponsors for this work, but claimed to have spent more than \$200,000. He spent the rest of his life seeking to collect the extra \$90,000, but had difficulty substantiating his claims because of the secret nature of his work and the supposed embarrassment that would result by revealing with whom the money had been placed. Unable to pay his debts, Andrews spent several short periods in jail, and died a destitute alcoholic.

With the early advocacy by Merritt, with gunboat diplomacy, with the lobbying of Andres, with Lord Elgin’s charm, wit and gracious entertaining, the Reciprocity

Act of 1854 was, as Elgin's secretary noted, "floated through on champagne." The agreement provided for free trade in such natural products as farm produce, fish, timber, coal, and other minerals. Americans were allowed to fish in the disputed waters off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, to use the Canadian shores to dry their fish, and Canadian ports for provisioning. The Maritimers, in turn, could fish off the American coast as far south as North Carolina, but more importantly they had free access to the big American market. It was not, however, the last time that the fisheries became embroiled in dispute, or used as bait in trade talks.

Abrogation, Confederation, and the National Policy (1854-1891)

During the 12 years that it remained in effect, until March 1866, the reciprocity treaty brought good times to the four BNA provinces, as the value of trade with the United States tripled. How much of the prosperity was due to the free trade and how much was due to other factors is still a subject of debate by economic historians, but for Canadians of that era there was no doubt that free trade with the Americans was a very good thing.

With the end of the American civil war, however, the end of the treaty was also in sight. The Americans, as required under the terms of the treaty, gave a little more than one year's notice before the treaty was terminated. There were a number of causes: growing protectionism sentiment in the northern United States; American resentment of some small-scale raids against the United States that had been launched by confederate forces from Canada; a hope by some that abrogating the treaty might lead to the annexation of Canada in the American

drive for manifest destiny. It did not help that the anti-Americanism that has grown like a cancer into the bones of so much of Canada's nationalism, had already begun to germinate. Sniffed Lord Minto, a later Governor General: "There is a general dislike of the Yankees here and I do not wonder at it... What the Canadian sees and hears is constant Yankee bluff and swagger and that eventually he means to possess Canada for himself."

The provinces hoped that the treaty would be extended, but they prepared for its end, planning to create their own free market among themselves, and then hopefully some day extend and expand it westward. Canada was planned as the response to the end of free trade with the Americans. A delegation from the provinces to a colonial conference in London reported that they had "explained the immediate injury that would result to Canadian interests from the new abrogation of the Treaty; but we pointed out at the same time the new and ultimately more profitable channels into which our foreign trade must, in the event, be turned, and the necessity of preparing for change, if indeed it was to come." Nine months after the Americans had given their notice, the provinces formed a Confederate Council of Trade, with two objectives: to form an economic union among themselves, and to re-establish trade reciprocity with the United States.

Confederation did not bring the quest for a free trade agreement with the United States, or reciprocity, to an end. The first tariff established by Canada the year after Confederation offered to eliminate import duties on specified imports from the United States whenever Americans were prepared to reciprocate.

The long procession of formal and informal missions to Washington to seek a renewed reciprocity agreement, started almost immediately. John Rose, the first Conservative minister of finance, led the parade in 1869, followed two years later by John A. Macdonald himself. The Liberal administration of Alexander Mackenzie in 1874 sent George Brown, who actually obtained the support of President Grant for a draft agreement providing for free trade in 60 specified natural products, agricultural implements, and 37 other categories of manufactured goods. But the American Congress refused to even consider it. The Conservatives sent yet another emissary, Charles Tupper, in 1887; Macdonald made his last pitch to the Americans in 1892, and Wilfrid Laurier made the final pilgrimage in 1896.

Not even the fisheries bait and gunboat diplomacy could budge the Americans into another reciprocity agreement. When the first treaty was abrogated in 1866, Americans lost the right to fish in disputed Canadian waters, and Britain and Canada seized 400 American fishing boats, much to the wrath of the Americans. It was to settle both this and secure a trade treaty that Macdonald accompanied British officials to Washington the following year. He returned without the trade treaty, and with the fisheries dispute only temporarily resolved.

Between all these negotiations, Macdonald established the National Policy, which was claimed to have a double purpose. On the one hand, it set high tariffs to encourage the establishment of factories and manufacturing in Canada. On the other hand, the high tariffs were said to be a tool, which would pry a reciprocity agreement from the Americans. "Why should

they give us reciprocity when they have our markets open to them now?” was Macdonald’s rhetorical question in Parliamentary debate. “It is only by closing our doors and cutting them out of our markets that they will open theirs to us.” The National Policy was supposed to establish both free trade and protection.

Some said the reason the Conservatives had adopted a protective tariff policy was because the Liberals had not. It was 1876. The Liberal administration of Alexander Mackenzie had been in power nearly four years, and

***John A. Macdonald may have
died a British subject, but he was
buried in an American casket.***

would soon have to face the voters. It was Mackenzie’s luck to win office just at the start of the first Great Depression, a quarter of a century of gloom interrupted by only a few brief periods of economic sunshine. Tough times sharpened the trade debate. Manufacturers clamoured for protection. The staples producers—farmers, fishermen, lumbermen, miners—demanded commercial union with the United States. The country’s population was shrinking as Canadians, especially from Quebec, flocked to the United States.

In the Liberal camp, the free trade champion was Richard Cartwright, best remembered, said one historian, for his “improbable whiskers and uniquely passionate hatred for John A. Macdonald.” The scion of a wealthy loyalist family, Cartwright had substantial business

interests in transportation, mining, real estate, manufacturing, and had started political life as a Conservative, until he quarrelled with Macdonald. Minister of finance in Mackenzie's administration, Cartwright had hectored so vociferously for free trade that the Conservatives called him the Blue Ruin Knight. The advantages of free trade with the United States were so great, Cartwright declared "that scarcely any sacrifice is too great to secure them." It was not free trade but the lack of free trade that threatened to drive Canada into the arms of the United States, according to Cartwright. As for any loyalty or obligation owed to Britain, Cartwright argued that because of how the British had botched negotiations with the Americans, all that was owed was Christian forgiveness.

The hard times also hit government revenues, which, before income tax was invented, depended primarily on import duties. The Liberal budget in 1873 was expected to bring a much higher tariff. Conservative finance critic Charles Tupper had reportedly prepared his speech for the House, attacking the anticipated high tariffs. When they failed to appear, Tupper asked that the House rise early, and later that evening delivered his speech, attacking the Liberals for failing to provide protection. The story was later elaborated by one of the leaders in the Conservative caucus, Dalton McCarthy:

No doubt in the world the Conservative party were put out of power [in 1873] and by going in for the National Policy and taking the wind out of Mr. Mackenzie's sails [sic], we got [back] into power. We became identified with the protective policy, and if Mr. [William Lyon] Mackenzie [King] had

adopted a protective policy, we would have been free traders. I am willing to make this confession, that if Mr. Mackenzie had been a protectionist there would have been nothing left but for us but to be free traders. But Mr. Mackenzie was either too honest or too earnest in his opinions to bend to the wave of public opinion and the result was that he was swept out of power and had only a corporal's guard to support him when the House met.

Beyond doubt the Conservatives were swept back into power on the National Policy platform when the election came in 1878, but there's little conclusive evidence that it attained its stated objectives. The National Policy established an average import duty of 28 percent: 25 percent on agricultural implements, 30 percent on railway equipment, 25 percent on woollen clothing; 30 percent plus half a cent a pound on refined sugar. But it did nothing to slow the exodus of Canadians leaving to live in the United States. The year after the policy was established, the number of Canadians emigrating to the United States increased 300 percent, while the following year it increased a further 25 percent. In the two decades after the policy was established, some 1.5 million people emigrated to Canada—and two million left.

Organized labour was just starting to emerge in Canada, and the attitude of the labour leaders was reflected in the *Labour Advocate*, the journal of the Toronto Trades and Labour Council. Building Canada as a separate nation, said the *Advocate*, was “the greatest and most stupendous blunder,” for which “the CPR was built, the protective tariff created, the northwest land monopolies

endorsed, and the people's money squandered on immigration.”

The free trade debate dominated the next election, too, in 1891. Wilfrid Laurier had now assumed the leadership of the Liberals, and for their campaign platform they had adopted a policy of “unrestricted reciprocity”—complete free trade with the United States in both natural products and manufactured goods. Macdonald sought to steal the Liberal platform by arguing that the

Two million people left Canada to make their homes in the United States in the first 20 years of trade protection under John A. Macdonald's National Policy.

Conservatives could use high tariffs to compel the Americans to agree to reciprocity, and that the Americans had, in fact, already suggested such an arrangement. But when American Secretary of State John Blaine wrote that “There are no negotiations whatever on foot for a reciprocity treaty with Canada, and you may be assured that no such scheme for reciprocity with the Dominion confined to natural products will be entertained by this government,” Macdonald quickly shifted ground. He now attacked reciprocity as a scheme designed to break up the British Empire.

“A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die,” Macdonald declared. “With my utmost effort, with my latest breath, I will oppose the ‘veiled treason’ which attempts by sordid means and mercenary proffers to lure our people from their allegiance.” The Tories rolled out their banner—“the old flag, the old man, and the old party”—and won the election. Three months later, Macdonald was dead.

Macdonald may have died a British subject, but he was buried in a casket made in West Meriden, Connecticut, described as “an exact facsimile of that of the late President Garfield.” It was symbolic of the National Policy, which ultimately could not overcome the pull of geography, economics, and common sense.

Wilfrid Laurier led his party to victory in 1896, and the Liberals were soon accused of preaching free trade in opposition and practicing protection in power. Goldwyn Smith, the intellectual gad-fly who preached not just economic union but political union with the United States, has described how the Liberals supposedly sold out to the manufacturers at meetings held in the “Red Parlour” of the Queen’s Hotel in Toronto: “... on the neck of the Canadians... now rides an association of protected manufacturers making the community and all the great interests of the country tributary to their aims. Before a general election, the Prime Minister calls these men together in the parlour of a Toronto hotel, receives their contributions to his election fund, and pledges the commercial policy of the country.”

A harsh judgment. But in fact, given the political need to reconcile conflicting demands, Laurier probably went as far as he could to liberalize the tariff—even if that

was not a great distance. He renewed the quest for a reciprocal treaty with the United States, and when he was rebuffed declared, "There will be no more pilgrimages to Washington. We are turning our hopes to the old motherland." In its first two years, the Laurier administration eliminated the tariff on imported binder twine, reduced it on agricultural implements and refined sugar, arranged a preferential tariff that reduced the cost of British imports, and subsequently made other adjustments.

The 16 years of the Laurier administration brought unprecedented expansion and prosperity. The depression that had hung so long over North America and Europe had at last lifted. Seventy million acres of farm land were settled in the west. People poured in to fill up this empty country: 784,000 from the United States; 961,000 from Britain; 594,000 from other parts of Europe. Laurier seemed right when he said the twentieth century belonged to Canada.

How the Laurier era was ended by the great reciprocity election of 1911 has been told too often to bear a repeating in detail. Perhaps more than ever before the country was pulled into conflicting demands of protection and free trade. On a tour of the West in 1910, Laurier was met at massive meetings by tens of thousands of farmers who were angry at being squeezed by high, tariff-supported prices for everything they bought and low-prices for everything they sold, pushed down by world markets and the cost of railway transportation. "In 1896 you promised to skin the Tory bear of protection," a farmer in Saskatoon bellowed. "Have you done it? If so, I would like to ask what you've

done with the hide?" But in Vancouver, Laurier met a delegation of lumber interests who demanded protection. And W.H. Rowley, president of the Canadian Manufacturers Association, told the association's 1910 meeting:

In season and out of season, in favour and out of favour, liked or disliked, I have always believed in protection, have always advocated it, and always will continue to do so. I have no politics other than protection, and I hope none of you have, if you have them, I think you should sink them for the good of the Association, for protection is the only politics the Association should recognize.

In Washington, President Taft saw some potential political advantage in reciprocity, which could lower food costs for consumers and newsprint costs for newspaper publishers. Through the editor of the Toronto *Globe*, Taft made it known he would like to talk trade, and in a series of meetings finance minister W.S. Fielding and the Americans hammered out the terms of an agreement. When Fielding outlined those terms in the House on January 26, the Tories were stunned by the range of products that would gain duty-free entry into the huge U.S. market. The Liberals, reported the Montreal *Herald*, "cheered and cheered again." Even some Conservative members from the West could not resist cheering. During the next couple of days, Conservative newspapers were among those that approved the agreement.

But the railways and manufacturers quickly rallied the opposition. "Bust the damn thing," CPR president William Van Horn ordered. The opposition was

strengthened by 18 prominent Liberal businessmen—led by Laurier’s former cabinet strongman, Clifford Sifton—who came out strongly against reciprocity.

Conservative leader Robert Borden forged two alliances to fight the election. In Quebec, he joined forces with Henri Bourassa, leader of the Nationalists, in an appeal to anti-British sentiment. In Ontario he was joined by the railways and manufacturers in an emotional appeal to pro-British and anti-American sentiment. Borden met in Toronto with four of the leading Liberal defectors—Sifton; Z.A. Lash, from Canadian Northern Railways; Lloyd Harris, who represented the Massey-Harris interests; J.S. Willison, editor of the *Toronto News*. Defecting Liberals outlined the terms for their support. Quebec and Roman Catholics were not to have an undue influence in any future Conservative government; Borden would bring men from outside Parliament into his cabinet; in forming a cabinet, Borden would consult with Lash, Willison, and Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Bank of Commerce. Borden agreed. By mid-August, some 9.5 million pieces of anti-reciprocity literature had been published by the Canadian National League, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, and the Canadian Home Market Association. The tone is indicated by the title of one tract, “An Appeal to the British-born.” On election day it was Conservatives 134 sets, Liberals 87.

Historian Edgar McInnis has summed up the election this way:

After long years of alternate bullying at the hands of their stronger neighbours, Canadians seized on an opportunity to assert their independence

of spirit, and, under an emotional upsurge that had nothing to do with logic, they rebuffed the United States by rejecting an agreement that Canada had been seeking for the past 70 years.

The vote, however, was much closer than the standings: 666,074 for the Conservatives, 623,554 for the Liberals. Farmers had voted for reciprocity, and in Alberta and Saskatchewan the Liberals had won 15 of 17 seats. From

In Saskatchewan, import duties cost \$28.16 per person in 1934. In the 1930s, you could eat for two months for less than \$30—and many people were hungry.

the bitter disappointment of the farmers emerged the Progressive Party, which campaigned in 1921 under the free trade banner to eclipse the Tories for second position in the House, with 65 seats to 50.

King, Bennett, depression, war, and a secret agreement

Mackenzie King returned the Liberals to power in 1921 with a Parliamentary majority of one. As he clasped the fragile key to office, the free trade flame may well have continued to flicker in King's ear, but he would never forget that it was this cause that 10 years earlier had cost him his Parliamentary seat as the boyish face on Laurier's team. Doing anything about his preference for

a lower tariff was not made any easier by U.S. action the same year. The Americans raised their tariff wall a little higher with the 1921 Emergency Tariff Act, imposed on agricultural imports, and Canadian sales to the United States that year fell by more than 40 percent.

In early 1930, at the outset of the Great Depression, U.S. duties jumped 50 percent with the Smoot-Hawley Act. King retaliated by increasing Canadian duties on American imports, and lowering them on British imports. American tariffs now averaged an astounding 37 percent; Canada's tariffs, 26 percent. In October, Richard Bedford Bennett rode in from Calgary to take over as prime minister, promising to use his tariff guns to "blast the way to world markets."

The tariff got higher—reaching 30 percent in 1933—and the depression got worse. Nowhere was it as bad as on the prairies. From 1928 to 1933, per capita income across Canada fell by an average of nearly 50 percent; in Alberta, by 60 percent; in Saskatchewan by 72 percent, according to one estimate. The tariff was blamed for skewering Atlantic and Western Canada. In 1934, the Government of Nova Scotia estimated that the tariff amounted to an annual subsidy of \$15.15 for everyone in Ontario and \$11.03 for everyone in Quebec, subsidies paid for by other Canadians at rates varying from \$11.67 per person in Nova Scotia to \$28.16 in Saskatchewan. In the 1930s, you could eat for two months for less than \$30—and many were hungry. More than a quarter of a million people left the prairies, and abandoned farms dotted the skyline.

Bennett and President Roosevelt met in 1933 and at

last agreed “to begin a search for means to increase the exchange of commodities between our two countries.” But progress was very slow, until King was again returned to power in 1935, and set his trade officials to work at a “terrific pace” to work out a trade treaty with the Americans. By November, agreement had been reached on the first Canadian-American trade treaty in nearly a century. It was not free trade, but it did slash the tariffs, and it accomplished what it was supposed to. In the next two years, Canadian-American trade increased by more than 50 percent.

Negotiations began on even further cuts, but this time they also involved reducing the tariff preference on British imports, thus requiring complex three-way negotiations. “Our discussions with the U.S. are the least of our worries right now,” wrote Norman Robertson, a senior official in the Department of External Affairs. “We can cope with them but not with God’s Englishmen and the inescapable moral ascendancy over us lesser breeds.” But agreement was reached with God’s Englishmen, as well as with the Americans, and tariffs were reduced still more. By the time the Second World War arrived in 1939, the back of the depression has been broken—if not by free trade, at least by freer trade.

Canadian-American trade did not become a big issue again until 1947, when a free trade agreement was secretly pursued as the solution to a severe dollar crisis. The world by then had resolved that never again would protectionism lead to such massive misery and destruction, and Canada was one of the nations leading the way to peace and prosperity through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [predecessor of the World

Trade Organization]. But now Canada faced a crisis that could cause it to restrict imports, at least temporarily. After the war, Canada loaned Britain and other European nations some \$2 billion—15 percent of Canada’s gross national product—to help European recovery, in return counting on these nations to buy Canadian goods and help create Canadian jobs. But the devastated European nations could not pay cash for Canadian food and supplies. Meanwhile, Canadians were spending \$2 for American goods and services for every \$1 sold to the Americans.

Something would have to be done. Like a debtor that can’t pay its bills on time, Canada approached its creditor, the Americans, to see if something could be worked out. Among the parade of officials who left Ottawa to talk things over with the Americans in Washington were Hector McKinnon and John Deutsch, who had just recently negotiated Canada’s participation in GATT. An American memorandum on the first informal meeting held in Washington by McKinnon and Deutsch said the two Canadians felt that “Canada must either integrate her economy more closely with that of the United States, or be forced into discriminatory restrictive policies” with a “danger of friction with the United States, if not economic war.”

Deutsch, the son of a Saskatchewan farmer, was a born-in-the-bones free trader. In a confidential letter to a newspaper friend, Deutsch wrote: “We have the choice between two kinds of worlds—a relatively free enterprise world with the highest existing standard of living, and a government-controlled world with a lower standard of living.” If the answer seemed obvious, Deutsch also

warned that the first choice “means meshing our economy as much as possible with that of the United States.”

After several weeks of informal talks, the Americans approached Deutsch “on a strictly confidential and private basis” at a New Year’s Eve dinner party in Washington. A conventional customs union was politically out of the question, since that would, in effect, allow the Americans to dictate Canada’s tariff with the rest of the world. The Americans suggested a modified customs union in which there would be substantially free trade between the two countries, but each would set its own tariffs on trade with other nations.

In Ottawa, there was strong support for the idea by Trade Minister C. D. Howe, Finance Minister Douglas Abbott, and even Mackenzie King. McKinnon and Deutsch were authorized to work out the details of an agreement with the Americans, which they did.

On April 1, 1948 Deutsch met with Abbott, Howe, Louis St. Laurent (who became prime minister months later when King retired), and Lester Pearson (then under secretary of state for external affairs). Howe, Pearson, and King were all in favour. Howe thought it would make a magnificent issue for the Liberals in the next election. Abbott and St. Laurent expressed concern about the short length of time to secure Congressional approval for a treaty before the U.S. presidential election in November.

The decision turned on King, but his initial ardour had already cooled. An editorial in *Life* magazine two weeks before this meeting, calling for a conventional type of customs union between Canada and the United States,

did not help. It sounded a bit too much like the Americans whose unthinking out loud had helped lead to the still-remembered reciprocity defeat in 1911, like Congressman Champ Clark who had said, "I am for it because I hope to see the day when the American flag will float over every square foot of British North American possessions, clear to the North Pole."

Later in a letter to Norman Robertson, then High Commissioner in London, Pearson described how the decision had been taken at the April fool's day meeting. King, wrote Pearson, had agreed that "from the economic point of view, there was everything to be said for the proposal and little against it." But on political grounds, King felt that "the Conservatives would seize on this issue... in order to force an early election. They would distort and misrepresent the proposal as an effort on the part of the Liberals to sell Canada to the United States for a mess of pottage. All the old British flag-waving would be resurrected by the Conservatives." The others apparently did not share this concern, but they acquiesced to King's decision, although they "felt particular regret at the necessity of coming to this conclusion."

Ottawa was forced to impose temporary restrictions on how much Canadians could spend on American goods and travel (no more than \$150 a year for pleasure travel in the U.S.), but the dollar crisis passed, helped by large American investments, by the 1947 discovery of oil in Alberta, and other economic developments. John Deutsch was reportedly bitter about the loss of this opportunity, but in the end he was right. The tariff continued to shrink, the Canadian economy became

more closely integrated with that of the United States, and by comparison with virtually any other era or area, prosperity was unprecedented.

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Winnipeg tough times blamed on National Policy



Glenbow Archives NA-118-24.

Winnipeg's main street in 1894. Tough times were blamed on the high costs of John A. Macdonald's National Policy, but with a plethora of bachelors, men were said to be excited about the prospect of boatloads of buxom young English women.

A correspondent for the *Regina Standard*, December 7, 1893, interviews Winnipeggers to report on conditions and life in that city. He finds business depressed; almost unanimous opposition to high import duties imposed by John A. Macdonald's National Policy; a plethora of bachelors, said to be a cause of the country's ills; and the promise of a dawning millennium with plans to bring in boatloads of buxom young English women.

Low prices for wheat, high prices caused by the Nation-

al Policy for everything farmers must buy, and heavy debts owed to mortgage holders and farm implement dealers were blamed for the bad times. Worst of these was the National Policy, “the great, infernal, monstrous wolf that has constantly stood at the farmer’s door demanding his percent in tones that were sure to be heard.”

One member of the Winnipeg wheat exchange predicted wheat prices would soon start to rise because speculators were counting on continued low prices. “It may not be a rule advisable to follow always,” said the wheat buyer, “but when you find speculators all talking one way, the other way is generally a pretty safe way.” Meanwhile, “In many of the farming communities the farmer’s wheat is sold to settle mortgage claims and the money largely goes out of the country;” more is paid to settle the claims of farm implement dealers; and country merchants who have been generous in extending credit to farmers who are in difficulty.

A young farm hand claimed that real cause of the trouble was too many despondent bachelor farmers who “were not farming in a way profitable to themselves or the country.” He claimed “That there are not girls enough in any community to get up a dance and that the bachelors always send and get a gallon of whisky when they want a good time;” they “don’t keep their shacks tidy;” and the country is so full of bachelors “that it is almost impossible for a farm hand to get a job unless he can cook and wash dishes.” But help is in sight. The *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 1, reported plans to bring in “large numbers of buxom young women” from England. “Is the millennium about to dawn?”

— Canada @ 150 —

Free trade kills marriages

In the endless free trade debate, Toronto's *Mail and Empire*, favoured protection, as in this satire October 2, 1895.

No nation embraced free trade more wholeheartedly than Britain. And that "ruthless and ungallant policy," says the *Mail and Empire*, has left the island's "young, beautiful, accomplished, well-born ambitious women in a "forlorn position on the matrimony market," while dashing prospects of bachelors restoring lost fortunes.

Free trade, it claims, had impoverished Britain—or at least the landed aristocracy who relied on high tariffs on imported grains and other food to reap profits from their lands and tenants. "From rent rolls that used to pile up fortunes it is now hard to make both ends meet." No mention is made of free trade benefits for Britain's manufacturers, merchants, and consumers.

The upshot is that ruined landed families could no longer endow their daughters with dowries, thus killing their marriage hopes. As for the bachelors, "To many of them, an advantageous marriage is their only escape from ruin. But where are they to look for rich wives?"

"In the United States, he finds what he wants," wealthy young maids, says the paper. "He has a title, pedigree, and ancestral home to offer, while on her part, the bride has millions, to make life in such an altitude of society as magnificent as it ought to be."

But "English women and their mammas" will hardly be delighted to see eligible young bachelors flocking to another country for their brides. "What they should do is form a Protection League. They should advocate, and advocate strongly, the protection of the home market."

How Canada created the oil industry

In 1854, Nova Scotian Abraham Gesner designed and built the first of some 70 U.S. plants that used coal and bitumen to refine a lump fuel he invented, and which he called kerosene, also known as coal oil. In Britain, James Young had earlier started distilling a lubricating and solvent from coal. In 1856, two years after Gesner's refinery started up, Young learned about Gesner's lamp fuel, and added kerosene to his lubricating and solvent products. Young beat Gesner and his backers in obtaining a U.S. patent for kerosene. Young died wealthy; Gesner died impoverished.



Library and Archives Canada, Canada Post Corporation.

Abraham Gesner, “Father of the modern petroleum industry”

Kerosene—the world's leading lamp fuel for half a century—could be refined from crude oil at much less cost than from coal or bitumen. The birth of the oil industry awaited only the discovery of an adequate supply of crude oil. At site later known as Oil Springs in the southwest cor-

ner of Ontario (then Canada West), carriage maker James Miller Williams set out to refine kerosene from a deposit of bitumen. When his workers dug for water, they struck oil, North America's first significant oilfield. By September 1858, Williams' was advertising his kerosene lamp fuel, refined from crude oil, at \$1 to \$1.25 per gallon in nearby London and Sarnia. He established the first successful oil company, with crude oil production, refining, and marketing. For 20 years, his company sold its Victoria Oil- kerosene in Canada, Europe, South America, and Asia.

In August 1859, across the other side of Lake Ontario at Titusville, Pennsylvania, Edwin Drake brought in the first commercial U.S. oil well (other than for patent medicine). That followed the discovery of the Oil Springs field in Ontario by more than a year, and Williams' kerosene refining and marketing by at least 11 months. Yet U.S. histories have acclaimed the Drake well as marking "the birth of an industry."¹

That's the story in a nutshell. The details are spelled out in a paper I delivered in 1958 to a symposium of U.S. and Canadian petroleum historians and published in a U.S. peer-reviewed journal.² Following is the paper, slightly edited for length.

The story starts at Chipman Corner near the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia in 1816, *The Year Without Summer*. Ash from a gigantic eruption of Indonesia's Mount Tambora volcano had clouded much of the world, causing crop failures that resulted in some 200,000 deaths in Europe. Snow and ice lingered into summer causing more crop failures and hunger in northeastern North America.

At Chipman Corner, more than just the farmers were hungry; so were their horses. To save some horses from slaughter and hopefully earn some money, 19-year-old Abraham Gesner collected a small herd of old nags and, working as a deckhand, shipped them for sale in the West Indies. The voyage took Gesner as far as South America. Barely covering expenses, Gesner returned home with no money but a boat load of rocks, minerals, shells, curios, and a pile of bitumen from the pitch lake in Trinidad that had caulked the ships of Walter Raleigh and others. Two succeeding horse-trading voyages were greater disasters—both ended in shipwrecks. Gesner soon began experimenting with the Trinidad pitch, or bitumen, finding that it would burn with a steady flame that left little ash. It was, by his reckoning, the first of some 2,000 experiments over the next couple of decades aimed at converting bituminous substances into a fuel for light.

Bituminous experiments were only one of a staggering array of endeavours for a largely self-educated man, surely one of the last Renaissance men: farmer, physician, geologist, chemist, inventor, author of some 20 books and reports, the most popular lecturer in the Maritimes, an advocate for the rights and welfare of the Mic Mac Indians who were his guides on field trips, and a proponent of scientific farming practices.

Gesner spent three years studying medicine in London but seemed more fascinated by lectures in geology and chemistry. As the first geologist appointed by a British colony, he made the first geological surveys of both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. His inventions included one of the first electric motors driven

by a voltaic battery, briquettes made from compressed coal dust, a machine for insulating electric wires, a wood preservative, and a process for using asphalt to pave highways. He built the first science museum in Canada, a collection of some 2,000 stuffed animals and other artifacts that became a cornerstone of the New Brunswick provincial museum.

None of his achievements made him wealthy, and not all of his endeavours were successful: horse trading was just the first of his financial failures. His unbounded enthusiasm could lead to exaggerated claims, such as enticing prospects for an envisioned New Brunswick iron ore industry, that resulted in failure and resentful investors.

He found a source of better bitumen than the Trinidad pitch, a deposit in New Brunswick's Albert County, that became known as *albertite* and erroneously classed as coal. He attempted to lease and mine albertite, but in a dispute that involved a suspicion of skullduggery by a rival, an armed standoff at the prospective mine site, and a celebrated legal case, he lost the right to mine the bitumen.³ He sought a franchise to provide Halifax with manufactured gas from bitumen, rather than coal, only to again lose out to his rivals.

About 1843, Gesner returned his attention to the bitumen he had brought from Trinidad a quarter of a century earlier, and which, as already noted, melted when hot and burned with a steady flame. Now, at temperatures below 800 Fahrenheit, he distilled from the bitumen an oil that he called *kerosene oil*; and at higher temperatures, into a gas fuel, which he called *kerosene gas*.

Gesner first publicly demonstrated his kerosene in a lecture at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, on June 19, 1846, an event about which too little is known. Writing about this, 15 years later, Gesner claimed that:

“The first successful attempt to manufacture oils from coals in America was made by the author of this work. Oil from coal was made and consumed in lamps by him in his public lectures at Prince Edward’s Island, in August, 1846, and subsequently at Halifax, Nova Scotia.”⁴

In August, however, Gesner was out in the field on a geological survey of Prince Edward Island, and a brief note in Charlottetown’s weekly newspaper, *The Islander*, makes it clear that the lecture was, in fact, on June 19.⁵ The newspaper devoted only five lines to the lecture. All it said was that “The subject chosen was ‘Caloric,’” i.e., heat; that the lecture was held not as customary in the hall of the Mechanics’ Institute but in the court house, in order to provide more room for “the experiments,” and that it had been attended by “a numerous and delighted audience.” That this was an historic marker, however, is highlighted by one of Gesner’s biographers:

“This must have been the occasion of his demonstration of the new hydrocarbon lamp fuel. His audience was enthusiastic, but little knew they were witnessing the birth of the petroleum refining industry.”⁶

But was coal the source of the fuel, or was it bitumen? And was the distilled fuel kerosene oil or kerosene gas? The answers were not reported.

If not in 1846, then before 1850 when he arrived in New

York with a big, promotional splash, Gesner's focus was fixed on his kerosene gas, which he claimed "affords the cheapest, safest, and most agreeable light ever used."⁷ Gesner demonstrated his kerosene gas in January to a number of New York "gentlemen, somewhat distinguished for their scientific attainments,"⁸ distilled from Trinidad bitumen in a retort he had invented; garnered glowing reviews in at least seven New York newspapers; and obtained a U.S. patent.

Gesner's retort was designed to be built small enough to work with a kitchen stove, or large enough to work inside existing retorts of coal gas manufacturers. Thus it could be used in a house, a factory, or the gas works that supplied entire towns. The *New York Evening Post*, February 1, 1850⁹ provided the most graphic account of Gesner's demonstrations:

About one pound of crude bitumen was enclosed in a retort in a common stove, from which a pipe led into a small tin reservoir where the gas was condensed, and afterwards passed into another tin vessel that served for a gasometer. In a few minutes the heat of the stove generated about six cubic feet of gas, which, without purification or cleansing in any manner, supplied two large burners with brilliant and unflickering light for two hours.

Gesner's U.S. patent No. 7,052, dated January 29, 1850, was focused on the "manufacture of illuminating-gas from bitumen," including "both compact and fluid bitumen," and the use of his retort.¹⁰ By fluid bitumen, Gesner must have meant crude oil. He noted later that year that the bitumen was readily distilled into kero-

sene oil, but that this was not necessary to make gas, “for the crude material sends off its gas with great facility.”¹¹ What this patent failed to include was Gesner’s process to extract oil, i.e., his liquid kerosene, from bituminous matter.

Gesner may have sought to correct that oversight on another trip to New York, 10 months later, in November. He also sought to commercialize his gas-making retort. A New York firm, Walworth, Nason & Guild, Eugene Le Gal of New York, and Abraham’s son, Henry Gesner, were appointed agents to license the use of the retort for “manufactureries and other buildings.” License fees were as much as \$1 per burner, depending on the number of burners. The Walworth firm was also authorized to manufacture the retort.¹²

While in New York on this second trip, Gesner is reported by the *Scientific American* to have applied for a patent, for “one of the most valuable discoveries ever made in the manufacture of oil, resin, or asphaltum gases.”¹³

The reference to “the manufacture of oil” is significant. This preceded by two years the U.S. patent of Gesner’s Scottish rival, James Young, for the distillation of a lubricating oil and solvent from coal and bitumen. But whatever happened to this latest patent application of Gesner’s? There is no record of such a U.S. patent being issued. Possibly the report referred to the combined patent rights issued by the State of New York to Gesner and Thomas Cochrane, the tenth Earl of Dundonald, rights that would be subsidiary to a U.S. patent.

Following his New York splash, Gesner spent the next few years in his ill-fated bid to mine Albertite bitumen

and supply Halifax with kerosene gas. He did, as a trial, supply kerosene in 1851 to light the beacon at Meagher's Beach lighthouse in Halifax, replacing whale oil and reportedly cutting fuel costs by nearly three quarters. The good doctor was also reported to have stated that he "can erect lights along the shore, without expensive houses, by raising poles and placing the lights upon them."¹⁴ If kerosene oil, rather than gas, was used at the lighthouse, this would have been its first significant use as a lamp fuel, preceding the coal oil industry by a few years.

At this stage, Gesner was associated in his illuminating efforts with Thomas Cochrane, who arrived in Halifax in 1848, a vigorous 73-year-old admiral of the British navy in the Western Atlantic, and the inspiration for C.S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower.¹⁵ Cochrane's naval career was perhaps even more spectacular than that of the fictional Hornblower. In the Napoleonic wars Cochrane captured more than 50 French vessels before being captured himself. Later, while serving as a Member of Parliament, he was jailed for a one-year term for fraud, on charges his defenders claim were false. Breaking out of jail, he stormed back into Parliament, only to be thrown back into jail for the remainder of his term. Released, he headed, successively, the Chilean, Brazilian, and Greek navies, with more spectacular exploits, before re-joining the British navy.

Cochrane also had a long-standing interest in bituminous oil and Trinidad's pitch lake. Cochrane's father had patented a method of producing oil from coal tar, the by-product of gas distilled from coal. The oil was intended for use as a lubricant, waterproofing agent,

and illuminating fluid, although commercial development never followed the patent. Thomas Cochrane himself, while serving his term in jail, patented a lamp intended for use with fuel extracted from Trinidad's bitumen. He also, by this time, controlled the Trinidad bitumen, having purchased all the property surrounding the pitch lake. Gesner's work with Cochrane ended shortly after the admiral returned to England and retirement in 1851.

Rebuffed in his efforts in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Gesner returned to New York in 1853, this time with his family, to take up residence and make one more effort to establish a bitumen-based gas light business.

In New York, Gesner found financial backing with the help of a 28-year-old promoter and ship's broker with the splendid name of Horatio Eagle. Eagle issued an eight-page circular entitled *Project for the Formation of a Company to Work the Combined Patent Rights of Dr. Abraham Gesner, Nova Scotia, and the Right Hon. The Earl of Dundonald of Middlesex, England*.¹⁶ This was presumably the patent issued by the State of New York.

Eagle's circular, dated March, 1853, offered for sale \$100,000 in shares of a new company at first called the Asphalt Mining and Kerosene Gas Company. Gesner, the circular noted, had been hired as the chief chemist "at a modest salary." A wide range of possible uses for kerosene oil was listed: waterproofing, paving, insulating underground telegraph wires, making paints and varnishes, as solvents, "burning fluids," and to produce gas "for lighting manufactory." Within months, the goal shifted from gas to liquid kerosene lamp fuel. The corporate name was changed to North American Kerosene Gas

Light Company, then North American Kerosene Company, and finally the New York Kerosene Oil Company.

Gesner's U.S. patent for "a new liquid hydrocarbon, which I denominate "Kerosene," and which may be "used for illuminating and other purposes," was issued January 27, 1854,¹⁷ almost a year after Eagle's circular. The patent was assigned to the company.

The patent described three types of kerosene. Kerosene A and B were essentially gasoline and mostly flared. Kerosene C was the lamp fuel. The patent described the process of distillation from coal or bitumen and subsequent refining with sulphuric acid and calcinated lime and re-distillation to produce a fuel that burned in an Argand lamp "with a brilliant white light without smoke or the naphthalous odour so offensive in many hydrocarbons resembling this but possessing very different properties."

The company's large coal oil plant on Newton Creek, Queens County, New York was under construction by the time the patent was issued. Kendall Beaton, whose *Business History Review* article did so much to establish Gesner's contribution to petroleum refining, claimed, "We can be fairly certain that it began operations in the first half of 1854."¹⁸ There were start up problems, not surprising for the first application of a new refining process. By February 1856, however, a company circular cites the claims of independent chemists that kerosene oil "gives a better and more brilliant light than any other substance known, at less than one-half the cost of candles or camphene."¹⁹

Gesner's refinery remained the dominant plant throughout the short-lived U.S. coal oil industry. The business

was near its apex when the *Scientific American* estimated the production of kerosene in December, 1859 at nearly 23,000 gallons a day, from some 50 to 70 plants. The Gesner works accounted for more than 10 percent of the total, at an estimated 2,500 gallons a day, followed by 1,500 gallons from Samuel Downer's Boston plant.²⁰ But Gesner's association with the enterprise promoted by Horatio Eagle in 1853 would last barely five or six years.

SCOTTISH RIVAL JAMES YOUNG

When Gesner was pursuing his ill-fated quest to establish a bitumen-based gas light business in Canada, his Scottish rival, chemist James Young, was making rapid progress in Great Britain. How much technological progress Young made is debatable, but he did spectacularly well in making a fortune, in part by enforcing his British and American patents for distilling coal.

In distilling coal and shale, for half a dozen years Young produced only a lubricating oil and a solvent. In New York, Luther Atwood also developed a lubricating oil. And certainly lubricating oils were needed at this stage of the industrial revolution. As historian Leonard M. Fanning observed:

You held your nose against the smell of rancid animal and vegetable oils used to lubricate the spindles and machines. You shouted to be heard over the shrieks and groans of ponderous steam engines. You sat helpless in the railroad coach when the cumbersome locomotive hotboxed to a stop because its bearings had become overheated and acid-eaten.²¹

Young did, for a short time, produce an illuminating oil, not from coal or shale, but from crude oil. Three hundred gallons a day of light crude oil seeping in a Derbyshire coal mine first got James Young into the oil business in 1848. As Young described it, the oil “has the consistency of thin treacle [molasses or syrup] and with one distillation gives a clear liquid of brilliant illuminating power.”²² Producing a burning fluid by a simple one-pass distillation of crude oil was at least as old as Greek Fire in the first century AD. Young’s first illuminating oil business quickly ended when the coal mine seepage was exhausted.

Young then experimented with distilling oil from coal. On October 7, 1850, he obtained a British patent “for the obtaining of paraffine oil...and paraffine [wax] from bituminous coals.”²³ It would be six years after this British patent before another chemist showed Young how to further refine this lubricating oil into a suitable lamp fuel, similar to Gesner’s kerosene. Young’s U.S. patent followed in March, 23, 1852.

In 1851, at Bathgate, Scotland, Young established what has been described as “the first truly commercial oil-works in the world,”²⁴ first using a bituminous coal, and later, shale. From 1851 to 1856, Young’s oil works produced principally his lubricating paraffin oil and naphtha, used as a solvent for rubber and paint manufacture.

It was Luther Atwood and his associate, Joshua Merrill, who inadvertently showed Young that his lubricating oil could be redistilled and refined to yield a suitable lamp oil.²⁵ Atwood had developed a lubricating oil, distilled from coal tar. He called it “coupe oil,” apparently

viewing this as the chemical equivalent of Louis Napoleon's *coupe d'état*. Atwood's firm, the United States Chemical Manufacturing Company, was subsequently purchased by Boston whale oil dealer Samuel Downer (Downer & Son).

In 1856, on the heels of Gesner's plant, new coal oil refineries were starting to pop up in New York and elsewhere in the eastern United States, most of them using coal from U.S. mines. In Glasgow, James Young learned how to turn his paraffin lubricating oil into a lamp fuel. Atwood and Merrill were also in Glasgow, helping George Miller & Company establish facilities to make and market Atwood's coupe oil. Miller & Company was a large manufacture of coal tar naphtha, which was mixed with Young's paraffin oil to dissolve rubber and form a waterproofing compound, used on raincoats—known as Macintoshes. Atwood experimented with a five-gallon batch of Young's lubricating oil, re-distilling and refining it to produce “a water-white beautiful article of illuminating oil.”²⁶ On a visit to Miller's office in the Fall, Young saw his refined lubricating oil burning in a lamp. He cut off sales of his paraffin lubricating oil to Miller, and began making his own lamp oil, two years after Gesner's New York plant was producing its kerosene lamp oil.

Young's lamp oil, according to Merrill, did not “compare with Mr. Atwood's in quality,” but it was good enough to generate quite large and very profitable sales. When other British firms saw this, they too, began to make lamp fuel from coal or shale. One was the Miller firm, Young's former customer. Young sued Miller for patent infringement, winning damages so extensive that Miller & Com-

pany was bankrupt. From another English firm, *Furney & Co.*, he collected \$250,000 in damages.

Young was aggressive not just in Europe in enforcing his patent rights. New York lawyers *Benedict & Boardman* in a notice published in November, 1858, advised what was now a large number of U.S. coal oil refiners, that Young “had transferred to a company in the United States the right to use in the United States his patent for making oil from coal.”²⁷ The refiners were warned, that “legal measures will be immediately adopted against all persons infringing said patent.” The licensee with the exclusive right to make oil from coal in the United States was the Downer firm in Boston.

Such legal action to stop anyone distilling oil from coal or other bituminous material was undoubtedly contentious. Aside from coal gas, for more than a century at least a dozen Europeans had experimented with distilling oils from crude oil seepages, from bitumen, coal tar, petroleum-impregnated rocks, and even wood. Archibald Cochrane, the ninth Earl of Donald, distilled an oil from coal tar and burned it in lamps in 1781. French chemist Alexander Selligie in 1835 patented an oil distilled from rock, and operated three small refineries, producing oil that was sold as a lamp oil and to enrich coal gas.

Young’s method of distilling oil from coal was depicted by Thomas Antisell, the man who was instrumental in approving Young’s U.S. patent, “as a small step in advance of previously applied knowledge, an advance so slight as hardly to have elicited any surprise.” Antisell, a Georgetown University chemist, was also the U.S. Patent Office official responsible for examining numerous applications involving chemical processes. The

description is from Antisell's 1859 book on the distillation of "burning fluids" from coal.²⁸ But Antisell also wrote that there was "no shadow of a doubt that Young's process was a bona fide improvement in an art" when the U.S. patent was issued in 1852. And Young prevailed in his suits against the U.S. coal oil refiners, who were thus obliged to pay him royalties.

Other than in a list of patents in his book, Antisell devotes only one sentence to Gesner's work: "The first manufacture [of coal oil] in this country was the attempt of Solomon [sic] Gesner on the bituminous shales of Dorchester, New Brunswick."²⁹ In his list of American patents involving "the distillation of oils from coals, bitumens, and schists," there is no mention of Gesner's 1850 patent. His list starts with Young's 1852 U.S. patent.

Ater Atwood and Merrill returned from Britain to Boston in late 1856, the Downer firm took out its licence to use Young's patent, and in 1857 began producing lamp fuel, paying Young a royalty of two cents a gallon. The Downer firm then became associated with the New York Kerosene Oil Company; obtained an exclusive right to use the registered trade name *kerosene*; Samuel Downer changed the name of his company to Downer Kerosene Oil Company; and Atwood became chief chemist for both firms. With those changes, Gesner was gone from the New York Kerosene Oil Company and "the Gesner works."

Atwood is credited with improving the refining processes at the former Gesner works, and no doubt he did. He also inherited a model refinery, as described by Kendall Beaton:

"From engineers' drawings of the plant which have sur-

vived, we can appreciate Dr. Gesner's very real abilities as a practical manufacturing chemist. His plant was laid out in orderly fashion and the individual pieces of equipment were well planned and well constructed, differing very little from similar pieces of refinery equipment being built as late as the time of the First World War."³⁰

James Young retired in 1870 and used his fortune for good causes. He financed many of the African expeditions of his university classmate David Livingstone, purchased from Arab traders the freedom of African slaves, and continued to finance the anti-slavery movement even after slavery had been abolished in Britain and the British Empire.

Gesner remained in New York for several years, combining his medical practice, geological consulting, and writing his 1861 landmark, *A Practical Treatise on Coal, Petroleum, and other Distilled Oils*. He examined prospective oil lands in Canada West, and authored a paper on the gold mines of Nova Scotia.³¹ In ill-health, he returned to Halifax in late 1863 and died there the following April. Ignored and forgotten, he was buried in a grave that was unmarked for 69 years, until Imperial Oil erected an impressive monument.

As for his role in establishing the oil industry, Gesner claimed only this: "The progress of discovery in this case, as in others, has been slow and gradual. It has been carried on by the labours, not of one mind, but of many, so as to render it difficult to discover to whom the greatest credit is due."³²

WILLIAMS, GESNER, YOUNG AND THE FIRST CRUDE OIL REFINING

The coal oil refiners in the 1850s did everything to create the oil industry except find crude oil. They created the product, a lamp fuel; developed and improved the technology to produce it from bituminous materials; built the refineries; gave rise to improved oil lamps; and created the marketing facilities and market demand. All that was then needed was a supply of crude oil, which could greatly cut the cost making lamp fuel from solid bitumen.

That was the missing link first supplied by James Miller Williams. He was reportedly drawn into the oil business by the success of James Young, and by a bankrupt customer who owed him money for the purchase of wagons. There are conflicting reports about the possible influence of Young and Gesner on Williams' refining operations. With no corporate records of Williams' operations available, only a scanty picture can be stitched together. In any event, Williams' initial effort was to distill and refine oil from bitumen. Events leading up to his entry into the oil business can be told here only in brief highlights.

It was Thomas Sterry Hunt, the brilliant American chemist and geologist with the Geological Survey of Canada, who first drew attention to the bitumen deposits on the banks of Black Creek in Enniskillen County in the GSC's annual report for 1849. The GSC had been sent a sample of the bitumen. In his analysis of this sample, Hunt pointed to potential commercial uses: "to build roads, to pave the bottom of ships, to manufacture gas for lighting, for which it is eminently suited."³³



Lambton County Museum, 36564201.

Angus Surtherland, foreman for Fairbank Oil Properties, in 1957, examines a plank from the cribbing of the 1858 Oil Springs discovery well, North America's first crude oil well for the emerging oil industry. Within weeks, the new field provided feedstock for the world's first sustained oil company, with crude oil production, refining, and marketing kerosene, the world's principal lamp fuel for half a century.

Charles Nelson Tripp, an energetic and visionary prospector and promoter and his brother Henry, devoted half a dozen years to the daunting task of exploiting this commercial opportunity, working in an isolated forest area, near the southwest tip of Canada West, one of the last areas in the province to be settled. It was an area of seasonal swamp, a shin-busting tangle of fallen trees, with no roads or railway and more than 20 miles from the nearest water transportation, at Sarnia.

Charles Tripp sent another sample of the bitumen to Thomas Antisell, who reported that the “most appropriate use” for this “very valuable variety of bitumen” was as either a gas or oil for lighting. The Hamilton Gas Company also said it would be very useful for making gas. Despite these reports, Tripp focused his efforts on mining the bitumen then boiling it in open pots, to produce a paving material. His paving material won a prize at the 1855 Universal Exhibition in Paris, and he also won an order for asphalt to help pave the streets of Paris.³⁴ But he was already going broke, with judgments piling up for unpaid bills, including money owed to Williams for the purchase of wagons.

In late 1856, after working briefly for Williams, Tripp left Canada to prospect for mines in the southern United States. On a return visit to Canada ten years later, Tripp boasted to a newspaper reporter that he had amassed a fortune in Mexican silver mines.³⁵ A few weeks after that he died in a lonely hotel room in New Orleans, reportedly of “congestion of the brain.”³⁶ He was 43. His obituary claimed that he knew more “about the mineral wealth of every southern state than any other man alive” and had been organizing companies to develop “on a gigantic scale” deposits of “oil, copper, lead, zinc and iron” that he had discovered in Louisiana and Texas.³⁷ A prototypical promoter, Tripp was resourceful, energetic, everlastingly optimistic, and always with a vision of wealth to sell.

Williams and several associates began to acquire Tripp’s properties in early 1856, before Tripp left to prospect in the southern United States. Williams later bought out his partners and organized a new firm, J.M. Williams &

Company (re-organized four years later as the Canadian Oil Company, in which he held one-third of the capital stock). By 1857, Williams “undertook the distillation of this tarry bitumen,” according to Sterry Hunt.³⁸ Mining engineer Charles Robb says Williams was inspired in this effort by the success of James Young in making both lubricating and lamp oils. He says Williams obtained a license to use Young’s patent, and set out to distill the bitumen “for the purpose of using it as a substitute for coal in the manufacture of such oils.”³⁹ Hunt and Robb thus both imply that Williams relied on Young’s refining process, not Gesner’s.

Yet Williams was surely aware of Gesner’s New York refinery, which—as we have seen—had been producing kerosene for lamp fuel since early 1854, according to Beaton. Young did not begin to produce a lamp fuel (in addition to his lubricating oil and solvent) until 1856, according to Merril, as we have also seen. Thus when Williams started his distillation of the bitumen in 1857, Gesner’s plant had been producing kerosene for three years, while Young had been producing a lamp fuel for no more than one year, and Samuel Kier of Pittsburgh had been refining crude oil since 1850.

Williams in 1857 built a refinery on Coal Oil Inlet in Hamilton to distill and refine the bitumen.⁴⁰ There is no report that he managed to produce a commercial product from bitumen. The next year, however, the Hamilton refinery began producing fuel from crude oil, from the field that Williams’ well diggers discovered. It was thus North America’s first crude oil refinery. With later expansion and much modification, it remained in operation for more than three decades, until 1891.

A number of published accounts say that Williams was distilling the bitumen at the site of the deposit on Black Creek, 100 miles west of the Hamilton refinery, before he found crude oil. One account says that a simple retort in which bitumen was distilled stood “on a gentle slope, between the creek and the fringe of the far-flung forest,” less than 200 feet from where a well would find crude oil two years later.⁴¹ This seems unlikely, and is contradicted by the *Sarnia Observer*. When the Williams well struck oil, the *Observer* reported that: “As yet no works for manufacturing the oil into a merchantable commodity have been erected on the premises, what has been obtained having been barreled up and sent to Hamilton to be prepared there.”

It was thought by the *Observer* that Williams intended to “put up suitable work” to process the oil at the discovery site, “*with as little delay as possible.*”⁴²

The date of the Williams discovery has generally been reported as August, 1858, but it was earlier than that, perhaps in July or even as early as May. The discovery of crude was first reported in the *Sentinel*, the weekly newspaper in Woodstock where lived both GSC geologist Alexander Murray, who had examined the bitumen deposit in 1851, and Henry Tripp, the brother of the departed Charles. No existing copies of this issue of the *Sentinel* are known, so the precise date of the first published report of the oil discovery is also unknown. The *Sentinel* article, however, was republished, probably a week later, in the *Sarnia Observer*, also a weekly newspaper, on August 5. The brief article reported that “An important discovery” had been made “a short time since,” by a party “*digging a well at the edge of a bed of bitu-*

men.” The oil was said to have been “accidentally discovered,” adding credence to suggestions that Williams, or rather his men, were digging for a supply of clean water. This “inexhaustible” supply of oil, according to the article, was great enough to yield “not less than one thousand dollars per day of clear profit.”

The *Sentinel* item was very likely published during the last week in July, and the nebulous “short time since” phrase suggests that oil was likely found at least a week before that, perhaps a few weeks. Thomas Gale, writing in a book with a foreword dated June 1, 1860, claims the well “has been in operation over 2 years.”⁴³

Reports even differed about the depth of the Williams’ well. The first known inventory of Oil Springs wells, compiled by a Mrs. Richardson about 1862, says the well was dug to 14 feet, and later deepened.⁴⁴ Gale says the well was “49 feet deep, 7 x 9 feet square, cribbed with small logs.⁴⁵ As others rushed to dig in the vicinity of the discovery well, the *Observer* noted on August 26, 1858 that “a hole dug 8 or 10 feet in width and about the same depth, will collect from 200 to 250 gallons a day.” Evidently, the discovery well encountered oil at about 14 feet, was later dug to the reported 49 feet, and still later drilled a further 100 feet into rock, according to both Mrs. Richardson and the *Toronto Globe*.⁴⁶ By the time Sterry Hunt visited Oil Springs in December, 1860, oil well digging appears to have given way to spring pole drilling. Hunt found that “nearly one hundred wells had been sunk” to depths of 40 to 160 feet.⁴⁷

It is worth noting how quickly Williams was able to offer distilled and refined lamp fuel after finding crude oil. Less than two months after reporting the oil discovery,

the *Observer*, on September 23, complained that “this most superior illuminating oil” was being offered by Williams’ Sarnia agent for \$1.25 per Imperial gallon, while advertised in London for only \$1 per gallon.

Williams did, as the *Observer* predicted, build a simple one-pass still at Oil Springs, which operated for a less than two years, venting the lighter fractions in the air and possibly simply dumping the heavy ends. The purpose was to reduce the volume of oil moved to Hamilton for refining, to reduce transportation costs. Charles Robb reported that:

“At first the distillation was carried on at the wells, but latterly the percentage of loss in refining being so small (about 30 or 35 per cent), it was deemed expedient to remove the works to Hamilton, and convey the oil thither in barrels.”⁴⁸

A more likely reason for abandoning distillation at the wells was a fire that destroyed the still.

Williams probably used a pair of maple sugar kettles to make his pot still. Early Oil Springs producers used dozens of such stills. Colonel Robert Harkness, Ontario’s natural gas commissioner in the 1950s, who did much to record the province’s early oil history, has described one such sugar pot still, used by Hugh Nixon Shaw:

His still looked like two sugar kettles, placed one above the other forming together an iron globe, from the top of which rose a pipe which was connected to the worm [a long tube in which the gases from distillation are condensed. The worm at Gesner’s refinery in New York was 100 feet long.] The vapours passed up this pipe through a fine iron mesh, and then a brass wire mesh, which

Shaw claimed held back many impurities. From this iron pipe connecting the still to the worm, rose another small iron pipe through the roof to the open air which allows the 'benzole' to pass away as a vapour. The remaining vapour condensed in the worm, from which it drained into a collection tank. By this method 50 per cent illuminating oil was gained; the remainder was lost.⁴⁹

Operators of both pot stills and refineries faced two problems. One problem was the Enniskillen *sour* crude. It contained sulphur, which caused distilled or refined products to smell like rotten eggs. The skunk oil problem was one that the first American producers, with their sweet crude, did not have to face, at least until the discovery of the sour crude oil fields in Ohio in 1884.

The second problem was that both pot stills and refineries tended to either catch fire or explode with almost monotonous regularity. The Williams refinery in Hamilton was reported by the *Hamilton Times* to have twice been engulfed in flames during a six-week period in March and April 1860, causing some \$10,000 in damages, while the pot still at Oil Springs burned down on June 12.⁵⁰ At Petrolia, the Carbon Oil Company refinery, Eniskillen's largest at the time, is reported by the *Imperial Oil Review* to have "opened in 1871, and ran for a year, then exploded. A whole year was spent rebuilding it and on July 30—the very day it opened—it exploded again."⁵¹

It took 30 years to completely eliminate the skunk odour. In an advertisement in the *Toronto Leader*, March 18, 1859, Parson Brothers, distributor of American-refined coal oil, assailed the Canadian Oil Company lamp fuel

as “a disgustingly nauseous compound... worthless and offensive stuff.” On May 31, the *Leader* reported that University of Toronto chemist Henry Croft “has succeeded in deodourizing the natural oils found in the County of Lambton.” More than a year later, on July 4, 1860, Canadian Oil Company claimed in an ad in the *Hamilton Spectator* that... “recent experiments have been attended with great success, and have resulted in our obtaining a process by means of which we can now entirely remove the objectionable odour.”

Yet still another year later, on March 28, 1861, the company promised in a *Toronto Leader* ad: “We shall from this date furnish our customers with an Oil superior to any we have yet manufactured.”

Never mind. Rancid animal oils burned in lamps didn’t smell very sweet either, and gave less light and more smoke. Enniskillen lamp oil also cost much less. “It is,” wrote Professor H.Y. Hind of the University of Toronto, “incomparably the cheapest illuminator which has yet been manufactured; and it threatens, for domestic purposes, to drive all other means of illumination out of the field.”⁵²

Thus, despite the odour, J.M. Williams & Company and its successor The Canadian Oil Company, prospered for nearly a quarter of a century, until it was finally merged with other Canadian refiners into the Canadian Carbon Oil Company. Its lamp fuel, trade named Victoria Oil, was sold not only in Canada but also in Europe, South America, and Asia.

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Wild and wasteful, British Empire's biggest oilfield



Glenbow Museum Archives NA-601-1.

Line-up of investors, Calgary, May 13, 1914, waiting to buy stock in scores of new oil companies, who skinned Calgarians of more than a million dollars.

In the foothills of Alberta, some 20 miles southwest of Calgary lies Canada's first big oil field, the largest in what was once the British Empire, and among the largest in North America. It took 22 years to reveal the full extent of the energy stored in the Turner Valley oilfield, in three separate stages, from 1914 to 1936. Much of the energy was lost. It was the largest-ever waste of Canadian energy.

The first stage, the 1914 discovery of a small amount of oil and gas in shallow, Cretaceous age porous rock, rough-

ly 100 million years old, set off a wild stock market spree that left a number of Calgarians papering their homes with worthless oil company share certificates.

For ten years, Turner Valley yielded a trickle of oil and gas from its Cretaceous rock. Much below this, in Mississippian age rock more than 300 million years old, lay vastly greater accumulations of natural gas (discovered in 1924) and crude oil (discovered in 1936).

We'll look first at the 1914 discovery and the wild stock market spree it generated before considering the 1924 and 1936 discoveries of Turner Valley's older and much larger accumulations of natural gas, and how so much of it was lost and wasted.

The story of the discovery of Turner Valley starts with William Stewart Herron who rode into Alberta in 1903, a husky 33-year-old widower from Gelert, Ontario, to take up farming at Okotoks, some 25 miles southwest of Calgary, not far from Turner Valley when it was still just a valley. Overloaded with energy, Herron was a Jack of all trades: farmer, rancher, bronco buster, real estate speculator, amateur geologist, prospector, and promoter. He seems to have been a little too rough cut to join the upper crust of Calgary society, to which he ardently aspired.

Herron recognized an anticline at Turner Valley as the possible host of oil and gas; collected samples of gas bubbling from a spring; sent the samples to the Universities of Pennsylvania and California for analyses; then acquired leases to as much of the oil and gas rights as he could obtain. Needing money to drill a wildcat well, Herron turned to Archibald Dingman, a well-connected veteran

from the oil and gas fields of Ontario. Dingman organized Calgary Petroleum Products, with money from such prominent Calgarians as lawyer and future Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, and James Lougheed, later senator and father of future Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed. The well they drilled, Calgary Petroleum Products No. 1, was also widely known as the Dingman well, to the great consternation of Herron, the real discoverer of the Turner Valley field.

What happened in 1914 is perhaps best told in the following excerpt from my book, The Great Canadian Oil Patch, second edition.

City of lunatics

Anyone visiting Calgary in mid-May of 1914 would have concluded, according to the *Calgary News Telegram*, that the city “had a population of 80,000 people, mostly lunatics.” This Stampede town “never saw such a Saturday night,” observed the *Calgary Albertan*. “It was the wildest, most delirious, most uproarious, most exciting time that had ever entered into human imagination to conceive.”

The cause of all the excitement was oil. For more than a year, an oil fever had gripped Calgarians as they followed the plodding progress of a drilling rig nestled in the foothills of nearby Turner Valley, its timbers shaking and its boiler hissing steam while the steel bit banged and clunked its way through hundreds of feet of rock. In late September and early October, at shallow depths the well had encountered small flows of natural gas that bore with it a spray of light gravity oil, variously described as condensate, naphtha, natural gasoline, or pentanes plus, and hereafter referred to as condensate.

For months the newspapers had been full of conflicting reports as to whether or not a commercial discovery had been made. Stockbrokers' offices displayed samples of the oil to convince Calgarians that it really did exist. So volatile was the condensate, that it was pumped into the tanks of cars that brought visitors to the well site, and the cars actually ran on this fuel. "Experts" had been freely predicting that "Calgary will soon be in the throes of one of the greatest oil excitements ever known."

Hundreds of thousands of acres of oil leases had been filed on with the federal government, and the value of these leases was skyrocketing. There were riots in the Dominion Land Office as eager speculators lined up to file on anything available — even the municipal Bowness Park. Dozens of new oil companies had been formed, hopefully, to drill on those leases, and shares were sold in the hundreds of thousands to Calgarians thirsting to get in on the ground floor and eager to part with their savings.

"Many Calgarians are suffering from a mild form of insanity," said the *News Telegram* in October, while the *Albertan* concluded simply that "the city is oil mad."

But the excitement was nothing compared with what happened after word reached Calgary on the night of Thursday, May 14, 1914, that this time the Dingman well had hit it for certain: oil.

"If the city was oil crazy on Friday," said the *Albertan*, "on Saturday it was demented." The *Herald* noted that the stock promoters had "struck a financial gusher," which made the discovery well "look like a lawn sprinkler."

All day and all night the crowds fought and struggled

for precedence in the offices of the most prominent oil companies, and clamoured for shares and yet more shares. Relays of policemen barely kept a clear passage-way and there was never a moment when the would-be purchasers were not lined up.

Within a few months, Calgarians woke up from that monumental speculative spree with such a hangover that more than half a century later the city still remembers the event as the wildest boom that ever hit the West. More than 500 companies were formed within a few months, holding half a million acres of oil leases and with authorized capital totalling an estimated \$400 million. Less than 50 companies actually started drilling and few of those found any oil. Calgarians, wiped clean of more than a million dollars of savings, were left holding thousands of share certificates worth less than wallpaper. Several homes, and the lobby of one hotel, actually were wallpapered with share certificates.

On January 25, 1913, Calgary Petroleum Products Well No. 1 (aka the Dingman well) started drilling — spudded in, in oil industry terms — and the heavy steel bit started pounding its way slowly through the rock.

From the start, the hole generated a frenzy of excitement. At 467 feet it entered a series of thin sands that yielded small volumes of natural gas with vapours of condensate — enough gas at least to fuel the rig’s boiler, and enough condensate to fuel the speculative spree.

A stampede for oil shares

Almost daily, melodramatic reports in the Calgary newspapers fanned the excitement. The *News Telegram* reported on July 13: “Oil men are generally agreed that oil will be ‘struck’ in this well inside of the next 30 days.”

Multiplying the possible facts several fold, it reported that gas at the well was being wasted at a rate of three million cubic feet per day and added that “the company is after oil and a mere matter of one thousand or two thousand dollars worth of gas a day is not considered of sufficient importance to bother with by the future Calgary oil kings.”

By October 9, the *Herald* reported that “a first class quality of oil has been struck at the well” and although “no gusher has yet been brought in, about one hundred gallons of high-grade oil [condensate] was brought to the surface in a bailer, and samples are now in the city.” The well by that time had reached 1,562 feet. The *News Telegram* on October 13 declared that reports from the well “seem to be more encouraging every day and all are of the opinion that within a short time it will be shown to the world that there exists in southern Alberta an oilfield second to none in North America.”

The boom was on, and “crowds swarmed the streets Saturday, filled the hotel rotundas and the sole topic of conversation was oil, oil, oil.” Big plans were afoot, according to an “oil broker from Montana,” who told the *News Telegram* that “there is no doubt but that hundreds of companies will commence drilling operations if the flow in the Dingman well turns out to be a permanent one.” New companies were already formed to peddle stock on the basis of their leases “in the oil fields.” By October 16, reported the *Herald*, “in the neighborhood of two dozen companies have been organized to sell stock . . . but most of them are awaiting news that a ‘gusher’ has been struck.”

And still the well kept teasing. In November, the *News*

Telegram reported that wet gas containing three gallons of condensate to every 1,000 cubic feet of gas was “blowing off” at the well at a rate of three million cubic feet a day. The *Albertan* once more assured its readers that “it is only a matter of drilling now before a large quantity of oil is struck at the Discovery well.”

Calgarians were in no mood to listen to words of caution. On November 25 the *Herald* published a letter from Dingman in which he protested “against some of the absolutely irresponsible and ridiculous statements” being published. “At the present time and under the present conditions our gas cannot be utilized for the production of gasoline, but later on, under the proper conditions and character of product, we feel confident of being able to extract what gasoline nature has left in the gas.” Crude oil had not yet been discovered, but “we are all hoping, and some of us working, to determine if possible the presence of commercial oil in Alberta.” On Monday morning the *Albertan* replied: “Dingman’s article in the *Knocker [Herald]* last Saturday makes us think that when he makes his big strike he will be a regular Rockefeller and establish Sunday schools and endow churches.”

Some Calgarians, at least, managed to maintain a sense of humour. “The trouble with this oil situation at this formulative stage,” wrote Bob Edwards in his Calgary *Eye Opener*, “is that you are never sure whether the man you meet on the street is a multi-millionaire, or just an ordinary, common millionaire.”

A cat ranch to skin Calgarians

And from a reader, the *Albertan* published this get-rich-quick formula:

“Being readers of your valuable paper and knowing you

to be fair in your criticism of new companies being organized in Alberta when the prospectus is sent you, and seeing by the Albertan that there is not going to be oil stock enough to go around to all the investors, perhaps some of those having money to invest in a profitable undertaking would be pleased to know of our company.

“We expect to operate a large cat ranch near Sedgewick, Alberta, where the best farming land in the province can be bought, at least the surface rights, which will be all we need, for less than the oil barons would ask for the mineral rights.

“Now to start we will collect, say, 100,000 cats, each cat will average 12 kittens a year which will mean 1,200,000 skins. The skins will sell from 10 to 15 cents for the white ones and 75 cents for the jet black ones, making an average price of 30 cents apiece, thus making our revenue about \$10,000.00 a day gross. A man can skin 50 cats a day and he will charge \$2.00 for his labour. It will take 100 men to operate the ranch, therefore our profit will be about \$9,800 per day.

“We will feed the cats on rats and will start a rat ranch adjoining the cat ranch. The rats will multiply four times as fast as the cats so if we start with say 1,000,000 rats we will have four rats a day for each cat, which is plenty. We will feed the cats on the rats and in turn will feed the rats on the stripped carcasses of the cats, thus giving each rat one-fourth of a cat. It will be seen by these figures that the business will be self acting and automatic. The cats will eat the rats and the rats will eat the cats and we will get the skins.”

Perhaps no one actually called the stock promoters

“rats,” but they certainly managed to skin Calgarians. The method was more foolproof than a cat ranch, and even simpler. The promoter would file on a lease for mineral rights with the Calgary office of the Dominion Land Agent, paying a filing fee of \$5 for each lease and a first-year rental of 25 cents per acre. A one-section lease (640 acres) could thus be picked up for \$165, a quarter-section lease for \$45. The promoter would then organize a company to which he would sell his leases for cash and/or stock at a price which in November 1913, according to the Herald, “usually runs from \$10 to more than \$25 per acre,” or from 40 to 100 times the initial cost. Shares would then be offered to the public.

The Magnet Oil Company, Ltd., according to its prospectus dated June 17, 1914, issued shares with a par value of \$350,000 to one Frank Frankel for 8,840 acres of leases that had cost \$2,215 to acquire by filing. “Undoubtedly large bodies of oil will be found on the holdings of this company,” consulting geologist G.F. Hayes advised in the prospectus. “After looking over your holdings I must say that you have a very strong proposition to put before the public.” The prospectus noted that “fortunes made in oil by comparatively poor people in the oil fields of Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, California, and Calgary have been numerous,” pointing out that “\$25.00 invested in the stock of the Home Oil Company returned \$10,500.”

Rex Oil Company contracted to pay its founders \$15,000 in cash and \$50,000 in stock for its sole lease holdings of 960 acres acquired for \$290. The \$15,000 for its founders would come from the public sale of shares to hopeful Calgary investors. Rex Oil boasted, “There is

probably no industry in the world which yields such enormous profits as money invested in oil." It claimed, "The element of chance is practically eliminated." Chance, in fact, was totally eliminated; since it never drilled, the company had no chance of finding oil.

In a series of articles in November on "The Flotation of Oil Companies," the *Herald* attempted to dampen the speculative fever in an exposé of the promoters' methods and profits:

"One has only to take a stroll through the business section of the city at the present time to observe the traps being laid for the unwary by the numerous oil concerns that have sprung up like a crop of overnight mushrooms.

"One thing that strikes a person in viewing these displays is the inevitable sample of oil from the Dingman well. Some of these samples are of a dark brown color, strangely like linseed oil; others are of a light shade, similar to sewing machine lubricant; others still are difficult to see clearly because of the stains smeared on the outside of the bottles. One can only conclude that 'age cannot wither nor custom stale the infinite variety' of the product of the Dingman well. A lot of the money that will be lost in oil stocks will go right out of Calgary into the pockets of men who know how to float oil companies and get the public crazy about the 'profits' so vividly portrayed. Those who either through the press or by example or inducement are inciting the public of Calgary to gamble in oil stocks are doing a great and irreparable injury, not only to the individual affected, but to the moral tone of the city and to its public and business interests."

The *Herald* series, retorted the *Albertan*, is merely an attempt “to keep out the small investor . . . until the big profits, if there are to be big profits, are all made by the more wealthy people.” It described the *Herald* and its series in such terms as “evil work . . . venomous hatchet . . . this disloyal alien,” and concluded that “if companies will be unable to develop these areas, it will be because this unpatriotic newspaper wafted the damp breath throughout the country in its attempt to kill this promising undertaking.” Investors appeared to agree with the *Albertan* that “for a man who can afford to take a chance with the money, it is a good speculation.”

The flotation of oil companies, as the *Herald* described it, was only half of the action in 1913 and 1914; the other half took place in the second-floor quarters of the Dominion Land Office where speculators could file on a lease for a fee of only \$5. Until the regulations were changed on February 28, 1914, the first year’s rental of 25-cents-per-acre did not have to be paid until 30 days after the lease was filed. Since quite a few of the filers did not get around to paying the 25 cents per acre rental, there was a continual supply of dropped leases available for re-filing.

Would-be leaseholders camped overnight in front of the building in order to be first in line when the office doors opened at nine in the morning. Men were hired by syndicates to hold down positions in the line, working on a rotation basis. When the front doors opened there was a wild melee as men raced, shoved and fought up the steps and along the corridor to reach the land titles office. Violence frequently broke out, office windows were smashed, and eventually the police were called to maintain order.

The leasing rush was well underway by August 2 when the *Herald* reported how a pair of ranchers from Cardston beat out representatives of the law firm of Lougheed, Bennett and McLaws for first place in line for filing on a lapsed 640-acre lease three miles from the Dingman well. "It was easy," reported the *Herald*. "The athletic countrymen, assisted by a husky 300-pound friend who is engaged in the piano moving business, repeatedly handed their opponents off the steps by their linen collars, and when they were outnumbered they occasionally managed to pick up a couple at once and deposit them carelessly over the railing of the land office stairs." The ranchers later reportedly turned down an offer of \$15,000 for their leases.

On October 10, the *News Telegram* reported that "from Thursday afternoon until noon Friday no less than 75 oil leases were filed on, amounting to approximately 48,000 acres. "Leases which had been lapsed for some time were thrown open for filing on that Friday. One of the successful filers was a J.W. Travers, who "had two men stationed on the land office steps for two weeks. The *Albertan* reported that "800,000 acres of land have already been filed on, and still the craze for filing is in no way abated."

In November, the *Herald* reported on a group of speculators who had "employed something like two dozen men, some of whom are employed regularly at \$15 a week," to maintain positions on a rotational basis "on the steps of the land office throughout the 24 hours of the day . . . at night the men are permitted to rig up a cover of canvas over the steps with cushions, blankets and a coal oil stove." By December, however, "cooler weather

and the recent regulations as to loitering on the land office steps has effectively put a stop to the all-night vigils in front of the door." Police replaced the shoving system among would-be filers by organizing a lottery. "Numbers are put into a hat and every filer draws one."

The events throughout 1913 and early 1914 were building up to the climax that arrived on the night of Thursday, May 14, when the word reached Calgary that Dingman's well had struck oil.

"On Friday, every available motor vehicle in Calgary was forced into service carrying hundreds of men to the foothills to the Dingman well," the *Herald* later reported. Enough was seen to enable the pilgrims from Calgary to return home with the most optimistic reports of the discovery and stimulated with determination to make Calgary the greatest industrial city on the map.

Then came the wild scramble after shares of stock. New companies were organized every day. Every spare bit of space in stores and offices forming the main business streets of Calgary was hired by the selling end of some new oil company. The whole downtown district was really swathed in cotton streams bearing the names and prices of new issues of stock.

In the ticket office of the railway company, an oil company had succeeded in renting a small space for stock-selling purposes. People were lined up for yards outside the door trying to get in to spend their money. One of the railway company's office inspectors from Winnipeg happened to arrive in Calgary just at the height of the excitement. The selling of railway tickets had been sidetracked entirely. Wastepaper baskets stood about the

floor conspicuously filled with cheques and paper money. The entire staff was receiving money from the crazy mob which merely demanded shares and receipts for its money.

The inspector soon found himself engaged in the same popular business. Afterward, he told of one old lady who had finally succeeded in getting close to the share counter eagerly demanding “some oil stock.” She had one hundred dollars to invest. The inspector said he didn’t know anything about the stock being sold and didn’t even know the name of it. “Oh, that doesn’t matter,” she exclaimed, “anything will do so long as I get some stock.”

Calgary’s paper oil companies maintained their brisk sales of shares for a couple of months, but as one by one the promoters folded up their corporate tents and left with bulging pockets, Calgarians soon suspected that they had been had. By September Canada had joined the Great War and the men who had lined up to buy oil stocks were now lining up to enlist. Calgary’s oil stampede was over.

The Mississippian Reservoir

While Calgary’s stock market spree was over in August 1914 with the start of the First World War, the Turner Valley saga continued for another 22 years, before a deeper and vastly larger store of oil and gas in rocks of the Mississippian epoch was fully revealed. It showed an oil field as big as the wildest claims of the 1914 stock promoters. But by the time the size of this energy store was known, most it had already been wasted or lost.

Think of an exceptionally large, corked bottle that lays

prone, tilted up toward the cork, as an extremely rough model of the Mississippian oil and gas reservoir at Turner Valley. The bottle is filled with tiny pellets, perhaps the size of shotgun pellets, to represent the porous Mississippian rock. Natural gas has migrated through the pellets, its path blocked by the cork, in reality, a layer of impervious rock. A layer of crude oil, being somewhat heavier, lays below the gas. And an almost endless layer of water, heavier yet, lays below the oil. All this is a buried three-quarters of a mile underground, so that the water, oil, and gas are under tremendous pressure. In 1924, Royalite Oil Company (a subsidiary of Imperial Oil, in turn, a subsidiary of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil) drilled Royalite No. 4 well, penetrating the gas cap. The gas rushed up the hole with such force that it lifted more than 3,700 feet of drill pipe that rose 130 feet into the air to the top of the drilling derrick. The gas exploded with a sound heard more than a mile away with the gas burned in flames that could be seen at a much greater distance. The drilling rig was demolished. It took weeks to bring the wild well under control

The gas was sour and wet—sour with the rotten eggs odor of deadly hydrogen sulphide, and wet with natural gas liquids, mostly propane, butane and, of greatest value, condensate.

During the next 12 years, before a deep well discovered the layer of crude oil down dip in the reservoir, dozens of wells were drilled in Turner Valley to strip out the condensate from the natural gas. The residue gas was simply burned in flares so large that some Calgarians claimed they could read their evening newspapers by the light. At its peak, the gas was being burned in dozens of flares

at a rate equivalent to burning 25,000 tons of coal per day. In 1931, it was described as “By far the greatest waste of natural gas taking place on the continent.”

But the flared gas was the least of it. Turner Valley originally contained trillions of cubic feet of natural gas and 1.1 billion barrels of oil. An estimated 1.8 trillion cubic feet of gas, equivalent to roughly 300 million barrels of oil, was flared and wasted during the 12-year period. That flared gas robbed the reservoir of the pressure needed to produce the oil. Under good conservation practices, Turner Valley should have yielded more than 60 percent of the oil in that reservoir. Now it is estimated that only 14 percent of that oil will ever be produced. That’s a loss of more than half a billion barrels of oil. Including the wasted gas, the total loss is equivalent to more 800 million barrels of oil, quite possibly as much as a billion barrels. At 2016 depressed crude oil prices during a cyclical supply glut, the market value of the lost oil and wasted gas amounts to between \$40 billion and \$50 billion.

The oil section at Turner Valley was Canada’s first big oil field. The 1936 discovery well, Turner Valley Royalties No. 1, was a costly shoestring gamble by Calgary promoters. Drilling, in the Depression years, paused several times while the promoters rustled more money. The gusher provided the first trickle of fortune money for two pioneer icons of the Canadian oil patch, Frank McMahon and Max Bell.

In 1938, the Alberta government created the Petroleum and Natural Gas Conservation Board to establish and enforce conservation measures, with maximum production allowable rates for every oil and gas well in the province. When the Leduc oil discovery came in 1947, Alberta

had in place a regulatory regime for sustainable oil and gas development that matched the best in the world, and exceeded most. Throughout the period of maximum production of conventional oil, Alberta was remarkably successful in capturing economic rewards for its citizens, the owners of the resource; in minimizing loss and waste; and in encouraging competition in the oil patch with a prorationing system that equitably shared market demand on the basis of sustainable production allowables for every oil well in the province.

Turner Valley made Alberta a trend setter in sustainable oil development.

— Canada @ 150 —

Canada leads establishing International Criminal Court



Photo by Vincent Van Zeijst, Wikimedia Commons.

Headquarters of the International Criminal Court, The Hague, Netherlands.

It is Friday evening, July 17, 1988. More than 300 people, crammed into the Red Room of the United Nation's Food and Agricultural building in Rome, are gripped by anticipation and apprehension. They include delegates representing 148 countries, their advisors and assistants, United Nations officials, and a large phalanx representing some 800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from across the globe.

From my book, About Canada, Toronto, Civil Sector Press, 2012.

The conference has been underway for almost five weeks. The “plenipotentiaries”—the government delegates with signing authority—joined it two days ago. Now, within the next few hours, they must decide the fate of a proposed International Criminal Court. Its mission is to investigate and prosecute people accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide.

In continuous negotiations since the start of the conference, a Preliminary Commission sought agreement on a text that, hopefully, the plenipotentiaries could approve and sign within the final three days of the conference. The Commission worked with the text of a treaty that had evolved during eight preceding years of drafting and negotiating.

The Red Room was crowded in the final meeting to determine the fate of the latest version of this long hashed-over text, after almost a century-and-half of ill-fated proposals for some form of an international criminal court.

An ill-fated history

Gustav Moynier, one of the Red Cross founders, may have been the first to issue a public call for an international court to deal with major atrocities. In 1872 Moynier issued a proposal for a court to prosecute perpetrators of crimes committed during the Franco-Prussian war. In 1919, delegates at the Paris Peace conference proposed a court to try the German Kaiser and others for crimes of the First World War. In 1937, member states of the League of Nations signed a treaty for an international criminal court, but it failed when few nations ratified it.

In 1947, on the heels of the Second World War, the UN General Assembly asked its International Law Commission to draft a court-establishing treaty. Completed in 1953, the proposed treaty dealt with crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Caught in the Cold War, this treaty, too, failed to gain ratification. In 1975, Benjamin B. Ferenz, one of the chief U.S. prosecutors of Second World War criminals brought before the Nuremberg trials, issued a call for an international criminal court in his book *Defining International Aggression: The Search for World Peace*. The book attracted wide interest, but little action.

The text that the Rome conference set out to negotiate, revise and approve was initiated in 1991 when the UN General Assembly asked the International Law Commission to prepare yet another draft treaty. Completed in 1994, this latest ILC text was followed by four more years of negotiations and revisions by two international committees, involving hundreds of diplomats, UN officials, advisors, and NGO members.

Attracted by the UN initiative, some 200 NGOs in 1993 established a Coalition for an International Criminal Court. For three years, this NGO coalition joined governments and UN officials in discussions that sought agreement on revisions to this latest ILC draft. The NGO coalition members acted almost like non-voting members of the committees that did the negotiating. While the coalition worked at the UN level, the NGO organizations worked in their home countries to raise public and political awareness and support. The coalition eventually grew to some 800 NGOs.¹ Prominent members included Amnesty International, Human

Rights Watch, and the World Federation Movement.

Canada was among those countries that wanted an independent court that would be free from control by the 15-member UN Security Council (with veto powers held by five countries) as well as free from restraint by individual countries. A group of a dozen like-minded countries “under the leadership of Canada and Norway... worked through the three years of negotiations as champions of a strong, independent and effective international court,” two members of the NGO coalition later wrote. “They developed a strong partnership with the NGO coalition and with other experts, and their achievements were impressive.”² This “Like-Minded Group” eventually expanded to embrace 60 countries. Its meetings were chaired by Canada, mostly by Montreal lawyer Philippe Kirsch, legal advisor to Canada’s UN mission, a diplomat with extensive experience in international criminal law.

Canada also helped fund the NGO coalition, contributed to a UN fund to enable lesser developed countries to participate in the years of negotiations, and sought to increase public awareness and support of the proposed court.

The need for such a court was highlighted in 1994 by the creation of two ad hoc tribunals to try crimes of genocide in Rwanda and war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. For four years, Canadian Judge Louise Arbour was the chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and initially for the Rwanda tribunal. She indicted Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic for war crimes, the first serving head of state to be held to account before an international

court. (Before his trial ended, Milosevic died while in prison.)

The final hurdle at Rome

Philippe Kirsch chaired the Rome conference commission tasked with the final negotiating work. His large contingent, almost the entire conference, had five weeks to revise and find agreement on this old, long hashed-over text.

Kirsch was described as “Pushy in driving delegations through negotiations... strong, determined, compelling and straightforward... NGO leaders all deeply trusted him.”³

Perhaps so. But “The task awaiting the negotiators was daunting,” Kirsch later wrote.⁴ While a great deal had been accomplished, the lengthy text (more than 20,000 words) was still “riddled with some fourteen hundred... points of disagreement” and “any number of alternative texts. Within the time available, the conference could not possibly have resolved the outstanding issues systematically.”

Outstanding issues included demands to expand the treaty to include crimes of aggression, trafficking in drugs, and terrorism, as well as specifying the use of nuclear weapons and land mines as war crimes. Who would control the court was a major issue.

A plethora of sub-committees and working groups met seven days a week. As time began to run out, the meetings lasted “most of the nights.” Yet after three weeks of intense negotiations, progress toward agreement “had ground to a near standstill... The road to an acceptable text was neither certain nor

apparent,” Kirsch wrote in his account of the negotiating process.

Canada’s Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy was one of the keynote speakers when the plenipotentiaries assembled on July 15. By prosecuting those who commit war crimes and genocide, the court “will help to end cycles of impunity and retribution,” Axworthy told the delegates. “Without justice, there is no reconciliation, and without reconciliation, no peace.” The court, he said, should have a “constructive relationship with the United Nations, but must be independent, able to initiate proceedings without having court jurisdiction ‘triggered’ only by a State complaint or a Security Council referral.”⁵

Even as Axworthy spoke, with less than three days left to sign a treaty, there was still “no agreement on... the fundamental questions,” Kirsch’s account noted. The pushing by Kirsch and the lobbying of delegations by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan had failed to achieve a breakthrough. Kirsch was faced with two alternatives. He could report that no agreement had been reached, and suggest yet another effort at yet another, later conference. Or he and his “bureau of co-ordinates” could draft yet one more revised text, “designed to attract the broadest possible support.”⁶

The first alternative seemed to offer little hope for success in the foreseeable future. And no one expected that a revised text would, at this late date, win the agreement of all the delegations. But there was hope that a revised, new text would attract enough delegates to sign the treaty and launch the court. The revised text was

prepared with the burning of more midnight oil.

That is why, on the evening of Friday, July 17, those crowded into the Red Room in Rome were gripped by anticipation and apprehension as they considered Kirsch's new text and the fate of the International Criminal Court.

The first test came on a motion by India seeking amendments. Approval of these, it was argued, would sound the death knell of the treaty. The proposed amendments were defeated by a vote of 114 to 34. When a second set of amendments proposed by the United States was defeated by a similar margin, there was "cheering, hugging, weeping, and rhythmic applause."⁷ The final test came just minutes before midnight, on another U.S. proposal, to reject the entire treaty. Instead, the treaty was approved by 120 states, with seven opposed and 21 abstaining. Those voting with the United States were Israel, China, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Qatar.

At the treaty signing ceremonies on Saturday, Kofi Annan summed up what seemed to be the prevailing attitude of the court's strongest supporters:

"No doubt many of us would have liked a Court vested with even more far-reaching powers, but that should not lead us to minimize the breakthrough you have achieved. The establishment of the court is still a gift of hope to future generations, and a giant step forward in the march towards universal human rights and the rule of law. It is an achievement which, only a few years ago, nobody would have thought possible."⁸

The United States missed an opportunity "to shape the court in America's image," Yale University law professor

Ruth Wedgwood, wrote in a U.S. perspective of the Rome conference. President Bill Clinton and Foreign Secretary Madeleine Albright had touted the court “as a key aim of American foreign policy,” but on terms considered necessary to U.S. interests. The United States missed its opportunity, Wedgwood wrote, because Washington failed to instruct its negotiators at Rome about the terms it would accept, until after three weeks of negotiations. By then it was too late to effectively argue the U.S case, according to Wedgwood.⁹

The United States was concerned that its troops, stationed across the world, “should not face the added danger of politically motivated prosecutions” because of an international court, Wedgwood argued. But at the same time, “Important changes were made in the draft treaty to reassure the United States.” The result was “hostility that lingers toward the United States, in countries that made hard concession at Rome, only then to see America reject the entire treaty.”

The treaty came into effect in 2002 when the required minimum 60 states had ratified it. It was another year before the court was up and running, with its headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. Kirsch was among the first 18 elected judges, and served as the court’s first president for more than six years. By 2012, the treaty had been ratified by 119 nations, who were thus the International Criminal Court’s “state parties.” The United States was still not among them.

(Endnotes)

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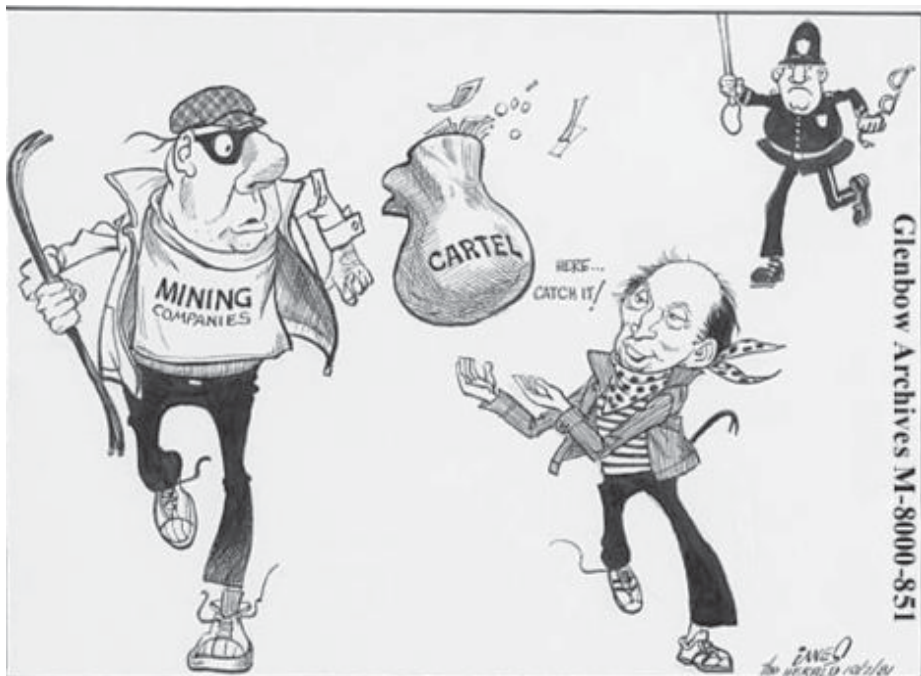
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— Canada @ 150 —

Talk about uranium cartel could land you in jail



Uranium mining companies toss their cartel to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in this Calgary *Herald* cartoon by Tom Innes, July 10, 1981.

In the 1970s, continued nuclear power development was still seen by many as essential to the energy needs of an increasing, and increasingly affluent, world population. But supplies of uranium fuel were threatened by a U.S. embargo that compelled U.S. power utilities to use only U.S. uranium. The embargo depressed prices from other sources, threatening to force the closure of at least a number of the uranium mines in Canada, Australia, and South Africa. The embargo was imposed despite the

fact that some of these mines had been developed with U.S. government encouragement, before the U.S. had its own domestic supplies. In response, the Canadian government lead in the creation of a world uranium cartel supposedly so secret that any Canadian who talked about it could be jailed.

Details of the cartel were exposed in my 1982 book, The Great Uranium Cartel (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.) Following excerpts shows how the cartel was set up, while a summary reports the aftermath, and the strains to Canadian-U.S. relations.

The existence of a uranium cartel, involving the governments and uranium mining companies of Canada, the United States, Australia, France, South Africa, and Germany, as well as an international mining firm with headquarters in England, was first brought to public attention in 1976 by some 200 pages of confidential documents stolen from the files of an Australian company.

The documents stolen from Mary Kathleen Uranium Ltd. revealed the establishment of the cartel in 1972. Its purpose was the classical purpose of a cartel: to control supply and increase price. In four years following the formation of the cartel, the world price of uranium increased by more than 700 percent.

The Mary Kathleen documents, as they soon became known, triggered a nuclear chain reaction that sent tremors through corporate headquarters, government offices, embassies, legislatures, and courthouses around the world.

A whole series of events was unleashed by the disclosure of the cartel. In the United States, a flagging inves-

tigation of uranium prices by the Department of Justice was quickly revived. A more sensational investigation was launched by a congressional committee, acting in concert with a committee of the New York state legislature. A score of law suits, with billions of dollars at stake, was launched. Canada, Australia, France, England, and South Africa took steps to protect their uranium producing companies from prosecution under U.S. laws. Diplomatic relations were strained as U.S. courts and legislators accused these governments of a cover-up, while the governments, in turn, accused the United States of heavy-handed attempts to extend its laws outside of its own borders, in violation of the sovereignty of other nations. The government of Canada went so far to protect Canadian uranium producers from prosecution under U.S. law as to pass a law which made it illegal for any Canadian to talk about the cartel. Having taken that step, Ottawa later charged the Canadian uranium mining companies with a criminal price conspiracy under Canadian law; this despite the fact that Ottawa had been instrumental in establishing the cartel in the first place.ⁱ

The root of the problem facing the uranium companies was the U.S. embargo that prohibited the use of foreign uranium in American nuclear power reactors. Ottawa maintained a steady drum-fire of diplomatic notes, discussions, and public statements, seeking removal of the embargo.

ⁱ The Canadian uranium mining companies were Rio Algom Ltd., Denison Mines Ltd., Gulf Minerals of Canada Ltd., Uranerz Canada Ltd. (UCL), Eldorado Nuclear Ltd., and Uranium Canada Ltd., the Crown corporation that handles the government's own uranium stockpile.

“The Canadian government has made repeated representation to the U.S. government with respect to the United States ‘viability embargo’ against imported uranium,” Ottawa declared in an Aide Memoire delivered to the U.S. Department of State in 1970. “Despite numerous assurances since it was introduced that the embargo was temporary, no progress has been made toward its removal.” The note pointed out that Canada’s

Uranium companies worried about losing sales if they did not join the cartel, or getting into legal trouble if they did. “None of us really wanted to be at those meetings. But none could risk not being there.”

uranium industry “developed in response to U.S. requirements,” was operating at one-third of current capacity, “by contrast with the United States uranium producing industry, which is operating at close to full capacity... The Canadian government views this situation with growing concern and draws the attention of the U.S. government to the fact that this embargo conflicts with U.S. obligations and Canadian rights under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [predecessor of the World Trade Organization]... The Canadian government therefore requests as a matter of urgent

concern that the U.S. government undertake to remove the embargo by a specified early date.”

The American response to the Canadian demand was spelled out by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission on October 13, 1971. Far from announcing an early date to remove the embargo, the AEC proposed to defer consideration of this matter until “the later part of the present decade.” In addition, the AEC outlined plans to dispose of its 50,000-ton stockpile, with safeguards intended to avoid disruption to the uranium market within the United States, but without any provisions to avoid disruptions to foreign markets.

If the Rothschild, Oppenheimer, and Rio-Tinto Zinc interests did, in fact, operate in the fashion of a club, in an effort to exert control over world uranium supplies and prices, it must have been a stormy club. At least it was stormy enough when they got together with other producers to officially organize a cartel, with more than a little help from their governments.

“None of us really wanted to be at those meetings,” according to an insider who confided to the author. “But no one could risk not being there. If you weren’t there when the pie was being sliced, you would worry about whether it was your pie that they were carving. And if you were there, you worried about the trouble you might be getting into.”

The minutes and reports of the semi-secret cartel meetings in Paris, London, Johannesburg, Nice, Toronto, Sydney, Geneva, and Las Palmas, suggest that trust at those meetings was in far shorter supply than uranium...

Jack Austin [Canada's Deputy Energy Minister] had a particular, and compelling, reason for wanting Gulf Minerals and Uranerz, the two partners in the huge [Saskatchewan] Rabbit Lake mine, to participate in the emerging plans for a uranium cartel. Canada—like almost every other nation—has a double standard about certain anticompetitive measures. They may be legal if they affect only the commerce and interests of other nations. Under Canada's Combines Investigation Act, a cartel of Canadian producers concerned with export sales may, under certain conditions, be legal. The effect, in this case, would be legal only if all Canadian uranium producers participated in the scheme. Otherwise, the producers that did participate, including the government's two Crown corporations, could be guilty of breaking Canadian criminal law. It was imperative that Gulf be roped in.

Gulf, however, had strong reasons for not wanting to join. It already had a market for its uranium, and there seemed to be a risk that it might lose part of that market. It was also concerned about the risk of violating antitrust laws; not only the Canadian laws that Gulf Minerals was subject to, but the American laws that its parent [Gulf Oil Corp.] in Pittsburgh was subject to. Ottawa felt strongly that Gulf Minerals was a Canadian corporation doing business in Canada, incorporated in Canada, and subject to the laws of Canada. That would be cold comfort for the Pittsburgh parent if it ever found itself in a U.S. court as a result of actions by its Canadian subsidiary, even if that subsidiary were acting in accord with Canadian law...

Although Gulf had not yet been invited to join the dis-

cussions [at the third cartel meeting in Paris] it was already being told that it was expected to participate in the contemplated producers' arrangement.ⁱⁱ The message came from Donald Stovel Macdonald, the strapping, six-foot-five, 40-year-old Toronto lawyer who, less than three months before had succeeded Joe Green as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

At a brief meeting in the minister's office on March 23, Macdonald had informed Nick Ediger [then manager of Gulf Minerals], Bud Estey [then outside legal counsel for Gulf Minerals and later a Supreme Court justice], and Roger Allen [staff lawyer with Gulf Mineral Resources] that a marketing arrangement by the uranium mining producers would be in Canada's interest, and he "urgently hoped" Gulf would participate. According to a Gulf memo, Macdonald "strongly implied that if the Canadian producers could unanimously arrive at a position regarded as acceptable by the government, the government was prepared to enforce agreement by creating a uranium marketing board or some other formal compulsory fashion."

(Another Gulf memo commented: "Bud Estey says Macdonald is key man; unfortunately, much of his authority is delegated to Austin, who seems to be less reliable.")

The Canadian producers met in Ottawa on April 10 at the request of Jack Austin to establish a position for

ⁱⁱ Gulf was not quite yet a uranium producer, since the Rabbit Lake mine it was developing with Uranerz was not scheduled to start production until 1975. Thus it had not participated in the first three cartel meetings in Paris, in February and March, 1972.

the fourth Paris meetings, now set for April 20 and 21. Austin reported that the March meeting in Paris had “terminated with the direction that the Canadian producers determine if they could get their house in order to present a unified position; otherwise further meetings in Paris would serve no useful purpose,” according to a file note prepared by Roger Allen. Rio Algom, Denison and Eldorado claimed that their suggested allocations were “unacceptable and they will not join unless it is increased.” Denison president John Kostuik argued that the Rabbit Lake mine should be deferred or its production rate cut back. Rio Algom vice president George Albino claimed that if the Rabbit Lake producers did not give up a part of their market share, “there was nothing further to discuss, as Rio Algom would not completely remove itself from the market for this five-year period in order that the desires of the Rabbit Lake producers could be attained.”

Failing to come to terms on how to share the market, the meeting turned to the other problem: whether what they were proposing was legal. Austin reported that “an opinion had been obtained from the director of the Combines Investigation Branch that the arrangement is legal as it is presently understood by the director but that it could later become illegal if orders have to be declined by Canadian producers as a result of the arrangement.” Stripped of the jargon, this meant if the cartel was to have any effect, it would almost certainly become illegal.

Gulf and Uranerz at this point, according to Allen’s file memo, protested that even if it were legal under Canadian law “their participation would be dependent upon a determination that it would not result in violation of

United States or German antitrust law.”

That brought out a hint of the way in which Ottawa (or perhaps Jack Austin) would eventually arrange Canadian participation in the cartel. Gulf and Uranerz would have to obey Canadian law, not foreign law. The government would make the arrangement legal. Gulf and Uranerz would participate whether they wanted to or not.

In blunt terms, Austin stated that “both Gulf and UCL are Canadian corporations operating in Canada and accordingly subject to the laws of Canada,” Allen wrote. “He again stressed the cabinet’s desire for the producers to implement the agreement without the necessity of direct government implementation such as creating a uranium marketing board. However, if government implementation proved necessary he would advise he felt sure it would be considered by the cabinet.” Austin then told the producers that “a formal declaration would be sought from the cabinet (with the minister of justice present) that the arrangement is in the national interest of Canada.” Once this was obtained, “Gulf and Uranerz would be directed to participate in the arrangement if other Canadian producers acquiesced in being so directed... Neither Gulf nor UCL were given an opportunity to agree or object to the Canadian government’s direction to participate in the arrangement.”

The duration of the planned cartel emerges as a subtle but crucial element of the Paris discussions. Ottawa had said that it was opposed to any extension of arrangements beyond 1977, as well it might. The longer such an arrangement was in place, the greater would be the difficulty of forecasting its effects, and the greater the risk of violating Canada’s Combines law. Gulf, too, had

said it would not participate in any arrangement extending beyond the six-year period. It foresaw the possibilities of the U.S. embargo being lifted in the late 1970s, which would increase its exposure under U.S. antitrust laws.

The Australians, however, pressed strongly for an arrangement extending through 1980. Their new mines were not slated to come into production until 1975 or 1976, and a market allocation plan that extended only through to the end of 1977 would be of little value to them.

Despite the thorny issues involved, Jack Austin hinted at a separate meeting of the Canadian caucus that he had in mind a separate arrangement extending well beyond 1980. He saw a need to stabilize prices not only in times of surplus supply, but in times of shortages as well. By the end of the 1970s, Austin said, “demand pressures then would be very high, and there would be just as much need to regulate the situation then, as now, when there was such an over-abundance of supply.” Failure to curb rising prices at a time of shortages, Austin suggested, would lead to yet another boom-and-bust cycle.

Austin was finessing the Canadian producers with a very subtle ploy. Unknown to the producers Ottawa by this time decided that the legal risks in the arrangements as contemplated were unacceptable, even if the arrangement terminated at the end of 1977. Austin hardly wanted to confess this aspect to the producers, at this late stage. There was a way around the problem, but it would require some adroit maneuvering. Ottawa would pass a resolution issued by the cabinet under

the authority of the Atomic Energy Control Act, which would seem to make participation in the cartel legal, in spite of the Combines law. The cabinet, however, did not want to issue such a regulation unless it was requested by the producers to do so. An extension of the cartel's terms would make more visible, and the producers would clearly see, the merit in requesting the government to pass the necessary regulation. Austin's strategy would be played out during the next several weeks. It was not for nothing that he had a reputation as a master poker player.

Gulf was feeling the increasing pressure to get in line. An internal memo at Gulf's Pittsburgh head office on April 28 concluded that "failure on Gulf's part to submit to coercive pressure being applied by the Canadian government respecting Gulf's participation would almost certainly result in severe adverse consequences for Gulf, including material deterioration of Gulf's relations with the Canadian government."

What Energy Minister Donald Macdonald was saying in private about the need for an international arrangement to improve uranium prices, he was also saying in public, although in somewhat more guarded terms. In March he told a House of Commons standing committee that "the government of Canada has taken steps for the holding of discussions at an international level regarding the state of the uranium industry... In the absence of international market stability the development of the resources required for the nuclear power industry in the 1980s will not be ensured." In another statement he declared that "it is critical that a resource exporter like Canada derives the capital from minerals and energy

commodities to achieve much broader industrial goals and make sure the national interest is protected in the international marketplace.” He did not mention that the discussions were being held not just with other governments, but with corporations.

While pushing for a producers’ agreement, it was becoming increasingly clear in Ottawa that steering such an arrangement through the legal shoals would be a formidable task. Both the combines director of investigations and the Justice department had advised the cabinet in March that such an arrangement held considerable risk of violating criminal law. The cabinet ordered a study of alternatives, including legislation to amend the Combines Investigation Act so as to exempt uranium marketing for a six-year period, or the establishment of a federal marketing agency. Another way would be to pass a regulation under the Atomic Energy Control Act.

The act already gave the federal government broad authority over virtually every aspect of uranium production and marketing. It would be a simple matter for the cabinet to issue a regulation under this act, authorizing the Atomic Energy Control Board to set uranium export prices and to allocate the export sales among Canadian producers, according to directions issued by the minister of energy. The regulation would be law. And the directions from the minister to the board would implement the export volumes and prices determined by the cartel. There would no longer be any question about the producers agreeing to the terms set by the cartel: they would be compelled by Canadian law to do so.

The next meeting of the Canadian uranium producers

was held on May 9 to discuss the upcoming meeting in Johannesburg—assuming there was agreement to hold another meeting.

There was by now routine argument about whose law Gulf Minerals would obey. Nick Ediger's file memo records:

I told the group Gulf was diligently pursuing a legal opinion with respect to its position in the U.S., and because of the potential gravity, it would take some time. Mr. MacNabb [Gordon MacNabb, then assistant deputy minister of energy] expressed his irritation at the extra-territorial effect of U.S. law. Albino, an American citizen, executive vice president of Rio Algom, with a wholly-owned subsidiary producing in the U.S., suggested that Gulf was overly concerned.

There was some question about whether Gulf would attend the planned Johannesburg meeting, and two different accounts of Gulf's response. [Government note taker] John Runnels's minutes reported: "Mr. Austin asked if Gulf was prepared... to go ahead and take the associated risk. Mr. Ediger replied in the affirmative." But Nick Ediger's file memo contains a different account: "All Canadian producers confirmed that they would attend... No one asked me so I kept my mouth shut."

There was also discussion about an "aide memoire" that all the Canadian producers were expected to sign at the Johannesburg meeting, stating that "All the undersigned Canadian uranium producers agree that it would be desirable to establish a marketing arrangement in the period to the end of 1977." The document, however, was ambivalent about a possible extension to 1980. It noted that "the major threat to the establishment of a suitable

arrangement stems from the new Australian producers,” and that this threat would be reduced considerably if an approximate allocation for all uranium producers could be specified during the period 1978-80.” It concluded, however, that there is no proposal at this time acceptable to all Canadian uranium producers to enter into any arrangement for the 1978-80 period.” The holdout was Gulf Minerals. Ediger had told the meeting, according to Runnalls’s minutes, that Gulf “could not contemplate an arrangement that would extend beyond 1977.”

The matter of the cartel’s term had still not been resolved when 14 representatives of Canadian uranium producers met at the Presidential Hotel in Johannesburg on the evening of May 28 “to discuss the strategy to be adopted for the meeting of international uranium producers commencing the next day.” It was time for Austin to play his hand, finessing the producers into requesting the regulation that would make adherence to the cartel arrangements a matter of Canadian law.

“Mr. Austin opened the meeting by indicating that the international discussions... would be difficult because the Australians would be going into these meetings feeling they had the whip hand,” John Runnells reported in his minutes. “The major problem would be the Australian allocation from 1978 onward... All the parties with the exception of Canada would insist on an agreement to the end of 1980.”

There were pointed suggestions that the Australians, having learned of the proposed price schedule of the proposed cartel that they proposed to join, had been selling all the uranium they could, at prices below the

cartel's tentative prices. If the Australians could not be trusted as this stage, Austin asked, "how would it be possible to look forward to a stable arrangement later?"

Most of the Canadian producers appeared willing, if somewhat reluctant, to extend the term. Eldorado president Bill Gilchrist said it would be "unwise" to go beyond 1980. Rio Algom vice president George Albino said that the "Australian position was not an illogical one." Denison president John Kostuik said that he would accept an extension to 1980 rather than "be the one to prevent any possibility for an arrangement." Ediger said that there had to be "some firm termination date."

Now that the producers had agreed that the cartel must be extended, Austin played his next card. He told the meeting that there was a possibility that a marketing arrangement could run afoul of the Combines Investigation Act. "It seemed to be a reasonable business risk to accept an arrangement up to 1977. Beyond that, however, the risk of infraction of the act was substantial. Hence the government of Canada, having listened to the advice of three separate departments on the issue, had decided that 1977 should be the limit of any arrangement"...

Austin added that "the government was sympathetic to a longer term that would be applied not during the demand scarcity but later on when there was a shortage of supply." There was, however, a catch. Because of its policy that it would not force anyone into an arrangement, "The government would not regulate ... unless such a request was made."

The position thus seemed to be, no extension, no cartel.

Extend the cartel and there was a grave risk of breaking criminal law. The government could resolve this by passing a regulation. But the producers would have to ask for the regulation. And they would have to make up their minds right away. "It would be necessary to reach a consensus at the present meeting," Runnells's minutes reported, "because on the following day the Canadians would have to disclose whether or not they were prepared to enter an arrangement extending into 1980."

Austin was asked how long it would take to pass such a regulation: nor more than four to six weeks, he responded. Austin did not mention that he had already been ordered to draft the regulation. The Energy Department had already decided that this was the route to follow, and Austin went to get the necessary request from the producers.

George Albino "asked if a request from Rio Algom and Denison would be sufficient. Mr. Austin replied that the action could be initiated with requests from the existing Canadian producers. Neither Gulf nor UCL would be asked to agree. Nevertheless he wondered what their position might be. Mr. Allen replied that from Gulf's standpoint, compliance with the laws of the host government would be an overriding consideration..

"Mr. Austin then asked if Denison, Rio Algom and Eldorado agreed that they would request the government to proclaim a regulation under section 9(c) of the Atomic Energy Control Act to specify price levels and volumes of [export] sales. Messrs. Kostuik, Albino and Gilchrist all agreed that they would make such a request."

Jack Austin had played his hand.

Trump!

On June 14, Austin wrote to Macdonald:

“Attached for your consideration and signature is a memorandum to cabinet reporting on the recent meeting of uranium producers in Johannesburg and on the details of the marketing arrangements which they have concluded. The memorandum recommends approval of the terms of the arrangement and the drafting and promulgation of a regulation and/or direction under the Atomic Energy Control Act which would ensure Canadian producer compliance with the Johannesburg agreement and would effectively protect them from any litigation which might otherwise be possible under anti-cartel legislation. All producers support the proposal... which would require compliance with the agreed terms of the marketing arrangements and thereby exempt the arrangement from the operation of the Combines Investigation Act.”

Austin did not mention that this excluded Gulf and Uranerz.”

After the cabinet had issued the regulation, Macdonald, in turn, on August 23, issued the first directive to the Atomic Energy Control Board, setting the volume and prices of uranium export sales, other than to the United States, and allocating sales among the Canadian producers.

The cartel was in business.

POSTSCRIPT

The cartel was intended to operate for at least eight years. It fell apart within two years, but it roiled international relations and politics for another three years. The world uranium price was less than \$5 per pound while the

protected U.S. price was \$6 when the cartel was set up in 1972. The cartel managed to add \$2 to the world price in 1973, bringing it in line with an increased U.S. price. The cartel became ineffective early in 1974 when market forces pushed prices past those it had set among its members. In 1975, the price soared to \$25 per pound, far in excess of what the cartel could have accomplished, or even envisioned.

Jack Austin had envisioned a cartel that would boost uranium prices when supply exceeded demand, and curb prices when demand exceeded supply. It didn't work out that way. The uranium cartel was overtaken by a bigger cartel, the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries. OPEC boosted world oil prices from \$2.45 per barrel in 1970 to \$2.50 in 1972, when the uranium cartel was formed, and \$10.50 the next year, when OPEC cut its oil production by one-quarter and embargoed sales to the United States and the Netherlands, where majority interest of Royal Dutch Shell is held. There were gasoline shortages—U.S. motorists lined up for blocks to fill up—and a threat of a cold winter in both Canada and the United States.

OPEC didn't cause an increase in the immediate demand for uranium, but it did contribute to a demand for contracted supplies. For nuclear power companies, many with just three- to five-year uranium supply contracts, the OPEC surge in oil prices demonstrated the virtue of longer-term supplies. Greater mining capacity would have to be on tap to enable longer term purchase contracts. Inquiries by U.S. utilities for new or longer-term uranium purchase increased 10-fold, from 15,000 tons in 1972 to 150,000 tons in 1973. There were other

factors. The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission proposed to reduce the amount of plant fuel recovered in its uranium enrichment process, which would increase the amount of mined uranium needed by 20 percent. Australia reduced the amount of uranium available for contract when, in 1973, it banned new sales contracts. France, in early 1974, launched the world's most ambitious program of nuclear power generation, for which it needed large long-term supplies.

The cartel clearly was not a significant factor—if a factor at all—in the big run up of uranium prices. But that was not the way it was perceived by many in the United States. There was a cartel that sought to increase ex-U.S. uranium prices; prices soared; ergo, the cartel was the cause. That was the view expounded in a sweeping inquiry by the U.S. Department of Justice; at public hearings held by a Congressional sub-committee, and in private lawsuits, most notably involving Westinghouse Corporation.

Westinghouse, a major supplier of nuclear power reactors, was caught in a power squeeze, having failed to heed the warning of an old adage, “He who sells what isn't his'n, must buy it back or go to prison.” To help sell its nuclear reactors, Westinghouse contracted to supply its utility customers with uranium at \$10 a pound, but neglected to contract for the purchase of the uranium. In 1975, when the market price was \$25 per ton, Westinghouse was on the hook for 72 million pounds of uranium it didn't have, nor did it have a couple of billion dollars to buy it. It notified 27 U.S. and three Swedish utilities that it couldn't provide the uranium.

The utilities scrambled to find the fuel they needed, driving the price of uranium as high as \$41. The utilities sued Westinghouse, and Westinghouse sued 29 uranium firms, blaming its troubles on a price conspiracy by the cartel and others in cahoots with the cartel. The lawsuits raged for a couple of years—helping to keep the cartel in the headlines—before Westinghouse and it

U.S Justice Department accuses cartel of soaring prices, despite law prohibiting purchase of foreign uranium. State Department protests. Ottawa issues gag law. Justice Department later finds U.S uranium industry was “massively anti-competitive.”

customers settled their difference out of court. For countless lawyers involved it was better than a uranium mine—it was a gold mine.

A joint investigation and public hearings by a U.S. Congressional sub-committee and a committee of the New York legislature also helped keep the cartel in the headlines.

The biggest investigation was launched by the U.S. Department of Justice, reportedly spurred by an article in the January, 1975 issue of *Forbes*, warning U.S. power utilities soon “may be at the mercy of a uranium cartel.”

It was not just Canada and the other cartel governments

that protested U.S. snooping into actions that complied with the laws of sovereign nations. Even the U.S. Department of State vigorously and continuously protested the action of the Justice Department, pointing out that the cartel could not have affected U.S. uranium prices because U.S. power utilities were barred, by U.S. law, from buying any foreign uranium.

The Justice Department pressed on, regardless. It demanded untold thousands of pages of documents from all the Canadian, U.S, British, Australian, German and Southern African firms of the cartel. Ottawa was not about to allow the Canadian firms to comply with U.S. jurisdiction. On September 22, Ottawa enacted the Uranium Securities Information Regulations, which carried a jail term of up to five years for anyone in Canada who disclosed cartel documents, or even talked about it.

Frustrated in efforts in Canada, the Justice Department spent a year seeking cartel evidence and testimony from seven top officials of Rio Tinto-Zinc Corporation. A British appeals court ultimately ruled that the RTZ officials must testify. A hearing was organized before a U.S. judge. "A bit cheeky of these American lawyer chaps, coming to London and setting up court to ask question about a uranium cartel," the *Washington Post* opined, tongue in cheek. The RTZ officials refused to testify. The Justice Department threatened criminal charges if they didn't. The matter went to the House of Lords. The Lords ruled that the RTZ people did not have to testify. The *Financial Times* commented:

"This ruling is an important new episode in a continuing struggle by other countries to resist the attempt of U.S. courts and federal regulatory agencies to enforce

**Meet
the
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**Alexander
Earle Gray**
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their authority on foreign nationals transacting business outside of the U.S.”

Beyond doubt, U.S. extra-territorial jurisdiction that long rankled Canadian-American relations was exacerbated by U.S. investigation of the uranium cartel. The matter was raised by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau during a two-day meeting with President Jimmy Carter in Washington in February 1977. “Trudeau raised long-standing Canadian concerns about the extra-territorial application of U.S. law,” a State Department memo noted. The bluntest protest came later that year, on June 16, from Donald Macdonald, by this time Minister of Finance. In a television interview, Macdonald accused the United States of using a “big stick” in uranium investigation.

“The U.S. was engaging in predatory pricing policies driving... Canadian and other producers out of the world markets,” Macdonald stated. “...we acted to protect ourselves from these predatory American tactics and now they are saying ‘you are maintaining a cartel.’ We don’t think the Americans should use a big stick against a Canadian policy which... was basically one to protect ourselves from predatory policies followed by the American government.”

The next day U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell was sitting in the visitors’ gallery in the House of Commons when Macdonald repeated his message. He protested that “the United States would seek to apply its laws in Canada, against the laws of the government of Canada, and I do not regard that as a friendly act.”

The hypocrisy of the whole affair lay in the fact that the

U.S. Department of Justice ignored a truly effective cartel-like situation. while assailing the international cartel which, at best, raised world uranium prices to the same level as U.S. prices for a period of no more than two years. The hypocrisy was later confirmed by the Justice Department itself, in a document asserting that the U.S. uranium mining industry, sheltered from foreign competition by the embargo, was “massively anti-competitive.”