The Formative Years

illustrations by C. W. Jefferys
Review in Review

Who was C.W. Jefferys?
The man whose paintings and drawings illustrate this issue of the Review is Canada’s greatest historical artist. In a working life that spanned 60 years he illustrated Canadian history from the time of Jean Cabot. Other artists have portrayed Canada’s history, but Jefferys is recognized as the best of them all. For one thing, his details are as authentic as painstaking research could make them—there is a story that he once spent $100 on a book about early firearms so that he could draw the muskets of Champlain’s men correctly.

Not only did Jefferys know what the things he drew looked like; he drew them in a style that made those details clear—he used a hard, clean, practical line that stripped his subject bare, reducing it almost to a plan.

But Jefferys put something else into his drawings, a vitality and liveliness that made them more than historical records. He drew events as he imagined them to have happened, and the people in his drawings have the look of being caught in the act. Jefferys gave his historical characters such bounding life that his drawings have taken on the status of unofficial portraits. His painting of Mackenzie reaching the Pacific, for instance, shows the strain of the trip overland in the explorer’s gaunt face and in the exhausted poses of his tattered men. And that is the way it must have been, without flags or fanfare or upraised sword; just a bunch of tired men, with a long journey still before them, and Mackenzie alone aware of their accomplishment.

Jefferys knew the historical value of his work, and one of his last aims was to bring it all together into a single collection. He was working on the project with Imperial Oil when he died in 1951 at the age of 82. Since then the collection has grown to include approximately 1,200 drawings and paintings, including the 102 drawings Jefferys did for an edition of Sam Slick stories. Jefferys considered the Sam Slick drawings his best work, although a Canadian Customs officer once ruled them dutiable on the grounds that mere black and white drawings could not be considered art, which is duty-free.

The collection is maintained today by Imperial Oil, and the company makes reproductions available for cultural and educational purposes without charge.

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Cover/Louis-Joseph Papineau
addressing an election crowd in the 1830s

Editor/James Knight
Design/W. A. Williamson

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Conflagration
by Robert Collins

The War of 1812

It was doomed to be one of the forgotten wars of history. For the British, at the time, it was just a minor colonial skirmish in the boondocks of North America. For the Americans, it was a defeat best forgotten as quickly as possible. For Canadians, even now, the War of 1812-14 languishes in most of our history books as a dry, inconsequential little fracas.

Yet what a war it was. It had everything: trickery, gallantry, atrocities; Indians, redcoats, battleships, cavalry charges; cowards, heroes, and bunglers. It was probably the crucial war in our history. For the first and only important time, Canada’s two founding races stood together to drive an invader from their soil. Had they failed there’d be no centennial to celebrate this year. But they won and, united as never before, went on to build a country.

Canada was anything but a country then. Its mere half million people in the Maritimes, Lower Canada (now Quebec) and Upper Canada (Ontario), were strung out in handfuls on the rim of the wilderness. They had little in common except the British flag. Some were Americans, who’d arrived in the wake of the United Empire Loyalists but whose loyalty was much less certain. Nearly two thirds were French-Canadian, who still bore no particular love for Britain. All were caught in a familiar squeeze, one they’d already experienced during earlier boundary settlements: on the one hand, nearly eight million Americans, flexing their newly found muscles; on the other, mother England, collecting and hoarding pieces of Empire like so many postage stamps.

Historians still debate the real cause of the war. The superficial reasons were plain enough. Britain, locked in a death struggle with Napoleon, forbade trade with France and was strong enough at sea to enforce it. Not only did she block neutral America’s trade but invoked the right to search, for British navy deserters, any merchantmen she could catch. Of the many insulting ‘incidents’ arising from this high-handed policy, the most outrageous came in 1807 when the British plucked some genuine American sailors from the U.S. Navy frigate Chesapeake, killing others in the process. No matter that Britain was wrong and apologized. From then on Americans screamed for England’s blood.

Many of them—and here was an underlying cause of the war—welcome the excuse to challenge England. They still hated the British, coveted Canada and thought the latter would be an easy conquest. Former president Thomas Jefferson said victory would be ‘a mere matter of marching’. Future president Andrew Jackson pictured it as a ‘military promenade’. Henry Clay, a warlike nationalist, trumpeted, ‘I would take the whole continent from them. I wish never to see
peace till we do.' The U.S. secretary of war believed war was unnecessary; a disenchanted Canada would come running to the Stars and Stripes at the first invitation.

They were all wrong, partly because they misjudged Canadians, partly because of American military blunders, partly because not all Americans wanted war. On the vote in June, 1812, the Senate was divided, 19-13; the House of Representatives, 79-49. Boston flew flags at half-mast when war was declared. New England as a whole refused to fight or buy U.S. war bonds and traded amicably with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick throughout.

But the Canadians wanted war even less. They were still struggling up from a primitive pioneer society. Communications were slow; roads were little better than trails. Particularly in Upper Canada, which was to bear the brunt of the war, the days and nights were filled with hard work and simple diversion: farming, milling, dancing, singing in the taverns, horse racing, hunting and amateur theatricals. Canadians had neither the heart nor facilities for battle.

They were shockingly outnumbered. At the outbreak, 8,000 British and Canadian regulars and less than 20,000 fighting militia stood against America's 35,000 regulars and a fluctuating rabble of militia in the hundreds of thousands. By war's end Britain and Canada had mustered a mere 125,000 fighting men to America's 750,000. All the same, Canada started with some distinct assets: discipline, training, purpose and a leader.

He was Upper Canada's General Isaac Brock, a 43-year-old career soldier with all the qualities of greatness. He was physically striking; six-foot-two with powerful shoulders, massive head and a strong shaft of a nose. He cut a fine swath in colonial society but he was no ballroom general. He had taken the Canadian posting reluctantly, yearning for the action and glory of European campaigns. But with characteristic thoroughness and fluent French learned in his native Guernsey, he studied the people and problems of the Canadas. He grew so committed to the colony that he later turned down a posting to Spain.

Brock's troops, in turn, liked him, for he was fair—a rare trait in an age when a lost tunic button could earn a soldier 50 strokes from a lash picked in brine. He was utterly fearless and made quick, accurate decisions. He knew the future battlegrounds as no other commander did. And in a war that dickered sporadically over three distinct fronts—the Niagara peninsula and Upper Canada west, the Montreal and lower St. Lawrence region, and the Great Lakes—Brock was the standout, the first real Canadian war hero, the pace-setter for all who followed.

The Americans, for their part, set a different pattern: bungling and bournemouth from the very beginning. Right after war's declaration, a U.S. fur trader, John Jacob Astor—more concerned about his northern trade than his patriotism—sent relays of warning riders to the British at Niagara and his agents in Montreal. Canada promptly capitalized on the tip. Captain Charles Roberts, posted high on Lake Huron, pondered conflicting orders from Canadian Governor-General Sir George Prevost ('Don't attack') and Brock ('Use your own judgment') and chose the one he liked. He moved on America's nearby Fort Michilimackinac with 43 redcoats, 180 voyageurs and 400 Indians. The U.S. commander was understandably surprised; the war had been on for a month but nobody'd told him. He surrendered without a shot.

Upper Canada was heartened. So were flocks of uncommitted Indians who now joined up with Canada. But not so William Hull, an aging U.S. general who'd been making forays and bloodcurdling threats across the Canadian border. He feared the scalping knife and further British attacks and he now scurried back to his headquarters at Detroit.

Meanwhile, the Canadians had captured a Yankee schooner with Hull's secret plans and evidence of dissent in his ranks. That
was enough for Brock. As the favorite ballad of the day, 'The Bold Canadian', told it:

*At length our brave commander,
Sir Isaac Brock by name,
Took shipping at Niagara
And unto York he came.
Says he, 'Ye valiant heroes,
Will ye go along with me
To fight those proud Yankees
In the west of Canada?'

Brock and his force took bateaux down Lake Erie to a fort at Amherstburg. Here he met a man in his own mold: Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief, already a legend in the region. The Shawnee was 43, a tense sinewy five-foot-nine, with light copper skin and bright hazel eyes. He was a born warrior. Already with 25 braves he'd routed a Hull force of 200. Yet unlike most Indians he was compassionate. Once Tecumseh captured three of Hull's messengers, stained with walnut juice in a clumsy attempt to slip past his scouts, but he refused to torture the phony redskins.

Now, while Brock listened quietly to reports and gave cold, quick orders, Tecumseh cried to his followers, 'Ho-o-oe, this is a man!' At a war council that night he backed Brock's plan of attack and carved from memory on a strip of bark a remarkably detailed map of the terrain around Fort Detroit. It was a formidable stronghold: 22-foot ramparts, a palisade of 10-foot hardwood spikes, 33 cannon and an eight-foot moat. Within were 2,000 men. Brock had 700 whites (half of whom were raw militia) and 600 Indians. But he moved down river opposite Detroit, demanded Hull's surrender, was refused.

In the morning the astonished Hull looked out to find Brock on his doorstep. It was a small but awesome force. Tecumseh had gathered a glittering array of tribes, with names that throbbed like distant war drums: Shawnee, Miami, Fox, Sac, Ottawa, Wyan-
dot, Chippewa, Potawatomi, Winnebago, Dakota. Brock's regulars were resplendent targets in scarlet tunics, grey trousers, red shakos and varying sashes, belts, braid and buttons depending on rank. The general himself was magnificent—full dress scarlet with gold lace and buttons, red cocked hat, white trousers, glistening black boots. As always he rode in front ('Other chiefs say 'Go', he says 'Come',') Tecumseh marvelled) on his splendid grey charger, Alfred. Tecumseh, on a grey mustang, rode beside him.

Hull was already unnerved. Indians frightened him. A lucky Canadian cannon shot from across the river had killed four of his men. Now, according to the ballad:

**Those Yankee hearts began to ache,**
**Their blood it did run cold.**
**To see us marching forward**
**So courageous and so bold.**
**Their general sent a flag to us,**
**For quarter he did call,**
**Saying, 'Stay your hand, brave British boys,**
**I fear you'll slay us all.'**

Which is precisely what happened. Hull surrendered without a shot. Brock ceremoniously gave Tecumseh his sash and pistols, receiving in return the Shawnee's gaudy sash with woven arrow pattern. Then he turned the fort over to a subordinate, Col. Henry.
BLOCK HOUSES

Diagonal Blockhouse

At Fort York, Toronto

At Kingston Mills to guard Rideau Canal

Stone Blockhouse in Fort Wellington, Prescott, Ont.

Shingle-covered Blockhouse in Fort Edward, Windsor, N.S.

FORTS at the MOUTH of the NIAGARA

Ft. Niagara  Ft. George  Newark Lighthouse  Battery

Procter, and returned to jubilant Upper Canada where he shrewdly attributed the victory to his ‘homespun warriors’. In fact, the militia was never a really decisive factor; the trained regulars (including many Canadians) did the real fighting throughout the war. But until then, Canada’s morale was at rock bottom; now it soared.

Given his head, Brock would have carried the war into other American territory. But Prevost, not noted for his military acumen, negotiated a temporary armistice in a try for peace. While it dragged on, the Americans hastily reinforced their posts. When the armistice ended, September 7, 1812, they had amassed 6,800 men to Brock’s 1,700 along the 33 miles of Niagara River between Lakes Erie and Ontario. Now Brock could only wait, outnumbered and meagerly equipped, wondering where the attack would come.

Near 4 a.m. on October 13 he sprang from his bed at Fort George to the sound of distant gunfire. He knew the enemy might strike Fort George, or Queenston Heights seven miles away, or both. He flung on his clothes, sprang to the saddle and made for the gate. A mud-splattered dragoon met him: ‘Enemy crossing the river in force!’ Crouched low over Alfred’s neck he urged the charger down the river road. Church bells began to cry the alarm. Lights winked on in houses. Brock pounded on through the wind and drizzle, his last ride, a race to literally save Canada. Ahead he could see the flicker of cannon: his own two against the American 24. Another messenger met him. Brock waved him alongside without breaking stride and listened as they rode: Americans were swarming ashore at Queenston. ‘Go back to Fort George, get General Sheaffe and all available men,’ he ordered and pressed on.

He burst into Queenston in the half-light. A handful of soldiers cheered him. He galloped up the Heights which rise 345 feet over the Niagara River at this point. A single
Suddenly there were yells from the rear: 300 Yankees had found a little-known fisherman's path up the Heights, circled behind, and were charging. 'Spike the gun,' cried Brock and, leading his horse, ran down-hill with the gunners.

The rain was over. In bright morning sunshine he gathered a hundred men, led them to the bottom of the hill, said, 'Take your breath, boys, you'll need it.' Then he paraded Alfred apologetically for the punishing ride and, on foot, led a sword and bayonet charge up the Heights. The Americans wiled Brock, always in front in his scarlet, caught a bullet in the wrist but ignored it. The enemy fell back to the brink of the cliff. Then an American stepped from the brush 30 yards away, took deliberate aim and shot Brock in the chest. He died almost instantly. His men, shocked and disorganized, retreated with his body.

Brock's side, Col. John Macdonell, led another charge. Again the Americans retreated; again the Canadians' leader was
killed; again the Americans surged back. Now the Stars and Stripes floated over Queenston Heights. Two thousand militia men prepared to cross from the opposite shore. But suddenly America’s victory went sour. Sheaffe was closing in with reinforcements. Indian gunfire and warwhoops drew nearer. And the American militia—mainly noted for insolence to officers, dozing on sentry duty and going home on whim—lost its nerve. Improbable as it would, American General Van Rensselaer couldn’t get 2,000 of his militia to set foot on Canadian soil. The regulars and militia on the Heights were soon overpowered. Suddenly it was a smashing Canadian victory—but Brock was gone. Still, he had saved Canada, for a time at least.

His successor, Sheaffe, was a poor substitute but for a time this didn’t matter. The Americans were busily fighting each other. Washington replaced the luckless Van Rensselaer with General Alexander Smyth, who scolded his militia for their shabby conduct. Some promptly deserted. Others shot at Smyth whenever he ventured from his tent—and sometimes even when he didn’t.

The next year began no better for the U.S. Procter moved out of Fort Detroit with a thousand whites and Indians, took on an equal number of Americans at Frenchtown (now Monroe, Michigan) one January dawn and won a gory victory. He took 300 prisoners and couldn’t stop the Indians—still nursing old grievances against these western Yankees who’d taken their land and razed their villages—from literally butchering many of the 400 others who were killed in the fight.

But in April America finally won a campaign. A strong force sailed over Lake Ontario to York. The capital of Upper Canada wasn’t much of a town: government buildings, marketplace with pillory for wrongdoers, frame houses, mills, dirt streets that turned to quagmire in the rain, and 1,200 people plus the army. The army, under floundering Sheaffe, was ill-prepared. Its confusion was compounded when an artilleryman accidentally dropped a lighted match in a chest of cartridges, blowing 35 men in the air.

The invaders quickly took the town. Sheaffe and his regulars retreated, setting off a powder magazine that killed 200 Americans and made them so angry they burned the Parliament Buildings. They also looted a few stores, paroled all men of military age and sailed south. A month later they took Fort George, at the junction of Lake Ontario and the Niagara River. Now the Niagara frontier was theirs. With a little effort they could probably sever Upper Canada from the east.

But the stubborn colonials stopped them again. On June 5, after pursuing the remnants of the Fort George detachment (who had fled north to Burlington Bay), the Americans camped overnight at Stoney Creek, on the southeast edge of the present site of Hamilton. They planned to end it all the next day—but they waited one night too long. Around 2 a.m., outnumbered about two to one as usual, a force of 700 Canadian and British regulars attacked the enemy camp. They’d stolen the American counter-sign, thanks to a talkative Yankee prisoner and a sharp-eyed Canadian settler, and used

Charles-Michel de Salabery at Chateauguay, 1813
ally, he already had word of the attack. But her deed was no less heroic and Laura Secord was forever enshrined in the hearts and chocolate boxes of her countrymen. Soon after, the Americans marched into an Indian ambush and surrendered before the Canadian regulars fired a shot.

Farther west, Procter had come upon hard times. His presence at Detroit had been keeping all of what is now south-western Ontario out of enemy hands, but defeat was only a matter of time. His Indian forces fluctuated unpredictably, his militia had to go back to the farms, he was low on supplies, and the Americans controlled Lake Erie. In September he burned Fort Detroit and began a long retreat up the River Thames. At Moraviantown, about 70 miles upriver, Tecumseh induced him to make a stand. The Shawnee himself sensed it was the end. 'My body will

Laura Secord warns Colonel Fitzgibbon of planned attack on Beaver Dam

Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thames, 1813

it to silently capture the sentries. Then they took the Yankee cannon at bayonet point and the Americans retreated, disorganized, to Fort George. They were not alone in their confusion. British General John Vincent had his horse shot from under him, got lost in the woods and showed up the next morning minus hat and sword.

The Canadians advanced cautiously as far as Beaver Dam, near Queenston. Their Indians constantly harassed the enemy. Finally the Americans assigned 600 picked men to wipe out Beaver Dam. A few nights before the attack, two American officers invited themselves to dinner at the home of James Secord, a Loyalist still recovering from wounds received while fighting for Brock at Queenston Heights. As they ate their commandeer meal, they talked of the surprise in store for Beaver Dam. Their careless talk was the beginning of a Canadian legend.

At sunrise next morning, Laura Secord, a slight 38-year-old mother of four, drove a cow casually past an American outpost, until she was out of sight, then dropped her milk pail and started a 12-mile (some sources say 20-mile) tramp through the backwoods to Beaver Dam. Avoiding main roads and dodging quick-triggered scouts she plodded through the steaming June heat, over swollen streams, through thickets of brambles until she fell tattered and exhausted among Canadian Indians. They finally took her to James Fitzgibbon, the commander. Ironic-
remain on the field of battle,' he told his braves. And he died at the Battle of the Thames, October 5, 1813, in the manner of Brock: at the head of his braves, flinging a tomahawk at the American commander. As the Americans crushed his forces, Procter fled with a few men and was subsequently court-martialed. His crime was faint-heartedness but he was fighting a battle he couldn't possibly have won.

Back around Niagara the American commander of Fort George, George McClure, was making his mark in infamy. After pillaging the area during October and November, most of his men deserted for not getting paid. McClure decided to abandon the fort. At dusk on December 10 he burned Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), turning 400 men, women and children into the snow.

It was the war's most wanton act and Canadian reaction was swift and terrible. McClure, while noting that 'the enemy is much exasperated', felt safe enough across the river in Buffalo. But on the night of December 19 the Canadians crossed the river and began their revenge. At 4 a.m. they silently strangled or bayoneted the sentries at Fort Niagara, swarmed inside and took it all with the bayonet. Then, under a new general, Gordon Drummond, almost the equal of Brock, they raged along the American side burning Lewiston, Fort Schlosser, Black Rock and Buffalo (where $190,000 worth of frame buildings went up in smoke).

As the war moved into its final year, the Americans, with better generalship and better-trained militia, were still stubbornly determined to take the Niagara peninsula. A large part of Upper Canada was badly battered and, through various kinds of connivance, was even buying food from the American side. Drummond’s 4,400 men were thinly stretched across the front, hoping to stall an attack that might come at any point.

It came, finally, out of Buffalo in early July. The enemy won a battle near Chippawa and began the long advance toward Drummond’s position at Burlington, just east of present-day Hamilton. But a few miles on, still within a shot of Niagara Falls, the Americans and a Canadian army ran head-on, to their mutual surprise, at a crossroads called Lundy’s Lane. The Canadians, believing themselves hopelessly outnumbered, prepared to withdraw. Then Drummond galloped up to rally them, setting the stage for the war’s bloodiest battle.

It began at 6 p.m., July 25. The odds were evener than usual: 4,000 Americans against 3,000 Canadians. The site was a long low rise, a mile from the Niagara River. The focal point was Drummond’s seven-gun battery. Again and again through the evening, the battery changed hands until both sides retired exhausted and the guns stood silent and alone.

Drummond had lost a third of his men but 1,200 reinforcements scrambled into the line.
The Americans began a final assault. They took the guns. The Canadians drove them back. All through the hot black night muskets rattled, bayonets flashed, the dying screamed. The senior officers on both sides were wounded. After six bloody hours the Americans reeled back to Chippawa. The Canadians slumped on the battlefield. In the dusk, the distant rumble of the Falls was heard again. Nobody had really won the battle of Lundy’s Lane but Upper Canada had refused to yield.

During all of these years America’s leaders repeatedly muffed a strategy that would surely have won the war: cutting off Lower Canada from Upper Canada. They talked about it in 1812 but dallied too long. Finally in September, 1813, two Yankee armies set out for Montreal, with their commanders, Wilkinson and Hampton, constantly bickering at each other.

At the Chateauguay River, 35 miles southwest of Montreal, Hampton ran into a crack French-Canadian force led by Lieutenant Colonel Charles-Michel de Salaberry, a talented strategist with the cold eye and tough jaw of an Old West gunfighter on the later late show. Any previous doubts about French-Canadian courage or loyalty were now dispelled. Overnumbered four to one, de Salaberry’s force built breastworks of logs to block the main approach, carefully arranged their sparse forces and waited. Hampton sent 1,500 of his 6,500 men to encircle the Canadians. But this advance party got lost in the dark and paused, waiting for the main force to press in. Hampton, with lost communications, waited in vain for the advance party to attack. De Salaberry spotted their confusion from atop a huge tree stump. A portion of his excellent little army checked the main enemy force at the barricades. The others wheeled on the 1,500 wandering Yankees and, with the aid of wild whoops and bugle calls which suggested a huge army, scattered the advance party in such panic that some began shooting at each other. Hampton and his whole army turned tail.

Meanwhile Wilkinson, with more than 7,000 men, moved down the St. Lawrence with a small force snapping at his heels. This harassing squad of 1,000 men was perhaps the most cosmopolitan army ever assembled in North America. On the St. Lawrence River were Royal Navy, Provincial Marine, French-Canadian voyagiers and English-Canadian boatmen from the fur trading posts. On land were British regulars, Canadian regulars of both races, French-Canadian and English-Canadian militia, and a band of Indians.

On November 11 they locked with the enemy on John Cryer’s farm, 20 miles west of present-day Cornwall, on the north shore. It was open ground, well-suited to the ‘thin red line’ shoulder-to-shoulder principle of formal infantry warfare. Most of the Canadian force had spent the day through a cold drizzle, and they rose in a mean temper to unlimber their flintlock muzzle-loading muskets and ram the long spike-like bayonets into place. Bayonets were the real weapon. A well-trained man could fire three rounds per minute but the loose-fitting musket ball, in a weapon with neither front nor rear sights, was apt to veer wildly off target. A hit beyond 100 yards was sheer luck.

The Americans advanced. The colonial lines—disciplined, well-drilled and cool—held fast, then forged ahead. The Americans wavered, fell back and, by night, were fleecing across the river. Later even the U.S. admitted to have taken a ‘severe drubbing’ at Cryer’s farm.

The Americans made by far their best showing on the water. On the Atlantic, although there was no matching the British navy for sheer force, Yankee skippers did well in ship-for-ship encounters. They took 1,344 British merchantmen during the war and, in 1812 alone, won five straight duels with British warships.

Inland, after a slow start, they had things
Chauncey chased Yeo into Burlington Bay. On another occasion, while Chauncey and Yankee land forces invaded York, Yeo slipped down to the Americans' Lake Ontario base, Sackett's Harbor, and did some damage.

For a while both sides did more shipbuilding than fighting, in Kingston and Sackett's Harbor respectively. In May, 1814, Yeo raided Oswego on the American side (taking it handsomely) and Sackett's Harbor (losing dismally). Later that year the Canadians suffered a disastrous defeat on Lake Champlain.

By this time, though, the sheer numbers of Britain's navy were effectively blockading the whole American east coast. The Yankee ports were slowly smothering and American victories on the Lakes or even, ship-for-ship, on the Atlantic, meant nothing in the end. And now, with Napoleon finally out of the way, Britain shook itself like a weary mastiff and turned around to properly deal with the pesky Americans.

In mid-August a British fleet sailed into Chesapeake Bay, headed for Washington with 4,000 troops aboard. A small American naval force fell back before them, finally burning its vessels and taking to land. On August 24, 6,000 American troops formed up at Bladensburg, north of Washington. President Madison rode out to watch the show, but it was a short-short feature. In the first skirmish eight Americans were killed, 11 wounded and 5,000 militiamen ran for their lives. The British easily captured the regulars who stood their ground.

That night in orderly fashion, the British marched unmolested into the capital of an area theoretically defended by 93,500 militia. They harmed no person or private property but, in reprisal for York, partly burned the government buildings and the presidential mansion. President and Dolly Madison left so abruptly that the redcoats found their unfinished dinner on the table. Then, having slapped America's wrist, the British marched back to their boats. (The campaign was not a total loss for America: the mansion, repainted to cover the smoke stains, became known evermore as the White House. And three weeks later, as the British unsuccessfully shelled a fort near Baltimore, failing to bring down the flag, onlooker Francis Scott Key wrote 'The Star Spangled Banner'.)

The exercise demonstrated rather clearly that Britain, with additional effort, might have taken America back again or at least named its own terms in the post-war settlement. But it had enough problems elsewhere and let itself be out-negotiated at the Treaty of Ghent. In fact, the treaty was more of an armistice; details of peace were worked out in agreements over subsequent years.

In 1817 the Great Lakes were demilitarized and no naval forces permitted to be maintained on them. This contributed to peace between the nations in the years ahead. In 1818 the western boundary and fisheries problems were settled. The old boundary line became firm: the 49th parallel from Lake of the Woods to the Rockies. In a vague fisheries arrangement that was to plague Canada for nearly a century after, the Yankees lost their right to fish and cure their catch along the Nova Scotia coast but were allowed the use of certain other Atlantic shores.

No word about the causes of the war was incorporated in the treaty. And even though Britain had taken northern Maine, the prewar boundaries were reinstated. The only visible result of the war was the terrible condition of parts of Upper Canada: poverty stricken, ravaged, partly destroyed.

The silly, cruel and wasteful war ended officially on Christmas Eve, 1814. But it was not a complete waste. Never again did the Americans actually take arms against Canada. And the Canadian spirit was intact; was, in fact, for the first time a strong identifiable thing. By holding fast in the War of 1812 Canada took a long step toward nationhood.

Specialized research for this article was contributed by George Barque.
In the British North America of 1820, there were only a few hundred thousand people loosely strung out on the long line from Gaspé to Lake Huron, plus smaller contingents in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The country was nowhere more than a few miles thick. Only four places could be dignified with the term ‘city’—Quebec, Montreal, Halifax, Saint John—and none of these was impressive. A road of sorts stretched between Quebec and the peninsula of Upper Canada, but it was secondary and the only way up country of any carrying capacity was by the river and the lakes.

The apparatus of civilized life was almost as meager as communications were poor. French Canada, it is true, had long had its institutions of education for its élite and Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were making a beginning. But, save for one or two ‘schools for the sons of gentlemen’, Upper Canada had little in the way of educational apparatus. All the provinces, however, had a vigorous local press, which argues that a considerable proportion of the population could read and write. Except for the newspapers that came their way, most people were not much interested in reading and writing, anyway; they were interested in cutting down trees, burning them up, sowing and reaping, getting through the winter and, with what energy was left over, perhaps roistering at the local tavern or assuring themselves of the safety of their souls at church or camp meeting. In short, as the illustrations in this chapter show, British North America in 1820 was a simple community of pioneers content to leave government to their ‘betters’—the English officials and their associates.

But a scant generation later, in 1841, British North America was greatly changed. Lower Canada (now Quebec) and Upper Canada (Ontario) were joined that year by the Act of Union passed by the British Parliament to create the Province of Canada. In all the provinces, population was much increased. Montreal was becoming, for the times, a considerable little city, with good houses, shops, streets, gas lights, water supply, hotels and the other equipment of an urban community. A second French bishopric had been provided for it. Quebec, the ancient capital, was well into its second life as the lumber capital too, and its wealth was increasing on the toll of the rafts that floated down to it. Halifax, with nearly a century of time and the fortunes of war behind it, had become a provincial capital of assurance; in it the first sprouts of a local literature (remember Sam Slick, the immortal clockmaker?) were already showing. In New Brunswick, the pleasant Anglicanism of a few families in the little capital of Fredericton was to give forth men like C. G. D. Roberts, who eventually wrote an important chapter in Canadian literature.
In the Province of Canada, not only had schools been founded but colleges. King's College in Toronto; Victoria, the Methodist college, at Cobourg; Queen's, the Presbyterian, at Kingston. In Quebec, François-Xavier Garneau was writing his classic history of the country (Histoire du Canada depuis la découverte jusqu'à nos jours) and Laval was becoming a seat of learning sufficiently considerable to enable it in a few years (1852) to apply for and obtain a royal charter of incorporation as a university. In 1836-37, there had been built and opened the first railway in Canada—the few miles of line that connected the Richelieu River with the south shore opposite Montreal and cut a day off the journey between New York and Montreal. In Upper Canada, both the Rideau and the Welland canals had been built and work was under way on those of the St. Lawrence. Railways were constantly talked of, though in the period none of them, with the exception mentioned, was built. In Lower Canada, the vast edifice of Notre Dame in Montreal had been completed in 1829, visible, if ugly, testimony to the strength and energy of the French race in America. In Upper Canada, Osgoode Hall had gone up in Toronto, providing space for law courts of the time. In every town and village there were newspapers. And, of course, just behind, still in very recent memory, were 'the troubles', the rebellions that in 1837-38 had torn the provinces internally apart and threatened to destroy them. The rebellions were crushed, but they succeeded all the same. By exposing the weaknesses of the old system they opened the way to self-government, eventual confederation and even the Commonwealth itself.

The old colonial system that the rebels opposed had been a haphazard growth. British colonies, it has often been asserted, had traditionally been something like Topsy—they just 'grewed'. Or as the historian J. R.

LUGGAGE

Iron-bound Trunk covered with Calf-skin. In Church at Clementsport, N.S.

Man's Hat Box

Buff Leather

Dig-skin Trunk Studded with Brass Nails

Jadele Bags

Band or Bonnet Box

Cholera on board an immigration ship of the 1830s
second empire consisted of the scraps left over from the wreck of the American Revolution, though here too some modification must be made.

British North America, or what was left of it in 1783, just after the wreck, stirred no hearts. 'This last foul brat', Edmund Burke had said of Nova Scotia on its founding. 'The liberty of parading in boundless wildernesses', is the way another English publicist summed up what had been acquired by conquest from France. If anywhere in the empire the consequences of 'absence of mind' were to be found, it was surely in the British North America that was left after the American Revolution. The glory had departed, Britain's colonial sun had set; why bother about what was left? The logical thing would have been to hand them over to the new country that had emerged and wipe the slate clean.

But the colonies were kept, and the old familiar pattern began to emerge again, even though it had been proved inadequate. Loyalist migrations, Montreal fur interests, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland as supply bases for the West Indies, a pinch of national pride, and not least, jobs for the needy relations of British politicians—all such things kept the old structure going, glass all out of the windows, sky showing through the roof. No repairs of moment were necessary—or desirable. The old type of colonial administration and of trade patterns, under which the first empire had thriven to greatness, would do quite well for the second. Colonial governors came and went as before, colonial councils gathered round them and colonial legislators met in colonial 'capitals' to bicker with them.

And all the time, there stood the former colonies, vigorously pushing westward, their progress plainly visible to the people of the provinces. They remained friends until the War of 1812 separated once and for all the people of the 'provinces' from the people of the 'states'. The war proved to be the foundation war for Upper Canada, the defence of its heritage for Lower, and for the Maritimes privateering and good times. After that war, the new wine of new provincial life was being poured into the old bottles of an ancient
colonial system, and as the Good Book tells
us, when that is done the old bottles are apt

and so it was in British North
America. A generation of controversy lay
ahead, a generation culminating in rebellion
and a new start in 1840.

Given the system that preceded the rebel-

dons, a new start was inevitable. Prior to the
middle of the 19th century, the traditional

government for British colonies was always
and everywhere the same, differing from place
to place only in detail. At its head was the
governor, and at the governor’s elbow was
an appointive executive council. The Legis-
lature consisted of two chambers, as our
Parliament does today: the Legislative COUN-
cil, which was appointive, comparable to
our Senate, and the Legislative Assembly,
which was elective, usually on a wide fran-
chise, and was the equivalent of our House of
Commons. Legislation had to pass through
both houses of the legislature, receive the
governor’s consent and then be sent to
Westminster for approval by the secretary of
state for the colonies. If no approval was
received back in the colony, the law in
question could not go into effect. Since the

Legislative Council was appointive, it in-
variably represented vested interests or social
status, and as such more often than not found
itself in conflict with the assembly. In Lower
Canada, the two bodies came to polarize
around race—the council was English; the
assembly, French—and so an ideal basis for
rival strife was provided. The only way the
assembly could prevail was by refusing to
pass supplies—that is, the money needed to
carry on public business—thus bringing the
wheels of government to a stop. In such im-
passes, governors were apt to dissolve the
assembly and have another election, which
usually brought back a house more recalci-
trant than its predecessor. Uncasing strife
had gone on between the assembly and the
other bodies in the old colonies that became
the United States, and this situation was duly
transferred to the newer ones. As Chester
Martin once very aptly termed it, it was ‘like
a fire without a chimney’.

It was in Lower Canada that smoke from
this fire filled the house, with a good deal
being generated in Upper Canada too, minor
amounts in Nova Scotia and traces in the other colonies. In Lower Canada, every problem, no matter how slight, eventually turned itself into a racial clash (as it is apt to do today), so it should not have taken much foresight to grasp what would happen sooner or later—the two people arrayed against each other and the situation so tense that bloodshed would follow. In the very first session of the first provincial legislature, 1792, there had been minor indications of the racial conflict, and as time went by there were more of them. If the province had been much better governed than it was, strife would have been moderated, though no doubt, people being what they are, the racial opposition, if it had not found one channel of expression, would have found another.

But the province was not well-governed. There was the cumbersome process of law-making already referred to and there was far too much effort from 'home' to instruct the governor in detail; in a day when letters and answers were often a matter of three or four months (and none in winter), long-range government necessarily must have been a failure. Then there were numerous appointment 'plums' to provincial offices made to lucky persons in Great Britain; colonial reformers used often to describe the empire as a vast system of charitable relief for the poor relations of the British governing classes.

There was also the uncontrolled emigration of the period, on crowded, disease-ridden shipping; thousands of people dumped into the port of Quebec, often to depend on the charity of the inhabitants and occasionally to spread disease far and wide. In 1832, the cholera, having finished off many of the emigrants en route, pursued the rest of them up the river, to Montreal, to Kingston, to York, and even as far as Detroit, mowing down many of the native-born in the process.

But chiefly, perhaps, there was the land granting system. In any new country the land is the obvious form of obtainable wealth.
and anyone who has any kind of inside track invariably does his best to acquire as much of it as he can, not for personal use, but to sell to later arrivals. Land-speculating has been the major form of sport in every new country from the day Columbus made his landfall down to the present. In British North America the game was played with pertinacity and success. A concrete example or two will illustrate what went on. One W. B. Felton came to Lower Canada in 1815, apparently with considerable capital. He received a grant of 2,000 acres in the Eastern Townships and his family another 2,000. In the course of the next 18 years, Felton made innumerable applications for further grants and while the authorities in England were always worried and sometimes hostile about these, somehow or other the grants were forthcoming. So were children, until the score stood at nine. Felton managed to get 9,400 acres in their names, in addition to 14,141 for himself. His case was defended on the ground that he had opened roads and built mills. But all this land was given free! A similar case was that of the original William Price, who in his own name

_Threshing grain with swivelled flails_
and that of his 'associates' received a whole township. The 'township associate' system was well understood; it usually involved collecting a couple of hundred names on a petition for a township and then paying each signatory a small sum for his signature and the abandonment of his claim. Collective land grants of this sort led to litigation, as heir succeeded heir, which extended over generations. The egle eyes of French members of the assembly naturally quickly spotted what was going on, and translated it into a looting of their inheritance by les Anglais.

All such grievances, and many more, were set down in the famous Ninety-Two Resolutions of 1834, whose submission to the legislature was one of the stages on the road to rebellion. The 92 resolutions comprised a complete bill of complaints; too complete, for they included trivialities. It is interesting to find among them a complaint included in French indictments of the English down to this day about the virtual monopoly of posts by les Anglais. A poste, a government job with security and status, has always meant much to a people conscious of status and insecure economically.

When favoritism was linked to race, language, religion, and leadership, strife was inevitable. In Louis-Joseph Papineau the aggrieved French found a leader. He was born to politics, his father having been an assemblyman before him. He became a lawyer and threw sufficiently well to acquire a seigneurie at Montebello up the Ottawa River. His father had been a land surveyor and as such something of a radical, for surveyors in French Canada, largely self-taught at that period, were men on the way up, men who had to push aside the favorites of fortune. Wilfrid Laurier's father was also a surveyor. Louis-Joseph lost his Catholic faith while at college in Quebec and although he respected it, he never regained it. He soon discovered that he was an orator, and as an orator, he was to gain remarkable ascendancy over a people always under the spell of the spoken word. His attitude, his complaints and his motives can be easily understood, for they were exactly the same as those of every

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**AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS**

**Wooden Plough**

*In Fort Anne Museum, Annapolis Royal, N.S.*

**Ploughs of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries.**

*In Museum East Kildonan Agricultural Society, Manitoba.*

**Used by Selkirk Settlers**

*Wooden Plough used on Prairies*
other left-wing French-speaking Canadian who has ever existed. English-Canadians are constantly asking what Quebec wants. The question is so simple (to the historian at least) that it appears naïve. Quebec wants what La race française en Amérique has wanted from the day of Lévis's surrender outside Montreal in 1760; she wants to reverse the Conquest, that is all. So that whatever the terms of the day may be, the situation never changes: reverse the Conquest, 'get the English off our necks', and if possible out of the house. People who cannot understand the psychology of a conquered people can never get very far in Canadian history and affairs.

Papineau's line very quickly became that of making the most of every grievance. The colonial authorities obligingly provided him with enough. They could have appointed him to the Executive Council and offered him an important post and there was a period when he might have accepted. But the matter was 'referred home' and referred back again and back again, until some years had elapsed. When an offer finally was made, it came too late and Papineau's pride refused to let him become a councillor. He remained in perpetual opposition and as a rule he was able to carry with him his fellow 'Canadians' (no English-speaking person used that term in those days).

In 1822 a neat little scheme was got up among the Montreal merchants to unite the two provinces. Upper Canada, whose population was smaller than that of Lower, would be given equal representation in the assembly and English made the sole official language. This was sounding the tocsin in-
PIONEER RELICS in Temple at Sharon, Ont.

Cobbler's Bench

Shoe Lasts

School Seat and Desk

Turnip Slicer

officials. This offer was not accepted, nor were later ones suggesting smaller and smaller civil lists.

The only constructive measure advanced by Papineau's party was to make the Legislative Council elective. This measure, which had American example to support it, meant a large French majority in the council: the English would have lost one of their major citadels of power and a combined legislature would have been able to bring much greater pressure on the government. The proposal had no chance of acceptance.

Discord began to mount in the 1830s. There was a riot in Montreal in which troops fired on the crowd and two or three citizens of French origin were killed: the parallel to the Boston 'Massacre' of 1770, in which under similar circumstances four or five Yankees were killed by the bullets of the redcoats, was at once drawn. Then doubts arose as to the good faith of one or two of the governors, especially Lord Gosford, ironically a man of untarnished honor. All this was accompanied by heady speeches within the assembly and without; the fine art of rabble rousing is not new. In reply, the English began to form semi-military organizations thinly disguised as constitutional associations. Papineau staged a series of open-air
mass meetings, at which his eloquence whipped the crowds to fever heat. Secret drilling began. The end was clearly in sight.

In December, 1837, fighting broke out. Here again, there was a parallel in history, for Sir John Colborne, the British commander, sent out a force to the southward of Montreal, much as Gage had sent his men out from Boston to Concord in 1775. The troops were fired on, and the first of the little battles of the rebellion took place. The French-Canadians of the countryside—with some English leaders among them—gave a fair account of themselves, but there the parallel with the American Revolution ended. There was no Bunker Hill, only the defeat at St. Eustache, not because of any lack of fighting spirit among the people of the Montreal-Richelieu district, but because of lack of preparation and of divided leadership. When, in the summer of 1837, Papineau had begun to see where his path was leading, he tried to retrace it and had advised against non-constitutional measures. It had been too late. When fighting broke out, he fled across the border. The rebels were crushed, many of them imprisoned and a number of them executed.

Surprisingly the rebellion did not turn into a long guerrilla war, such as occurred off and on in Ireland for centuries, and there were two main reasons. First, disaffection had manifested itself only in the Montreal-Richelieu area, not at Quebec, and secondly, the rebels lacked the support of the church. Many of the local clergymen probably were sympathetic but the constituted authorities of the church were not: they came down, as Catholic authority always must, on the side of 'the powers that be which are ordained of God.' Why not? Church leaders would have asked at the time. What was to be gained by rebellion against the armed might of Britain? Most likely absorption into the English and Protestant American union. And was not Papineau a free thinker? Why follow him?
In the same year and the same month, December, 1837, rebellion broke out in Upper Canada. It might seem as if the two were a concerted movement, but this is not the case. Papineau and Mackenzie had some correspondence, that is all. A rebellion did occur, however, in Upper Canada, and its effects were far-reaching. It is therefore necessary to look at things in the upper province in order to get an explanation for it.

Upper Canada in the early 19th century was only one place of the many in which people of English speech and the Protestant religion were making a vigorous attack on the bush: the same thing was going on at a score of points in the United States, as well as beyond the seas in Australia and South Africa. Essentially the same conditions existed in all these new settlements, and to a considerable extent the same grievances: favoritism at the little local capital, difficulties of communication, unfair and often corrupt land grants, uncertainty of the title to land (and what could make a man more uneasy than to have doubts that the home he was painfully making might not really be his own). If Upper Canada had its special struggle over the Clergy Reserves, (the awkward one-seventh of all its land that was reserved for the support of a Protestant clergy), New South Wales in Australia had its objections to the policy called ‘transportation’, which made the country a dumping-ground for convicts, so no claim to being unique can be established on such grounds. It may have been that there were more grievances in Upper Canada than elsewhere, it may have been that there were many Americans in its population not accustomed to taking grievances quietly or it may have been that there happened to be a few prominent trouble-makers present in Upper Canada; whatever the exact explanation, discontent began to bubble in Upper Canada soon after the turn of the century. It died
down during the war of 1812, then resumed again, to go on slowly mounting during the 1820s, have its pace accelerated during the 1830s and at last, as in Lower Canada, to break out in rebellion. The course of events in the two provinces thus ran parallel.

In Upper Canada difficulties more or less peculiar to the region probably would not have caused rebellion in themselves, but they provided some of the material from which rebellion arises. Among them the Clergy Reserves have been mentioned: they kept awkward areas out of settlement but, more provokingly, they were constant and visible symbols of denominational discrimination. If the hardy pioneering people of Upper Canada cherished one sentiment more than any other, it surely was that they were as good as any man. No pulling of forelocks to the lord of the manor in Upper Canada, none of the semi-feudalism, such as the annual rent payment to the seigneur known as les cour-roies, that existed in Lower Canada and that was supportable to a people brought up under authority.

Add to Clergy Reserves the marriage question. Why should Anglican clergy alone have the inherent right to perform the marriage ceremony? Anglicans were not even a majority in the province. The Clergy Reserves and the marriage question cooled the ardor of many a frontier Methodist and Baptist—and of many who were not frontier. Among these was Egerton Ryerson, son of a Loyalist and of unimpeachable loyalty himself. As a young man in 1825 he took on the Anglican champion, Archdeacon Strachan of York, and a pamphlet war ensued of which Ryerson had rather the better. Thenceforward, the Methodists, whose loyalty suffered another indignity in being often impugned because of their associations with their fellow Methodist organizations south of the border, became a power to be reckoned with in Upper Canada politics.

Still another factor in denominational dispute was the question of a local college. Strachan was determined that if one were to be established, it would be under the control of his church; that is, of himself. Much to the annoyance of other denominations, he persisted in regarding the Church of England as the official, if not exactly the established church in the colony. His efforts to maintain control of the new institution, King’s College, prevented an effective college from being established, thus delaying the cause of higher education in the provincial capital for 15 years and more, and incidentally giving rise to two other colleges in other parts of the province: Victoria at Cobourg and Queen’s at Kingston.

One quite exceptional family cannot be passed over in even the briefest account of Upper Canada at the period: the Baldwins. William Warren Baldwin had come from southern Ireland to Upper Canada in 1790. He belonged to a class of immigrant that was to become not uncommon in Upper Canada, the ‘small gentry’, many of them Irish Protestants. He had grown up in an Ireland in which Protestants, thanks to the pressures of the American Revolution, had squeezed out of the British government a considerable measure of self-government, under their own Parliament. His experiences came to Canada along with himself and they were duly passed on to his Canadian-born son, Robert. The Baldwins, father and son, came to see that the road to content in a colonial government was that which had been partially followed in Ireland, namely, more and more self-government. The device that would crown the structure of self-government was also plain to them: require the governor, through the leading officers of the Crown in the colony, to get his measures approved by the Legislative Assembly. It sounds simple and obvious today; in those days it was almost revolutionary, for it proposed the submission of the governor, the king’s representative, to the elected assembly. William Warren
FOUR-POSTER BEDS, CRADLES and WARMING PAN.

Observe side curtains

Mahogany Bed. Posts carved in "fern-leaf" or "feather" pattern.

Beside the Bed are steps by which to climb into it.

BALDWIN SUBMITTED this scheme to the Duke of Wellington in 1828, not long before the latter went out of office as Prime Minister. In the following decade, as tension mounted, his son proposed it to the governor of the day, Sir Francis Bond Head, only to have the governor accept the proposals in a form so limited as to ensure their failure. Gradually Baldwin's phrase for it took hold and became a constitutional rallying cry—Responsible Government. With the achievement later on, in 1848, of Responsible Government, Baldwin (together with his friend and partner from Lower Canada, Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine) brought self-government to Canada.

Robert Baldwin walked a dangerous road in the 1830s, for tempers were so high that he might easily have been lumped in with the extremists and accused of disloyalty. His was a paradoxical family: all its associations were with the Tory right; the Baldwins were Anglicans, large landowners, 'gentry'. Their friends and relatives were all in the same camp. Yet they persisted in their role of con-
stitutional reformers, came through the rebellion unscathed and Robert lived to see the triumph of the family conception, that Irish import, Responsible Government.

There were men in the colony who were neither as wise nor as firmly in the middle of the road as the Baldwins. Of these, one name at once leaps to everyone’s lips: William Lyon Mackenzie. But Mackenzie was not the only man who made himself obnoxious to the ‘family compact’ clique. There had been Robert Gourlay, whom the clique had succeeded in harrasing out of the land. There were others less provocative, such as the Bidwells. Gourlay and Mackenzie would have been restless and uneasy members of any society: in Upper Canada, privilege and favoritism that came close to corruption were so rampant that the natural tendencies of these two men were enhanced. Mackenzie found magnificent material in such a situation for his newspaper and he became the province’s first political journalist. By the 1830s, he had uncovered a dozen unsavory situations and was making appeal enough to the public to get himself elected both as mayor of York and member of the assembly. The device resorted to by his enemies to subdue him—votes for his expulsion from the assembly (followed by re-election, followed by expulsion, followed by re-election) made him a popular hero. It became clear to him that until a change in the nature of government was made, little reform could be accomplished. The failure of the Head-Baldwin experiment in 1836 apparently convinced him that things had gone beyond debate. No more than Papineau did Mackenzie deliberately and decisively think of rebellion. Both of them were ‘rhetoricians intoxicated with their own verbosity’ and they talked themselves out on a limb from which they could not crawl back and so had to jump off. In Upper Canada, no sane man who had cooly calculated means, ends and risks would have resorted to arms in 1837. Rebellion, to be successful, requires the sympathy of most of the people, requires careful preparation, gathering of arms, drilling, plans for the en-

suing government. The only factor that Mackenzie was justified in interpreting in favor of success was Bond Head’s foolishness in sending most of the troops off to help out in Lower Canada, but when a faction is in quite a small minority, the absence of troops is not enough.

Mackenzie’s rebellion, as an armed revolt, was a flash in a pan: a few shots (the pleasant legend is that these were quite enough to frighten both sides into taking to their heels) and it was all over. Mackenzie was a fugitive and some of the ringleaders were under arrest. The measures of repression that followed had an unpleasant atmosphere of vindictiveness about them: they widened the split in Upper Canadian society. Thousands of good settlers got out. Public credit was undermined. The great works that had been going forward on the St. Lawrence canal came to a standstill. The future, in a province given over to reaction, looked dark. Matters were not helped when the new governor turned on to have been the man who, as Governor of Tasmania, had spent the previous few years building those vast and melancholy structures still to be seen not far from Hobart and destined in their day to be the unhappy abiding places of the convicts. A master of coincidences for a province of free men? The prospect was not pleasant.

While neither rebellion was formidable as a rising in arms—their results were of basic importance and they have influenced life in Canada down to our own days. The rebellion in Lower Canada could easily be interpreted as that of a conquered people against their conquerors—naturally, their sympathies were consonant—and in this way it is interpreted by most people of French speech. Yet as has been made clear, the church had been against rebellion and those who took up arms had
been drawn almost solely from the Montreal-Richelieu district. While the rebels had the sympathy of their compatriots, few French-Canadians could find wisdom in the course they had taken. A province historically conservative to a degree that would have made even a family compact Tory shudder could hardly look with equanimity on armed rebellion against "the powers that be".

In Upper Canada, the interpretation of the rebellion was simple: bad government. Remedy that, and there would be few who would wish to depart from their traditional allegiance.

Luckily, for once in history the hour and the man coincided. The Imperial government decided to send out still another commission of investigation, and also a new Governor-in-Chief. This was Lord Durham, Radical Jack, as he had been called for his leading part in securing the passage of the Great Reform Bill of 1832. A peculiar choice for colonies in rebellion? Yes, but a peculiar man had chosen him, Lord Melbourne, the Whig Prime Minister. Durham was restless, difficult, brilliant. Melbourne had first got him out of the country by sending him off as Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and now this further chance presented itself to send him even farther away. So Durham duly came to Canada. He brought with him as able and unorthodox a group of assistants and disciples as must ever have accompanied a British pro-consul abroad, men nearly all of whom entertained advanced ideas on colonies and had minds as sharp as their ideas were advanced. None could have been more in contrast with the procession of grave and stolid generals that had preceded them.

The result of all this was five months of hard work, marked by a final temperamental explosion by Durham in the last month or so, a public proclamation by him which might almost have been interpreted as advice to start fighting again, and the great man's resignation. There followed another spate of
hard work on board ship on the way back to England, a month or so there and then the appearance, less than three months after the mission had left Canada, of the great, long and to-be-famous Report of 1839, brilliantly and hastily conceived, as brilliantly, hastily and soundly written, the greatest state paper of the 19th century as it sometimes has been called. If anyone wishes to understand the Lower Canada of the 1830s—that is, the Quebec of today—all he need do is read the Durham Report. It is readily available. It put its finger at once on the trouble in Lower Canada. I expected to find a contest between a government and a people; I found two nations warring in the bosom of a single state: I found a struggle, not of principles, but of races,' wrote Durham.

On Upper Canada, Durham had relatively little to say. He spent only a short time in the province, but had one significant interview—with Robert Baldwin. Baldwin evidently sold him on Responsible Government, for here was the central recommendation of the Report:

'It needs but to follow out consistently the principles of the British constitution and introduce into the government of these great colonies those wise provisions by which alone the workings of the representative system can in any country be rendered harmonious and efficient . . . I would not impair a single prerogative of the Crown . . . But the Crown must . . . submit to the necessary consequences of representative institutions; and if it has to carry on the government in union, with a representative body, it must consent to carry it on by means of those in whom that representative body has confidence . . . Every exercise of popular control might be combined with every advantage of vesting the immediate choice of advisers in the Crown, were the colonial governor to be instructed to secure the cooperation of the

**VESSELS of the GREAT LAKES**

*A bluff-bowed Schooner*

*Pulling up a shallow river*

*Source: Courtesy of Hudson's Bay Co.*

*A Barque*

*A Stonehooker*
assembly in his policy by entrusting its administration to such men as could command a majority...

In Great Britain, there was opposition to adopting the principle Durham outlined. The Colonial Secretary of the day, Lord John Russell, thought it would be impossible to give such a measure of power to a colonial assembly and have it remain colonial. It took several strong and able letters from Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia to argue him down. Howe had encountered in Nova Scotia the same general conditions that existed in the Canadas, but not in so extreme a measure. He was more of a statesman than either Mackenzie or Papineau and consequently while there was much discontent in Nova Scotia, there was no suggestion of an appeal to arms. That province actually led the way to Responsible Government in British North America, which was accorded it in 1846.

Unfortunately Durham’s sound view on Responsible Government was not accompanied by equal penetration into the nature of French Canada. What he had to propose in respect to it was simply that the sooner the French became English, the better for all concerned. This has never increased his popularity in French Canada!

Had it not been for the rebellions, discontent would have slumbered on, makeshifts would have been resorted to and it is hard to see what alternative course history would have taken. It is quite possible that a solution to the great conundrum—how to remain a colony and yet be independent—would not have got an answer at all. It is therefore not too much to assert that by providing the solution—Responsible Government—the Canadas (and especially Robert Baldwin) opened the gate for the modern Commonwealth, which is no small accomplishment.

The colonies differed so from each other that the solution of the political difficulties of one did not imply success when the same devices were applied to another. Constitu-
rional and political reform consequently took different shapes in all of them. In Newfoundland, the economy was so precarious that no sound basis could be found for self-government. The leaders of the ordinary men fought the snuggly-enconced office-holders and merchants, and this class struggle coincided with the racial and religious cleavage between Irish Roman Catholics and Anglican Englishmen. Two civil wars at once, even if fought only with shillelaghs, are rather too much for self-government, which in consequence was modified in the 1830s into government by appointed governor, with an assembly partially appointed, partially elective.

In Prince Edward Island, the issue was also economic; whether absentee proprietors should maintain their ownership of the soil or whether the land should be put into the hands of ordinary small farmers. Year after year nothing had been done and parts of the island were described in the 1830s as almost in a state of civil strife, with burly 'quarters' standing off owners' agents and attempting to maintain their de facto possession. The problem was not solved in the period, but remained one of the grievances which it eventually required Confederation (1873) to liquidate.

Proud New Brunswickers sometimes insist that it was their province that led the way in reform. They claim that in the early 1830s, the assembly, through some of its leaders, broke the hold that a small, tight knot of 'family compact' men headed by the Surveyor General, Thomas Baillie, had on the good places and especially on the revenues from the public lands of the province. As a result, the assembly secured control of what were termed 'the casual and territorial revenues of the Crown'—which because of

FIRE ENGINES

First Engine in Toronto, the "York," 1826, when Volunteer Department formed. Manned by 8 men on each side.

Engine presented to Toronto, 1837, by British America Assurance Co.

1840-50

The "Sampson"
First Locomotive in Maritime Provinces Built in England
In 1837, ran from Stellarton Coal Mines to Pictou Harbour
Now in front of Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax.

The "Dorchester"
First Locomotive in Lower Canada, on LaPrarie Railway 1836
Model reconstructed by Canadian National Railways for the centenary.
the sale of timber lands were large—and its leaders got places in the executive council. Thenceforth there was harmony between governor, council and assembly, which, in the understanding of the time and place, was Responsible Government. There is a serious qualification to be imposed on this, however, for the assembly itself was in the control of the timber operators (many of them of old Loyalist families). What had happened seems to have been that in 1833 a very small family group at the top—the Odell-Baillie connection—had had to yield to a larger but by no means all-embracing group farther down. New Brunswick as a result of the fight against Baillie did not become a democracy but a somewhat more widespread oligarchy.

The political evolution in Nova Scotia has always attracted interest because of the man at its centre, the magnetic, eloquent Joe Howe. A young man when he became caught up in public life, Howe, in defending himself in a famous libel suit, not only won his case but made the first breach in the ramparts of Nova Scotia family compactism. For years the province had been in the hands of a nice, snug little group in Halifax, five of them members of one firm, nearly all of them Anglicans, most of them with extremely well-paid public positions. In their corporate capacity, they formed both the Executive and Legislative Councils (which were not dis-
tistinguished the one from the other) and they met in private. When Howe let daylight into this cozy nest, the Colonial Office separated Executive and Legislative Councils and made it clear that Executive Councilors would somehow or other have to have the confidence of the assembly. It took nearly six years more, however, before the transition was effected. Even so, Nova Scotia was the first colony to be officially granted Responsible Government, in 1846. Its pioneering role was mainly played by Joseph Howe. Howe’s celebrated Four Letters Addressed to Lord John Russell, Colonial Secretary, in 1839 provided public documents fully entitled to rank alongside Durham’s Report in their telling literary style, the clarity and the cogency of their arguments.

It is clear that by the late 1830s something had to be done. All the colonies were growing in population. New Brunswick was building dozens of ships every year, Nova Scotians were to be found on every ocean.

Inland, the trees were falling fast, new fields appearing, new villages, new towns. Everywhere there was vigorous local life. Every colony wished progressive reform, none wanted change in allegiance. Because they divided men into groups, some clinging to things as they were or to their own privileges, others looking to necessary change, the rebellions provided the necessary foundation on which to build: here lay the basis of the party system that has come down to our own days. In general terms, if you are a Liberal (still more a New Democrat) in 1967, the chances are that you would have looked with a certain degree of sympathy on the rebels of 1837. The events of 1837 and the succeeding years therefore sum up British American history to that period and open the door through which the future could be dimly discerned. For the Canadas, the Act of Union duly followed in 1840 and in that decade Responsible Government for all the major colonies.
On September 15th, 1864, in the dusty, shady village of Charlottetown (population 7,000), a newspaper called Ross's Weekly unloaded on its readers the following indignant and curiously lip-licking account of a certain social event that had occurred in town:

'A few days after the close of the circus, a great public 'Ball and Supper' is announced; the evening of the day arrives; the proud and the gay, arrayed in fashion's gauds, flock to the scene where revelry presides...Pleasure panoplied in lustful smiles meets and embraces exuberant Joy...the fascinating dance goes merrily, and the lusibious waltz with its lascivious entwinements whilsts in growing excitement; the swelling bosom and the voluptuous eye tell the story of intemperate revel...In this scene, where intrigue schemes sit...our moralist mingles; here he rocks his piety to sleep, and cradles his morality in forgiveness; and the saint who could not tolerate Satan in the circus, embraces the Prince of Darkness in the gilded scene of fashion's vices, and the reeking slough of debauchery.'

Now the saint, our moralist, the victim of all this eloquent invective was the Charlottetown Protestant, a newspaper that had just finished attacking Slaysmaker and Nichols' Olympic Circus for fleecing the public. Ross's Weekly happened to like the circus and, anyway, John Ross generally resented the snooty way the Protestant expressed itself. Moreover, his paper, like many of the other 380-odd noisy little newspapers that served British North America, was volatile, testy, and highly personal. Therefore, the fact that Ross should print such an exposé was not surprising.

What was surprising about it—and the thing that makes it intriguing even now, even 103 years later—was that the guest list in that reeking slough of debauchery, the gentlemen who were helping pleasure panoplied in lustful smiles meet and embrace exuberant Joy, the very lusibious waltzers and intemperate revellers themselves, included virtually all the solemn-looking citizens whom we now revere as The Fathers of Confederation.

Yes, those same stiff-necked characters in the famous group portrait...those fellows with the mutton-chop whiskers and the dark, heavy, discreet, narrow-legged woolen suits...with their cheeks full of potatoes and their apparently glum, Victorian, sun-day-morning faces...those same men, the whole rollicking bunch of them, they stayed up all night through the night of September 7-8, 1864, at this Grand Ball at Province House in Charlottetown.

They arrived at 10, and they danced the local women around the ball, and they boozed it up, and they made florid speeches, and they didn't even start to eat till one in the morning. Then, somewhere around 5 a.m.,
they all made their way down through the warm island fog to the harbor and climbed aboard the steamship Queen Victoria for a trip to Nova Scotia.

There they would continue their 'deliberations'. They were founding a nation, and all through that astonishing, euphoric and frequently comic summer and autumn of 1864 they were proving that man does not found nations on bread alone.

By 1865, the Saint John Weekly Telegraph was crudely describing the historic Charlottetown and Quebec conferences as 'the great intercolonial drunk of last year'. The Perth Courier referred to Confederation as 'the measure of the Quebec ball-room and the oyster-supper statesmen', and, even while the Quebec Conference was still underway, the Berliner Journal was so bold as to suggest that no matter what the delegates did on their forthcoming trip to Canada West they could not possibly expect any worse hangovers than they'd already acquired. Barney Rooney's Letter, a satirical column in the Halifax Citizen mercilessly derided the Fathers for their conference table habits:

'John A': but hand us the tipple iv ye iver stop suppin' to see iv it's strong enough; and toss a lemon to Tilley, the sow; iv he must do penance like a patriarch.'

'I'll hae whiskey,' sez Jarge (Brown) . . .

'My cervice, ye're rich though, Darcie lad, about the danger o' ganin' ower early tae the polls . . . Dinna ye think sic, Mister Crupper?'

'Sir,' sez Tupper, as he dried the bottom iv his tumbler, and held it handy to D'Arcy's ladle, 'the well understood wishes iv the people are so notoriously in favor iv this scheme that it would be a reckless and infamous policy to put them to the trouble of expressing themselves . . .'

'. . . the whole set staggered on to the Confrance omnibus, in the top of good humour, Brown droning out 'Soggarth Aroon' to plaze D'Arcy, and D'Arcy blarneying the Scotch to plaze Brown, and McCully and Tupper swearin' eternal friendship on Confederashun . . .

It is clear then that there was far more to the founding of Canada than the old group portrait betrays. There was far more than the school textbooks care to reveal, far more warmth, passion, intemperance and color than we are used to associating with 19th century Canada.

The thing we forget, in our more solemn tributes to the Fathers of Confederation, is that they were men who cared violently about their politics, that they were at the seething heart of a whole society of business men, churchmen, farmers, bigots, factions, fanatical regionalists, goons, quacks, eccentrics, and brilliantly vicious newspapers; and that all these people and forces cared violently about their politics, too. Reports of high-level hard drinking are only one way by which we can sense the vivid color of those times.

Another way lies among the newspapers. Many of them were mean, witty, acid, literate, committed, frequently unfair and usually on the attack. When they disliked something—and many heartily disliked Confederation—they expressed their distaste with a combination of arrogance, style and bluntness. For instance, the St. Catharines Evening Journal disputed the idea that the voice of the people is the voice of God in the following terms:

'We don't desire our institutions to be the playthings of an irresponsible Executive, or the footballs of a senseless and levelling rabble, or the targets for wide-mouthed fanatics to shoot their mad ravings at . . .'

And the Barrie Examiner, discussing U.S. legislators, said they were all filled with 'demagogues, prizefighters and other specimens of the genus vagabond, who can handle a bowie knife much better than a pen'. The Halifax Morning Chronicle described French Canadians as 'the half-civilized people of the sterile shores of the Saguenay, the shivering squatters way up by the Temiscouata Lake', and the Stratford Beacon gave its readers this unspiring definition of the last hours of the
Confederation debate of 1865:
... the House was in an unmistakably seedy condition, having, as it was positively declared, eaten the saloon keeper clean out, drunk him entirely dry, and got all the fitful naps of sleep that the benches along the passages could be made to yield... Men with the strongest constitutions for Parliamentary twaddle were sick of the debate, and the great bulk of the members were scattered about the building, with an up-all-night, get-tight-in-morning air, impatient for the sound of the division bell. It rang at last, at quarter past four, and the jaded representatives of the people swarmed in to the discharge of the most important duty of all their lives.

The Saint John Weekly Telegraph was even tougher on the New Brunswick Assembly:
There they sit day after day, quietly pocketing the $4 and other perquisites, eating and sleeping and drinking at the public expense, but never, except probably once in the term, are they found opening their lips in the interests of the people whom they represent...

We have seen a member of the Legislature before now, not only ignorant, possessing information of no higher grade than that afforded by an Engine House education, but filthy in personal appearance, squirting tobacco juice on every side of him...

The newspapers were rough enough, but the things they said were probably mild compared to the language that must have flown when political enemies met face-to-face. In 1866, J.-B.-E. Dorion, l'infant terrible of the Canadian Assembly, complained that an Ottawa editor had slapped him across the face; and William Miller, MLA, publicly pummelled the editor of the Halifax Sun outside the Nova Scotia Assembly. Only a year before that a fearful row had blown up in the Canadian House because one of two MLAs, who happened to meet behind the Speaker's throne, decided it was time to settle a long-standing grudge between them. He grabbed the other man's nose and gave it a powerful yank.

Moreover, though these incidents involved public figures, they were small stuff beside the awful mayhem that frequently sprang out of public meetings and election-day brawls. In the Newfoundland election of 1861 people suffered violent deaths in Harbour Grace and Harbour Main, and it wasn't until a hundred troops came over from Halifax that things finally settled down.

In short, those distinguished and stuffy-looking gents whom we credit with inventing Canada were playing their politics in a rough, tough, fast league (and it is hardly surprising that, now and then, they liked to unwind at raucous parties). But even though...
That was on June 22, 1864, and because the events of that day were emotional, happy, surprising and mysteriously ennobling, it was as good a time as any to begin the story of that whole emotional, happy, surprising and mysteriously ennobling summer and fall of 1864.

Again and again in the years before July 1, 1867, the cause of Confederation would drop right out of sight but, later, the extraordinary fact that it had actually happened would seem to spring directly from the talks, the new friendships and the jolly travelling times of the season of 1864. It was then—among the champagne glasses as well as the minutes of the meetings—that the Confederation fever struck a few important men, and they could never shake it.

The campaign for Confederation was an exercise in the hard sell at the backwoods level. The salesmen were the politicians of the new coalition government that now ran the union of Canada West (Ontario) and Canada East (Quebec); they clearly hoped that some form of federation with all the colonies of British North America would bide them out of their own hopeless political stalemate. The customers—and they were a mightily suspicious bunch—were supposed to be Nova Scotians, New Brunswickers and Prince Edward Islanders.

The salesmen knew very little about their potential customers. Only two or three Cana-

dian politicians had even the slightest first-hand knowledge of the Maritimes. D'Arcy McGee reported that a Canadian who was curious about Maritimers earnestly asked him, 'What kind of people are they?' as though Maritimers were Mongolian tribesmen or Hottentot warriors.

Maritimers were almost as ignorant of Canada, and what little they did know about it they didn't like much. Canada was a land of rebellions, a place where people had hurled rotten eggs at a governor-general, the jaded home of railway scandals, broken faith and messy government. John A. and his sales team had a monumental selling job ahead of them.

They began on June 30, 1864, by asking permission to attend a conference on Maritime Union. Now, the Maritimes had been

mumbling aimlessly about a union among themselves for several years and they'd recently given an unenthusiastic airing to the idea of holding a conference on the matter. They had not decided where to hold it, or when, or who should attend and yet, here were the Canadians asking themselves in already. The Maritimes obliged and announced they'd have their conference September 1 in Charlottetown, and the Canadians could come along.

Meanwhile, and quite by chance, a hundred-old jolly good fellows from Canada were preparing to make a big, fast, backslapping, hand-shaking tour through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Businessmen in Halifax and Saint John had invited them on this mission of discovery and, early in August, they set out—D'Arcy McGee, 23 newspapermen, 18 members of the Canadian Legislative Council, 32 members of the Assembly, and roughly 40 other men of some distinction.

Saint John was an ambitious, lively, relaxed, money-conscious, cigar-smoking, the-at-going town. It had a pleasantly American atmosphere and it was the biggest city in the Maritimes. The Canadians, as they sailed up from Maine on an evening in early August, were astonished to find thousands upon thousands of cheering people gathered at the docks to welcome them. There was a levee at the Court House that evening, and that night the Saint John Chamber of Commerce laid on a button-popping banquet.

A couple of days later the Canadians boarded a special steamer, the Anna Augusta and—with the band of the 15th Regiment pumping away and the French Canadians singing old canoeing songs and singing imaginary paddles—they sailed up through a fragrant summer day, up through one of the most beautiful river valleys in North America, to Fredericton. 'The heat was gently softened by the summer breeze,' the Saint John Morning Telegraph reported, 'and the fleecy clouds which hung in the sky above us seemed but the shadows of the glorious earth.'

The same magical weather and sweet good
which the Victorian gentlemen of British North America regarded as ceremonial dinners and, shortly after that, HMS Lily, a 700-ton corvette, took the Canadians for a short cruise beyond the harbor. Returning, the Toronto Leader reported, "Nature smiled upon us... on one side the city of Halifax looking resplendent in the fullness of the noon-day sun, and on the Dartmouth side... the fields still green and lively with pretty cottages peeping out from charming clusters of trees."

In the third week of August, the Canadians went back home. They'd been stung by the weather, the beauty, the hospitality and the goodwill of the Maritimers and, for the east coast's part, the Saint John Morning Telegraph was speaking for a good many influential and persuasive men when it said, 'the Canadians are good fellows and a jolly set, and... we are sorry to part with them...'

This sunny excursion did not, of course, convince the Maritimers that they should join Canada in Confederation. Nor did it come anywhere near blowing away forever their distrust of the Canadian character, or their wariness concerning the larger political motives of Canadians. But it did convince some Maritimers that Canadians, as a whole, were not such bad chaps, not quite so foreign as they'd supposed. Canadians, too, liked good times, good food, good liquor, leapfrog and laughs. The trip ended only a few days before the Charlottetown Conference began and, though its timing was pure coincidence, it turned out to be something of an ice-breaker for the meeting, an atmosphere-warmer, a squirt of sweet oil to lubricate intercolonial frictions.

The Queen Victoria, carrying eight Canadian cabinet ministers, left Quebec on the evening of Monday, August 29 and, after a mild and sunny passage down the St. Lawrence and along the New Brunswick coast, steamed into Charlottetown on Thursday afternoon, September 1. The Canadians, by then, had apparently worked out their Confederation scheme and their Confederation pitch in some detail. All eight of them were highly familiar with the plan, had a clear idea of what each one should say, and a powerful recognition of their common purpose. One of them, the Grit newspaper editor George Brown offered a vivid description of the earliest stages in the Canadian 'invasion':

'Having dressed ourselves in correct style, our two boats were lowered man-of-war fashion, and being each duly manned with four oarsmen and a boatswain, dressed in blue uniforms, hats, belts, etc. in regular style, we pulled away from shore and landed like Mr. Christopher Columbus who had the precedence of us in taking possession of portions of the American continent.

The Charlottetown Conference met that afternoon, promptly deferred the whole phony question of Maritime Union, and agreed to hear the Canadians for four days. A week later, the Saint John Morning Telegraph reported that the arguments of John A. Macdonald, George Brown, George-Étienne Cartier and the other Canadians were 'almost irresistible' and that our own delegates are still more favorable to (BNA) Union than they were, and as they consult and converse with the Canadians the difficulties in the matter of detail vanish.'

One of the things that undoubtedly helped obscure the detail was the convivial or, to hear the subsequent critics of Confederation tell it, the downright indulgent quality of the extracurricular activities at Charlottetown. On Friday, the day after the Canadians arrived, Provincial Secretary W. H. Pope held a lavish buffet lunch at his house and, on Saturday afternoon, the Canadians countered with what was perhaps the most significant piece of shipboard hospitality in the history of Canada. The formal work was over till Monday morning. At four in the afternoon aboard the Queen Victoria the champagne began to pop. Cartier spoke, Brown spoke, McGee spoke with brilliant wit, the corks kept on flying, men gathered warm confidence and the hard-nosed Maritimers

A mid-Victorian family stroll

Image: 0x0 to 1224x792
actually began to believe that, yes, some day, a Confederation of the colonies of British North America might actually come to pass.

It was at this sunny, extravagant, mid-afternoon bash on the decks of a little steamer in Charlottetown's harbor that Confederation began to win converts, and to inspire them with a sense of mission.

The Canadiants finished their formal presentation on Tuesday, the Maritime delegates abandoned all consideration of Maritime Union, and the conference adjourned to Halifax. But first the Canadiants entertained the lieutenant-governor of Prince Edward Island and flocks of local ladies; the conference spent a day at the warm, beautiful beaches on the north shore; and that night everyone stayed up all night at the great ball whose orgiastic activities so deeply offended Rawson's World.

The conference stayed in Halifax only long enough to adjourn to Saint John, to agree to a further conference at Quebec in October, and to attend a public dinner where once again the huge amounts of food seemed to reflect everyone's idea of the occasion's huge amount of importance. Then they rolled on to Saint John where, at yet another banquet, the New Brunswickers toasted the others, everyone bellowed out 'For they are jolly good fellows,' and Cartier staggered through 'God Save the Queen' in both French and English. The next morning they moved on to Fredericton and from there they all went home to get ready for the Quebec Conference.

The Charlottetown Conference, for all the sniping it was already undergoing at the hands of the anti-Conference press, had witnessed the first appearance in British North America of an undeniably authentic national spirit.

At first the atmosphere at Quebec was considerably more depressing. It rained there day after day and, though the Charlottetown talks had enabled the delegates to reach large agreement on the virtues and general principles of Confederation, the Quebec Conference could not easily agree on the details. By the fourth day the Toronto Globe was reporting that everyone here has had a fit of the blues.

Then once more the Canadian government came to the rescue, this time with another ball. There were 800 guests. They danced quadrilles, polkas and Waltzes and the Canadiant cabaret hurled itself into the spirit of the function with a gusto that inspired a Maritime delegate to describe them as 'the most invertebrate dancers I have ever seen. They do not seem to miss a dance during the live long night.'

He went on, 'They are cunning fellows, and there's no doubt that it is all done for a political purpose; they know that if they can dance themselves into the affections of the ladies and daughters of the country, the men will certainly become an easy conquest.'

And there was no shortage of wives and daughters. There were plenty of beautiful French Canadian women but, more surprisingly, the Maritime delegates apparently regarded the conference as a choice opportunity to show their daughters to colonial society. Charles Tupper, the premier of Nova Scotia, brought his wife and daughter. So did the Nova Scotia Liberal A. G. Archibald, and George Cole of Prince Edward Island. R. J. Dickey of Nova Scotia, Charles Fisher, W. H. Steeves and J. H. Gray of New Brunswick all brought their daughters.

It was not altogether surprising then that, one week after the government ball, the bachelors of Quebec threw a Bachelors' Ball. Nor that George Sala, a famous correspondent for the London Daily Telegraph, included the ladies in his description of the east-coast representation: 'Nova Scotians, Newfoundlanders, New Brunswickers and Prince Edward Islanders, stalwart Saxon-looking yeomen, with comely wives and pretty daughters ...'

There were other good times in Quebec. The Board of Trade held a memorable Quebec-style feast at Russell's Hotel. After the conference ended, the various hotel claims against the Canadian government totalled $15,000. 'The Canadiants—who must, after all, be generous hearted fellows—appear to have great faith in the power of good food, champagne and torch light, as much more potent than dry argument,' said the Fredericton Head Quarters. 'They seem to think that turning the head is a synonymous phrase with convincing the mind.'

The delegates all stayed in the St. Louis Hotel and, according to Joseph McGillicuddy of Nova Scotia, they were 'a very merry party'. The Quebec Daily News chided Liberal George Brown for becoming 'as lithe and gay as the merriest courtier of the old Tory compact', and A. J. Smith, leader of the Confederation-haters in New Brunswick, could invariably draw a laugh at public meetings with remarks like this: 'They had nice times going up (to Quebec) and nicer after they got there ... dinners, balls, champagne, suppers, and only when surrounded with such influences were they fit to form a new empire.'

Near the end of the month the conference moved west. No fewer than a thousand guests attended a conference ball in Montreal. The delegates met for another highly amiable lunch the next day and then—a
soft, golden, late-autumn day—a steamer took them north to Ottawa. There, dense crowds filled the streets, a torchlight parade guided the delegates to their hotel and, as one of the Nova Scotians said over lunch at the half-finished Parliament Buildings the next day, 'We were indeed received like conquerors, like warriors returned from a great victory.'

The train trip to Toronto was even more astonishing. All along the route crowds turned out to cheer and wave handkerchiefs and, at one stop late in the afternoon, the delegates downed bumper of champagne on the station platform. At Toronto four brass bands, blazing torches, exotic firecrackers and thousands of people accompanied them to the Queen's Hotel. Some of the Fathers spoke from the hotel balcony to the crowds below, and the excitement in the streets did not die down till almost midnight. 'We have been received with continued ovation,' said Mc- Cally of Nova Scotia. 'It has been one Carnival, from the beginning until now.'

It was, of course, more than a carnival and when the long and frequently tense day time discussions of the Quebec Conference were all over, George Brown expressed his joy at its most sober accomplishments. He wrote to his wife: 'All right!!! Conference through at six o'clock this evening—constitution adopted—a most creditable document—a complete reform of all the abuses and injustices we have complained of.'

Brown had a right to be proud of the constitution but there was another achievement of '64, and it occurred on a more personal level.

It was the growth of an atmosphere among a few men, a shared experience, a contagious dream, an idea that took hold of different men at different times... at the 5th glass of champagne... the 16th oyster... the 350th blazing torch... the 4,000th mile... the 10,000th cheering voice.

Somewhere during that summer, this handful of politicians, many of whom had been strangers to one another, all found themselves hoping and thinking and working together for something that held more grandeur than any ambition they'd ever known before. Confederation, and many of their own political careers, still faced far more painful setbacks than any of them could forecast at the end of 1864 but, all the same, the months from June to November were a sweet time to remember.

For most of the Fathers, however, the months that followed '64 were something else. In New Brunswick the defeat in 1865 of Confederalist Leonard Tilley's government seemed, for a while, to have sunk the cause forever, both there and throughout the Maritimes. The cause of Confederation brought about the political ruin of some of its most distinguished advocates in Prince Edward Island and, though the island did finally join Confederation in 1873 it would take the tough, resilient and stubborn Newfoundlander until the middle of the following century to reconcile themselves to joining Canada.

But ingenuity, luck, courage and the gathering weight of opinion in London began to work on behalf of the Fathers' vision. In December, 1866, delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick joined the Canadians in a final conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel, London. The Quebec meeting had achieved a general agreement on the legal and financial basis for Confederation but some horse trading was still necessary. Moreover, Britain had some ideas of her own concerning the legislation that would establish what they all finally agreed to call 'the Dominion of Canada.'

The British North America Act was introduced to the British Parliament in March, 1867, and it passed with barely a ripple of debate. An anti-Confederation group from Nova Scotia, who'd camped in London during the winter and fought the scheme to the last hopeless minute, bitterly contrasted the uneventful passage of the BNA Act to the eagerness with which the British MPs plunged into a debate on a new dog tax. On July 1, 1867, a royal proclamation brought the Act into force for the four founding provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec.

All over the new country, July 1 dawned clear and quite warm. 'With the first dawn of this gladness summer morn,' began the Toronto Globe, 'we hail this birthday of a new nationality. A united British America takes its place among the nations of the world.' Newspapers from Halifax to Sarnia talked about 'our new destiny,' and even Summerside, Prince Edward Island, wished Canada well. And—though black crepe hung in the streets of Yarmouth and Halifax, though the Halifax Morning Chronicle published a bitter epitaph and though all but one of Nova Scotia's 19 members of the House of Commons were anti-Confederationists—ceremonial guns were booming in Quebec, Toronto, Ottawa, Fredericton and, yes, Halifax too. There were parades, and the sound of brass everywhere. There was a swelling nationalism in the eastern speeches, and stories that the West Coast favored joining Confederation. Flags were out. The sun was shining. The day was as beautiful as any summer day has ever been and, in the several cities of the Dominion of Canada, the friends of Confederation began to mark the great occasion by cracking oysters and lifting champagne to their lips.
Consolidation
One country sea to sea

Monday last, 1st July, was the birthday of the Canadian Dominion. It was proclaimed as a public holiday and to some extent was observed in this town as such, but by no means as a day of rejoicing. Throughout the day, numerous flags were displayed half-mast, some of them draped in mourning. ... In several localities the men wore black weeds on their hats. An effigy of Dr. Tupper was suspended by the neck all afternoon on the spot known as The Devil's Half Acre and in the evening was burnt side by side with a live rat. Another effigy of Dr. Tupper was burnt on the Parade ...

(Yarmouth, N.S., Herald, July 4, 1867)

And so Canada limped into Confederation. Bells pealed, fireworks popped, troops paraded, speeches rolled on and on in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. But Nova Scotians—those most prosperous of Canadians with their shipping, fishing and trade with the Yankee—came in kicking and screaming. They were sure their premier, Charles Tupper, had sold out to central Canada. For yielding a measure of revenue and independence to Ottawa they'd get a federal grant of 40 cents per head—about the price of a sheepskin, roasted their fiery spokesman, Joseph Howe, Nova Scotia wanted out.

It was only one of the splitting headaches facing the fathers of our country that day. Confederation was not an end but a beginning. Ahead lay four critical years. Not until 1871 would Nova Scotia be placated; the pushy Americans finally discouraged from trying to take over Canada; those crazy Irish raiders, the Fenians, turned away for the last time; and restless Manitoba, far-off British Columbia and the sprawling Territories pulled together to more or less assure the nation's survival. They were troubled, violent years, but there were also glorious, rollicking years. They were times when nobody doubted the future of the Empire, much less the survival of mankind; when all stout fellows rose on cue to offer 'Three cheers!' for the Queen, the commanding general, the newest MP or almost anybody; when gentlemen wrote love letters to ladies that said, 'Tomorrow I shall hasten to the presence of her from whom I hope I may never henceforth be parted ....'

If they now seem like incredibly naive times, it is because most Canadians then were simple outdoorsmen, thinly spread across the wilderness, in a relatively uncomplicated age. There were only 3,300,000 souls in the four provinces, 75 per cent of them in Ontario and Quebec, and most were very close to nature. The Maritimes, to be sure, had bankers, lawyers, flocks of little universities and newspapers, and a lively literature led by Thomas Haliburton's wagish clockmaker, Sam Slick. But their strength was in ships and the sea. It was the last day of the wooden
Red River cart

ship and Nova Scotia built hundreds of them. The Halifax fish market featured 16 different species. Nets lay like cobwebs on the grass in every village. Lobster flapped in the shallows of the Miramichi River with every outgoing tide; you could buy 100 for 50 cents.

It was the same in the central provinces. Montreal, true enough, was a sophisticated city of 100,000 where merchant princes lived amidst cushiony carpets, velvet draperies and crystal chandeliers. Quebec City’s 60,000 included students and priests, soldiers and gen-

try. But the backbone of Quebec province was the habitant, a cheerful God-fearing soul in cap, vest, breeches and boat shoes; long, low whitewashed stone houses; villages with saintly names that rang like church bells; tiny slots of farms hugging that great highway, the St. Lawrence River.

Ontario had Toronto, 90,000 and growing fast, full of Tories, churches, bars, Orange men, Methodists and merchants. Its census included clerks, carpenters, saddlers, brewers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, booksellers, bankers, grocers, hotelkeepers. Both it and Montreal had gas lights, boardwalks, cobbled streets and horse-drawn streetcars. Stage coaches were being relegated to back roads. For $10 first class, $8 second class, you could ride the Grand Trunk Railway between Montreal and Toronto any day but Sunday—a jolting, grimy, cinder-splattered ordeal with the funnel-shaped smokestack billowing sooty clouds. Still, you made it in 14 hours, a near-miracle in those days. Surely this was civilization.

But these were exceptions. In all four provinces, countrymen in their baggy homespun outnumbered the frock-coated citymen, eight to one. The rich odor of fresh-turned sod, the tang of new-cut wood was everywhere. Beyond, in the Canada-yet-to-be, the Red River settlement at Fort Garry was a wild collection of Indians, grass, half-breeds, buffalo, unkempt farmers in buckskins and sheer hard-

ship. Grasshoppers stripped the crops that first summer of Confederation; by winter, the settlers were eating horses, even cats. Here the only ‘trains’ were Red River carts, bound together with rough dried buffalo hide, ox-drawn, devoid of nails or grease, screeching south or west. When the ruts grew too deep they shifted one cart wheel onto fresh sod and so, in time, parallel tracks moved off to infinity, through Indian and missionary country, finally to a fort perched high over the North Saskatchewan.

The establishment at Edmonton boasts of a windmill, a blacksmith’s forge and carpenter’s shop. The boats required for the annual voyage to York Factory in Hudson Bay are built and mended here. Wheat grows luxuriantly. There are about 30 families living in the Fort . . .

(Journal of English travellers W. B. Chisholm and Viscount Milton, 1865)
LOWER FORT GARRY

Hudson's Bay Company store and fur loft, built in 1833

Beyond lay the Rockies; then the Cariboo gold fields now dwindling to nothing; then the newly united colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, heavily in debt yet hungrily eyed by the United States.

The west was not yet Canadian, but it was not American, either. The 49th parallel had been recognized as the border between the United States and British colonies in the west ever since the Treaty of Paris in 1783, although at that time it had been meant to reach only to the Mississippi River. When it was discovered that the Mississippi rose farther south, the two governments took the sensible course of extending the boundary west to the Rockies in 1818. The Americans wanted to push it straight through to the Pacific, but the British were not yet ready to surrender Oregon, although they agreed to do just that in 1846.

The idea of stitching all this wilderness into the new country was beyond the ken of most Canadians. A Halifax clergyman, soliciting funds for the Red River famine victims, said Nova Scotians 'would have given quite as intelligently had the sufferers been in Central Abyssinia'. Canadians of 1867 had other worries, some of them remarkably like ours.

They feared the Americans, many of whom, having finished the Civil War, wanted to annex Canada. The pop song of the day was the Yankees' 'Tramp, Tramp, Tramp The Boys Are Marching' and although Canadians sang it, the way they always sing American songs, it gave them a queasy feeling.

They also fretted over contemporary manners and morals. Teenagers were less obedient, more pampered and more interested in sex (referred to as 'the nameless sin') than in stricter pioneer days. Staunch church-goers all, Canadians viewed women's fashions with mingled delight and alarm. The voluminous skirt, nipped-in waist and billowing bodice displaying a wide acreage of bare bosom that was the fashion throughout the period was surely sinful and maybe even a health hazard.

'That our daughters here in frigid and changeable climate should expose to the chilling winds a vital part of the body, is one of the evils of fashion which should be discounted by every mother, father and brother.'

(Anonymous writer, London, Ont., 1882)

Women bared their décolletage anyway, and, when the winds grew sharp, stuffed newspapers under their coatfronts. They could be forgiven this little show of femininity; women's life for the most part was drudgery, especially in the country. They made everything, from tallow soap to elderberry shoe polish. The family was a soak-on-Monday-scrub-on-Tuesday horror that the newfangled washing machine had not yet alleviated. Cooking was forsaking the fireplace for a cast iron stove but it was still primitive; to tell if the oven was hot enough for a cake, the housewife was advised to 'hold your arm in and count to 40'. (If she could only count to 20 before pulling out, the oven was hot enough for pumpkin pie.) She was also urged to burn dishcloths when they became 'black and stiff and smell like a barnyard'. Bedbugs were everywhere. Open sewers and outdoor privies were common even in the cities. Bathubs were for the rich. Most people washed their hands, face and feet in that order of priority and countered other

Protestant Church & Mission School, Red River 1820
body odor with scented pomades and lotions. Anyway, a man with an honest smell was likely an honest man. Daughters were warned that the city dandy who carried scented sachets in his pockets was doubtless disguising some evil: booze, tobacco or bad breath.

If Canadians of that era were less fastidious than us they were a sight more neighborly. In Quebec they carried neighborliness to the extreme, with the charivari. On a wedding night the yokels blackened their faces, donned grotesque costumes and set upon awful din of horns, drums and hanging pots and pans outside the newlyweds' home. If the groom refused to invite them in for a drink he might be forcibly removed, tarred, feathered and ridden on a rail.

In Ontario, the ubiquitous 'bee' was one way of mixing business with pleasure. The gentler kind—corn husking, apple paring, quilting—were good excuses for 'sparkling'.

If a boy happened to find a colored kernel in a corn cob it entitled him to kiss his girl. If she tossed a curling apple peel that spelled his initial—good omen! And a quilting bee might end with young men dropping in for tea and being roughly tossed in the newly finished quilt.

Barn raisings were lustier affairs, featuring heavy work, drinking, fighting, the occasional killing, and eating.

‘Our men worked well until dinner time when after washing in the lake they all sat down to the rude board which I had prepared for them loaded with the best fare that could be produced in the bush. Pea soup, legs of pork, venison, elk, and raspberry pie, plenty of potatoes and whisky to wash them down, besides a large iron kettle of tea . . .

(Susanna Moodie: Raking It in the Bush, 1871)

After the food, wives and girl friends would join in and dance until dawn. Or maybe the men drifted off to the general store to sit around whistling, spitting (tobacco or spice gum) and talking politics. Politics were a live issue that first autumn of Confederation.

In the August election Sir John A. Macdonald carried three of the provinces and formed a coalition cabinet. But it was an uneasy victory. In Nova Scotia, only Tupper of all the Confederationists was elected.

It was merely part of the crushing load that John A. carried with grace. For all his whisky-drinking human frailty, the homely 52-year-old statesman was surely the only man with the wisdom, wit, diplomacy and sheer staying power to hold Canada together in those times.

‘He can throw off a weight of business in a wonderfully short time. Occasionally he comes in with a very moody brow, tired and oppressed, his voice weak, his step slow; and 10 minutes after he is making clever jokes and laughing like any schoolboy, with his hands in his pockets and his head thrown back.’

(Diary of Lady Susan Agnes Macdonald, July, 1867)

The MPs gathered in November for the first Parliament. Ottawa was a scruffy town of 21,000, short on accommodation and social graces, noted mainly for riotous brawls whenever the river log-drivers hit town. The new Parliament Buildings were by far the most imposing sight, even though the clock tower reminded John A. of a cowbell. But then cowbell architecture was the vogue in every courthouse or city hall in the land.

For a while the Nova Scotians, led by the brilliant Howe—a rumpled man with coarse features, untidy grey hair and a tongue that could bring a cheering crowd to its feet—did not unduly harass the government. Christmas came, a bountiful time in this productive land. City markets were glutted with frozen carcasses of pigs, sheep, deer, ducks, geese, chickens, turkeys. The fun was plain and ample too. Sleigh rides, hay rides, ice boating and skating.

Nowhere were winter sports more popular than in Quebec province. The Saturday downtown parade of sleighs pulled by high stepping horses was a Montreal ‘special’. In the Victoria indoor rink, hundreds skated on the 200-by-80-foot ice surface. Peel Street was turned over to tobogganing every evening.

At night, by the light of candles or lanterns of the new petroleum lamps, taffy pulls, spelling bees, white, euchre, cribbage, home theatricals, musicals, recitations. And, of course, the question of decorating Christmas trees.

‘Do not load its green boughs with sugar candies . . . You can make your Christmas tree with the healthful gifts of Nature . . . Apples, pears, grapes, nuts and other fruits that the little ones love. You can add lumps of real sugar, white and clear as crystal, if sweets are indispensable; and there are sugar candies honestly prepared from good sugar
and made beautiful without coloring.'

(Sarah Hale: Slumber, 1866)

New Year’s was a rip-roaring time of parties, house visits and, in Quebec, the traditional blessing of the entire family by the head of the household. For John A. and his government, though, the New Year turned bitter. Nova Scotia seemed determined to abandon Canada. Joseph Howe sailed to England to seek the mother country’s support. Macdonald sent Tupper after him to counter his arguments and try to reason with him. The debate raged on in the House. Macdonald was fortunate to have a supporter like D’Arcy McGee, a darkly handsome Irish poet, journalist and Parliamentarian, one of the greatest orators in Canadian history. McGee had become increasingly critical of the Fenians, those American Irish who in their bumbling attempts to free Ireland from Britain had already made several abortive attacks on Canada. And in McGee, too, the ‘Canada First’ movement, a little show of nationalism in the late Sixties, found its inspiration.

But now, on the night of April 6, 1868, McGee was concluding a stirring speech on the Nova Scotia problem: 'I have great reliance on the mellowing effects of time. Time will heal all existing irritations; time will mellow and refine all points of contrast that seem so harsh today . . . . He sat down to warm applause.

‘Ottawa: The Hon. T. D. McGee was assassinated at half past two this morning. He stayed in the House till 2 o’clock, made a long and eloquent speech, walked home to summer John A. followed up with shrewd strategy: he visited Halifax with George-Etienne Caronier, Tupper, and Ontario Premier John Sandfield Macdonald, an intimate friend of Howe and one-time anti-Confederationist. They reasoned and cajoled. Howe, too loyal a Canadian to permit Nova Scotia’s annexation by the U.S. (a distinct possibility), gave in. Ultimately he accepted a cabinet post in the Macdonald government and helped Tupper sweep the province in the next federal election.

The Toronto, first locomotive built in Ontario

Canada’s government was far too preoccupied that summer of 1868 to notice a curious juxtaposition of events in the Red River settlement. In July, Louis Riel, a young Métis with thick curly black hair and brooding intelligent eyes, returned to his native St. Boniface after studying for the priesthood in Montreal. The Métis were a people apart—half white, half Indian. Neither nomadic nor settled, they developed a way of life that was entirely their own, and they nursed a fierce pride in their hybrid race. Riel, a fiery speaker and ardent student of politics, was destined never to be a priest. He took a traditional Métis job driving a Red River cart train and began to rediscover the problems of his people. Their old way of life—trapping,
working the cart trains, raising cattle on small rectangular farms running French-style to the banks of the Red River—was about to vanish under an onslaught of settlement. Already a federal government crew was starting a road between Port Grey and Fort William, the first hint that Canada would soon buy Rupert’s Land, including what is now Manitoba, from the Hudson’s Bay Company.

One of the road builders was Thomas Scott, an Irish-Canadian Orangeman with a quick temper and considerable disdain for Indians and Métis. Scott and others fell in with a third player in the Red River drama: Dr. John Christian Schultz, an Ontario hustler who’d staked out great tracts of land, aspired to government and wanted to see the west opened to settlers.

If this simmering stew was little known to John A. and his followers, it was a total blank to the average Canadian. Summer life in Canada was hard work on weekdays but never on Sunday. That was the day every living soul went on picnics. Picnics? Gastro-nomical orgies?

One joint cold roast beef, 1 joint cold boiled beef, 2 ribs of lamb, 2 shoulders of lamb, 4 roast fowls, 2 roast ducks, 1 ham, 2 veal and ham pies, 2 pigeon pies, 6 medium lobsters, 18 lettuces, 6 baskets of salad, 3-4 doz. plain pastry biscuits, 2 doz. fruit turnovers, 4 dozen cheesecakes, 3 doz. plain biscuits, 6 lbs. butter, 3 doz. quarts of ale, 2 doz. each ginger beer, soda water, lemonade, 6 sherry…”

(Partial picnic recipe for 40 persons, 1860s)

Sumptuous though they were, those feasts of a century ago would probably not appeal to our tastes today. The bread was gritty because milling was imperfect. Eggs frequently had a gamey taste, since hens ate anything they could catch. Milk might be tainted with turnip or wild herbs. Sugar had a molasses flavor. Butter quickly went rancid. Anyway, if you believed one London, Ont., doctor, who later gained fame for his yearly almanac, medicines and advice on just about everything, people of 1868 just over-stuffed themselves.

In the good old days of corn bread and crust coffee, there was but little trouble with Dyspepsia but since the days of fashionable intemperance, both in eating and drinking, such as spirituous liquors, wines, beers, also tea and coffee, hot bread or biscuit, high seasoned food, overloading the stomach at meals, and constant eating and drinking between meals, excessive venery, want of outdoor exercise, all have a tendency to de-bilitate the stomach and bring on or cause Dyspepsia…”

(Des Chase’s Recipes, London, Ont., 1868)

Politically, the Yankees were giving John A. a different kind of heartburn. Since the Civil War they had pestered England for payment of damages caused to Northern shipping by the Confederate privateer, Alabama, built in English shipyards and sold by England to the South. Several highly-placed Americans suggested Canada would be an acceptable payment, since the entire northwest or B.C., or both, thereby giving the U.S. a handy corridor to its new possession, Alaska.

This latest piece of Yankee audacity infuriated most Canadians. By early 1869 ‘Johnny Canuck’ became part of the Canadian image. He showed up in the Montreal humor magazine, Grinchuckle, as a clean-cut square-jawed type in unidentifiable uniform, vaguely resembling Hollywood’s idea of a Royal Canadian Mountie. In his first cartoon appearance Johnny Canuck (then labelled ‘Young Canada’) kicked a rascally Uncle Sam out of Canada. The same sentiment ran high on the west coast.

Tune: Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!

Come boys, let’s sing a song For the day it won’t be long When united to our country we will be Then the Maple Leaf entwined And the Beaver too, combined With Old England’s flag shall float upon the sea.
Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The new Dominion
Now is knocking at the door
So goodbye dear Uncle Sam
As we do not care a clam
For your greenbacks or your Inukshuks any more.

(Cariboo, B.C., Sentinel, June 10, 1869)

The Red River settlement had no particular love for Uncle Sam either, but neither did it like Canada’s high-handed treatment. The federal government had now bought Rupert’s Land and the Northwest Territories—an enormous area covering the northern parts of Ontario and Quebec, half of Baffin Island, all of the prairies to the B.C. border, and the present Northwest Territories—from the Hudson’s Bay Company for $1,500,000 and certain grants of land. Fort Garry was neither consulted nor informed of negotiations. Now, well ahead of the December 1, 1868, takeover date, federal land surveyors were tramping through the Red River settlement.

It was too much for the Métis. They were loyal to Canada but they refused to meekly cede their land to greedy Ontario settlers, already moving in. They organized a council, with Louis Riel as secretary. In the meantime the first governor-designate, William McDougall, a cold, intractable easterner, made his way west via the easier U.S. route with a 60-wagon entourage. As he prepared to enter Canada at the international boundary (he, too, ahead of the official takeover time) the Métis peaceably but firmly turned him back. Then Riel and 100 armed men took Fort Garry without a shot, elected an assembly (English and Métis were equally represented) and drafted a Bill of Rights asking for responsible provincial government, ownership of their own land and fair representation in Parliament. Riel strictly disciplined his troops, even to making them take an oath of temperance. It was no rebellion of savages.

The December deadline passed. McDougall scurried over the border long enough to read a phony proclamation saying he’d taken over in the name of the Queen, scrambled back to safety and was subsequently fired. Riel’s flag flew over Fort Garry. Back east the baffled federal government sent Donald Smith, a respected Hudson’s Bay Company governor, to make peace with the Red River settlers.

The easterners meanwhile settled into another winter of plenty and pleasure. Theirs was no longer really a pioneer society. There were flour, woollen and saw mills, banks, insurance companies and a new postal system (letter rate three cents per half-ounce). Western Ontario had oil wells and salt works. Montreal had sugar refineries. And there were distilleries, brickyards, brewers, tanners, clothiers, cobblers, saddlers and, of course, merchants.

A western settler plows his first furrow.

On the Cariboo Road to the British Columbia gold fields.
Pioneer Prairie houses. A framed log house, left, and an Austrian immigrant's homestead.

Timothy Eaton had opened his Toronto store the day before with a new approach in retailing: cash sales only and one clearly marked price. For a start he offered fancy dress goods at 10c per yard. Toronto girls

stocked up in a hurry. After all, one had to dress prettily for church; here's where one might meet a man; with luck he'd ask to see you home. Later, maybe, if your parents liked him, he'd take you sleigh riding or to a dance. Dances were all-night marathons, fortified with little snacks of chicken, turkey, beef and oysters. There were polkas, jigs, hornpipes, Scotch and Irish reels, the quadrille, the Schottische and the waltz.

If a lady waltzes with you, beware not to press her waist; you must only lightly touch it with the open palm of your hand lest you leave a disagreeable impression not only on her countenance but on her mind.

(Rules of Etiquette, Anonymous, 1857)

In the west, a grimmer business was afoot. Riel had arrested some unruly Ontarians, including the notorious Schultz and the abrasive Scott, both of whom subsequently escaped to rouse more trouble. But Donald Smith arrived and one blustery January day in 1870 stood outdoors for five hours at 20 below zero, talking reason to a thousand colonists. They were impressed; they too wanted peace. They elected a new representative government, again with Riel as president. An English judge and French priest went east as delegates to work out orderly terms for the annexation of Rupert's Land. Success was near.

Then Thomas Scott joined an attempt to overthrow the Riel government and was arrested again. He incessantly berated his Metis guards, threatened Riel's life and incited other prisoners to do the same. Riel himself visited the cells to quiet him; Scott sprang on the Metis leader. Then Riel's self-control snapped. Impetuously, he held a trial, found Scott guilty of treason and sentenced him to death the next day. Smith and others begged him to reconsider. But at noon on March 4, Scott went before a firing squad.

He said goodbye to the other prisoners, was led outside to the gate of the Fort with a white handkerchief covering his head... On descending the steps poor Scott said, 'This is cold blooded murder'... He continued in prayer... Then he knelt in the snow, said farewell, and immediately fell back pierced by three bullets which passed through his body... A man discharged his revolver at the sufferer, the ball, it is said, entering the eye and passing around the head. (Donald Smith's report on the execution)

News of the brutal act was three weeks reaching the east by letter and U.S. telegraph. English-Canadians were furious. With the Toronto Globe, they branded Riel a 'ruffian' and demanded an expedition to enforce peace in the west. Twelve thousand men were duly marshalled under Col. Garner Wolseley for the long march.

Meanwhile the Province of Manitoba (Chippewa for 'The God that speaks') quietly came into being on July 15, 1870. Riel waited, still hoping for a fair deal. He prepared a speech of welcome and trained the Fort's guards for a friendly salute. They had been assured by the Canadian government that Wolseley's troops came in peace.

But the grapevine reported otherwise. The troops were having a long hard trip by boat and portage. American and Canadian newspapers were ridiculing their slow progress and fanning their tempers. By the time they entered Manitoba they were mad at everything and everyone, especially the Metis. Riel, on the advice of his English friends, withdrew. '...The whole country far and near was a sea of deep and clinging mud. There was nothing approaching a road in the whole territory so I had to forgo all pomp and circumstance of war and had once more to take to our boats and the dreary oar. We were all wet through, very cold and extremely cross and hungry... A cup of hot tea and a biscuit swallowed quickly and all were again at the oar by six a.m. August 24, 1870. The rain poured in buckets upon us and at places the country was under water.... As I watched the muzzles of the fort guns... I confess I hoped each moment to see a flash and hear a round shot rush by me... But
Riel had bolted and the fort gates were open. It was a sad disappointment to all ranks . . .

(Report of Col. Wolseley)

So the ‘rebellion’ was put down. Wolseley’s troops got drunk, looted, killed a few Métis and went home. Within weeks the settlement faced danger again, this time from the threat of yet another Fenian invasion. Riel (officially still in exile) urged his people to stand with the other Canadians against any attack, and himself quietly joined their ranks. But the Fenian army turned out to be 39 men who were hauled in by the U.S. army before they properly got over the border. Never again did the Fenians rise. Louis Riel did, though, in the 1880s, but for the time being he accepted a quiet gift of money from the federal government and faded into the U.S.

The west, now relatively peaceful, was still a bare-knuckled place. Manitoba’s first elections were sprinkled with thugs, brawls and ugly accusations among candidates. Southwest, in what would some day be Alberta, two whisky traders built Fort Whoop-Up, on the Oldman River near modern Lethbridge, where Indians brought furs and went crazy on rrotgut liquor. Places like Whoop-Up, with their accompanying abuses, eventually brought the Mounties to the west.

The entire plains region was ravaged by smallpox that fall and winter; an estimated 5,000 Cree and Blackfeet died.

‘Our poor population is more than decimated. As many as six burials a day at some of our stations. This dreadful epidemic had taken all compassion from the hearts of the Indians. The lepers of a new kind are removed at a distance from the others and sheltered with branches. There they witness the decomposition and purefaction of their bodies several days before death . . .’

(Letter from Rev. Fr. Lacombe, Mission of St. Paul, to Bishop Tache, Winnipeg, 1870)

Of all the western regions, B.C. was perhaps the most tranquil. A Cariboo miner could go to night school for arithmetic, Spanish or English grammar. In Victoria you could buy a piano, life insurance or fishing tackle and they were at least bringing the fights indoors (with a ‘sparking exhibition of muscular Christianity’ Tuesday and Saturday nights in Armstrong’s Old Lager Beer Cellar). The colony, having struck a deal with Canada which promised to give it a railway 10 years after entering Confederation, was eagerly awaiting official union in the summer of 1871. Rough or not, the country had survived the first critical years.

Or almost. There was still the constant harassment of the United States. The newest problem was fishing rights. American fishermen wanted free access to Canadian waters. Canada, with no reciprocal privileges, was quite properly charging a license fee. Americans had been ignoring it and Canadian and British ships had seized about 400 lawbreakers in three months. So, a British Commission, with John A. as the sole Canadian member, visited Washington to try for a settlement.

‘I think this American fishery question bothers Sir John. I suppose it is ticklish business as Brother Sam may show fight.’

(Diary of Lady Macdonald, Jan. 4, 1871)

Sir John indeed was bothered. He knew that Britain as usual would pacify the Americans at the expense of its ‘colony’ and he feared, correctly, that Canadians would blame it all on him. Nevertheless, he had to at least try to win a fair deal for Canada. As negotiations dragged through the spring he stubbornly held out. But at last the Americans and British ground him down. Reluctantly he put his name to the one-sided Treaty of Washington that gave Americans fishing rights in Canadian waters for 10 years and free navigation on the St. Lawrence River canals. In return, Canada gained navigation rights to three remote Alaskan streams, free admission of Canadian fish to the U.S. market, fishing rights in some U.S. waters and $5,500,000.

Later Canada wrung compensation for the Fenian raids from Britain: a guaranteed loan for public works in return for obediently knocking under at the Treaty of Washington. The Americans stuck Britain handsome for the Alaska affair—$15,500,000. And later, too, the Canadian-American west coast boundary was fixed by arbitration. But none of this affected B.C.’s entry into Canada, fixed in 1870 and now awaiting only the formalities.

‘Today British Columbia and Canada joined hands and hearts across the Rocky Mountains . . . At 12 o’clock last night there were manifestations of great rejoicing in the city. Bells were rung, guns fired, blue lights and Roman candles burned and crackers snapped. And people met on the streets and shook hands with and congratulated each other, and cheered and cheered and cheered. They were celebrating the Birth of Liberty.’

(Daily British Columbian, Victoria, July 20, 1871)

So the four tumultuous years ended on a happier note than their beginning. There was much still to do. Four more provinces to be drawn in, over 78 years. The incredible building feat of the CPR. Settlement, wars, depressions, French-English strife. Canadians were still very much the pioneers: Manitobans were advertising oxen in the lost-and-found columns; Barnard’s Stage Coach line in Victoria on July 20 advertised a new ‘fast’ trip to Barkerville in the interior: exactly one week of steady travel. It was a long way to the 20th century, much less to a centennial. But the critical years were over.
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