ISLAND OF LOST DREAMS

For thousands of 19th century immigrants, Grosse Ile quarantine station was their first stop in Canada. For many it turned out to be their final resting place.

BY WARREN GERARD

Whitecaps are dancing on the shoulders of green, wind-whipped waves in the Ile aux Grues archipelago of the St. Lawrence River. It is a bright summer’s day, and Captain François Lachance is setting a course from Berthier-sur-Mer to the once forbidden place that is Grosse Ile. The 90-minute voyage in the modern 20-metre white-painted steel cruiser provides time enough to set one’s mind in harmony with the beauty and power of the great river as it meets the sea. The Laurentian Hills rising to majestic Cap-Tourmente overshadow the north bank, and sitting at the water’s edge to the south is Morimont, about 46 kilometres downstream from Old Quebec City. Ahead, across the dipping bow, lies Grosse Ile, a small island some 2.5 kilometres long and 800 metres wide, sculpted by coves and capes and covered by maple, oak, birch and pine. Today only the wind in the trees breaks the silence on Grosse Ile, but in years past the island was a place of Irish tears, where thousands upon thousands of sick and fevered immigrants first set foot on Canadian soil. For many of those poor and desperate men, women and children—inspired as they were by courage and the hope of new beginnings—Grosse Ile was the bitter end of their terrible journey and a final resting place. The reminders of that time are everywhere on the island, which up until 1984 had been closed to the general public. Grosse Ile is now a national historic site, however, and its story is becoming better known. Workers have been preserving the wooden second-class hotel and the hospital and sheds where the sick and dying lay. On the island are many structures of historical significance, including Roman...
Catholic and Anglican chapels and a small village where doctors and nurses lived. At one end of the island stands a 14-metre high Celtic cross with the following inscription: "Sacred to the memory of thousands of Irish emigrants, who, to preserve the faith, suffered hunger and exile in 1847-48, and atrick with fever ended here their sorrowful pilgrimage."

During its 105-year history - the quarantine station opened in 1832 and closed in 1937 - hundreds of thousands of migrants stopped at Grosse Ile. The Irish were not the only immigrants to experience its misery. Indeed, Germans, Belgians, Dutch, Russians, Norwegians, Swedes, French, English, Welsh, Scots and many others also passed through. But this story, and indeed the story of Grosse Ile, is mainly about the Irish.

It begins in 1832, when the island, as isolated and strategically located as it is, was chosen by colonial authorities as the location for a quarantine station. On May 1, 1832, passengers and their baggage, if the vessels needed cleaning, all passengers had to come ashore.

"So sudden and so great was the onslaught of the disease that the island was soon overcrowded with sick, dying and dead. And the ships in their summer procession kept coming. Desperately the authorities gave up their attempts to stop every ship at Grosse Ile and, with a minimum of inspection and segregation, permitted all but Irish ships to proceed upriver. Previously, the healthy and the sick had been dumped together on the island, hence the healthy and the supposedly recovered were crowded into the Saint Lawrence River steamboats for passage to the interior. However, before the end of June 1832, in fact, 25,000 people had landed in Quebec City."

"On Grosse Ile itself, despite the fact that some ships went up to Quebec without stopping, the volume of work did not diminish. Doctors and priests fell sick and died along with their patients. Throughout the summer the ships kept coming. By September 30, the newspapers reported the 'official bulletin' at Quebec City at 3,292. More than that had died at Grosse Ile."

"By November of 1832, as ice covered the river and ships were blocked from their trade, the cholera epidemic ended. But little did the colonial authorities of Quebec or the doctors and nurses of Grosse Ile know what it was to come. It was truly to be a nightmare, even worse than the cholera epidemic. It began a little more than a decade later, when the impoverished Irish victims of the bitter potato famine set sail."

At the height of the migration in 1847, the Irish were not the only ones who set sail to escape widespread famine in Europe. As well, there were Germans, Norwegians, English and Scots, but those who were forced to leave Ireland were a distinct breed altogether, their despair brought about by decades and more of injustices at the hands of the English gentry. Eventually, the outcome found its tragic consequences in the famine and disease that culminated in a terrible crisis in 1846 and '47. It was then that Ireland's traditional potato crop failed in what was already a subsistence economy at best, and the rents owing to absentee landlords was put in the other staple, wheat. It is said that up to one million people in Ireland starved and died in the 1840s while the wheat they had grown and that could have sustained them was exported. Many thousands were driven from their homes and land by landlords who saw that they weren't turning a profit and had become a burden. Some of them were helped to emigrate, given money or sailing assistance, but most were given empty and unfilled promises. Nevertheless, they left - about 15 million in all - heading to many parts of the world, including Canada and the few ships of Grosse Ile."

This time it was typhus that killed them - and the death tally far exceeded that of the cholera epidemic of 1832. And yet again it was the Irish, already starving and ill, who were most vulnerable and suffered the greatest number of deaths. They were easy victims for typhus, transmitted as it is by lice thriving in crowded and filthy places such as the steaming of sailing ships. Surviving from those grim days is the diary of Gerald Keegan, an Irish schoolteacher who died of typhus and found his resting place on Grosse Ile along with his wife, Aileen, three months after they had set sail from Dublin. Shortly before he died Keegan wrote about what it was like on Grosse Ile in 1847.

"The quarantine buildings were huddled together at the upper end of the island and each we examined during the day. Except the one in which uncle lay, they are flimsy affairs, a shelter from the heat of the sun and no more, for the boards are shrunk and the roof leaky. In one the huts are in double tier, like those of a ship, the result being the patient in the lower berth is made uncomfortable by the one above, and he in turn, from weakness, cannot get out nor into it without help, which he seldom
gets. Every place is crowded with sick, even the two churches being occupied. The government had prepared for 200 sick; already there were fifty more, and more crowding on the ships who cannot be landed for want of room. Without regard to age or sex they are huddled together in the stocks, and left to die or recover. The attendance was hardly worth speaking of. At long intervals a man or woman would come round with drink and food, but there was no pretense at comforting for their comfort. We were told by many of the people had been there for hours. We supposed the dead lying next to the living, for the bodies are removed only night and morning, and in many cases there are about two in each of the bunks. On all this sad scene, from which hope had fled, shone the virtues of patience and submission to the divine will. No querulous word was heard, no grumbling, the sickly flock bowed beneath the yoke of affliction with pious resignation. Workmen were busy building a new shed and there were tents lying round, but all the preparations were woefully insufficient.

Douglas also described what he faced when a ship arrived at Grosse Ile. "The Irish from Liverpool, May 28 [1847], with 476 passengers. Fever and dysentery cases came aboard this vessel in Liverpool, and death occurred before leaving the Mersey River. On muster the passengers for inspection yesterday, it was found that 106 were ill of fever, including nine of the crew, and the large number of 156 who died on the passage, including the first and second officers and seven of the crew, and the master and steward dying, the few who were able to come on deck were ghastly yellow-looking spectres, unshaven and hollow cheeked, and, with exception, the worst-looking passengers I have ever seen, not more than six or eight were really healthy and able to exert themselves."

Out of the despair, misery, and suffering on Grosse Ile in 1847 came stories of courage and care, sacrifice and generosity. Perhaps one of the most humane acts involved the children whose parents had died on Grosse Ile, leaving them alone in a strange land. Thousands were adopted by Irish and French Canadians in Quebec. The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada, edited by Robert O'Driscoll and Lorren Reynolds and published by Celtic Arts of Canada, recounts a story involving a country cure who visited Monsieur Ballarguen, then cure of Quebec City, who had an orphaned child in his house: "Showing the beautiful boy to his visitor, he [Monsieur Ballarguen] told him that he had two hundred others like the boy, and exhorted him to get his people to come for them." The next Sunday the child was shown to the congregation, who were told that he was the gift of the Bon Dieu, that there were two hundred others like him, all the gifts of persons who fleeing from Pestilence and Famine in France in the year 1847 found in America but a Grave. Elsewhere on the island, however, are two other small cemeteries, and the number of those who perished in that year may be as high as 15,000.

In the 1860s, the quarantine station at Grosse Ile faced no more nightmares like those in the 1830s and 1840s. In the decade from 1870 to 1880 only 42 deaths from infectious diseases were reported on the island. And by the early part of the century the changes in the quarantine station were taken over by hospitals in Quebec City, particularly after the scientific revolution in medicine in the late 19th century.

By 1937 it was clear that Grosse Ile had outlived its usefulness as a quarantine station (any cases calling for quarantine could easily be handled upriver in Quebec City) and the station closed. Then in 1943 the Department of National Defence and the government set up an animal disease research centre on the island. What went on there over the next two decades is shrouded in secrecy, and under terms of the Official Secrets Act the island was a prohibited place. It is known, however, that the research centre produced a vaccine for a cattle plague called rinderpest and advanced research was conducted into bacteriological warfare, particularly on the anthrax bacillus, which causes an extremely virulent and infectious disease of warm-blooded animals that can be transmitted to human beings with fatal consequences. In 1965 Grosse Ile was turned over to the Department of Agriculture and became a maximum security quarantine station, this time for livestock imported from Europe.

All of this latter-day history, however, seems an aside to the real significance of Grosse Ile as the gateway to Canada for hundreds of thousands of immigrants—and, tragically, for many of them a graveyard in a lonely, forbidding land. Today Grosse Ile, as a national historic site, serves as a tribute to all who stopped there in their quest for a better life in the New World and a reminder to us all of the debt we owe those who settled this land.
CAMP WITH A DIFFERENCE

Care and compassion are the cornerstones of Camp Quality, which gives youngsters with cancer a week of fun and fulfillment

BY SHONA MCKAY

"I didn't really want to come here that first summer," recalls Kathryn Rutherford, a pretty young woman from Thunder Bay, Ont. "I was 17 and devastated about the results of my illness. I'd been in hospital for almost a year and was feeling angry, awkward and shy. But I did come and, looking back, it was the best thing I could have done. There were a number of kids my age. Everyone was so warm and loving. They encouraged me to look at what I could do. So I swam and I did crafts. I even got up on talent night and sang. It was such a wonderful, positive experience. I went back home ready to begin my life again."

Rutherford, who was diagnosed with bone cancer six years ago and subsequently lost an arm and shoulder to the disease, is talking about her initial experience at Camp Quality, a summer camp that caters exclusively to children and teenagers with cancer. Located on a 97-hectare wooded site near
Pricetville, Ont., the camp Rutherford attended operates for one week each August. During that time about 50 children and 100 volunteers gather to pack in as much fun as possible. "It's a place where the focus on illness and treatment is put on the back burner for a while," says Gerry Davis, a 56-year-old primary school principal from Guelph, Ont., who was the camp's director from 1990 to 1992. "Most particularly, it's a place where children who have been forced to confront very serious issues - issues most of us don't face till we are adults - can be children again."

As well, being among other youngsters with cancer can be comforting. For once they don't feel different. It also helps them feel positive about recovery: they see youngsters who are overcoming the disease - kids who've been coming here since the camp began in 1988. Indeed, the odds are in their favour: 90 percent of children who are diagnosed with some form of leukemia, for example, recover.

Since 1983, the worldwide Camp Quality organization has earned a special place in the lives of thousands of children with cancer and their families. It was in 1982 that Vern Entwistle, an Englishwoman living in the United States, became excited about the idea after reading a description of a camp for children with cancer in the United States. So moved was Entwistle that she decided to act - decisively. After moving to Australia with her husband, a minister with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Entwistle organized the funding and volunteer medical staff and counsellors needed to establish the first Camp Quality, near Sydney, Australia, in 1983. So successful were her efforts - and results - that Camp Quality developed into an international network over the next decade. Today there are 32 camps operating in eight countries around the world. It's a phenomenon that is still growing. For instance, a second Canadian Camp Quality opened in Ontario on Lake Nipissing last year, and plans are being made for the creation of additional camps in western Canada over the next few years.

Davis, who was a member of the first Canadian Camp Quality executive committee, notes that there is a simple philosophy behind Camp Quality. "As our name implies, we are dedicated to providing youngsters with a topscrach experience," he says. "In terms of time, we can't offer quantity. So what we concentrate on is giving the kids quality. We try to provide the best whether we're dealing with activities, food, medical care or people."

Indeed, it was Camp Quality's emphasis on excellence and voluntarism that lay behind Imperial Oil's decision to become a major corporate sponsor. Since the Canadian Camp Quality organization was established, Imperial has contributed $25,000 annually, providing more than half the organization's yearly budget. (Totally reliant on charitable donations and volunteer help, Camp Quality offers its services free of charge.) Says Susan Young, head of corporate contributions at Imperial and a member of Camp Quality's board of directors: "The people involved in Camp Quality are trying to do something special and important for kids. And they are succeeding. I have seen so many children whose lives have been made better as a result of their camp experience."

Her praise is echoed by Arnold Katz, a physician and Imperial's director of occupational health, who also serves on the Camp Quality board of directors. "I have met so many wonderful and amazing people through my involvement with Camp Quality," he says. "The volunteers are truly the most selfless group of people I have ever encountered."

The funding that Camp Quality receives from Imperial and more than 100 other organizations and individuals has allowed the camp's organizers to design an activity schedule that evolves a continuum of smiles and laughter. On any given day of the action-packed week, children devote their mornings to a programme that ranges from archery, wood-working and painting to crafts, canoeing and fishing. Meanwhile, afternoons are reserved for more physical and collective events such as a mini-Olympics, swimming at the camp's freshwater pool, hot-air balloon rides and, with the assistance of the local fire department, hose down any adult who makes the mistake of approaching too closely. It is during the afternoon that children and counsellors board a bus for the annual journey to the nearby Guelph Air Park. Once there, each boy and girl gets the opportunity to take to the skies in an antique biplane.

Under a giant blue and white open-sided tent, Angie Edwards, a gamin-faced nine-year-old from Hamilton, Ont., who was diagnosed with leukemia two years ago, is examining a toy car she has just chilled from a block of ice. As she proudly displays her creation - while at the same time chatting excitedly about her accomplishments in a track and field event held the previous day - it's easy to understand the seminal role activities play at Camp Quality. Certainly Davis acknowledges their importance. "The kids get something more than momentary pleasure from making a puppet or participating in a race," he says. "They gain a feeling of self-worth and confidence."

To illustrate his point, Davis tells a story. "Several years ago a 10-year-old girl named Jennifer came to us. She was the skinniest child I have ever seen," he remembers. "Jennifer had been quite ill, and the cancer treatment had made her chubby and bald. We knew that the kids at home had been giving her a hard time. It's not out of the ordinary for cancer kids to be shunned by their peers. But one day at camp this little one went fishing with a group of kids and, miraculously, caught 14 fish. Well, we made such a fuss of her. We announced her accomplishment at dinner that night in the dining hall and everyone cheered. Jennifer blossomed, and little by little over the week she came out of her shell. It was wonderful to observe."

Beyond the abundance of games and sports, it's clearly the hundreds of volunteers who devote hours of their time throughout the year - as well as a week of their vacation time - who give Camp Quality its unique character. Mary Birubidge is only one of scores of volunteers whose commitment is exceptional. Along with her husband, Gordon, a former bank manager who now supervises the camp's maintenance programme, Birubidge starts preparing for her summer visit to Camp Quality from her home in Listowel,
Ottawa, in January. As the person in charge of ordering the food and devising the menus, which include delights such as roast turkey and lemon chiffon pies, she begins writing her shopping list and hunting down the best grocery boy eight months before camp begins.

During the actual week of camp, along with the head cook, Vernice Coulter, a caterer from Stratford, Ont., and six other helpers, Burbridge begins her day at 5:30 a.m. in Camp Quality's spacious, styrofoam kitchen, sometimes she and her colleagues are still there at midnight. "An early rising counselor can get a cup of coffee, and at night a hungry child can get a snack," she explains.

Like the kitchen staff, the members of Camp Quality's eight-person volunteer medical team (which includes Brenda O'Connor of Toronto, the camp's head nurse for the past six years, and Michael Riedes, a pharmacist from London, Ont.) keep long hours. On call to bandage cuts and burns, the doctors and nurses also administer daily chemotherapy medication to the many children still in treatment. As well, the team is responsible for dealing with any disease-related emergencies. Their importance in the latter regard becomes graphically apparent as O'Connor and Riedes abruptly interrupt an after-dinner conversation to rush to the side of a 10-year-old boy who has just suffered a seizure. Returning some 30 minutes later, the two explain that the child, now resting in a darkened room, has been affected by daily seizures since undergoing brain surgery several years earlier.

Of all the volunteers, it is probably the counselors—who known as companions at the camp—who have the most demanding role. From the moment each of these individuals meets up with his or her camper to board the bus for the journey to camp to the farewell hugs on the last day, companions and their respective campers are inseparable. According to Julie Sellery, who works for Imperial in Toronto and has served as both a companion and program coordinator at Camp Quality, there are good reasons for the insistence on the pairing of each camper with an adult. "The close relationship is necessary for health and safety reasons," she says. "If a child gets a nosebleed in the night, there's an adult at his or her bedside. Similarly, if a youngster gets overtired during the day, there's someone there to notice and suggest some quiet time."

The companion companion training is also a proven means of promoting emotional and psychological health. Notes Sellery: "The biggest part of the companions' job is to help campers feel good about themselves and have a fabulous time." Sometimes companions can achieve that goal with a mere word of encouragement. At other times, ensuring great moments takes a little more effort—something Sellery well knows. "The first year I came here, I was a companion to a young girl who had undergone radiation for a cancerous growth in her eye," she says. "Although the disease had affected her vision, there was nothing wrong with her energy. Lauon loved to run and so we ran all week. Everywhere. At the end of seven days, I was exhausted. But that was okay because, in spite of constantly being out of breath, we both had a super time."

Given the level of commitment—not to mention the expenditure of energy—it's easy to understand why Camp Quality boasts a large and ever-growing roster of fans among campers and parents. Joe Edwards, a spunky and diminutive 15-year-old who has been battling leukemia since infancy and who has been attending camp since age 11, is but one of Camp Quality's many effective boosters. "The people here really understand what you've gone through," he says. "And they help you move ahead. They make me feel I am a valuable person and that I can look forward to the future and be happy."

According to Edwards, the attitude of the campers is a welcome change from the looks of pity and the acts of unkindness that he sometimes experiences. "I'm in high school now, and some of the kids don't deal well with my illness," he says. "Some of the older guys make fun of me because I'm short. They don't understand that chemotherapy affects every cell in your body that grows and that that's why I'm smaller. But here, I don't have to explain myself to anyone. People just accept me, and that's great."

Doris Edwards, mother of Joe and Angie Edwards, shares her son's enthusiasm. An unfailingly resilient woman, Edwards is talking of the month following February 1994, when medical tests revealed that Angie also had cancer. "It was extremely difficult news for all of us to accept—especially Angie. For six months she was very ill, and she was very angry. She barely talked."

According to Edwards, it was only when Angie spent a week at Camp Quality that summer in the company of her brother that she began to bounce back. "The people at Camp Quality work hard to get kids to feel good about themselves," she says. "The kids feel special and accepted. Angie came home from camp that summer, I could see a big change. She was still weak and she was very thin but she had began to come out of her depression. Camp Quality is a very special place for all of us. The kids love it—in fact they talk about it all year long. And I think it's wonderful too. For the week that the kids are there, I don't worry. I know that they are with people who care about them, and I know they are having a great time."

Charlotte Rutherford is yet another parent who holds Camp Quality in high regard. "Kathryn went through a very tough period the year she went to Camp Quality for the first time, she recalls. "She had lost her arm and the drugs had made her lose her hair. She was so self-conscious about her appearance that she didn't want to be around strangers. I also remember that she wouldn't go anywhere without her cosmetic arm or clothes with long sleeves. But today all that has changed. Unless it's a formal occasion, Kathryn doesn't wear the artificial arm—it's a bother."

Last summer Kathryn returned to Camp Quality as a companion and in September went to Barcelona, Spain, as a member of the Canadian swimming team at the Paralympics for disabled athletes. "A lot of things happened to make things better for her," says her mother, "but Camp Quality played an important part in her recovery. She came back from the experience full of enthusiasm and flying high. Her life has been uphill ever since."

With help from more than 100 volunteers, the camp offers youngsters a rich and varied programme of crafts and activities, including rides in a hot-air balloon and an antique biplane.
The Blue Bell, Sam McBride and William Inglis were the Toronto ferries, to be sure, but the Trillium, the sturdy, capacious, curvaceous and glorious Trillium, for ever sails in my memory as the queen of the Queen City’s harbour. I have ridden ferryboats from Hong Kong to Macau, England to Holland, Vancouver to Victoria and Maine to Nova Scotia. Ferries have carried me across the St. Lawrence, St. Lawrence River and in the calm waters of Lake Ontario. Wonderful vessels all, but never quite the Trillium.

For it was she who introduced me to the willows, lagoons, sand and sails of the closest thing to paradise my hometown offered: Toronto Island. One morning in 1948, when June was bursting over all over, I joined dozens of happy children aboard a wooden streetcar that rolled downrough with its windows open to a thrilling breeze. We were bound for a Sunday school picnic, and the squealing, gum-chewing mob at the ferry terminal proved that besides other youngsters from Toronto the Good were also being rewarded for having endured Bible studies on all the Sunday mornings of the dark winter.

The aroma of Lake Ontario, the fringe of trees across the harbour and the Trillium, waiting in her slip, made everyone shipshape, and when she lowered her castle gate to the dock, we gaily stormed aboard. She accommodated us with ease, just as she’d already accommodated heavens only knew how many other picnickers during the 33 years she’d been gliding to and from Toronto Island. More than 40 metres long and nearly 25 metres wide, with room for 1,350 passengers, she and her sister ship, Blue Bell, were the biggest island ferries in operation on Toronto Bay.

She was double-ended, and her top deck, out of bounds to passengers, bore two captain’s wheelhouses, two flagpoles and a black smokestack. For passengers, the Trillium had an enclosed lower deck, but even during storms, youngsters shot upstairs to line the railing of the middle deck. It was open to winds from every direction.

Just before sailing, the Trillium let out a horrendous blast from her foghorn, and everyone jumped, screamed or cheered. As she edged away from her slip and picked up speed in the shiny green water, you heard the plish, plash, plash of her paddle wheels. In the railing, in the slats of her wooden benches, barnished over the years by a million bumps, and, indeed, in everything you touched, you felt the steady, comforting shudder of her engine. The Trillium...
im's side was as white as a snow, and, under a way, she was a vision of beauty and business that not even a railway locomotive could match.

Once on the island, our teachers easily controlled us with such races: three-legged races, British bulldog, and other games, and while the Sunday school superintendent said grace, we mostly bowed our heads over our egg salad sandwiches and peanut butter cookies. During the 15-minute crossing, however, we behaved like colts gone wild: the adults just threw up their hands and hoped nobody would fall overboard. All voyages on big ferries are like that: they leave wild horses in children. The ferry vanishes away from the land, where adults rule everything, and flows them through a never-ever time of crazy freedom. Throughout that long afternoon of games and stories, I wanted for days' end, yet it was a template and I gave in. I couldn't want to go home because I wanted to go back to the Trinity.

At 17, I held hands abroad her like a 15-year-old girl whose hair blow in my face. The intuitive exclamation of my brother returns on the boat now gave way to nostalgic surges of romantic feeling, and every time we arrived at the ferry dock, the Trinity seemed to be saying, like the bit song of the sea, "Hello young learners." My favourite poem was by an overgrown romantic of the Beller sea, Edna St. Vincent Millha. It was about a man and a woman who were too much in love to say goodbye, and it began like this:

"We were very tired, we were very sorry.

We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
The Trinity, unfortunately, didn't offer all-night service.

When Canadians discuss Canadian's historic transportation achievements they tend to forget ferries and sometimes dream highways towering from coast to coast, epic railway construction, heroic bus pilots and the creation of mighty airlines. Ferries, however, start where highways and street rails end and perform services beyond the capacity of any aircraft. No airline will ever move 10,000 tonnes of Prince Edward Island's annual produce to a mainland market in less than a month. Ferries are the backbone of the island's economy, the lifeline for isolated communities, and the key to the island's cultural and historical heritage.

Private companies once operated both the Newfoundlander coastal services and the Bermuda service that Martin Atlantic has inherited. In the age of sail, and even after steamships replaced sailing vessels, it was ferry boats—literally hundreds of them—that kept the coastal towns of Newfoundlander and Labrador connected to the mainland. In the 20th century, Princess Patricia of Labouchere, N.S., for instance, enjoyed scheduled connections with Charlottetown, Victoria, Quebec, and Sherbrooke. For the rest of the world, however, the ferry boat was a symbol of an era that is gone forever.

Grady's Ferries, the oldest remaining passenger ferry service in North America, is proud of its heritage. In its 100th year of operation, the company has operated in the waters of the Bay of Fundy, the St. Lawrence River, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Its current fleet consists of three vessels, the MV Port aux Basques, the MV Port aux Basque I, and the MV Port aux Basque II. The MV Port aux Basques is the oldest vessel in the fleet and has been in service since 1932. The MV Port aux Basque I was built in 1969 and the MV Port aux Basque II in 1993.

The MV Port aux Basque II is the newest vessel in the fleet and has been in service since 1993. It is the largest vessel in the fleet, measuring 120 feet in length and 24 feet in width. The MV Port aux Basque II is equipped with all the latest safety and communication equipment and is capable of carrying up to 120 passengers and 50 vehicles.

Ferries are still an essential part of the transportation network in the region. They provide vital services to many communities that are not accessible by road, and their importance as a mode of transport is unlikely to diminish in the near future.
The voyage never sailed (left) as the world's most famous ferry route across from Vancouver Island through the Inside Passage.

Ladies of people on remote islands and isolated communities. The Saskatchewan farmer ferried nine of them on the South Saskatchewan River, while Alberta, where dozens of ferries once crossed turbulent rivers, now has only seven vessels at seven crossings. Ferries made a huge and largely unseen contribution to the settlement of the Prairies.

Between 1901 and 1914 more than a million immigrants settled in the Prairies and the North West Territories. In just 19 years the population of Alberta and Saskatchewan rose by more than 400 percent, but the railways could not take the newcomers on foot. By 1918 the route to the homesteaders' lands was big and sometimes violent river like the Saskatchewan, Bow, Peace, Red Deer and North and South Saskatchewan, as well as dozens of smaller rivers that rumbled down from the great mountain to the west. Since the pioneers could not build their own bridges, they built dozens of crude ferries. By 1954 Alberta boasted 77 government-operated ferries; Saskatchewan 42. Moreover, farmers built their own forges and charged for using them.

The theory that the railways opened the Canadian West is Quebec's answer to the Newfoundland coal barons. With capacity for 250 passengers, she makes scheduled voyages of 1,250 kilometers—from Gjoa Haven on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, across to Sept-Îles, and then farther downstream to ports at Gjoa Haven, Hear- ington Harbour and Port Simpson at the Labrador border.

Ferries ply many ferry routes in Ontario's great countryside, but the biggest is the 10-kilometer Cape Chignecto, which carries up to 600 passengers and 150 cars between Tignor and the Penetang Portage on Lake Huron. It is Ontario's Northumberland Transportation Commission, the provincial agency that runs the service, closed a second and broader boat on the route last year, it was named Wainwrights. The agency hoped to replace "little sister" or "little brother," but local Onondaga gracefully explained its real meaning: "It's not far." The Globe and Mail reported, "While New Onondaga has become famous for its scenic name: Deseret, Odyssey people on the Penetang Portage say Ontario is going into better with a ferry named "Lady.""

The most northerly ferry in Canada—one of four seasonal services run by the Maritime Service Division of the Department of Transportation, North- west Territories exits the Mackenzie River at Northern Red River. That's 95 kilometers north of the Arctic Cap, and Captain Pinky Wages, director of the division, says it's one of the most northerly ferry services in the world. In Manitoba, six provincial ferries cross rivers and lakes and serve specialized communities of people on remote islands and isolated communities.

The rebuilding of people on remote islands and isolated communities. The Saskatchewan Ferries ferried nine of them on the South Saskatchewan River, while Alberta, where dozens of ferries once crossed turbulent rivers, now has only seven vessels at seven crossings. Ferries made a huge and largely unseen contribution to the settlement of the Prairies.

When they reached a ferry crossing, what was now in a cable, strong enough to handle two actors and a coach, and a wooden scow big enough for three or four wagons and a few animals and people. Railings ran along both sides of the roadway, and for loading and unloading, the ferryman lowered ramps at each end. A second cable ran from the deck to the shore above the river, and the cop- per—under a system of pulleys and an anchor fixed to bedrock. He was the master of a placid river. He was the master of a placid river. He was the master of a placid river.

The neuroscience fermenters included colourful characters: buffalo hunter Abraham Salon, an ally of Louis Riel in the 1885 Rebellion, the strutting "Admiral" Beck, whose pet

Pemetic Peak was so named after the captain's name, because of his courage and ability to lead his crew. Beck died in 1915, cut down in the prime of life, but his memory lived on among the fishermen and workers who depended on his services. He was the master of a placid river.
On summer nights people set tables of food on the river bank, next the scon's deck, and dance by the light of the moon.

People never forget ferries they once loved. Thirty years after a bridge replaced one at Nelson, B.C., Jean Webber, who had been the ferry’s cook, said, as she knew her own bedroom, wrote thoughtfully, ‘Forgive me though when I say that I cannot drive across that bridge without a dreadful feeling of loss. What will anyone learn as he drives to the North Shore, just Kenneth Lake! Whom will he meet? What will he see of life?"

For 35 years, the White Island ferried people from Wolfe Island to the St. Lawrence at Kingston, O., but in 1969 a better vessel replaced her old. The one wasn’t much to look at, and Captain R.E. Fawcett conceded she was sometimes “a miserable little devil” to handle. In later years, however, islanders greeted with outstretched arms the skiffy launch that was used for the amusement of scuba divers. Mildred Walby, then a municipal councillor for the township of Wolfe Island, decried the idea as “a despicable and disrespectful act.”

Adding, “I would rather see the islanders crowned with roses, the maypole danced and all, the nest of the wood that, that is to take the nest.” Unfortunately for those who loved the White Island, it was scuttled.

The Kipawa was as well a highly regarded vessel. It served as a hotel and later as a ferry between Wolfeville and Paterson on Nova Scotia’s Minas Basin, and went into service in Newfound and the Second World War and in 1978 as agent at Bonavista. Never again would she sail under her own power. Soon, however, 21 New Scotians launched a campaign to bring “Old Kip” home, and in 1982 they persuaded the Canadian Government to tow her back to Nova Sco- tia. At 57 years of age, she began a new career as a summer theatre in Parsonage.

The Tulliam’s fate was even more miraculous. In 1975, I spent the summer of 1975 in a cottage on Toronto Island. Every working day I rode a morning ferry to my downtown job and an evening ferry home. Reading a newspaper or chatting with neighbours in the cool air above the water, so islanders were the norm. We knew that no big city in the world offered commuters a more enjoyable service, but something bothered me. The Tulliam had vanished.

One fine Saturday afternoon I rode my bicycle past a new generation of Sunday school picnics, and in a silent corner I found her. She had been sitting here for 10 years. Much of her superstructure was above water, but vandals had defaced it, and the desolate tree paddled across right through her lesser deck. Midnight soundlessly had smothered her windows and brigades, her boat of brass seating and smeared her with 150. My beloved Tulliam looked like a beast for an assassin.

I soon moved to Halifax (where, incidentally, one of the oldest ferry systems in North America still crosses the harbour to Dart- mouth), and a few years passed before I again visited Toronto Island. On a fragrant summer eve- ning I strolled to the eastern Gap. That’s a channel be- tween the harbour and Lake Ontario and, for us, a good place to snift old times. I remembered the dead Tulliam. No one had told me that, while I was in Halifax, Tulliam lovers had persuaded the city to invest nearly a million dollars not just in putting her back in service but in lovingly restoring her to all her old glory.

Standing there at the Gap in 1975, I heard West Island music. I looked north and saw the miracle: the born-again Tulliam. She was charging straight toward me, and on her middle deck, open to the wind, a Trinidadian steel band accompanied the singing and bringy chorus of hundreds of men and women. The Tulliam sailed right past me and out to Lake Ontario. Never before had I known her to leave the crowded harbour for the benevolence of the lake, and as I watched her churn south toward the empty horizon, I hoped she’d sail right into the next millennium.

Now, 15 years later, she seems determined to do exactly that. While reinforcing the Toronto Island service on busy summer weekends and weekends, and a chance boat for historians, she continues to bring joy to countless children and locals. Not bad for an 83-year-old.31
EDUCATING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

Imperial's chairman and chief executive officer discusses why Canada must provide its youth with the best in education

BY ROBERT PETERSON

It's easy to be cynical about the state of the Canadian education system these days. There's certainly no shortage of critics ready to point out its deficiencies. "It's still possible to get a good high school education in Canada," someone said recently, "but the problem is that it takes four years in university to do so."

I don't think that things are as bad as that by any means, and any serious review of the adequacy or otherwise of our current system should at least begin with an acknowledgment of its achievements. Much of Canada's economic success in the past has been attributable to the quality of its workforce; in many industries, including my own, the knowledge and productivity of employees has contributed to a level of national economic growth over the past decade that is one of the highest among the developed nations and virtually identical to that of Japan. We have much of which to be proud.

At the same time it would be foolish — indeed, dange-rous — to allow ourselves to be blinded to some of the shortcomings of our current education system. The warning sig-"In
1991 nearly one in every four Canadian students dropped out of high school, at a terrible cost to ourselves and society"

not read or write well enough to operate effectively in today's society.

Last year the Second International As-essment of Educational Progress placed Canada a poor ninth in a comparison of the maths and science skills of 13-year-olds from 26 nations. Worse, many don't com-plete their education; in 1991 nearly one in every four Canadian students dropped out of high school, at a terrible cost to themselves and society. On the basis of these and other statistics I think it's fair to suggest that the system has served a third of our students very well, another third reasonably well and, unfortunately, the remaining third, the dropouts, very badly indeed.

Of course, there are many ways of measuring the perfor-mance of our education system. But the critical ques-tion, I believe, is how successful are we in watching the education our young people receive with the needs of soci-ety. In other words, is our present system capable of pro-ducing people who will be sufficiently skilled to perform the kind of jobs on which this country's economic prosperit-y will depend in the 21st century? Here I see several rea-sons for concern unless significant changes are made.

One particular cause for concern is that the world's eco-nomic structure is in the process of fundamental change. And the speed at which this change is occurring poses se-vere challenges to our ability to adapt. We have to recog-nize that national borders have effectively disappeared in the new global economic reality. In both our domestic and export markets we find ourselves in competition with the rest of the world. Yet as a country we really have nothing to offer that we can do faster, better or cheaper than our na-tional competitors. I can't think of anything, for example, that we have to sell that no one else can produce. It wasn't always this way. For more than a century, coun-tries rich in natural resources, such as Canada, could count on their resource-based industries — forestry, mining, energy, agriculture, fishing — to maintain and increase their stand-ard of living. It was great while it lasted, and, understand-ably, it led to a kind of provider's mentality among the re-source-based industries that they could live on their resources, dipping into their God-given patrimony as and when required to top up their national coffers.

But those days are gone, probably forever. The development of many Third World countries and the rapid spread of technology have resulted in an abundance of many formerly scarce resources. They have become commodities, easily traded and readily available. Prices have become the major determinant of whether or not a country can sell its resources.

This does not mean that Canada's natu-ral resources no longer have a contribution to make to this country's economy. There will continue to be markets for our lumber, our coal, our fish and our wheat — but only as long as we can produce them at least as competitively as we can be produced anywhere else in the world. To take an example from my own industry, the crude oil producers of western Canada are in competi-tion with producers throughout the world for every barrel of oil they sell. Crude oil has become a commodity in plentiful supply, as have natural gas, gasoline, chemicals and most other resource-based products. Only the most efficient producers are des-tined to survive. The resource industries, like every other segment of business, have changed from a goods-producing process to a customer-satisfying process. As the Har-ward economist Theodore Levin pointed out many years ago, "An industry begins with a customer and his needs, not with a patent, a raw material or a selling skill."

The globalization of resource production has already had a dramatic effect on Canada's balance mar-ket. Less than six percent of Canadian workers are now employed in all our primary industries, and the knowledge component of these jobs has increased rapidly as the drive for efficiency has demanded more complex technology. In-deed, the Economic Council of Canada reported that 35 percent of Canadian firms were having trouble introducing new technology because their employees lack the necessary skills to understand and operate the equipment. Even sec-onary manufacturing accounts for little more than 14 per-cent of total employment in Canada. Combined, our pri-mary and secondary industries employ not much more than a quarter of the entire labour force.

The other three-quarters of our workers are employed in the service industries. And in this sector most of the demand is not for low skill and low paying jobs but for highly skilled workers in the knowl-edge-based industries such as telecommunications, health care and computer technol-o gy, all areas in which Canadian firms are doing very well internationally. In fact, as the Toronto economist Nuda Beck has pointed out, more Canadians now work in communications and telecommunications than in our mining and petroleum indus-tries combined, and the Canadian electronics industry employs more people than pulp and paper. It is fair to say that Cana-dians have moved from their traditional role of "producers of wood and drawers of wa-ter" to being bowers of computer chips and drawers of electronic circuits.

This sea change in our employment pat-terns poses an immense challenge for our educational system. For example, it has been suggested that while less than half the jobs that existed five years ago required a post-secondary education, two-thirds of the new jobs created in the next decade will probably require it.

There is another reason for concern. In a world that is already growing more competi-tion, if the high knowledge jobs that will exist in the future cannot be filled by Canadian workers, there is little
doubt that these jobs will migrate to other countries where such skills are available.

Economists like to speak of countries having a "comparative advantage" in specific sectors of the economy. In the past this has generally referred to the favoured position a country has enjoyed by virtue of possessing plentiful natural resources or access to technology or readily available investment capital. These days, however, there is a growing belief that the only real comparative advantage an individual country possesses lies in the superior abilities of its workers. The American economist Lester Thurow has suggested that "in the 21st century natural resources will be irrelevant. Capital will move around the world. Technology will move around the world, in practice more slowly than product, but it will move. The thing that will move the slowest is human beings. The only strategic asset is the skills of the workforce." If this is true, and I believe it is, then Canada's comparative advantage in the future will no longer lie in its natural resources, considerable though they are, but in the ability of Canadians to add value, in global terms, to a specific product or service. In this country we are very dependent on one another, and if each of us does not, in some way, add specific value to what we produce, our collective productivity as a nation will suffer.

Is Canada's education system equal to the task of meeting the immense challenge posed by this new global economy? My answer, as I have suggested, is a qualified "Yes." It can, provided some major structural changes are made, I am encouraged by the progress that has been made in the past few years in many areas and in almost every province. Commitments from all levels of government and the business community have made the education and training system more efficient. However, Canada's dropout rate remains much higher than that of some of our major competitor countries, a particularly disturbing fact given that as low-skilled jobs continue to disappear, those who lack basic educational skills become virtually unemployable.

Of course more needs to be done. I do not pretend to be an expert on education but my own agenda for change would include the adoption of a nationwide core curriculum (which would involve standard measures of achievement at various grades and an increase in the length of the school year), coupled with paying teachers more competitive salaries to attract and keep high quality staff. I am also in favour of deregulating university fees in the interest of increasing the incentive to provide high quality education.

However, we cannot expect our educators to assume total responsibility for a massive overhaul of the school system. Ensuring that our young people have the best possible education is everybody's business, including parents, labour organizations, the business community. And business, of course, has a clear vested interest in education. The reason that most Canadian business leaders are committed both to improving the quality of our education and to making it more effective has very little to do with philanthropy; the fact is that their profits depend on it. The cost of failing to business in lost productivity is reaching staggering proportions and the problem is getting worse as the complexity of most jobs increases. But the education-business partnership is much too many, it's not only business that stands to benefit from an improvement in our education standards. I don't think that our educators have anything to fear from business's increased involvement in the educational process. I see no danger of our schools being turned into factories, dedicated to producing skilled labour for industry rather than educated citizens. The skills required by the worker of today go far beyond the old traditional technical qualifications. The ability to solve problems, to recognize opportunities, to act on one's own initiative while remaining part of a team, to communicate effectively and to interact well with other people are some of the important qualities that my own company and many others look for today when they hire new people. These are very much the same qualities that our educators are working to inculcate into students to allow them to function effectively in today's society.

And business also has much to offer the school system in such areas as management, performance appraisal, budgeting and organizational restructuring. The business-education partnership can, in fact, be mutually beneficial to both parties.

One practical way in which business is helping is by providing, as it should, a substantial measure of financial support. In 1992, for example, out of Imperial Oil Ltd.'s education budget of $8.2 million, $2.7 million was contributed to education, the category receiving the greatest share of the corporation's donations. We regard this as money well spent. As someone once said "Education may be expensive but have you tried ignorance". But business has more to offer than money in this area, and some of the most enduring and valuable aspects of the business-education partnership are on a foundation of sharing human resources. One such activity Imperial participates in is the Adopt a School program, in which company personnel pay regular visits to local schools for teaching and other assignments, while students visit various companies to gain hands-on knowledge of an area of interest to them.

There is also job shadowing, where individual students shadow employees for a day or two to get a better idea of what their working environment is all about. And business is also engaged in a number of more traditional programmes such as bringing cooperative students, participating in career fairs at schools and universities and in a wide range of similar joint activities. Despite these encouraging trends there is no question that we need a more effective relationship between business and education. The ultimate goal of the business-education partnership must be to ensure that our young people graduate from high school and university with the skills that will allow them to enter and succeed in tomorrow's workplace.

In the end we share a common goal. Business and our young people are entering an age of global competition, and education must provide them with the skills they will need to succeed. That may be a tall order, but I don't think it's an impossible dream. To see a successful competitive nation in the 21st century will comprise individuals who are highly flexible, skilled, knowledgeable and fully accountable contributors to the social, political and economic well-being of their societies. They will be treated individuals with a zest for learning who are involved in their communities and who understand the valuable interactions between individual success and the collective economic performance of their nation. They will be individuals who are both personally happy and publicly useful.\end{document}
Notable Events
For more than 80 years music festivals have been helping develop talented Canadians
by Kenneth Bagnell

On a blustery day in the spring of 1932, in the pretty coastal town of Powell River, B.C., 15-year-old Paul Beauchene strode onto the stage of a civic auditorium, adjusted his tuba and played before an attentive, sympathetic audience. He was taking part in one of the rituals of spring in his home town — the Powell River and District Music Festival. To his delight the adjudicator commended him, and while he didn’t place first, he felt greatly encouraged. But even he could not have guessed how deeply the course of his life would be affected by that childhood performance and later ones in the British Columbia of his youth. “For me,” says Beauchene, “the festivals were a doorway to the future — a great doorway.”

Beauchene, like so many other young Canadians, was taking part in an important part of our nation’s cultural patrimony, one of Canada’s 230 community music festivals. From Grand Falls, Nfld., to Kelowna, B.C., more than 250,000 Canadians, from young children to senior citizens, take part in these festivals every year, competing in a wide range of categories, from soprano solos to choral ensembles, from piano to steel drum. Over the years millions of Canadians have made their first, sometimes uncertain, stage appearances in community festivals, many going on to gain international acclaim — cellist Ophra Harnoy, contralto Lois Marshall, pianist Angela Hewitt and the country’s renowned pianist, the late Glenn Gould, to name a few. “The festivals do an enormous good,” says contralto Maureen Forrester. “Perhaps one in 100 participants will become a professional. That’s not a bad average. But they are not the only ones the festivals benefit. All of the competitors will be the better for the experience, enriched in their music and in their personal lives.”

The first Canadian music festival was held in Edmonton in May 1908. 30 contestants took part. The Alberta capital was first to act on the urging of the governor general, Earl Grey, who had asked each provincial lieutenant governor to help establish the British custom of music festivals in Canada. Within the next few years other festivals were held to other provinces, all nurtured by British immigrants who, like Grey, believed that music festivals would benefit not just the competitors but the community and country. Over the following decades the tradition became, as Grey had wished, part of Canadian life.

From the beginning, music festivals have been events that involve not just performers but volunteers, who see to innumerable details from raising funds to driving adjudicators

Millions of Canadians have made their first, sometimes uncertain, stage appearances in community festivals, many going on to gain international acclaim.
Festival time is usually springtime. For performers, parents, uncles and neighbours, it is a day in which deep pride must live beside stomach butterflies. "We are a family," recalls Missive Hanzadeh in Music for One... Music for All, a history of festivals in Saskatchewan, "watching when she squeezed our hand not as a brother but as a sister close to the tricky spot in his piano solo."

On a morning late spring, in the sanctuary of St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Fredericton, and a stream of children, young, eight and nine, their faces fresh, their clothes sparkling, performed at the piano — viola, duets, violin. It was a session of Fredericton's 46th annual Kiwanis music festival, where two days later, after about 4500 individual

performers had sung or played, a large crowd filled a high school auditorium, was welcomed by the mayor, then fell into silence and attentive for the "grand concert," in which selected festival winners performed.

While most festivals are managed entirely by volunteers, a few, such as those in Calgary and Toronto (the latter marking its 50th anniversary this year at the city's Roy Thomson Hall, are so large they require full-time, year-round administration to deal with entries, put together the syllabus, hire the adjudicators and attend to the many details involved. Even the lunch breaks, which might deter some parents from spending money on extra fees, has not hampered the festivals. Last year, Joan and Barrie Stood of Calgary had six children taking part. The fees added up. "We think it's money well spent," Joan Swed says. "Our children may not often win first prize, but they win in many other ways that we think are just as important — they gain an appreciation of music and self-confidence."

Canada's local festivals, with their open competition and their community spirit, are both the foundation and the soul of the festival movement. But for some who take part, they can also be, as Paul Beauchesne says, doorways to festivals at other levels that are more competitive. Consider Beauchesne's own experience last year.

By then, he was in his mid-teens, a mature young man with a bachelor of music degree from the University of Victoria. On May 1 and 2 he stood on a stage at Vancouver Community College playing in the local festival, the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival. He entered a maximum number of classes, performing works by various well-known composers. He won every class in which he competed. Obviously the adjudicator was impressed, recommending that he step up to participate in the provincial festival set to take place at the end of May in Vernon. He did, winning again, which meant he was now eligible for the most stringent competition of all — the national festival to be held in August in Charlottetown.

One day later that summer, in the driveway of his home in Vancouver, he loaded a 1982 station wagon with two tubas, a cello, flute, clarinet, and ran to perform in the provincial. To be held in August in Charlottetown.

The trip Beauchesne took, crossing Canada from one coast to the other was not to fulfill his ambitions as a musician but his aspirations as a Canadian.
most of the festival's many costs—including that of bringing competitors from every province and an international panel of adjudicators to the festival and accommodating them for most of a week. In August the national festival was held at the University of Prince Edward Island, a pleasant campus of new and old buildings beneath the trees of Charlottetown. On certain days when the performers were practicing, the festivals of Canadian Music Festivals met. The federation includes volunteers from across the country who meet each year during the national festival to keep in touch and to plan the CIBC National for the following year.

Many of the volunteers are the same men and women who donate hundreds of hours to festivals in their own towns and provinces. They like music, they like young people, and they like getting together to aid a good cause. Often they are couples like Alan and Marion Brown of Toronto. He is a retired Alcan executive, a Kiwanian who is a past president of the Kiwanis Music Festival of Toronto. Marion is president of Keynotes, a group for women who, like their Kiwanian husbands, have given innumerable hours to their local festival. Although they weren't involved in the Nationals, the Browns decided to travel to Charlottetown last summer to enjoy the festival.

"We've always liked music," Alan says, "and when you see the quality of the young people who take part and put so much into it, it's a privilege to be here and to have been of help."

The CIBC National was held on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Paul Beauchene played on Friday, just past four in the afternoon. As required by the rules he performed from memory, playing two of the pieces he had rendered in British Columbia, concertos by Richard Strauss and Ralph Vaughan Williams. He faced a class of eight competitors playing on various brass instruments—tuba, trumpet, trombone, French horn and euphonium. The competition was obviously keen. "The participants are of very high caliber," said James Mendelsohn, president of the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals, chairperson of the CIBC National and a professor of music at Brandon University in Manitoba. "After all, they have come through a very rigorous sifting," When Beauchene won in the brass competition—awarded first place by adjudicator Philip Sinder, a professor of tuba and euphonium at Michigan State University and a well-known tubist in several American ensembles—he had a couple of reasons to savour his achievement. For one, he received a generous $2,000 award from the CIBC. But also, as Mendelsohn noted, his achievement would bring him to the attention of those people in the field of music—agents, producers, conductors—who take note of young people whose talent and promise were tested and proven at the national festival.

Every day in every part of Canada, young people who take the path Paul Beauchene began in Powell River sit at pianos, raise their violins or their own voices in practice for their moment on the stage at a local festival. When the moment comes, they will be taking part in one of the truly worthwhile rituals of growing up Canadian—one that is, as a festival volunteer once said, "held for the glory of music and the spirit of our country."