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Report of the Annual Meeting

Presidential Address

Lawrence J. Burpee

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THE ANNUAL MEETING
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY

LAWRENCE J. BURPEE

In opening this second annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, it is my purpose merely to put before you, as briefly as possible, some of the matters that have engaged our attention since the last annual meeting.

OUTLINE LECTURES IN CANADIAN HISTORY

This project, you will remember, was discussed at our last meeting. The idea is that the association should have prepared, by competent hands, a series of outline lectures each devoted to some phase or part of Canadian history. The outlines would be for the use of high school teachers and others capable of developing them into lectures. They should strike the happy medium between a mere skeleton and a fully-developed lecture. They are intended, in fact, to furnish the groundwork upon which a lecture may be built. We supply the material, and the lecturer clothes it in his own language. Each outline would be accompanied by a set of slides, and other illustrative equipment, if the subject should lend itself to that sort of treatment. It is believed that in this way the association could do a very useful and patriotic piece of work, in breaking down a lot of mistaken ideas that have crept into the popular conception of Canadian history, and building up in their place, in the minds of both Canadians and others, sound ideas of the history of this country.

I need not remind you that this scheme, developed in a comprehensive way—and it is hardly worth attempting unless we plan to cover all the important aspects of Canadian history—involves an expenditure far beyond the means of this association. We can only hope to succeed by enlisting the co-operation of governmental agencies, in reproducing the outlines in print or some other convenient form, and in preparing sets of lantern slides, motion picture reels, etc. I believe I am justified in saying that we already have the warm support of the Public Archives of Canada, the National Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior, and the Natural Resources Intelligence Service. The only obstacle that may for a time stand in the way of their fullest co-operation is the policy of rigid economy that has been imposed upon all the departments of the Dominion service. We are already indebted to the Public Archives for assistance in getting together material for slides; to the Natural Resources Service for the making of negatives and slides; and to the National Parks

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Branch and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for gifts of motion picture reels.

A good deal of time has been devoted during the past few months to the carrying out of a survey of available sources of material for slides, not only in such obvious collections of historical pictures as the Public Archives, the Chateau de Ramezay and the John Ross Robertson collection in the Toronto Public Library, but also in other less known places. It is abundantly clear that we shall not lack material to illustrate the outline lectures, if we can make arrangements to have it reproduced in the form of slides. We already have in Ottawa several hundred slides, covering to some extent such fields as early exploration in both Eastern and Western Canada, the history of New France, the western fur trade, early means of transportation, the Indians and the Eskimo, animal life and the physical features of the country. The material for these has been drawn mainly from the Public Archives, the National Parks Branch and the Paul Kane collection in the Royal Ontario Museum. This is of course merely a nucleus of the collection that we shall need to illustrate the outline lectures; and it must not be forgotten that for every lecture we shall need several sets of slides.

As to the outlines themselves, that is of course the branch of the scheme for which this association is directly responsible. I am glad to say that we have already made this much progress—a tentative list of eighteen subjects has been prepared, and in each case a Canadian scholar thoroughly familiar with the subject has been asked to undertake the preparation of an outline lecture.

The following is a list of the subjects, and of those who have undertaken to prepare the outlines. In some cases, where the writer was already overwhelmed with work, he has accepted this patriotic task on the understanding that it would have to await the completion of other commitments.

Arthur G. Doughty.....	Siege of Quebec, 1759.
George M. Wrong.....	The Fall of New France.
Charles W. Colby.....	Frontenac.
Ægidius Fauteux.....	Founding of Montreal.
Chester Martin.....	Red River Colony.
Basil Williams.....	Growth of Responsible Government.
J. C. Webster.....	Siege of Louisbourg.
W. S. Wallace.....	Loyalists in Upper Canada.
O. D. Skelton.....	The Canada Company.
F. W. Howay.....	Sir James Douglas.
A. MacMechan.....	Story of Halifax.
Gustave Lanctot.....	Jacques Cartier.

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D. A. McArthur..... The Quebec Act.
L. J. Burpee..... The North West Company.

We also asked Hon. Thomas Chapais, Col. William Wood, Pierre-Georges Roy, and Mgr. A. E. Gosselin, to undertake the subjects of Montcalm, the Naval War of 1812, Early Days of Quebec, and Champlain, respectively, but they have not yet felt at liberty to do so. Perhaps we may be able to enlist their co-operation at some later date.

DICTIONARY OF CANADIAN HISTORY

I have been in correspondence with a number of Canadian historians and historical students and teachers, as to the desirability and practicability of preparing such a work of reference. The idea was that it might be carried out as a co-operative scheme, the more important topics at any rate being prepared by those most competent to write upon each particular subject. As to the desirability of such a dictionary, I find no differences of opinion. Every one who has been consulted agrees that a Dictionary of Canadian History is one of the most needed works of reference. The practicability of undertaking it as a co-operative scheme is still in the air. The difficulty is the same that stands in the way of so many similar projects; the men most competent to do the work are already committed to a great many other duties, and do not feel justified in adding another burden to their load. However, the scheme is still alive, and some way will be found of turning it into a reality.

CANADIAN HISTORICAL ATLAS

You will not have forgotten that this matter was brought before the association at the last annual meeting. It is one of several projects which the association has before it, involving considerable expenditures. Like these others, it is a very important and desirable piece of work; but the mere fact that it cannot be carried out without ample funds, forces us to go slowly. With our present income, the only practical way of publishing such a work of reference is by securing financial support from government sources; and the present moment is a peculiarly inopportune time to ask either the Dominion or Provincial Governments for money. It is improbable that any publisher would undertake it as a private venture, as it would be expensive to produce and the market is limited. Therefore we must keep it before us as a project to be taken up at the earliest practicable opportunity.

In the meantime, Professor MacMechan has been good enough to outline roughly his ideas as to the appropriate steps to be taken in preparing such an Historical Atlas. He says:—

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“The first step would be the formation of an extensive committee of selection, composed of leading historians from each province. These would submit suggestions to a central committee, small and with editorial powers. This editorial committee would sift and winnow the material. It would have to be brought within reasonable limits—say 200 pages, the format being fairly large, flat and thin, in short something like a geography.

“These 200 pages should include:—

“1. Pictures by good artists, of scenes in Canadian history. I should insist on their esthetic value.

“2. Portraits of the chief actors in the drama, with signatures; spurious portraits rigorously excluded.

“3. Scenes from the life of the various provinces: fishing, lumbering, harvesting, etc., early views of cities, etc.”

MACKENZIE NATIONAL PARK

There has been brought to the attention of the association a proposal for the creation of a National Park at Bella Coola, on the Pacific coast, to include the historic spot where Alexander Mackenzie first reached salt water on his memorable expedition overland to the Pacific in 1793. It is represented that this park would not only form a very appropriate memorial to the great explorer, but that it would also contain all the essentials of a National park; glorious scenery in mountain, forest and waterways; fishing, mountain-climbing, salt and fresh water bathing and hot springs; mountain goats, bears, and other wild life; petroglyphs and other records of Indian life, past and present. With the park was associated a proposal for a highway or motor road, to follow in part the route of Mackenzie down to the sea, and connect at its eastern end with existing motor highways.

The suggestion, it is understood, has been before the National Parks Branch at Ottawa, and also before the Government of British Columbia. The attitude of the latter Government is of course a very important consideration, as the first step would be the transfer of such lands as might be required for the park from the province to the Dominion. There is reason to believe that the British Columbia authorities are not yet prepared to consider favourably the transfer of lands for a park, but might be willing to convey to the Dominion a smaller area near Bella Coola to be set apart as a National site in commemoration of Mackenzie's expedition. This at any rate would be a step in the right direction; and the creation of a park at some future time might reasonably be expected to follow. It would not be inappropriate for this association to put itself on record as favouring the creation of a National park, and failing that, a National site.

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PETROGLYPHS NEAR BELLA COOLA

In this connection, it is very desirable that steps should be taken to preserve certain petroglyphs, or Indian sculptured figures, on the rocks a mile south of Bella Coola river and at other points in the same area. Probably this could be arranged for in connection with the Mackenzie National Site.

HISTORIC SITES

We also ascertained that there existed in the neighbourhood of the town of Macleod, Alberta, a very characteristic and striking buffalo pound, which had been in use for many generations among the Indians of the western plains. The matter was taken up with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, and we were advised that this is one of the sites recommended for preservation or marking, and that steps were being taken to that end.

Complaints having been received as to the condition of the old military burying-ground at Chambly, representations were made to the Historic Sites Board, and we were advised that this cemetery had now been put under the control of the Department of the Interior, and would be looked after as part of the Fort Chambly National Site.

Other similar matters that were brought to the attention of the Historic Sites Board were the marking of the old North West Company's post at Kamloops, and the preservation of the bastion of the old fort at Nanaimo. No action has so far been taken on these suggestions, so far as we are aware.

INDIAN VILLAGE IN STANLEY PARK

It is pleasant to record the efforts of the Art, Historical and Scientific Association of Vancouver, toward the erection of a typical Indian village in Stanley park. The village will comprise three lodges, to be carved and painted inside and outside by Indian artists; and before these will stand a number of totem poles. A suitable site has been placed at the disposal of the association, and some of the totem poles are already in position.

PARKMAN CENTENARY

In November last the centenary of the birth of Francis Parkman was celebrated at Montreal. The celebration took the form of a very successful meeting, at which addresses were delivered by Sir Arthur Currie, M. Jules Jusserand, the French Ambassador at Washington, Dr. Bliss Perry of Harvard, Ægidius Fauteux of the St. Sulpice Library, Montreal, and Dr. Charles W. Colby, the well-

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known Canadian historian. The Brassard Choir of Montreal sang a number of the inimitable old folk songs of French Canada.

At the same time, a very interesting exhibit of Parkman material was held in the Museum of McGill University Library, including relics of the historian, manuscripts, corrected proofs, autographed copies of his books, and a great deal of material bearing upon the history of the period that one associates with the name of Parkman. Material for the exhibit was loaned by the Public Archives of Canada, Harvard University, the Library of St. Sulpice, the Massachusetts Historical Society and Brown University.

As a permanent memorial to Parkman, the committee responsible for the commemoration proposed a fund to endow scholarships tenable at any of the Canadian universities or at the Public Archives in Ottawa by students making a special study of Canadian history; and to assist in the publication of meritorious works on Canadian history.

It may interest you to know that the committee, of which Sir Arthur Currie was chairman, was an unusually representative one, including representatives of all the principal Canadian colleges and learned societies, the Prime Minister and several other members of the Cabinet, the Leader of the Opposition, the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament, the Premiers of nearly all the provinces, and a number of other men prominent in the public and business life of the country. This association was represented directly by Mr. Pemberton Smith, Mr. George Iles, and myself, and indirectly by several others who also represented other organizations.

A pamphlet containing a full report of the addresses at the Montreal meeting has recently been issued by the committee and McGill University.

REPRESENTATIVES AT OTHER MEETINGS

This association was represented at the last annual meeting of the American Historical Association, in December last, by Prof. Basil Williams, of McGill University, and Prof. D. A. McArthur, of Queen's University, who conveyed to our American friends and fellow-workers our most friendly greetings and wishes for their continued success.

I had the privilege of representing the association at a most interesting meeting in September, 1923, to commemorate the heroic work of the Jesuit Fathers on the shores of Georgian bay. Memorials erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board were unveiled, and a number of stimulating addresses were given by Brig.-Gen. Cruikshank, Father Devine, of St. Mary's College, Dr. Coyne, Mr. Biggar, of the Public Archives, and others.

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NEWSPAPERS AS HISTORICAL MATERIAL

Our attention was drawn not long ago to the fact that an opportunity offered to secure for preservation a complete file of a long-established Canadian newspaper. Even if it was the province of such an association as ours to preserve such material, we have at the present time no quarters either for a library or office purposes, and if we had, the price at which this file of newspapers is held would be far beyond our means. The matter has been turned over to the Public Archives for consideration.

There can, of course, be no question as to the importance of preserving files of our principal newspapers, particularly those that have been in existence for many years. They are invaluable as sources of historical material. In fact the vital necessity of getting them into some place where they will be safe from vandalism has been emphasized recently by an incident that one is almost ashamed as a Canadian to record. It appears that one of our members had occasion not long ago to consult the files of one of the oldest of Canadian newspapers, for information that could not very well be obtained elsewhere. On applying at the office, he was told that the old files of the paper had recently been destroyed, as the space they occupied was needed for other purposes. The contrast is rather singular. The proprietors of one newspaper hold their set at a practically prohibitive price; while those of another wantonly destroy a set that the Public Archives, McGill University Library, or any other similar institution would most gladly have accepted for preservation, either as a gift or on loan. This is one of the ways in which historical material of incalculable value is lost to Canada and to the world.

PERMANENT QUARTERS FOR THE ASSOCIATION

The fact that we have at the present time no quarters either for office or library purposes, or for executive or other meetings, has already been alluded to. It is to be hoped that some means may be found of remedying this situation. For obvious reasons, and particularly because of the presence there of the Public Archives, Ottawa seems to be the most suitable place for the headquarters of the association. Unfortunately our means do not at present admit of renting suitable rooms, but possibly some other way may be found of getting over the difficulty.

REVENUE

The treasurer will put before you a statement of the finances of the association. It has been our policy to keep the annual fees

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down to a minimum, so that no one who is interested in the objects of the association will be prevented from joining on the score of expense. At the same time, if we are to carry out any of the ambitious schemes that have been put before you, we must have a larger revenue, either in the form of endowments or annual grants from the Dominion or Provincial Governments. Some steps have already been taken by your executive toward that end, but so far without success. Success will come in time.

NEW MEMBERS

It is gratifying to report that while 45 new members, including a life member, were added in 1922-23, we have gained 109 in 1923-24—for the most part within the last few months. In these are included five organizations and 104 individuals. Of the latter, 49 are from Quebec, 36 from Ontario, 9 from British Columbia, 5 from New Brunswick, 3 from Nova Scotia and 2 from Manitoba. There are 37 French and 12 English from Quebec, and 31 English and 5 French from Ontario. It will be seen, therefore, that the association is growing as we would have it, members coming from all the provinces, and from both the races which for the most part make up our population. We are also getting the type of members that is most needed, men and women who are really interested in the objects for which the association was created.

DECEASED MEMBERS

On the other hand, we must lament the loss of several of our old members, who were loyal friends and who all took a keen interest in the work of the association. Notable among these was E. C. Whitney, one of our life members, a man who had earned the respect of everyone both because of his generous support of all good causes and because he was in best possible sense a good citizen. We have also lost Sir Edmund Walker, who was not only eminent as a banker and publicist, but also as a student of Canadian history; Dr. Otto Klotz, astronomer, an authority on Canadian boundary questions, and a most kindly gentleman; J. Castell Hopkins, a well known writer on historical and other questions, and editor of that invaluable annual, the *Canadian Annual Review*; James Hope, the veteran Ottawa bookseller; Lawrence Fortesque, who was a mine of information on the early history of the west and the Mounted Police; and H. C. Mott, of Brooklyn, N.Y., a warm friend of the association. The usual resolutions will, I presume, be submitted to you.

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CANADIAN HISTORY SOCIETY

Sir Campbell Stuart is, it is understood, at present in Canada for the purpose of organizing a Canadian branch of this society, of which branches have already been established in England and France. The particular objects of the society are to "maintain an interest in the Canada of to-day among the descendants of those who have contributed to the upbuilding of its institutions; to ensure the preservation of historical records relating to Canada, and to render them available to the society for the purpose of its publications; to publish in a series of volumes biographies of those who have by their services contributed to the history of the country; and to endeavour by research to discover historical sources."

As an organization working in the same general field to which we are devoted, this association wishes the Canadian History Society every possible success, and offers its co-operation wherever that may be found practicable. In saying this, I feel sure that I am voicing the wishes of the members of the Canadian Historical Association.

UNIQUE QUEBEC

Finally, I should like to express my own personal appreciation of the delightfully characteristic manner in which Colonel William Wood has brought together the many facts and conditions that make this most picturesque old town of Quebec unique in Canada, in America and in some respects in the world. In dedicating his pamphlet to the Canadian Historical Association, as well as to the Royal Society of Canada, he has paid us a compliment to which we cannot be insensible.

The pamphlet is published by the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, and I should like to express, on behalf of this association, our satisfaction in having the opportunity of meeting here with that most venerable of Canadian societies, our appreciation of the splendid work they have done in the past for Canadian history and are still doing, and our warmest congratulations on the completion of a century of achievement. Let us hope that the society may see not only many more years but many more centuries of equally useful and patriotic effort.