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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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Résumé de l'article

Dans la mémoire collective, le nom de William Lyon Mackenzie reste attaché à la lutte pour l'établissement d'un gouvernement responsable, et cela au détriment d'autres hommes politiques qui jouèrent aussi un rôle déterminant dans cette lutte. Cela est dû en grande partie, comme nous le montrons dans cet article, à l'action de William Lyon Mackenzie King qui réussit, lorsqu'il fut au pouvoir, à détourner en faveur de son grand-père le souvenir de cette lutte. Son influence notamment sur le choix des monuments érigés en Ontario, comme différents discours et écrits public, contribuèrent peu à peu à construire et imposer une image idéalisée, une glorification presque allégorique, de cet homme et de son action politique.

THE SIDEWAYS MARCH:

MACKENZIE KING'S MONUMENTAL QUEST, 1893-1940[1]

By Dennis Duffy

William Lyon Mackenzie King knew how to work up a grand occasion and a grand monument too. As a very junior minister in 1905, he had engineered the enshrinement adjacent to Parliament Hill of his heroically dead roommate, Bert Harper. He had not only raised the funds and selected the sculptor and the emblem for the memorial (a stalwart Sir Galahad), he had wheedled his way into a site that most viewers would assume was the Hill itself, so closely did it adjoin those sacred precincts. Most of all, he had convinced his patron, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, to grace the occasion of the monument's unveiling, thus transforming personal mourning into public monumentality.[2]

King knew how such deeds were wrought. What then had gone wrong with what should have been the unalloyed delights of his 18 June 1938 unveiling of a Niagara Falls memorial arch? After all, its panels marked the progress of Canadian governance and bestowed a culminating role in that pageant to his Grandfather. Though neither the monument itself nor the attendant ceremony lay under his Prime Ministerial sway, he had had his say about both. Its origins lay

[1] I am deeply indebted here to an anonymous peer reader whose commentary proved at once learned, generous and transformative.

[2] Harper monument: Dennis Duffy, "The Grandfathering of William Lyon Mackenzie King," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32:4 (2002), 581-608. McQuesten: John C. Best, *Thomas Baker McQuesten: public works, politics and imagination* (Hamilton: Corinth Press, 1991), 126-29; Jean Coutu, Vehicles of Nationalism: Defining Canada in the 1930s," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37:1 (2002), 180-205.

Abstract

This article concludes with William Lyon Mackenzie King's successful diversion of the public memory of the struggle for responsible government from its various historical proponents to his grandfather, William Lyon Mackenzie. This he accomplished through his influence on monuments erected in Ontario during his heyday. The article follows this progress as it ambles through a number of other monuments and popular texts, culminating in an idealized testament to an individual apotheosized into a near-allegorical political presence.

Résumé: *Dans la mémoire collective, le nom de William Lyon Mackenzie reste attaché à la lutte pour l'établissement d'un gouvernement responsable, et cela au détriment d'autres hommes politiques qui jouèrent aussi un rôle déterminant dans cette lutte. Cela est dû en grande partie, comme nous le montrons dans cet article, à l'action de William Lyon Mackenzie King qui réussit, lorsqu'il fut au pouvoir, à détourner en faveur de son grand-père le souvenir de cette lutte. Son influence notamment sur le choix des monuments érigés en Ontario, comme différents discours et écrits public, contribuèrent peu à peu à construire et imposer une image idéalisée, une glorification presque allégorique, de cet homme et de son action politique.*

in the nationalist designs of a provincial cabinet minister; its unveiling lay in T.B. McQuesten's hands too. But McQuesten was a Liberal, and as such shared Mr. King's estimation of the role that William Lyon Mackenzie had played in the evolution of responsible government. He had consulted with King and even asked him for a list of appropriate Scriptural quotations for the monument. Ostensibly a memorial to Upper Canada's pioneers, the Clifton Gate Arch had broadened the normal notion of pioneering, expanding it from a narrative of exploration, land clearance, settlement and defense to one including the development of political institutions that came about well after the typical pioneering experience had concluded. One of its most notable bas-relief panels—there were four—depicted an idealized profile of Grandfather presenting to the Upper Canadian Assembly in 1835 his *Seventh Report* on the deficiencies of the colonial regime that he would take arms against.

The panels' story was a novel one, recombining various elements of Upper Canadian history within a teleology that concluded in the 1837 Rebellion where Mackenzie had played so prominent a role. St. James' Anglican cathedral in Toronto parades a set of stained glass windows marking a progress of events originating with the creation of the world and culminating in the establishment of Trinity College. The sequence may strike non-tribal viewers as bathetic, yet it expresses a community's sense of selfhood and the pride taken in its own achievements.

So with the secular faith of Upper Canadian liberalism. The panels move chronologically from French explorers such as La Salle and Hennepin (along with Père Marquette, the first European to look upon the Falls), to pioneering United Empire Loyalists in an ox-drawn wagon, in turn leading to a British regular along with a sailor and an Indian defending Upper Canada in 1812. Mackenzie's *Report* concludes this process. Rather than a series of events marking a historical evolution, the sequence more closely resembles a set of historical snapshots. Those looking on it with the eyes

Clifton Memorial Arch. Courtesy of Niagara Falls Public Library

of faith beheld a geometry as inevitable as the line from first base to home. The panels' deft assemblage of constituencies and historical worthies chiselled into the service of a common good could have caused no disquiet in the Prime Minister, himself expert in such constructions. Mackenzie King wanted the struggle for responsible government at once focused upon his ancestor yet decoupled from the Rebellion, and the panel certainly accomplished that.[3]

The inscription itself summarizes a visual narrative at once triumphalist and egalitarian in its exaltation of the commonality:

> This memorial was erected to honour the memory of the men and women in this land throughout their generation who braved the wilderness, maintained the settlements, performed the common task with praise or glory and were the pioneers of political freedom and a system of responsible government which became the cornerstone of the British Commonwealth of Nations.[4]

[3] Mackenzie King to McQuesten, 30 March 1937, quoted in Best, *Thomas Baker McQuesten* ,129.

[4] Mark Frank, *The Mackenzie Panels. The strange case of Niagara's fallen arch* (Toronto: Red Robin Press, 1987), 2.

Who can indeed take exception to a public monument that he has personally inscribed? Granted, the wording came his way through the dictation of a panoply of spiritual and actual forbears. The provincial authorities having awarded Mackenzie King authorship of the inscription, he handed the business over to a visionary array numerous as those trooping across the stage in Act IV of *Macbeth*. Public figures such as Laurier and Asquith had been accompanied by such humble folk as King's mother and father. Grandfather, the monument's subject had joined the company as well, and it was William Lyon Mackenzie's spirit that had dictated some alterations.[5] Even the Prophet Isaiah had only answered to one editor.

Yet even the permanent display of this group-writing project could not measure up to King's aspirations. His diary for that Saturday complains of the arch's size. Fifty feet in height, its dimensions nonetheless failed to allow cars to pass through it, reducing it from the *Arc de Triomphe* he had felt "not unworthy" of the events it marked to a minor highway ornament. Yes, the weather was fine when it needed to be—sun breaking through the clouds just as King pushed the button dropping the veil—and a motorcade consisting of a number of fancy cars flanked by five Ontario Provincial Police motorcyclists was more than most of us get for our funeral, let alone for an unveiling. He complained about "little in the way of publicity or organization of the whole proceedings; no attempt at advertising and no propaganda," though we have copies of six-minute radio talks about the upcoming festivities scripts broadcast on area stations.

King was pleased with his own remarks on the occasion, despite claiming ignorance about the centrality of his address to the ceremony. Calling that prominence "a complete surprise," his diary flies in the face of surviving documents indicating a closely detailed demarcation of the roles played by the various speakers, documents that had to have been scrutinized by the Prime Minister's Office. The attendance (several hundred) struck him as inadequate, since he had yearned for a great *national* rather than a provincial occasion, though the Memorial Arch was a provincial project with a provincial budget. And then there was the attitude of Premier Mitchell Hepburn, which King denounced as "hateful." The willfully absent premier and the so-easily slighted prime minister were engaged in pumping the bellows of a mutual hatred that would flare into the nastiness of two years later when Hepburn's Ontario legislative assembly voted to censure King's government for what it deemed a slack prosecution of the war. But that lay in the (predictable) future. What especially galled Mackenzie King was Hepburn's brass in first placing his own name on the dedicatory plaque very near to King's and then pointedly skipping the unveiling.

Still, it had been a grand occasion. Even the diarist who seemed particularly querulous that day, almost in search of a

[5] *The Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King,* 27 March 1937. Archivianet, <http://king.collectionscanada.ca/EN/Default.asp>

grievance to treasure, had to admit at the end that he had looked upon an artistic rendering of a concept "which will not be without its significance, as related to the Old Testament conception of God's Covenant with his people." In fact, the unveiling confirmed in him the sense that "my life has helped to mark, in no small part, the completion of Mackenzie's work." Surely the amplitude of this significance justified a rest on the seventh day.[6]

Whatever occasioned this dyspeptic lament, which even the memorial's significance failed to calm utterly, an even greater upset—graven in stone—lurked there. Within a few months, during the winter of 1938-39, the prime minister telephoned an antiquarian friend, complaining at length to about the arch's shocking inclusion of sinners amid its cavalcade of saints.[7] There, amid the list of homegrown patriots, lurked the names of some American filibusters who had assisted Mackenzie in his attempts to carry on the struggle from American soil. Membership in the Hunters' Lodges established by the Patriot Hunters in 1838 ranged from those purportedly seeking disinterestedly to deliver Canada from the tyrannies of colonial rule to groups appointing themselves to office in the provisional government that would follow the successful invasion. Whatever their ultimate aims, the Hunters, (whose name it was hoped legitimated their prowling with guns around the border zone) were scarcely the sort of group with whom Mackenzie King sought to link his grandfather's name.[8] If he had sought to have the Rebellion itself downplayed here, then the appearance of those names recalled that uprising's most disreputable aspects and proved especially galling.

What was to be done? Rectifying that error required new stones, surfaces that the Clifton arch failed to furnish. Luckily, a remedy lay close at hand, within a structure already shaped by the Prime Minister's concealed hands.

I

The Niagara Arch's failure to achieve Mackenzie King's aims lets us assume that its demolition two decades after his death had to have delighted him

[6] I have based this account of the unveiling and of Mackenzie King's responses to it, on Mackenzie King's diary for 18 June 1938, and "Unveiling of Clifton Gate & Official Opening of William Lyon Mackenzie House," Archives of Ontario (hereafter cited as AO) RG38-3-2-563. For a thorough background study of the arch and its eventual demise: Joan Coutu, "Vehicles of nationalism" and Mark Frank, *The Mackenzie Panels*.

[7] "Mr. King believed that the inclusion of American raiders with Canadian Patriots was unjustified, and detracted from proper appreciation of the merits of the Canadian Rebellion.": Edwin C. Guillet, "Foreword," *The Lives and Times of the Patriots* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963 [1938]), [2]. Guillet's 1938 account itself indicates a milestone in the process of enshrining the Rebellion that culminated in the Niagara Arch. Appropriately, his history's later preface records the PM's dissatisfaction, as does Guillet's letter of 18 February 1939 to *Saturday Night*.

[8] Oscar A. Kinchen, *The Rise and Fall of the Patriot Hunters.* New York: Bookman Associates, 1956. see also, Curtis Fahey, "Hunters' Lodges" in *Canadian Encyclopedia Online.* <www. thecanadianencyclopedia .com/index.cfm? PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0003915>

in the spirit world.[9] The 1940 installation of the William Lyon Mackenzie memorial in Queen's Park, Toronto, concluded a grandson's rehabilitation of an ancestor who finally perched unblemished atop his very own pedestal. I have written elsewhere about that memorialization.[10] It concluded a complex process of cultural revision and diversion, some of that process under the guidance of Mackenzie King, but much of it through other agencies. My aim here is to review some moments in that process, before a final glance at the implications of the ancestral apotheosis that Mackenzie King brought to perfection in Queen's Park.

William Lyon Mackenzie Memorial in Queen's Park. Courtesy of Archives of Ontario

Four sites mark my tour of that rehabilitation highway that stops on the grounds of the Ontario Legislative Assembly. Not exhaustive in the manner of a MapQuest itinerary, my survey overlooks many twists and turns on the route. I offer instead a schematic chart, one that highlights the phases in public memory creating the conditions for canonization that an observer as astute as Mackenzie King could seize upon. To mark each of these four phases—heroic revisionism, rehabilitative consensus, suppression of opposition material, reconfiguration of popular historical narrative—I have selected a representative, metonymous event or occurrence. Other phenomena would serve as well; these are the ones offering the widest scope for the argument here.

- The 1893 memorial to two 1837 rebels, Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews in Toronto's Necropolis burying ground represented the enshrinement of 1837 and the events around it.

[9] The destruction of the so-called Honeymoon Bridge by pack ice in January 1938 resulted in the planned Memorial Arch's relocation at a spot distant from the bridge that replaced it, where it lingered as an impediment to traffic. In keeping with Ontario's cherished cultural tradition of the automobile's primacy in the allocation of public space, the authorities dismantled the arch during the winter of 1967-68 (Coutu). Some of the panels from the demolished arch now rest in the rear of Toronto's Mackenzie House (Frank).

[10] "The Grandfathering of William Lyon Mackenzie King."

- The emergence of a consensus in high school and popular history textbooks indicated a rehabilitation of Mackenzie and his reputation, establishing a close relationship between his agency and the now-enshrined rebellion.
- Mackenzie's descendants' assault upon any accounts denying his primary role in the emergence of Responsible Government eliminated any effective barriers against his heroic emergence.
- The placement of Mackenzie's protests within a monumental account of Upper Canadian genesis lodged him firmly within any provincial master narrative.

Discussing these indices as to how the rough places were made plain clarifies the Queen's Park monument's triumphalist recreation of Upper Canada's history.

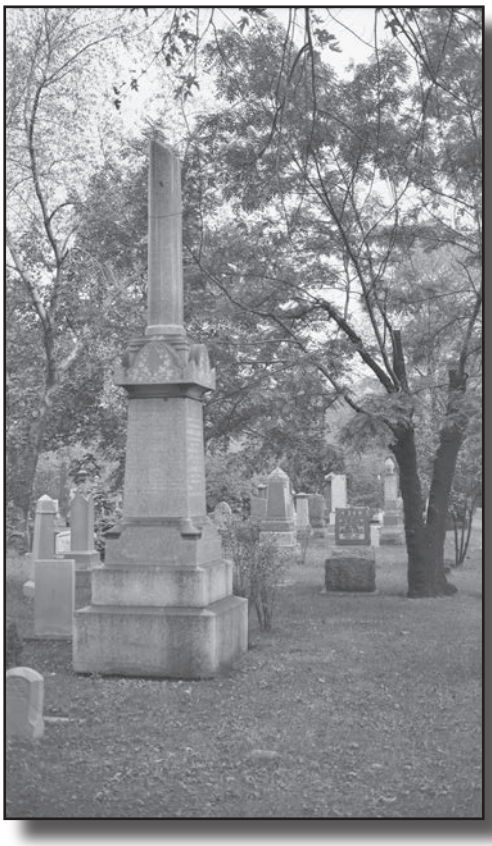
1837 Reconstituted:

The remains of Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews, publicly hanged for their role in the 1837 rebellion, languished in a potter's field until 1859. Then William Lyon Mackenzie marched alongside others as they transferred the coffins—surely reconstructed for the occasion—to respectable burial in the Necropolis. Consider that relocation the first phase in their posthumous cleansing. There they lay with only the simplest of markers until 28 June 1893, when a group of "friends and sympathizers" erected in their memory a fifteen-foot tall marble broken column.[11] The newspaper report of the unveiling remarks upon the suitably rainy weather on the mournful occasion. A number of provincial parliamentarians spoke, two clergymen delivered remarks, and Mr. Joseph Tait, "in response to many calls from the assembly," found himself not at all at a loss for words. The pair had not died in vain; their deaths "drew the attention of the home government to the abuses which existed and brought about the reforms for which they fought." Cheers then erupted when Mr. Tait closed with the statement that they were "true, good, loyal self-sacrificing men ... a noble example to all who followed them." Paralleling this assertion of loyalty, the ceremonies concluded with a singing of one verse of the national anthem as everyone scattered from the downpour.

Tait's remarks indicate just how respectable the former rebels had become, as does the presence of MPs, MLAs and the clergy. Lount and Matthews had been subsumed within a mythic pattern central to the Christian beliefs of their mourners: victims whose sacrifice had brought about a greater good. Any speaker invoking that consolation assumes an audience convinced about the righteousness of the cause for which the martyr died. Tait's speech indicates that speaker and hearer alike shared a sense of the Rebellion's righteousness. Yet the inscription on the column itself ignores that consolatory machinery, neglecting to assign its subjects any role in creating a new political order. Instead, Peter Matthews is extolled as one who "was known and respected as

[11] We know nothing about that group's membership beyond its chairing by one T.W. Anderson. An account of the ceremony occurs in "Notice of Necropolis Ceremonies," (Toronto) *Globe* (29 June 1893), 8. A broken column indicates a life cut short in Victorian funerary architecture; it often marked the grave of a child.

an honest and prosperous farmer always ready to do his duty to his adopted country and [who] died as he lived—a patriot." Lount "had lived as a patriot and died for popular rights." No great chain of causality is graven in stone. Mr. Tait may have identified their deaths with the eventual triumph of their cause and of Responsible Government. Those in charge of the marble column felt no irresistible impulse to draw his far-reaching moral. The pair are commemorated as martyrs, but witnesses to a miscarriage of justice rather than figures whose sacrifice—in the manner of the Christian Atonement—enabled their followers to enjoy their present benefits.



Necropolis Memorial. Courtesy of Toronto Public Library

Here stood a political culture steeped in Christian observance. Yet the Reverend Dewart (we have no initials to identify him by) forbore to draw that familiar trope of consolation at a moment when an invocation of a progressive destiny would have seemed not only appropriate, but even necessary. It remained to the secular figures, chiefly principal speaker J.D. Edgar, MP to draw this secular version of a religious schema, and point out the optimistic teleology surrounding the deaths of the column's subjects. Significantly, cheers greeted quite another moment in Edgar's address. He had noted that these two Upper-Canadian rebels had endured the death penalty while a Quebec rebel, George-Etienne Cartier, went on to a knighthood and nearly became prime minister. Resurrecting interprovincial grudges charged a crowd to a greater degree than did apotheosizing the dead or idealizing the present. Obviously, the myth of 1837 offered the prospect of providential optimism (their deaths gained us our liberties). Equally as patent, the fund-raisers and inscribers declined to utilize this consolation, preferring instead to remember the pair as patriots rather than as forerunners and atoners. And with no recorded notice taken of William Lyon Mackenzie.

Where does this leave us? With John Charles Dent. His popular, 1885 *Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion* drew the conflict in polemical terms. Doughty

heroes fought a demonized opposition, satisfying a public's demand for a simple story, simply (if voluminously) told. The dedication of the Necropolis memorial reflects this thinking. So the Rebellion has been redeemed, its providential nature now a matter of widespread assent. But William Lyon Mackenzie takes no pride of place there. No hero in this account, Dent describes Mackenzie as possessed of

> an active but ill-balanced organization. His sympathies were too quick and strong for his judgement, and he frequently acted from impulse and hot blood. From his cradle to his grave he was never fit to walk alone and without guidance through any great emergency.[12]

In hindsight, the Necropolis column laid what turned out to be the foundations for Mackenzie King's enthronement of his grandfather. Yet Dent's infantilization of Mackenzie helps explain why any celebration of Mackenzie was going to take time to bring about.

Inserting Mackenzie's figure atop that ideological base was not going to be easy. As long ago as 1862, son-in-law Charles Lindsey had attempted to couple together the Rebellion and Mackenzie's role in it as foundations of responsible government: "Much of the liberty Canada has enjoyed since 1840, and more of the wonderful progress she has made, are due to the changes which the insurrection was the chief agent in producing."[13] That weld however, failed initially to hold. Dent's work of twenty-three years later, so supportive of the Rebellion, so critical of the role Mackenzie played there, indicates just how limited was the acceptance of Mackenzie's prominence in the evolutionary process. This lack of acceptance explains why John King, another Mackenzie son-in-law and Mackenzie King's father, felt compelled to publish a 150-page pamphlet savaging Dent's work. John King placed his hero in very unlikely company, accusing Dent of "bigotry" against John Beverley Robinson, John Strachan and William Lyon Mackenzie. Indeed, John King viewed "[T]his bulky book [as] partisan from the circumference to the core."[14] No matter; support of the Rebellion had yet to entail any support of Mackenzie that went beyond his family. The join came unstuck.

The Necropolis column and Dent's history alike reflect that while the rebels of 1837 had become the heroes of 1885-93, no single rebel had been marked out for distinction, especially the rebel whom the Mackenzie family had in mind. The literary arm of that conviction had disdained Mackenzie; its monumental one ignored him. But a plinth had been raised. The need to personalize events, to picture them in terms of human figureheads was bound

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[12] John Charles Dent, *The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion; largely derived from original sources and documents* (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885), I, 118.

[13] Charles Lindsey, *William Lyon Mackenzie.* "Edited with numerous additions by G.G.S. Lindsey." (Toronto: Morang, 1910 [1862]), xiv.

[14] John King, *The other side of the "story" : being some reviews of Mr. J.C. Dent's first volume of "The story of the Upper Canadian rebellion" : and the letters in the Mackenzie-Rolph controversy : also, a critique, hitherto unpublished, on "The new story"* (Toronto: James Murray, 1886), 3.

eventually to place a man's statue atop that foundation. But for the present, that figure was not going to be Mackenzie's.

The Textbooks and Popular Histories Speak

By 1900, things were changing. A straw in the wind, an announcement in the *Globe* indicated that a revision was taking place, and on a popular level. Beneath a large headline, RISING OF MACKENZIE, followed by the encouraging subhead, YOUNG CANADA TAKING AN INTEREST IN HISTORY, the paper ran a lengthy item quoting a query by Miss Lizzie Scott, a teacher at Galt (ON) Central High School. Miss Scott had requested on 7 December that the editor forward to her any "pointers you can" that would assist her students (three boys and three girls) in their forthcoming debate. The resolution: "Was W.L. Mackenzie justified in the rebellion of 1837 and 1838?" To which the editor, John Willison replied with a few hundred words in the affirmative, which concluded with a mention that the standard works on the subject were those by Lindsey and Dent. Despite his yoking of two sources differing in their estimate of Mackenzie, Willison spoke with no ambivalence about his estimate of the rebel's role in the evolution of the desired goal:

> History proves that the rights of constitutional liberty which British subjects enjoy today have only been obtained by agitation and in some cases by the exercise of force. ... Few will deny today, in the light of history, that the cause of constitutional government in Canada was materially advanced by the action of Wm. Lyon Mackenzie and that results have justified the rising on 1837.[15]

A metropolitan daily had now proclaimed that Mackenzie was the most prominent player in a rebellion that had advanced Canadian freedom. Whatever these public utterances may tell us about the shift in public opinion toward Mackenzie, the fact that the *Globe* editor's statement was made to a group of high school students leads us to consider just what had been going on in their history classes.

As we might expect, the high school textbooks changed their views over the years, both about the rebels themselves and the roles they played in the master narrative of Upper Canadian history's climax: the appearance of responsible government. Narrative logic assumed that responsible government's appearance provided the destination for any charting of pre-Confederation politics. Opinion therefore centered on the question of the degree to which the Rebellion hastened that epiphany. Once this question had been answered, it remained only to assign points to any rebel's role in that process.[16] W.J. Robertson's 1892 *Public*

[15] "Rising of Mackenzie," (Toronto) *Globe* (11 December 1900), 4.

[16] By the time we are discussing, the terms in which the debate had been set, especially the widespread adoption of the epithet "Family Compact" had skewed the argument in the rebels' favour. This major aspect of a historical re-naming is not my concern here. The writings of the late Graeme Patterson, to whose scholarship I am profoundly indebted, provide ample and original discussion of these matters. See especially, his "An enduring Canadian myth: Responsible Government and the Family Compact," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 12:2 (1977), 3-16; *History and Communications. Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, the Interpretation of History.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 136-69.

School History of England and Canada, after a glance at the Rebellion, shrouded its eventual outcome in vagueness: years would pass after the Rebellion before a "full measure of responsible government" came about. David Duncan's 1905 textbook offered a more precise dating, that of 1848 and Lord Elgin's call to Baldwin and Lafontaine to form a government for the United Canadas upon the occasion of W.H. Draper's electoral defeat.[17] By 1897, the popular historian W.H.P. Clement's version of history for high school students had unequivocally restored Lindsey's coupling:

> If the rebellion in the two Canadas led—as no doubt it did lead—to Lord Durham's report, and so to the enlargement of colonial self-government, then not only Canada but British colonies the world over should have a kindly feeling for Papineau and Mackenzie.[18]

Kenneth Windsor's definitive survey assures us that progressivist assumptions underlay all (Upper) Canadian history in its early days. J. Castell Hopkins and William Kingsford were prominent in this Whiggish cavalcade, which like many a procession was also distinguished by those whom it excluded. As Windsor notes, the prestigious "Makers of Canada" series barred from its precincts such figures as John Strachan and John Beverley Robinson. In fact, the series compounded its bias by inserting Lindsey's hagiographic volume of forty years previous (see above), updating it with a lengthy appendix by another descendant, one that highlighted Mackenzie's "advocacy of those great constitutional reforms which are inseparably connected with our present system of government" (p. 526). Clearly, only Responsible Government's advocates figured in the nation's growth.[19]

As the *Globe's* remarks attest, the Galt Central debaters at the end of 1900 could have reckoned that the affirmative just might be the winning side of their contest. By 1914, W.L. Grant's *Ontario High School History of Canada* could assume this as well, casting Durham as the proximate cause but leaving no doubt that the Rebellion had served as the primal.[20] An observer could argue that by 1910, a pro-Mackenzie stream of opinion had made its way into respectability. In fact, the Lindsey volume itself appeared in the prestigious "Makers of Canada" series. The suppression through the courts of a later, competing, less adulatory biography by W.D. LeSueur has been told elsewhere.[21] Into that vacuum, reflecting the shift in opinion, sprang a product of family piety that was—in its latest rein-

[17] W.J. Robertson, *Public School History of England and Canada (*Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1892), 250-51; David M. Duncan, *The Story of the Canadian People* (Toronto: Morang, 1905), 183.

[18] W.H.P. Clement, *The History of the Dominion of Canada* (Toronto: Wm Briggs, 1897), 244.

[19] Kenneth N. Windsor, "Historical Writing in Canada (to 1920)," in *Literary History of Canada. Canadian Literature in English*, edited by Carl F. Klinck. 2nd Edition. Vol. I. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 229-40.

[20] W.L. Grant, *Ontario High School History of Canada* (Toronto: T. Eaton, 1914), 207-11.

[21] A.B. McKillop, "Introduction. The Critic as Historian." *A Critical Spirit. The Thought of William Dawson LeSueur.* Ed. A.B. McKillop. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 247-67.

carnation—given the seal of public approval. The figure who had sought to be the breaker of Canada was about to be translated into one of its makers.

Shortly afterward, public sculptor Walter S. Allward had enshrined Reform's twin heroes, Baldwin and Lafontaine on Parliament Hill in 1914, in poses naturalistic rather than heroic. Seven years previous, Stephen Leacock's remarkably uncritical Makers of Canada volume on *Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks* had performed this task of consecration. If, as Leacock's introduction to the volume put it, ""Time has shown [that] ... the conception of responsible government—has proved the cornerstone of the British imperial system," then Baldwin and Lafontaine and Hincks had in fact guided a global movement.[22] Allward's memorial echoed in bronze sentiments that had become an historical *textus receptus.* To be sure, Mackenzie had been excluded from the pantheon, but no one any longer doubted that the figures within that pantheon had exerted world-historical influence. Leacock, Canada's best-known non-fiction writer had placed Upper Canada's political history at the center of the British Empire's evolution. Other, less prestigious forums than the Makers of Canada series would advance this thesis. It remained to place William Lyon Mackenzie among the notable movers of this force.

Not every one wanted to do that. George M. Wrong's 1921 *Ontario Public School History of Canada* was not only influential in the way that textbooks are, it also represented the work of a well-connected figure whose importance at the University of Toronto was matched by his status in Toronto high society. In 1908, Wrong had played a minor role in the suppression of W.D. LeSueur's "unfriendly" biography of William Lyon Mackenzie. Wrong's textbook's interpretation rode the crest of the wave that had been building for decades. Despite his marriage to a daughter of Edward Blake and the impeccable Liberal credentials that fact conveys, Wrong shied away from any exculpatory portrayal of Mackenzie, and adroitly evaded the opportunity to write a biography of him.[23] He noted instead that "in demanding that the people of Canada should govern themselves," Mackenzie has been "vindicated by time." But not in his embrace of American aid, where "he was running counter to the deepest convictions of the Canadian people."[24] Wrong's caution seems excessive, and not at all surprising in a figure so meticulously circumspect. Textbook and popular historians alike appeared on the verge of canonizing Mackenzie.

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[22] Stephen Leacock, *Baldwin, Lafontaine, Hincks Responsible Government*. (Toronto: Morang, 1907), ix.

[23] According to LeSueur, Wrong had been offered the Makers of Canada slot for a biography of Mackenzie. He demurred on the grounds that such a project was bound to incur controversy, which would in turn lessen his effectiveness as a professor of Canadian history. William Dawson LeSueur, "Preface by the Author," in *William Lyon Mackenzie: A Reinterpretation.* Carleton Library No. 111. (Toronto: Macmillian of Canada, 1979), xxxiii. The reissue of the old Lindsey biography in the "Makers" series in fact attested to just how uncontroversial a figure Mackenzie had become.

[24] Wrong, *Ontario Public School History,* 232.

A Critical History Silenced

A.B. McKillop tells in detail the story that I briefly summarize, here and elsewhere.[25] Over a period of five years, during a time when King was advancing within his parliamentary career and first ascending to Cabinet (the Labour ministry), he masterminded the suppression of LeSueur's biography. *William Lyon Mackenzie: a Reinterpretation* portrays its subject more as a quarrelsome but compelling and at times necessary nuisance than a prophet. Employing first a whispering campaign, then a luncheon-table confrontation, then the law, King silenced the unbeliever. The low drama nonetheless provoked high feeling. An ally of King remarked to LeSueur "some of our friends think that you intend to slaughter Mackenzie King's distinguished grandfather."[26] That King ally, publisher George Morang, withheld the author's manuscript from him for three years, returning it only after LeSueur successfully litigated. Morang's rationale? His advance to LeSueur allowed him control over any manuscript submitted. The Supreme Court finally threw out that argument, pushing King into successfully employing another argument, one calculated to chill later historical researchers.

"Rebels marching down Yonge Street to attack Toronto, December 1837" by C.W. Jeffreys, The Picture Gallery of Canadian History*, Vol. 3, 1830-1900 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1950), 23.*

The Lindsey family—controllers of the papers that LeSueur made use of—successfully contended that LeSueur gained access to them after representing himself as a "favourable" biographer. The court supported the family's contention that LeSueur had misrepresented himself. It allowed the Lindseys both to smother LeSueur's right to publish his biography of Mackenzie and to retain possession of any notes accumulated during his research. From his desk at the Rockefeller Foundation in December 1915, King proclaimed personal victory in a jubilant telegram: "Ac-

[25] See MacKillop, *A Critical Spirit,* and Duffy, "The Grandfathering of William Lyon Mackenzie King."

[26] George Morang to LeSueur, 5 September 1907, quoted in A.B. McKillop ed., *A Critical Spirit,* 257.

cept heartiest congratulation on a splendid victory am delighted."[27]

Within the context of the present argument, LeSeuer's silencing demonstrates how half full the glass of victory must have seemed to Mackenzie King. On the one hand, the law had confirmed that control Grandfather's public memory now rested in the family's hands. Professional historians now faced considerable obstacles in registering any weighty dissent from this hagiography. On the other, no professional historian rushed into that vacuum. The Makers of Canada series had to resort to a biography written by a non-professional backed by a clumsily-inserted familial apologia in order to fill the Mackenzie slot. A scholar of the timidity of Wrong still did not feel compelled to produce anything more than a lukewarm defense of Mackenzie in a textbook published more than five years after the family's victory. That fact indicates just how reluctant professional historians were to award Grandfather the leading role that Mackenzie King and family had cast him in. What could not be printed on paper could be cast in bronze, however.

Niagara's Narrative Arch

We know very little about the process by which Ontario's version of nation-building came to award pride of place to William Lyon Mackenzie. Jean Coutu's superb "Vehicles of Nationalism" shows in detail how the Niagara Arch—brain-child of a staunch Liberal, Ontario's Minister of Highways T.B. McQuesten—was commissioned as part of a series of highway and tourist sites advancing the message that Canada's national culture differed from that of the U.S. We know that McQuesten visited Mackenzie King in Ottawa, seeking from him a list of apt Biblical passages to engrave upon the arch. He also gave him final approval on the arch's dedicatory inscription (see above). One might expect two Liberals in power, one federally and the other provincially to chat about such matters of mutual interest as the erection of historical memorials with nationalist intentions. But these discussions went beyond polite chat, as we have seen, assigning to the prime minister control over the verbal aspect of the arch's memorial intent. That assignment could never have happened had the prime minister not paid close—perhaps supervisory—attention to the monument's visual aspects.

That said, we have no record of who originated the arch's panoply of heroes that culminates in William Lyon Mackenzie's submission of his grievances to the Assembly. Certainly Mackenzie King could not have composed a narrative more congenial to his own view of Upper Canada's history. Hypothesizing an alternative series of panels focuses our understanding of just how partisan a reading of history appears on the arch. The first three panels (opening: exploration; second: U.E.L. settlement; third: 1812) follow what we may call the Loyalist paradigm. Exploration may have been largely

[27] McKillop, *A Critical Spirit,* 278.

a French affair, but it bore fruit only with the arrival of the U.E.L. settlers and the establishment of British institutions that their appearance entailed. The second panel, first drawn by popular historical illustrator C.W. Jeffreys, then moulded by Emanuel Hahn, and finally sculpted in bas-relief on stone by Louis Temporale, significantly replicates the style and figuration of an earlier Jeffreys series on the Loyalists' arrival. The story told so far follows the path set out by such nineteenth-century historical novels as William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* (1877) and Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty* (1893), in which *l'ancien régime* yields through a process of moral evolution to the successor regime. The moralistic message of the historical novels may be absent from the panels, but they maintain a pattern of natural, continuous succession. The panels assume continuity rather than disruption as a hallmark of Canadian history. The French explorers were part of a historical evolutionary pattern they could never have discerned, but which bestowed significance upon their actions. From these premises, the third panel conveys the final act in the Loyalist myth, but without the actual Loyalist presence. A British regular, a seaman and a native ally stand on guard. The absence of a settler militiaman as a prime participant in Upper Canada's defense reflects historical reality rather than mythic imperatives, but the panels thus far embody again that classic pattern of Upper Canadian Loyalism: defeat in a revolutionary struggle followed by the successful defense of the new land handed over to the defeated, who then turn it into a bastion of British institutions.

For all their differences, John Beverley Robinson, John Strachan and Egerton Ryerson would have found themselves roughly in agreement here. That pattern of settlement and successful defense defined their society and its role within a global empire that gave that colony's petty affairs a greater significance.[28] Such a trio might have come up with some subject or other for a fourth panel that would deliver the ultimate significance of that settlement and its defense. But the posturings of a gadfly who enlisted American aid in his attempt to overthrow British institutions could hardly have been their first choice. Of course, the province had changed, and of course that "myth of Tory origins" that Dennis Lee mocked as "full of lies and blanks" could no longer be sustained through public imagery.[29] The rebellion itself and to an extent Mackenzie's role in it had been subsumed within a greater progressive mythic framework of the sort invoked by Willison of the *Globe*.

Thus, the Niagara Arch grafted Mac-

[28] I follow here the outline of Loyalist self-imaging and Imperialist imagination treated by me in *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Images of Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 29-43, 55-69 and *Sounding the Iceberg: an Essay on Canadian Historical Novels* (Toronto: ECW Press, l986), 11-23. Jeffreys' U.E.L. settlement series: *The Picture Gallery of Canadian History*. Vol. 2 1763-1830 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1945), # 23, 24, 25.

[29] Dennis Lee "When I went up to Rosedale," *The Gods* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 17.

kenzie within the Ontario primal of settlement and defense. Now Ontario's achievement no longer lay in its perpetuation of British political institutions in North America. That triumph lay rather in Ontario's alteration of those institutions, its "pioneer[ing]" of "a system of responsible government which became the cornerstone of the British Commonwealth of Nations." We know who wrote that inscription, and we have to admire Mackenzie King's rhetorical sleight of hand in plucking the concept of pioneering out of the muck of laborious settlement (the stuff of pioneer museums) and idealizing it within the development of political institutions (the stuff of civics textbooks).

Like the acid used by the cleaners of stone, Mackenzie's appearance within this new context erases the violence of agitation and rebellion from his image. We will not find here the sentiments of a contemporary Marxist historian extolling the armed struggle for democracy in Upper Canada.[30] On the arch, violence within the peaceable kingdom has been directed outward—against foreign invasion—while the memory of civil conflict has been relegated to the halls of assembly rather than to the tavern where the rebel forces formed themselves up for their disastrous march.

Does it matter whether the final panel "fits" the preceding three? We are not looking at narrative that is truly sequential, but only adventitiously so. After all, it takes a very great wrench in meaning to posit that the French "discovery" of Niagara Falls was the prelude to Loyalist Upper Canada. The monument's narrative is not tightly plotted. Mackenzie's grand remonstrance neither "belongs" to, nor can it be argumentatively excluded from the series of panels. They represent propaganda, not rigorous exposition of historical consequences. What interests instead is the cultural politics that have settled around this panel. Mackenzie had by then become a "safe" enough historical personage for his prime ministerial grandson to help parachute into a leading role within a pageant of Ontario history. This swelling progress that the provincial government—in the institutional guise of the highway ministry—had decided to image on the arch served as the province's self-image on display. Defending Canada (panel three) was no longer the province's primal. Instituting a system of self-government—thus linking a Canadian quiet revolution to an American noisy one—bound visitor and native alike in a reverence for representative institutions. The border could continue to be undefended; mutually, L/liberally uniting both nations. Where better could the memory of William Lyon Mackenzie flourish than under those new, post-historical conditions?

[30] Stanley B. Ryerson, *1837. The Birth of Canadian Democracy* (Toronto: Francis White, 1937). The Canadian Left's armed support for the Loyalist side in the 1936-39 Spanish Civil War—Ryerson dedicates his monograph to them—took the form of the "Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion" in the International Brigade, an entitlement that Mackenzie King could neither control nor relish. Ontario's acknowledgement of the "Mac-Paps" takes the form of a very humble ground-hugging plaque in the vicinity of the towering Mackenzie memorial.

II

Viewed in that rosy, continentalist glow, the inclusion of the Hunters on the arch need not have unduly bothered Mackenzie King. After all, foreign freedom fighters occupy an honoured niche in many a national, revolutionary myth. My supposition is that it was as "fighters" that the names most discomfited Mackenzie King. Unlike Stanley Ryerson's history, the monument leaves the nature of the successful "struggle" comfortably vague. Only the odd Canadian versed in his own history or the astoundingly rare American visitor possessed of that knowledge would even realize that the struggle had at one point taken a violent turn in which some men perished and others saw their lives and fortunes wrecked. Some kinds of events are best not recalled too specifically on public columns, at least in cultures on the brink of global war.

As we have seen, this would all be remedied. The Queen's Park memorial graced the west side of the legislative buildings two years after the Niagara Arch's unveiling. The planning of the installation, the relationship between patron and artist, I have covered in detail elsewhere. Beyond summarizing the statue and its genesis, two other aspects of the memorial require discussion here. First we need to examine Mackenzie King's apparently groundless attack of nerves about the hostile attention his act of ancestral homage might attract. The other question considers the implications of the enigmatic nature of the monument's most prominent figure. Mackenzie's portrait bust that rests atop a tall base in the memorials left foreground stands in front of a figure resting on a base that gives him a twelve-foot elevation. So sizeable an artifact commands a viewer's attention. It will also command ours, once we have discussed the anxiety occasioned by the monument as a whole.

Because the project belonged to its patron from the beginning, we have no problem assigning authorship where any aspect of the Mackenzie memorial is concerned. The wording on the base—a near-copy of that on the Niagara Arch—the positioning of the monument itself within the Ontario *via sacra* on the grounds of the legislative assembly, the commissioning of the sculptor, the use of funds donated by as powerful an assembly of individuals as the country could have come up with at that time, all lay under Mackenzie King's control by the time of the statue's installation.[31] The wording does not quite assign the arrival of responsible government solely to Mackenzie. Yet the singling out of his name, plus his appearance as the sole historical (as opposed to allegorical) figure on the site certainly implies his primacy in the struggle. The

[31] TO COMMEMORATE THE STRUGGLE FOR RESPONSIBLE/GOVERNMENT IN UPPER CANADA AND THE PIONEERS OF A/POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH/UNITES IN FREE ASOCIATION THE NATIONS OF THE/BRITISH COMMONWEALTH. IN MEMORY OF/WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE. 1795. 1861./FIRST MAYOR OF TORONTO 1834. MEMBER FOR/ YORK IN THE LEGISLATURE OF UPPER CANADA 1828 1836/AND FOR HALDIMAND IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF CANADA 1851. 1858. Commission by the William Lyon Mackenzie Centennial Committee, 1940.

replication of the Niagara material functions as a kind of *pentimento*; the new memorial's recounting of Mackenzie and his career is the brushstroke that effectively covers the earlier motto, refocusing its energies toward a single hero.

The pleasure that Mackenzie King took from the monument was not marred by any inclusion of the wrong set among any list of names. While he had wanted the structure installed by 1937, and missed out on a grand opening when it was installed in 1940—lest such an occasion seem a distraction from the war effort—he took comfort in what the statue symbolized to him. He had inherited the ancestral mantle, and done his duty both to Mother and to Grandfather. Ironically, Mackenzie King had over the years defended in the House, sculptor Walter Allward's many delays in his production of the Vimy Memorial. Now it was his personal project whose deadlines Allward had ignored. Still, it seems to us now that a small dedicatory ceremony in 1940 wouldn't have generated the kind of negative reaction that Mackenzie King seems to have feared. That fear, seemingly groundless but which nonetheless haunted Mackenzie King and his stand-ins on the Memorial Committee, may have originated in uneasiness about the process of historical revisionism that we have been describing in this essay.

As we have seen above, a high-school debate had provoked a media response indicating how acceptable Mackenzie's role in the rebellion had become. Another high school contest provides a glimpse into fear driving both the committee and its behind-the-scenes controller. Memorial Committee Secretary J.L. Wilson's apparently innocuous suggestion that the committee sponsor an essay contest that would heighten interest and understanding of Mackenzie's achievements provoked a stormy response from Senator A.C. Hardy, Committee Chair. Such a competition "throw[s] the whole thing too much into politics. Amongst the essays and probably among the winners, there is a certainty of certain political or provocative statements being made. Above everything I want to avoid this."[32] What would constitute provocation? Opinions denying Mackenzie's centrality in the process of acquiring responsible government? In an essay contest geared to exactly that conclusion? Or could provocation lurk instead in the possibility of the contest's attracting media attention, which would in turn provoke unfriendly comment?

The committee's records tremble with anxiety on the part of fundraisers, prime minister and sculptor alike. Senator Hardy feared that "Toronto's prejudice and hatred" would forestall any Mackenzie memorial, as if John Strachan and John Beverley Robinson still stalked the assembly.[33] Certain enough of the rightness of his cause not to appear

[32] AO, R.G. 3-10-0-1024. Box 307. Mackenzie Memorial Correspondence, Hardy to Wilson, 26 October 1936.

[33] AO, R.G. 3-10-0- 495. Box 259. Hepburn Private Correspondence, A.C.Hardy to Mitchell Hepburn, 9 March 1936.

finicky in his misuse of fact, Wilson assured Eric Brown of the National Gallery that politics was playing no part in this cultural endeavour.[34] Hardy warned Wilson "we shall probably have to contend with a good deal of political attacks." Sure enough, the feeblest fulfillment of this prediction came about a month later when an anonymous sheet arrived in the mail, headlined "Lest They Forgot." It purportedly quoted William Lyon Mackenzie expressing regret over his act of rebellion and apologizing to a British statesman. "[W]e doubtless will be up against something of this kind," fretted Wilson.[35]

Who would cancel the Santa Claus parade on the complaint of Ebenezer Scrooge? What can account for such anxiety? Were the proponents of the memorial a-tremble at the audacity of their appropriation of responsible government to a single—highly contested—figure? Walter Allward may have been nervous about "the possible state of public opinion which may be antagonistic to the erection of a Memorial of this kind next spring," but the men we are quoting were hardened political operatives. Who was Hardy trying to fool with his apprehension that he feared to disturb the prime minister on this matter, crushed as he was "under the great strain of the present day ... I should hate to have him disappear from the scene before the monument is finished?" Could he have been serious when he confided to Public Works minister Harry Nixon "strictly between ourselves it is just possible that some fanatic might try to wreak a hundred year old vengeance on this structure."[36] Fanatic? In Toronto? Over an event a century past? Surely that weight of anxiety had to have trickled downward. Mackenzie King's first try at the canonization of Grandfather had been marred. Nothing was going to go wrong here, and keeping everyone concerned in a state of perpetual agitation may have seemed an efficient management tool to Mackenzie King. It appears as logical an explanation as any for the perturbation afflicting all concerned. And the role of underdog is always congenial in public life.

Even the most deviously aggressive of managers cannot create symbolic meaning where none readily appears. Whatever the enigmatic nature of the ploughboy figure on the Mackenzie Memorial may have meant to the sculptor, it certainly bewildered its intended audience. Without rehearsing in detail what I have said elsewhere, the meaning of the ploughboy puzzled not only educated members of the audience and provincial cabinet ministers. It seems to have eluded the sculp-

[34] Wilson to Brown, 10 September 1936, "C. Boyanowski Research William Lyon Mackenzie Monument," Edward P. Taylor Research Library, Art Gallery of Ontario.

[35] AO, Mackenzie Memorial Correspondence. Hardy to Wilson, 26 October 1936; 21 November 1936.

[36] AO, Mackenzie Memorial Correspondence." Wilson to Hardy, 19 September 1939; Hardy to Wilson, 20 September 1939. Public Works Files, 1940 "Memorial—W.L. Mackenzie", Hardy to Nixon, 13 May 1940. "Mackenzie Memorial Correspondence," Wilson to Hardy, 27 May 1940,

tor himself, an artist unusually articulate where the meaning of his allegorical figures was concerned. His placement of his twenty Vimy figures into such groupings as "the Spirit of Sacrifice," "the Defenders," and "Canada Mourning" indicate a creator not at all shy about naming his allegorical creatures. Yet what more sensitive barometer of Allward's possible exasperation and impatience have we than his telephoned dismissal of the queries about his figure's significance: "One can put own interpretation on it." It is "[m]ore or less a background for Mackenzie."[37]

The question of the figure's intelligibility concerns us here only insofar as it represents Mackenzie King's indifference to the question, at least as far as the written record is concerned. Certainly the Prime Minister of a nation at war had more pressing concerns, but he had taken time from them to discuss the memorial on numerous occasions. Was he simply unwilling to undertake another stab at perfection, since his principal aim lay fulfilled? Grandfather now occupied his very own site. No other historical personage blocked the view of him, no written testimony interrupted his soliloquy, no contradictory claim disturbed the reverent atmosphere. Wasn't that enough?

The 1893 broken column in the Necropolis had resurrected Upper Canada's revolutionary martyrs, wresting them out of the darkness and into the light. It had been a long march from there, from a memorial mute about Grandfather's deeds, mute in the very cemetery where he lay buried. There had to have been a softening in the inscription of public memory. A false start had to have been made, and then repudiated. The opposition had to have been silenced. But it had all worked out.

William Lyon Mackenzie King's 1940 ancestral memorial signified imposingly in stone and bronze that cultural and genuine politics alike had concurred in William Lyon Mackenzie's apotheosis. Time, historical amnesia, partisan polemic, behind-the-scenes manipulation and ancestral piety had finally grasped the opportunity for a substantial rewrite of Ontario history. Who controlled the present, controlled the past. Nothing had been lost, finally, save intelligibility.

[37] AO, "Memorial—W.L. Mackenzie 1940," Quoted in J.G. Gibson to Campbell, 29 September 1940.