

turned southward. For the next few years, he "bummed" his way down the west coast from Vancouver to Mexico, and then worked his way around the southwestern United States. Finally, he returned to Canada, where he spent several years at farming and store-keeping, and in a brief fling as a university student. At last, out of work and desperate for a job, his past experience stood him in good stead, and he was able to catch on with a Canadian bank which sent him to their Whitehorse branch.

Poetry readings

At this point, Service could not have been regarded in any manner as accomplished, or even promising. He had done nothing of note. But he did have a gift. Since childhood, he had been fascinated with rhyme, and his great pleasure was to compose bits of verse and doggerel, some of which had appeared in local newspapers and magazines. During his stay at Whitehorse, Service further indulged his enthusiasm for poetry by reciting verses at gatherings.

At one time, his friends requested that he perform at an upcoming church concert. The amateur entertainer realized that his audiences must have been growing weary of hearing "Gunga Din," "The Face on the Bar-room Floor," and "Casey at the Bat", and with this disturbing fact in mind, he decided to take a walk and think over the problem. While walking, he met Stroller White, the editor of the *White Horse Star*. White suggested that Service write his own poem for the occasion, an original piece of work having something to do with the Yukon. Service thought that sounded like a fine idea. He went along, thinking about it. As he did, it occurred to him to use as his theme the eternal love triangle, and to set the scene in a

Yukon saloon. Furthermore he decided to use the medium of music to tell the story.

First line set

By this time, it was beginning to get late, and as Service continued his walk, he noticed that the Whitehorse night spots were coming to life. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, he thought, "A bunch of the boys were whooping it up". That line set his mind going full tilt.

Along with the other bank workers, Service lived in quarters above the bank itself. Returning to his lodgings, anxious and eager to commit his poem to paper, Service was dismayed to find his mates all asleep. So as not to wake them, he tiptoed downstairs, intending to do the writing in his teller's cage. However, as he walked into the room, the light-sleeping ledger-keeper woke up. Seeing a figure moving near the safe, he quickly reached for his revolver, took aim, and fired. The terrified Service quickly identified himself, and thanked the Lord that the man was

a bad shot. The ledger-keeper went back to sleep, and Service proceeded to his destination, in a state of feverish excitement. One after the other, lines popped into his head, and he scribbled them down on his pad. By five a.m., he had written his poem.

Unfortunately, "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" was much too coarse to be recited at a turn-of-the-century church concert, so Service stuffed his work into a dresser drawer, and left it there. It's not known how he finally decided to entertain the gathering at the church, but in any event, from that point on, he continued to write poems about the people and the landscape of the Yukon. After he had collected a sizable pile of paper, he decided it might be nice to publish the material in book form to give to his friends for Christmas presents. So he sent it off to Scotland, with a check for \$100. The publisher raved over Dan McGrew and his fellow Yukon denizens, returned the author's check, and published the book under royalty terms. Robert Service's writing career was under way....

Canada and the U.S. discuss urban transportation

A group of experts in one of North America's key problem areas gathered for the seventeenth Canadian-American seminar at the University of Windsor, November 13 and 14, to examine "Mass Transit - the Urban Crisis of North America".

The Boland Memorial Lecture, traditionally delivered at the Canadian-American seminar banquet, was given this year by William J. Ronan, chairman, American Public Transit Association, New York. At present, Mr. Ronan is also chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Canadians included Wallace G. Atkinson, an engineer and pioneer of "dial-a-bus"; Michael A.S. Blurton, manager of the transportation systems department of the Canadian Systems Group; R. Wayne Bowes, a chief transportation-planning engineer; F. Dawson Catton, engineer; D.J. Reynolds senior transportation analyst, National Capital Division, Ottawa; and Richard M. Soberman of Toronto, Ontario Transportation Development Corporation.

From the United States came John A. Bailey, of the Murphy Engineering Com-

pany; Professor Yale Brozen of the Graduate School of Business of the University of Chicago and a consultant to the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and General Motors; Frank C. Colcord, chairman of the Political Science Department of Tufts University; Judith T. Connor administrator with the Washington Urban Mass Transit Administration; Robert B. Johnston, general manager of the Port Authority Transit Corporation, New Jersey; Louis T. Klauder, consultant to AMTRAK.

Panel moderators also came from both sides of the border. They included: Karl Guenther, director, Transportation Authority, Ann Arbor; Karl L. Mallette, commissioner, the Toronto Transit Commission; James Mansbridge, manager, S.W. & A. Railway Company, Windsor; Leo J. Thibodeau, president Thibodeau Express Ltd, Windsor; and Julian R. Wolfe, manager, special projects, Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority, Detroit.

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