

## CALGARY STAMPEDE – A CANADIAN TRADITION

Governor-General Roland Michener opened this year's Calgary Stampede on July 3 with the following remarks:

The first Calgary Stampede in 1912 was officially opened by Canada's Governor General of that time, the Duke of Connaught.

Those were the days when Canada's "finest" were still known as the Royal North West Mounted Police; when visitors to the boom town of Calgary could purchase a bottle of Scotch for \$2.00 and the ladies could take home a brass bed complete for \$16.50.

Since then, the Stampede has grown and prospered with the city which gives it its characteristic vitality and exuberance. It survived with some difficulty the lean years of the Great Depression but since then has gone steadily forward to become known and appreciated throughout the whole of North America, and even overseas, as "The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth".

### LIVING HISTORY

The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, to give it its full title, is not only a great livestock show and exhibition on the North American pattern – it is a living history of the early days in Southern Alberta. It is a most exciting reminder of the life and customs of the Indians, cattlemen and pioneers of those days; and, if I may say so, a very healthy reminder, for those old and often romantic customs are fast being overwhelmed by the machines of the new technology. In many places the horse has almost disappeared and even man himself is sinking to the level of a statistic in a computer.

Not so in Calgary! The battle is not lost here! We tenderfeet all applaud your devotion to the ranches with their horses, their cattle and their men, and your devotion to the freedom of the ranges.



"Bulldogging" a steer



Chuckwagon race

Although I have known Calgary from my boyhood, I never ceased to marvel, as do other visitors to your city, at the vitality and enthusiasm of your past and present, which come to a climax each year in the Stampede. In the words of your youthful guests of this year, the Stampede is your "thing".

This is not idle talk to give Calgary the credit for this great show; I have learned from my hosts that at least 1,000 volunteer Calgarians, young and not so young, are working in the Stampede and many have been busy with it for weeks and months. It is not surprising that the Stampede, along with the Canadian National Exhibition and that newcomer "Terre des Hommes" in Montreal, has become part of the Canadian tradition.

### SPECIAL TRADITIONS

Before opening this year's show, I mention briefly two special traditions of the Calgary Stampede.

First, there is the tradition, very agreeable from my point of view, which brings Governors General here at least once during their term of office, to enjoy themselves and to express the greetings of Her Majesty and the admiration and support of all your fellow Canadians. It is appropriate because Governors General, more particularly since Canadians have held the office, do speak for Canada as a whole – except in matters political and controversial!

The second, and very admirable, tradition relates to the opening ceremonies. I well remember at Expo 67 it took an hour of speeches from the Commissioner General, the Mayor, the Prime Minister of Quebec, the Prime Minister of Canada, and myself, to get the show on the road. At the Canadian National Exhibition, if the guest of honor speaks for less than half an hour the audience feels cheated. Here you are more civilized! Here you put first things first: brevity before wit, and a chuckwagon race before both.