

Founding of Quebec of Great Historic Interest

It was on July 3, 1608, that Champlain landed at Quebec. On his first voyage, in 1603, when he had sailed up the St. Lawrence, he had been struck with the strategic possibilities of the point, Kebec, as the Indians called it, where the great river narrowed to three-quarters of a mile. When the Sieur de Monts, not discouraged by the failure of the Port Royal venture, had succeeded in obtaining the exclusive privilege of the fur trade, though only for a year, and determined to make another effort to establish a settlement in the new world, Champlain advised that it should be this time on the St. Lawrence, where the traffic with the natives inland could be carried on by way of the great river, and where the "habitation" might be situated in a place capable of being defended more effectively than in Acadia, with its many ports and landing places. De Monts recognized the wisdom of this advice. In the spring of 1608 he fitted up two vessels. Pont Grave, deputed to trade with the savages for furs, set sail in the first for Tadoussac, and Champlain, as the lieutenant of De Monts, in the second with the supplies necessary for the beginning of the settlement.

Arrived at Quebec, Champlain's first care was to select a site for the habitation. He fixed upon a spot near the river (now identified by the corner of Notre Dame street and Sous le Fort in Lower Town), and at once set the men to work, some cutting down trees and sawing planks, others digging a cellar and making ditches. The first building put up was the magazine, or storehouse, 18 x 36 feet, with a large cellar. The living quarters were in three wings of two stories, each 18 x 15 feet, with a gallery under the second story windows, and the whole habitation was surrounded by a ditch or moat fifteen feet wide and six feet deep. At several points were buttresses, on which cannon were mounted.

Not much is known of how the handful of French passed the time that first winter at Quebec. The snow lay deep about the habitation from January to April. Of the twenty-seven or twenty-eight men in the place, fifteen more died of scurvy and dysentery. It was with the greatest relief that Champlain and the few remaining learned that Pont Grave had again arrived from France with men and provisions.

About the middle of June there appeared upon the scene two or three hundred warriors of the Montagnais, Huron and Algonquin tribes, who were not slow to remind Champlain of the promise made six years before to assist them in their war against the Iroquois. Champlain, consulting with Pont Grave, concluded that now was the time to win the friendship of these allied tribes, and their assistance in the discoveries he wished to make in their own and the enemies' country, or to alienate them, a course which would greatly increase the difficulty of making further explorations, besides being a blow to the fur trade so necessary to defray expenses.

With nine other Frenchmen, Champlain embarked with the Indians. Up the Richelieu they made their way cautiously to the lake which now bears the explorer's name. Near the place now called Crown Point, Champlain had his first fight with the Iroquois. Largely through the surprise and the execution caused by the white men and their firearms, the allies were completely victorious.

Early in September, Pont Grave and Champlain, leaving Captain Pierre Chavin of Dieppe in charge of the habitation, with fifteen men, sailed for France, where they at once reported to De Monts and his majesty on the events and discoveries of the past year. To the king Champlain presented a ceinture of porcupine quills, a piece of Indian workmanship with which his majesty was much pleased.

The part that the Sieur de Monts took in the beginning of the Canadian enterprise is apt to be overlooked, or underestimated. It was, as already said, under his auspices that the post was established at Quebec in 1608, and now, although he was not able to procure a renewal of the monopoly of the fur trade, he would not give up the enterprise, so anxious was he that it should succeed to the glory and honor of his country. Associating himself with some merchants of Rouen, he resolved to continue the habitation at Quebec and finish the exploration of the St. Lawrence, trusting that the profits of the fur trade would defray the expense.

Returning to Canada in April, 1610, Champlain found the winterers—as they came to be called—in good state at the habitation. After another fight with the Iroquois up the Richelieu, in which he had his ear cleft by an arrow tipped with sharp stone, Champlain occupied himself in erecting a palisade around the habitation, and putting things generally in order. The newly-made gardens were a pleasant sight, with vegetables, very fine Indian corn, rye, barley and grapevines. Later Champlain had some rose trees set out.

On this voyage and the succeeding one the fur trade was unsatisfactory. The news having got about in France that De Monts no longer held a monopoly, several private merchants sent out vessels, with the immediate result that they put up the price of beaver skins—the Indians were not slow to take advantage of the keen competition, and demanded several times as many knives, hatchets, etc., for a pelt as they had got for it before. The supply of beaver skins was not at all equal to the demand, and the merchants lost heavily.

As soon as he had recovered from an accident, in which his unlucky horse fell upon and

nearly killed him, he addressed himself to the Count de Soissons, a Bourbon prince, to whom he spoke with great earnestness of the importance of the enterprise, deploring the evils which lack of regulation had already wrought, and the total ruin that menaced it unless some one of influence took the settlement under his protection. De Soissons obtained from the king an appointment as viceroy of New France, and on his death shortly after this commission was remitted to the Prince de Conde, who named Champlain his lieutenant in Canada. An association of merchants was formed, who were to have a monopoly of the fur trade, in return for which they promised to maintain the habitation, to send out laborers and workmen and to pay the expenses of the Recollet missionaries in the country. As soon as the commission was published there was a great outcry from other merchants, who denounced the monopoly as unfair, and petitioned the council to have it broken. It was not until March, 1613, that terms were concluded, and Champlain, who was much grieved at his enforced absence from Quebec, again sailed, this time as Governor of New France.

For several years the settlement at Quebec made little progress. Champlain had not much time to devote personally to the affairs of the habitation. His summers were spent for the most part in extending his explorations, in

stable built there, and sent the cattle down in charge of six men.

Twenty years after the landing at Quebec, Champlain's vision of a colony in New France was little more than a castle in the air. The population numbered no more than 105, of whom there were only six or seven settled families. (One settler, Abraham Martin, afterwards became a farmer, the owner of the land now named the Plains of Abraham.) The trading companies had made no effort to establish colonists in the country, and left the few people they did bring out without the means of cultivating and sowing the land. Not an arpent and a half had yet been cleared, and only one or two families were making a living for themselves. Not having any incentive to work, the would-be settlers in the place lounged about, hunted and fished, and killed time in whatever ways offered themselves.

The summer of 1628 found the habitation quits out of provisions, except four or five puncheons of stale cakes, some peas and beans. Nothing had been heard of the ship expected from France. It was as if the place were abandoned. Suddenly came the news that six English ships had arrived at Tadoussac. On the afternoon of July 10, 1628, a small vessel was sighted coming up the river. It proved to be some Basque fisherman, bearing a letter from the English commander, David Kirke,

A boat under a flag of truce landed and an English gentleman courteously presented to Champlain a letter from the two Kirke brothers, Louis and Thomas, acting for Captain Kirke, who remained at Tadoussac. They assured Champlain of courteous treatment for all at the habitation; and a fair and reasonable composition, the terms of which were to be agreed upon. Champlain was forced by circumstances to yield. The agreement signed, 150 armed men landed, and the English took possession of Quebec July 21, 1629.

Captain Kirke, having left the habitation and the fort well supplied, returned to England. The Frenchmen and priests were given passage home. At Plymouth Kirke learned to his vexation that peace had been made between England and France. The peace had been concluded on April 24, and Quebec was taken on July 20. Champlain was unwearied in urging upon ambassadors and councils that they should negotiate with Great Britain for the restoration of Canada.

The treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye was signed March 20, 1632. By it Quebec was restored to France. Cardinal Richelieu, who had constituted himself superintendent of navigation and commerce, formed a new company to establish a colony, and sent an expedition to retake possession.

Champlain, with renewed hope and cour-

Canada, he thought, would have 70,000,000 people in the lifetime of men now living. By dramatic stages the task of developing civil liberty for its two peoples had gone on and Dominion Day, July 1, 1867, would yet be recognized as one of the great turning points in the history of the Empire. Confederation there had been followed by another in Australia, and New Zealand and South Africa was feeling its way.

Dr. Parkin recalled the fact that seven years later, in 1874, he had first come to Oxford, a very crude youth.

The other day The University Magazine stated that the term Imperial Federation was first used in a Union debate in 1874, in which the Vice-Chancellor and he both took part. Whether this was true he knew not, but he knew that the idea had since grown from a small beginning into a mighty tree, and that great statesmen were willing to stake their whole career on its fulfillment. Only statesmanship which took an Imperial view could now win for a man a supreme career in the public life of this country. They must strive to keep Empire politics from being the football of party in this country. In asking them to join in this great commemoration of a country's birth and of its common heroes he felt he was asking them to help in maintaining and conserving the noblest ideals of the Empire. (Applause.)

The Right Hon. Winston Churchill, M.P., who met with a hearty reception, in seconding the resolution, said most of those present were young people, and he thought it was an exhilarating reflection that the tercentenary of Canada should recall to their mind that the venerable island which nourished them had already a daughter 300 years old. (Laughter and applause.)

Dr. Parkin, whose long and persevering labors in the cause of Imperial federation were well known to all of them, and he thought recognized gratefully wherever they were known, had referred to many of the stages in the history of Canada, many of the noble milestones in the majestic march of Imperial federation. (Applause.) The history of Canada was already a long one, but its future attracted them even more than its past. He agreed with what Dr. Parkin had said that there was perhaps no other region in the whole world, which had a greater potentiality of expansion, a greater future and a greater range of hope before it. (Applause.)

There they saw an active, thriving peacable, free population in a vast land possessed of every form of natural wealth; they saw that these people were moving steadily on all the great high roads of social and political progress, and while they developed to the full their capacity for the onward and forward movement, they nevertheless preserved that dignity, that decorum, that sobriety of public and private life which as an element had yet to be shown of great and perhaps inestimable value to the whole continent of North America. (Applause.)

They had come there to consider the means by which the city and university should participate in the celebrations which were to take place in Canada in July to Wolfe and Montcalm, two soldiers who died on the same field of battle. He was struck by the reference of the Vice-Chancellor to the quotation which General Wolfe made from Gray's Elegy as he was moving up to the attack upon the heights of Abraham. The lines were well known, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave." They all remembered the high compliment which the young soldier paid to the poet, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave." But it was not true. All paths of glory did not lead to the grave. They were almost the only paths that could over-leap the grave.

Let them consider for a moment what would have happened if the British troops had stormed the heights of Abraham after some shabby or great breach of the laws of honorable warfare or if the victory had been sullied by massacre, or the French had fled with cowardly precipitation, this very battle which today both races in Canada have joined together to celebrate, would have been a canker, a corrosive sore, and the ink with which it was recorded would have blurred page after page of history, and instead of being as it was today a memory of union, of peace and of reconciliation, an inspiring and noble memory, it would have been a cause of shame and a curse poisoning the relations between the two peoples of that great land. No, the conflicts of base men, by barbarous methods for sordid and petty aims, might lead only to the grave, but the combats of heroes and in them the seeds of future unity and reconciliation. (Applause.)

He thought it might also be found true in the evolution of events that South Africa would be the scene of another similar unification. (Applause.) There they had had an equally fierce and furious encounter. There they had equally valiant men doing their duty on either side, and there again the day would come—he did not know whether they would live to celebrate it, but there would undoubtedly be an occasion when there in Oxford another generation would assemble to celebrate the union in South Africa—of people who would look back to the events of recent history, not with the feeling of rivalry and of hatred, but with a common pride that the people of Canada today regarded the struggle of Wolfe and Montcalm. (Applause.)



visits to the Algonquin and Huron countries, cementing the friendship of these tribes for the French and encouraging them to bring their pelletterie to the trading posts below the Sault Ste. Louis and at Three Rivers. Almost every winter found him in France, keeping the affairs of the country before those in authority, and endeavoring to stir up an interest in colonizing the place.

When Champlain arrived to take possession for the Duc de Montmorency, the new viceroy, in July, 1620, he brought with him his young wife, Helene Bouille, and he spent the next five years at Quebec. He was vexed to find the habitation in a very neglected condition. The rain beat in everywhere; the wind whistled through the cracks where the boards had shrunk apart; the storehouse was falling and the courtyard was littered with one of the lodgings that had already tumbled down. He set the workmen to restoring it, and also commenced the construction of a fort on the height commanding the river at its narrowest place. This spot was the site of the Chateau St. Louis, the residence of the French governors, and over it at a later date floated the British flag when the British governors-general were in residence.

The winter of 1622 there were in the habitation fifty men, women and children. Pont Grave was so ill that he could not go out all winter. It was July before the vessels arrived from France next year with provisions. In 1625 Champlain resolved to leave with his family for France, after they had "wintered five years in the country, with more hardship than was necessary, owing to the lack of care on the part of the Associates."

Returning to Quebec July 5, 1626, Champlain did not find the habitation as far advanced as had been promised, while the fort was just as it had been left. He saw that much time was lost in the long summer days by going from the habitation to the natural meadows at Capt. Tourmente, below the Island of Orleans, to make hay, so he had a house and

demanding the surrender of Quebec, on the ground that the king of Great Britain, being at war with France, had commissioned him to take possession of Canada and Acadia. Captain Kirke added that he had seized the ship which was bringing provisions to Quebec, and had also taken or destroyed the cattle at Cape Tourmente. To this Champlain sent answer that they had still "Indian corn, peas, and beans, besides what the country furnished," and that to give up the fort and habitation "in the state we are now" would make them unworthy to appear before their king.

Captain Kirke, believing the place to be better provisioned than he had supposed—in reality the inhabitants were reduced to seven ounces of peas per day—contented himself with taking as prizes any vessels he could find along the coast, and sailed for home.

The French supply ships having been intercepted, there was no hope of any succor for the "winterers" that year. "We ate our peas by count," writes Champlain. The fishing was some resource, but there were no nets or lines. The Indians, expert eel catchers, sold part of their catch at ten cels for a beaver skin. Powder was so scarce to be used in hunting, but a little venison was procured from the savages. That terrible winter passed how slowly! As soon as navigation opened Champlain sent to Tadoussac and to Gaspé men with letters asking succor from any vessels that might arrive owing allegiance to the French king, but they returned without having seen any ships. The people at Quebec were now reduced to subsisting on roots which they dug up in the woods.

One day Champlain's servant, coming in with four small sacks of roots, reported that he had seen an English vessel a league from the habitation behind Point Levis. Champlain assembled all the responsible men to take counsel what should be done in this extremity. It was felt that without provisions or ammunition it would be useless to try to hold out.

age, returned to his post as governor. He never saw France again. In the autumn of 1635 he was stricken by paralysis, and died on Christmas Day. He was buried at Quebec.—Esther Botting in Toronto Globe.

WOLFE-MONTCALM LINKED AT OXFORD

One of the most notable of the gatherings in support of the Wolfe and Montcalm memorial in connection with the Quebec Tercentenary was that held in Oxford University. The Vice-Chancellor presided, and among the chief guests were the Duke of Marlborough, the Right Hon. Winston Churchill and Dr. G. R. Parkin, organizing representative of the Rhodes scholarship trust.

Dr. Parkin opened his address by moving the following resolution: "That this meeting expresses its hearty sympathy with the celebration in July of the tercentenary of Canada, and considers that the British people can most fittingly show their interest in the commemoration by the presentation of a memorial of Wolfe and Montcalm."

The period of 1759 was perhaps the most glorious in British history, said Dr. Parkin, who Wolfe was doing in Canada, Clive was doing in India—laying far and wide the foundations of our world-wide Empire. In India Duplax, in Canada Montcalm, representing the French race, were both of them men of finely tempered steel, worthy of the great race from which they sprang and worthy of the great opponents against whom they were matched. These men, great in military skill and in governing powers as they were, had not behind them the firm support of a free people directed by a supreme patriotism as was the case in England. They failed, but failed nobly and gloriously, winning in failure the admiration of all posterity.