

THE CITY OF MONTREAL

ITS RISE FROM BARBARISM TO CIVILISATION AND WEALTH

An Address delivered by Mr. R. Wilson-Smith before Christ Church Cathedral

Young Men's Association, January 24th, 1912

At the outset of his address, Mr. Wilson-Smith referred to the earliest days of Montreal—the landing of Jacques Cartier at Hochelaga, even then an important commercial centre, in 1534, the adventurous history of the early French settlers constantly harassed by the Indians, the coming of Monsieur de Maisonneuve and the formation, in 1663, of Canada as it was then known, into a Crown Colony of France. He pointed out that Canada's history under this regime, is one long story of neglect and commercial oppression by the rulers of France. Consequently, no great efforts were made to enlarge the country by immigration, nor to protect the settlers from Indians, nor to establish local forms of civic government nor to develop the commerce of the country. In 1763, an English force reached Montreal from the West. In 1764, the laws of England were established. In a few years the city boundaries were formally set out, running up McGill Street along Fortification Lane to Dalhousie Square, and so on to the river. There was no dwelling house in 1792 north of Craig Street.

In 1802 the total exports via the St. Lawrence were £1,200,000.

In 1809 the first steamer on the St. Lawrence, built by Mr. John Molson, left Montreal for Quebec, with ten passengers and took 36 hours for the trip. The fare for the return voyage was \$17. (One writer gives the date as 1810). About this time a police and nightwatch force was organized.

In 1811 the McGill University was founded.

The American War of 1812, though it put Montreal in peril of being taken by Americans, helped the city by the large expenditures for army purposes.

In 1813 a second steamer was launched here.

In 1817 the Bank of Montreal was founded, the office being in what was then a fashionable residential quarter, around the Church of Notre Dame. St. François Xavier Street was to Montreal then what Sherbrooke Street is to-day.

In 1822 the General Hospital and a Committee or Board of Trade were established.

In 1825 a vessel passed through the Lachine Canal—a very important event.

In 1830 the Harbour Board was established.

In 1832 the City was incorporated, and work was begun on the docks and waterworks.

In 1837 gas works were commenced on a small scale. In the same year grave troubles arose from the rebellion, five rebels being hanged in the city.

RAILWAYS.

In 1836 the line from Laprairie to St. Johns was opened. This had wooden rails with iron on top, like the first railways in England.

In 1855, the Grand Trunk Railway operated from Montreal to Brockville; in 1856 from Montreal to Toronto.

In 1860 the Victoria Bridge was opened by the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward the Seventh.

In 1861 a Street Railway was started.

NAVIGATION.

Up to 100 years ago Montreal was far behind Quebec in its shipping, and early statistics are not to be had as to the vessels which visited this port, the entries being made at Quebec and Customs duties all collected there.

POPULATION STATISTICS.

In 1535 Jacques Cartier found fifty huts at Hochelaga and 1,200 inhabitants, all Indians.

In 1659 there were forty houses and 160 white men, 50 of whom had families.

In 1667 the population was 766.

In 1722 the population was 3,000.

In 1760 the population was 5,000. At that time, there were only 19 Protestants in 110 rural settlements in Canada.

The population in

1800	was 9,000	1861	was 91,200
1816	" 16,000	1900	" 262,260
1825	" 22,000	1905	" 292,092
1831	" 27,300	1906	" 337,496
1844	" 44,100	1908	" 352,500
1852	" 57,700	1911	" over 500,000
1858	" 80,170		

*After the annexation of St. Henri, St. Cunegonde and Villeray.

†With suburbs.

AREA.

The area of the City in 1883 was 4,624 acres.

The area of the City in 1900 was 5,972½ acres (about 9½ miles).

The area of the City in 1910 was about 25,747 acres (about 40 miles).

Miles of Streets in 1883—116

do 1900—180

do 1910—500

Length of streets paved in 1883 was 1.3 of a mile.

Length of streets paved in 1900 was 28 miles.

Length of streets paved in 1911 was, about 82½ miles.

Length of sewers in 1883 was 86 miles.

Length of sewers in 1900 was 174 miles.

Length of sewers in 1911 was about 252 miles.

TAXABLE REAL ESTATE AND DEBT.

The value of the taxable real estate was in

1868	. . . . . \$39,174,120	1906	. . . . . \$200,964,594
1888	. . . . . 89,634,093	1908	. . . . . 234,822,751
1898	. . . . . 142,223,500	1910	. . . . . 319,341,616
		1911	. . . . . 381,180,848

The value of the property exempt from taxation increased from \$6,017,800 in 1868 to \$120,110,964 in 1911.