

PREFACE

MY CLAIM ON THE WEST: A PROPHECY THAT CAME TRUE

There is something inspiring in this building of a new country in which even the least of us has had some part. I can remember how my father went—from our Lake Simcoe farm—to the first Manitoba boom of over fifty years ago—before the railway. He had an idea that what the West needed was British energy and pluck. He came back broke in six months. Then Uncle Edward went; he had a gifted mind and used to quote to us that “the Star of the Empire glitters in the West.” It didn’t. He came back broke.

Then my brothers Dick and Jim went. Dick was in the Mounted Police and then worked in a saloon and came home broke. Jim got on fine but he played poker too well and had to leave terribly fast. Charlie and George and Teddy went—they all went but me. I was never free to go till now, but *I may start at any time*. Going West, to a Canadian, is like going after the Holy Grail to a knight of King Arthur. All Canadian families have had, like mine, their Western Odyssey.—*Stephen Leacock in the Book “Funny Pieces”, 1936.*