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CANADIANA.

A COLLECTION OF CANADIAN NOTES.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

VOLUME II.

EDITOR:

W. J. WHITE, M.A.,

PRESIDENT SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES

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CANADIANA.

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VOL. II.

JANUARY, 1890.

No. 1.

THE OLD "FRENCH" CANALS ON THE RIVER ST. LAWRENCE.

Last summer, when visiting the "Cascades," where the sea-green waters of the dashing St. Lawrence are linked with those of her dark and placid sister, the Ottawa, I could not help admiring the grandeur and brilliancy of our Canadian scenery, and took out my sketch-book to secure a *memento* at least of this weird landscape which baffles pen and pencil.

At the point where these rivers meet without mingling, stands the ruin of an old seigniorial mill, a *souvenir* of the past, when a Vaudreuil or a De Beaujeu exercised feudal sway. The history of this mill must now be left for some student of the records of the *noblesse* of Canada and their efforts to secure the settlement of the country and to meet the wants of their *censitaires*. The walls are crumbling, and expose the heavy rafters of the building. The mill stones are within, resting from their labors. As we entered, the cattle seeking shelter there, fled and left us in full possession. But what especially attracted my attention was a canal of about twelve feet wide a few acres distance, cut across this point between the two rivers, and forming a communication by water to get past this wild rapid. No boat sought passage, no lock-keeper was there, the gates were gone, and

the banks overgrown with bushes. It was a desolation, but it was suggestive of the efforts of either military or commercial organization to overcome the difficulties of navigation. I knew, moreover, that Canada was historic ground, and that Quebec and Montreal were the starting points of the pioneers of Canada, who had explored the country from Hudson Bay on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south, and from Louisburg on the east to the Missouri on the west. I therefore, sought a clue to the history of this canal and the result of my enquiries is here given:—

My friend, Raphael Bellemare, a well-known Canadian archæologist, had in his possession a map of the island of Montreal, dated 1744 (executed by Bellin, of the Department of the Marine), which corresponds with the map in Charlevoix's work on Canada. This map he lent me, and it is herewith reproduced, and is worth studying. It will be noted that the only "canal" there indicated is the one by which the little River St. Pierre is utilised as a means of passing through the then Lake St. Pierre (since drained) to Lachine by what is styled the Lachine canal.

There is no canal laid down at the "Cascades," nor in that neighbourhood. Parkman, the careful and reliable historian of Canada under the French *régime*, having been referred to, I found that in 1673, Frontenac, with a force of 600 men, supplied with 120 canoes and two flat-boats, had passed *over land* from Ville Marie (Montreal) *en route* to Cataragui (Kingston), where he visited the Iroquois, and that the "Cascades" and the neighboring rapids were passed with toil and difficulty by dragging their boats up the rapids, or, where that was impracticable, by *portages* through the woods. From this it may be inferred that there were no canals at any part of the route at this time (1673).

I had noticed, many years since, that along the shore of the St. Lawrence, cuttings had been made in the rock-

ledges at the points where rapid water existed, to allow boats to pass, probably by the aid of a tow-line from the shore. The first one was at Point St. Charles, where the Victoria Bridge now stands, and I was surprised to find that similar cuttings are now to be seen on the southern shore of Isle au Heron. Why there, I cannot divine, as a natural "*chenaille*" channel or canal exists in this double-island from the lower to the upper end, but even when the latter point has been reached, the head of the St. Louis or Lachine rapids has to be crossed to reach either shore. I was also aware of an inland cutting connecting the St. Pierre river with a brook, *La Petite Rivière*, running through the St. Gabriel farm, then through the old Montreal College grounds, thence across McGill street, where it was spanned by a wooden bridge, thence along Commissioner street into the St. Lawrence harbor at the foot of St. Peter street. The accompanying map lays down this cutting exactly on this line as one entrance to the "canal" or inland-water route from Montreal to Lachine, the other being by the River St. Pierre itself at its mouth, thence through the small Lake St. Pierre, in rear of the present Côte St. Paul, and by a cutting marked "Canal de Lachine" to Lachine. That a swamp remained where this lake existed until within a few years, and that traces still exist of an old "canal" about three acres south-east of what is styled now-a-days the old Lachine canal, is well known. From these facts I am satisfied that inland water navigation between Montreal and Lachine, on the line laid down in this map, did exist. From my own knowledge of this cut across the St. Gabriel farm and the River St. Pierre, as I knew it some fifty years since, I may state that there were not more than two feet of water therein, the width of the cut being about six feet, and of the St. Pierre river about twenty feet. It is stated that in 1763, when Lord Amherst, who had passed with his army from Oswego *via* the St. Lawrence, and had suffered heavily by loss of men and boats in passing the Cedars

and Cascades, abandoned his transports at Lachine, he left them in the mouth of this canal. Probably he found this inland Rivière St. Pierre navigation unsuited to his purpose, as he marched overland on Montreal.

In the Blue-book of 1867, page 566, the Commissioner of Public Works, states: "Prior to the construction of the Beauharnois canal, the navigation between Lakes St. Louis and St. Francis was effected by means of short canals and locks at the Cascades, Cedars and Coteau du Lac.

"Prior to 1804 they were as follows, viz.:—

	Length of canal.	Width of lock.
At the Cascades—old French canal lock at the		
Faucille, about.....	400 feet.	6 feet.
" "—Trou du Moulin.....	200 "	6 "
Old lock at Split Rock.....	200 "	6 "
At Coteau du Lac—canal and two locks.....	900 "	7 "

"These canals had a depth of two and a-half feet on the water sills of the locks, which were of stone, and were designed for the passage of boats capable of carrying thirty to forty barrels of flour.

"In 1804 the locks at 'Split Rock' and Coteau du Lac were partly rebuilt, and a new canal of about half a mile in length, with three locks six feet in width between the quoin parts of the gates was constructed at the foot of the Cascades, instead of the old French locks at the "Faucille" and the "Trou du Moulin." In 1807 the locks were enlarged by the Royal Staff corps from six to twelve feet in breadth, and the depth of water on the sills was increased from two to three and a half feet for the passage of boats capable of carrying eighty to one hundred barrels of flour." From which I was led to infer that there had been certain small French canals at the Cascades, Cedars and Coteau rapids which had been subsequently enlarged under the British *regime* in 1804 and 1807, and subsequently abandoned after the opening of the Beauharnois canal on the south shore in 1845, but I could get no information as to

the history of these original French canals until I obtained the same from our able Canadian archivist, D ouglas Brymner, who referred me to his report on the same in "Canadian Archives," 1886, fol. xx., and following, to which I refer for details, and here briefly summarize to complete my statement.

According to this report the Department of Public Works had been misled by tradition in assuming that these original canals had been built by the "French" as the documentary evidence since obtained was not then in its possessions. It is as follows :

In Bougainville's *M emoire sur l' etat de la Nouvelle France*, 1757, p. 79, the passage of Montcalm upwards from Montreal and the frightful rapids are referred to, but no mention is made of a canal *except that one from Montreal to Lachine had been spoken of but none had been built.*

Knox, in his "Historical Journal," vol. 2, p. 458, 1760, describes the passage upwards from Montreal and the difficulties of navigation, but gives no hint of the existence of a canal. The point is settled by the report of Col. Gother Mann, of the Royal Engineers, on the state of the canals in 1780, where he says they were built under the orders of the then Governor Haldimand by Captain Twiss in 1779 and 1780, and that they should be enlarged, and adds, that these canals had been built primarily for transporting military stores and munitions, and secondly with the view of assisting merchants. Captain Twiss' letters fix the dates of the construction and completion of these canals in 1780-1781, and, as seen by subsequent records, they were enlarged in 1804 and 1817 and abandoned in 1845.

Mr. Brymner also gives at page 28 of the same volume an account of the canal at the Sault Ste. Marie 3,000 feet in length, with a water lift of nine feet, proposed to be built by the "North-West Company" in 1792, and subsequently carried out.

Thus all the Canadian canals, except that laid down in

Bellin's map of 1744, from Montreal to Lachine, were constructed under the English *regime*, but from the facts set forth in the commencement of this article, although Bougainville and Knox may not have considered it worthy of the name of a canal, still, that an inland navigation on a scale equal to the first English canals at the Cascades, viz., six feet in width and two and a-half feet in depth, did exist, is now on evidence, and that Bellin understood it to be a canal and so styled it, is apparent from his map.

It is well known that the French pioneers were firstly accustomed to pass westward from Montreal by the Ottawa and its branch the Matawan to Lake Nipissing, and then down the French river to Lake Huron when seeking the lakes north-west of Ontario and Erie, or later by the route from Toronto to Lake Simcoe into Lake Huron; or should they have sought Lake Erie they went by Lake Ontario to Niagara Falls where they *portaged* and subsequently, when prevented by the Iroquois from approaching this *portage*, they passed by Hamilton Bay down the Grand River to Lake Erie. Referring to an interesting work on "The Canadian Canals" by William Kingsford (the well known historian) 1865, p. 12, as illustrative of the old route taken by our forefathers in their passage to Upper Canada (now Ontario) it is stated. "Thus on leaving Montreal the stage drove the passengers to Lachine, where they took a steamboat to the Cascades, a distance of 24 miles, at the Cascades they took a second stage, on which they rode to Coteau Landing, some 16 miles. From Coteau Landing a second steamboat carried them 41 miles to take a third stage at Cornwall, by which they travelled a distance of 12 miles to Dickinson's Landing where they embarked on another steamboat which carried them to the upper lakes."

I have also been told by men who afterwards were among the richest merchants of Ontario that when visiting Montreal to purchase their goods at the spring and autumn sales they took the stage, but often had to leave it and walk as it was

“so slow,” and one of these merchants was actually in the habit of *walking from Toronto to Montreal* and back, always *once* and sometimes *twice* in the year.

Therefore, it may be said, in this our day of palace steamers and Pullman cars transporting us from place to place with lightning speed and in luxurious ease, “our lines have fallen to us in pleasant places,” but let us give credit to our ancestors for their energy and judgment. Although not germane to this subject it may be noticed that in this map “Lachine” is laid down south-east of the canal, whereas the site of the present town of Lachine is to the north-west of this canal. A doubt has been raised as to the location of La Salles fort and home whether in the neighborhood of the present Fraser homestead, as Mr. Fraser has always stated, or near the site of the present town as Mr. Girouard supposes. It is reasonable to infer that the “Lachine” of 1744, and not the Lachine of 1889, was the home of the gallant La Salle, and that Fraser’s statement, based on tradition, is apparently confirmed by Bellin’s map which shows the site of Lachine with church, mill and fort to the south of the present canal.

MABEL.

REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL CLAUS.

By Mr. ERNEST CRUIKSHANK, FORT ERIE, ONT.

II.

The Indians acting in conjunction with the centre division of the British army in Upper Canada during the summer of 1813 never exceeded 500 in number, and were naturally divided into three classes. About fifty, chiefly Mohawks, from the Grand River, under Norton, were present at the action at Fort George on the 27th May. Upon the defeat of the garrison, they returned to their villages, where most of them remained quiet for several weeks for fear of losing their lands if the invasion proved successful; but Norton

and John Brant, with about 100 warriors, having removed their wives and children to a place of safety, joined General Vincent at Burlington Heights on the eve of the battle of Stoney Creek. They refused, however, to advance that night, but participated in the pursuit next day.

Another body of about 340, selected from the Seven Nations of Canada by Sir John Johnson, Superintendent of the Department, left Montreal on the 26th May. Twenty of the St. Regis warriors, under Lieut. St. Germain, did good service in the expedition against Sackett's Harbour; and the remainder, commanded by Captain Dominique Ducharme, did not join Vincent's advance-guard till the 20th June. Four days later they fought the battle of Beaver Dams, or Beechwoods.

The third party, conducted by Captain Elliott and Mr. Livingston, and composed of Western Chippewas, Ottawas, and Pottawatomes, set out from Amherstburg about the middle of June. "There are some very fine fellows among the Indians I have sent you," Proctor wrote to Captain McDonell, "whom, no doubt, I shall miss." Their march was very leisurely, for they did not arrive at the Forty-Mile Creek (Grimsby) until the first of July.

To this place the Indians, already with the army, had retired immediately after their victory in the Beechwoods, in spite of all the entreaties of their officers, and forced Claus to hold a council to give them an opportunity to recite their grievances, the substance of which was that they had not been allowed to plunder their prisoners. This took place on the last day in June, and their speech is thus reported:—

"BROTHER,—We, the Six Nations and the Seven Nations, thirteen in all, will now answer. We were promised in old times that whatever we took from the enemy we should be paid for by the King. We hope the King will not forget his promise and satisfy us for what we took the other day.

We were accustomed to receive some pay for prisoners. We have been repeatedly told not to take scalps.

“BROTHER,—We have listened to your words, and the Seven Indians have done the same. Perhaps the Chippewas have taken some.

“BROTHER,—The King has told us the Americans were the aggressors; that you could not keep off the war, and that he was determined to have the old French line and not let them come so near us again. Our western brethren have been encouraged to come forward with the promise of preserving their country for them, or not to make peace until you had those lines. The Ohio is their boundary.

“BROTHER,—The Canada Indians have lands within the old lines; they hope you will not forget them. We wish to have a paper from you to say that each nation will be paid. You have sent everywhere, you tell us, for shoes. You see the state we are in. We cannot go into the woods, as we are barefooted. When our people were at Detroit last summer, a Shawanee Chief asked the late General Brock what was to become of the things taken, and he told him he had taken the words out of his mouth; that the Six Nations would be paid in money at Niagara and the Western Indians here. We shall see if what we were promised will be done. We understand complaints have been made of our bad treatment of the prisoners. We have moved our families back and the white people are using us in the same way. We suppose what we take we are much in need of, and we have no money to pay.

“BROTHER,—If any of the Nations lose their men, will their families be taken care of and not allowed to want? If any get wounded, will they be taken of?

“We suppose you wish to know whether we mean to turn our faces towards the enemy. The Seven Nations, except a few who go with the wounded, will go back. It is the same with the Six Nations, but we would be glad to know when

you mean to strike at Niagara so we might collect all our forces in time."

On the arrival of the Western Indians, Major Givins was placed in command of the bands from St. Joseph, Sault Ste. Marie, La Cloche, Matchedash and Lake Simlon, and they immediately proceeded to the front, where, as Claus remarks, "the others could not avoid following."

On the evening of the 5th July, Col. Thomas Clarke having made a successful raid upon the American post at Schlosser the night before, he writes to Harvey:—

"Interpreters Fairchild and Brant have just returned from Queenston and reported a conversation held with the Tuscaroras, of which I enclose a copy. The interpreters are of the opinion that the Indians in American territory expect that the British troops will shortly cross, and are anxious to know how they will be treated. At the council alluded to at the Standing Stone, all the Indian nations there renewed their friendship. The Western Indians have not yet returned from the Four-Mile Creek, nor will they, I think, without doing something; nor have the Indians that went to Queenston this morning returned. P.S.—A general council is to be held at Buffalo Creek, five days from date."

It would appear that the Indians spoke to each other across the Niagara, which is in some places in the gorge above Queenston less than 300 yards in width. This document is entitled:—"Conversation between the principal chief (Osquirisor) of the Tuscarora Nation within the United States and the chiefs of sixteen different nations with the British forces."

The Onondagas saluted the Tuscarora chief and nine other Indians with him, after which Katoirota, the Onondaga chief, spoke:—

"*Katoirota*, BROTHER,—We understand that it was your wish to see us and to speak with us, and we have come to learn what you have to say."

Ta Karihsga, a Mohawk chief, spoke :—

“BROTHER,—The Onondaga has spoken and has told you we are ready to hear what you have to say.”

Osiquirisor, the Tuscarora, spoke :—

“BROTHER,—Our desire to see you was to know whether the same sentiments of friendship existed with you that you expressed at the Standing Stone (Brownstown) two years ago. Notwithstanding we are separated by the contention between the British and the Americans, our sentiments are still the same.”

Katoirota, the Onondaga, spoke :—

“BROTHER,—You see, notwithstanding the report that the British are weak, the Great Spirit is with us and we are enabled to take possession again, though the King has been obliged to give ground at Niagara. We want to understand from you whether you are inclined to take part with the Americans or not. We wish to know what you had to communicate to us in particular.”

Osiquirisor, the Tuscarora, spoke :—

“BROTHER,—These times have been hard and we have laboured under great difficulties, being so near the lines, and we wish to know whether your sentiments are still friendly toward us, and if you cross the water whether you will hurt us.”

Katoirota, the Onondaga, spoke :—

“BROTHER,—This will depend on yourselves. If you take no part with the Americans, we shall meet you with the same friendship we ever did, and we look for the day when you shall see our faces on your side of the water. We have no contention with you. It is the King and the Americans, and we have taken part with the King. We will contend for his right.”

Osiquirisor, the Tuscarora, spoke :—

“BROTHER,—We are determined to sit still and take no part.”

Ta Karihsga, the Mohawk, spoke :—

“BROTHER,—We take leave of you, the head of our army ; and your friend, the head of our department, salutes you.”

*THE MUTILATION OF THE BUST OF
GEORGE III.*

A bust of George III., which had been erected several years in the city of Montreal, was on 1st May, 1775, daubed over, by some ill-disposed persons, with black, and a cross was suspended from it, ornamented with a mitre and a string of beads; under it were written these opprobrious words: "*Voici le Pape du Canada, et le Sot des Anglicans.*." This act was seditious and deserving of punishment, and though a reward of 100 guineas was offered, the perpetrators of this wicked act were never discovered. (See Smith's "History of Canada.")

The head, attached to a plaster bust, is preserved in the rooms of the Natural History Society.

The following appeared in *The Remembrancer*, published in London in 1776:—

"The act was undoubtedly deserving of punishment; but it was not, and few Englishmen will think it ought to have been, regarded as a capital crime. However, it seems that M. de Bellestre, a French gentleman of the province of Quebec, and one of the new members of the legislative council established in it, was of a different opinion—for, as the people were gathered together on the next day to hear a proclamation made of a reward for the discovery of the persons who had committed this offence (which reward was no less than 100 guineas, which the English inhabitants of Montreal had individually subscribed at a general meeting, and which was proclaimed by beat of drum at the head of the grenadiers of the 26th Regiment), this very loyal French gentleman said that 'he would give £100 out of his own pocket to find out the persons who had done this, and see them severely punished and sent out of the province; for that they deserved to be hanged, and if they were in England would be so.'

"Upon hearing this severe opinion, a young English merchant, of the name of Franks, and who at that time

happened to be standing near M. de Bellestre, replied to him in these words:—‘*On ne pend pas pour si peu de choses en Angleterre,*’ that is, ‘In England men are not hanged for such small offences,’ which words he repeated twice or three times. This provoked M. de Bellestre to such a degree that, after giving the young man much opprobrious language, he at last proceeded to blows, and struck him in the face and pulled him by the nose; upon which the other gave him a blow in the face, which knocked him down. The next day, May 3rd, upon a complaint of M. de Bellestre to three officers of justice of a new kind, called conservators of the peace for the district of Montreal, not of the blow he had received from Franks (for to this he was conscious he had given occasion by striking him first), but of the words pronounced by the latter, ‘that in England people were not hanged for such small offences’—these conservators issued the warrant hereunder following for committing young Franks to prison; and he was accordingly carried thither by a party of soldiers, with bayonets fixed,—and £10,000 bail (this was offered to procure his liberty and be security for his appearance to take his trial for this offence) was refused. And there he continued for a week; at the end of which time, the same conservators of the peace (by direction, as it is supposed, of Governor Carleton) ordered him to be discharged without any bail at all.”

The warrant of commitment is in French:—

“*District of Montreal.*

“By John Fraser, John Marteilhe, and René Ovide Hertel de Rouville, Esquires, Judges and Conservators of the Peace in the District of Montreal.

“WHEREAS, Francis Mary Picôté de Bellestre, Esquire, has made oath on the holy gospels, that, on Tuesday the second day of this month of May, as he was standing still in the street to hear a proclamation published concerning those wretches who had insulted His Majesty’s bust, he had

openly declared that he thought they deserved to be hanged; and that thereupon one Salisbury Franks had answered with sharpness 'that it was not usual to hang 'people for such small offences, and that it was not worth 'while to do so,' and that he had repeated these words several times, and with a loud voice.

"WE, having regard to the said complaint, and considering that every good subject ought to look upon the said insult to His Majesty's bust as an act of the most atrocious nature, and as deserving of the utmost abhorrence; and that, therefore, all declarations made in conversation that tend to affirm it to be a small offence, ought to be esteemed criminal;

"Do, for these reasons, authorize and command you to convey the said Salisbury Franks to the prison of this town, to be there detained until he shall be thence discharged according to law. And for so doing, this warrant shall be your justification.

"Given at Montreal, under our hands and seals, on the third day of May, 1775.

"(Signed) JOHN FRASER.
 " JOHN MARTEILLE.
 " HERTEL DE ROUVILLE."

The warrant to the jailor to receive and detain him was as follows:—

"You are hereby ordered to receive the within mentioned prisoner, and keep him in custody till by law discharged.

"J. F (the initial letters of Judge Fraser's name).

"To Mr. Mackay, Gaol-Keeper."

The warrant for his discharge, on the ninth day of the same month, by the same magistrates, was as follows:—

"*District of Montreal.*

"By John Fraser, John Marteilhe, and René Ovide Hertel, Esquires, Conservators of the Peace in the said District, in the Province of Quebec.

" To the Keeper of the Jail in Montreal.

" WHEREAS, David Salisbury Franks is now in your custody, in virtue of our warrant duly sealed and signed; these are now to command you to forbear detaining any longer the said David Salisbury Franks, but to suffer him to go at large wherever he pleases, and that without fees. And for so doing, this shall be your warrant.

" Given under our hands and seals at Montreal the 9th of May, 1775.

" (Signed) JOHN FRASER,

" JOHN MARTEILHE.

" HERTEL DE ROUVILLE."

Notes.

GENERAL WOLFE.—I am sure we are all pleased when reading anything from the pen of Mr. Geo. Murray, especially when touching on Canadiana. In connection with the death of Wolfe, the burden of proof seems to be in favor of the usual well-known account of his death. This is given in Captain John Knox's Historical Journal of the Campaign in North America for the years 1757 to 1760; a large quarto in two volumes, dedicated to Lt. Gen. Sir Jeffrey Amherst, published in London, 1769. Knox was present at the engagement—an evident fair chronicler—issuing his work when many of the chief actors were living, and in his vicinity. Their names appear as subscribers to his well-written journal, his statements have never been questioned, and with the following extract from the second volume, page 79, we rest our case:—

This is a foot note in smaller type, and reads—

" Various accounts have been circulated of General Wolfe's manner of dying, his last words, and the officers into whose hands he fell, and many, from vanity of talking, claimed the honor of being his supporters after he was

wounded, but the following circumstances were ascertained by me through Lieutenant Brown, of the Grenadiers of Louisbourg, and the Twenty-Second Regiment, who, with Mr. Henderson, a volunteer in the same company, and a private were the three persons who carried his Excellency to the rear, which an artillery officer seeing, immediately flew to his assistance; and these were all that attended him in his dying moments. *I do not recollect the artillery officer's name, or it should be cheerfully recorded here.*"

J. H.

Montreal, 9th Dec., 1889.

EPITAPH ON GENERAL WOLFE.

In worth exceeding, and in virtue great,
Words would want force his actions to relate,
Silence, ye bards! eulogiums vain forbear,
It is enough to say that *Wolfe* lies here.

Epigram on the numerous epitaphs for General Wolfe, for the best of which a *premium of one hundred pounds was promised.*

The muse, a shameless mercenary jade!
Has now assumed the arch-tongued lawyer's trade;
In Wolfe's deserving praises silent she,
Till flattered with the prospect of a fee.

Written by the celebrated Scotch poet Robert Ferguson, who died October 16th, 1884.

D. D.

Queries and Replies.

TRAFALGAR MOUNT MONUMENT — Can any of our readers give the history of this monument, on the Côte des Neiges Hill. Mr. David Denne has the prospectus of a cemetery company which proposed to purchase a site here; and finds an old legend, written by Avocat de Boucherville, of Montreal, in 1832, published first in Huston's book, and reprinted in Paris, 1852. This story is highly romantic and sensational, but what is the true narrative?