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EVENTS IN CANADA FROM 1812 TO 1815.

[Condensed from a paper read by Mr. J. P. EDWARDS before the Society for Historical Studies, Montreal, 11th May, 1887]

The hostile feeling of the people of the United States towards Great Britain which was engendered in the war of independence, showed itself from time to time after that until it again assumed the form of active warfare in 1812. It is unnecessary to trace the incidents which expressed this feeling, such as the closing of the American ports to British commerce, the failure of Erskine's negotiations, the disputes arising from England's claim to the right of search and similar matters, but there are some facts comparatively unknown which may be mentioned.

In May, 1811, an American officer, Commodore Rogers, commanding the forty-four gun frigate, the "President," attacked a British eighteen-gun sloop, the "Little Belt," off the Massachusetts coast. The smaller vessel made a short resistance, but was soon reduced to a very crippled condition. There was something peculiar about this affair. The American commander had evidently mistaken the "Little Belt" for some other vessel, as, after the fight, on learning the name of the British commander, he expressed surprise and regret, and offered all possible assistance to the sloop,

although it is needless to say this was not accepted, and she made the best of her way into Halifax. This may perhaps be explained by a fact mentioned, I believe, only in a number of the *Montreal Gazette* for 1813, namely, that Rogers, who was a Scotchman, had been in the British merchant service, but had been impressed into a man-of-war, from which he deserted and entered the American navy. It is quite possible he may have been the victim of cruel treatment by the commander of the British vessel, and have mistaken the captain of the "Little Belt" for this officer. Rogers was court-martialled, but acquitted, popular sentiment being very strong in his favor. Unlike the action of the British Government in the "Leopard" and "Chesapeake" affair, no reparation appears to have been offered by Mr. Jefferson's administration, although they disavowed any hostile intent.

The causes which led to the declaration of hostilities are to be found in the President's Message to Congress of 1st June, 1812, and the manifesto of the Prince Regent dated 9th January, 1813. To sum up all—apart from any prejudice—it appears that the United States forced on the war, and that the capture of Canada was looked on as a foregone conclusion. The formal declaration of war was made by the U. S. Government on the 18th June, 1812. The populations on the opposite sides of the frontier in America were about eight millions and three hundred thousand, or about twenty-seven to one against Canada. In combatants the United States put about sixty thousand in the field, while Canada was protected by about four thousand regulars, who, with the Canadian militia and Indians, brought the effective force up to about ten thousand.

The deficiency in numbers was to some extent compensated by the energy and ability of Major-General Isaac Brock, who has been well called a worthy successor of Wolfe. Brock was young and thoroughly versed in his position, far-seeing, totally regardless of personal fatigue

and exposure, and with that natural capacity for command, without which military genius goes for little. Unlike Wolfe, he was in command of an army wretchedly inferior in numbers to his opponents, with a vast stretch of frontier line to defend, and moreover held inferior rank to a man to whom he was as much superior as is possible; while Wolfe had complete and sole control of his army. Both men combined high military attainments with an unswerving devotion to their King, and the honor of the British arms has never known abler defenders. Both fell in action leading on their men to victory, and the dying words of each were orders for their successors in command.

Brock had been in Canada with his regiment—the 49th—from 1802, and had since his arrival thrown himself into the defensive and military improvement of the Colony with unusual spirit. There is one fact that has not been stated by most writers on Quebec, which may be mentioned in this connection, namely:—that the most important citadel battery at Quebec (where the King's Bastion now stands) was planned and erected by Brock, at the time only an infantry officer; and while it was afterwards called the King's Battery by Sir James Craig, it was popularly known as Brock's, and a traveller visiting Quebec twelve years later gives it only the latter name.

It is interesting to note that the first man killed in this war on land was a loyal Indian.

The fighting began in July, 1812, and the following extract from a Montreal newspaper of the 12th of September records the reception which Gen. Hull and the other American prisoners taken at Detroit on the 16th of August received in this city:—"Last Sunday evening the inhabitants of this city were gratified with an exhibition equally novel and interesting.

"That Gen. Hull should have entered into our city so soon at the head of his troops rather exceeded our expectations. We were, however, very happy to see him, and re-

ceive him with all the honors due to his high rank and importance as a public character. The following particulars relative to his journey and reception at Montreal may not be uninteresting to our readers:

“ It appears that Gen. Hull and suite, accompanied by about twenty-five officers and three hundred and fifty soldiers, left Kingston under an escort of one hundred and fifty men, commanded by Major Heathcot, of the Newfoundland regiment; at Cornwall, the escort was met by Capt. Gray, of the Quarter-master General's Department, who took charge of the prisoners of war, and from thence proceeded with them to La Chine, where they arrived about two o'clock on Sunday afternoon. At La Chine, Captains Richardson and Ogilvie, with their companies of Montreal militia, and a company of the King's from Lower Chine, commanded by Captain Blackmore, formed the escort until they were met by Col. Auldjo with the remainder of the flank companies of the militia, upon which Captain Blackmore's company fell out and presented arms as the General and line passed, and then returned to La Chine, leaving the prisoners of war to be guarded by the militia alone. The line of march then proceeded to the town in the following order :

1. Band of the King's regiment.
- 2 The first division of the escort.
3. General Hull in carriage, accompanied by Capt. Gray. Capt. Hull and Major Shekleton followed in the second, and some wounded officers occupied four others.
4. The American officers.
5. The non-commissioned officers and soldiers.
6. The second division of the escort.

It unfortunately proved rather late in the evening for the vast concourse of spectators assembled to experience the gratification they so anxiously looked for. The inconvenience was, however, in a great measure, remedied by the

illumination of the streets through which the line of march : passed. When they arrived at the General's house, the General was conducted in and presented to His Excellency Sir George Prevost, and was received with the greatest politeness, and invited to take up his residence there during his stay at Montreal. The General appears to be about sixty years of age and is a good looking man, and we are informed by his friends that he is a man of general information. He is communicative, and seems to bear his misfortunes with a degree of philosophical resignation that but few men in similar circumstances are gifted with. On Thursday last, General Hull with eight American officers left this city for the United States on their parole."

[The paper then proceeds to narrate the events of the war from the battle of Queenstown Heights, which was made memorable by the death of Sir Isaac Brock, on to the treaty of peace.

The essay formed one of a series read before the society in the session of 1886-87, which sketched briefly the whole history of Canada. As the papers were not intended to bring out new points, but rather to refresh the minds of the members upon those already well known, they did not contain much matter of particular interest, although they proved, of considerable benefit to the society. The concluding paragraphs of Mr. Edwards' paper refer to the bibliography of the period, a subject with which he is thoroughly acquainted, and upon which he is at present engaged. It is hoped that the result of his labors will be published at an early date, as it will undoubtedly be of great interest.—Ed.]

The literature bearing in this period is very extensive, but with few exceptions is worthless. To any one going closely into the results of the various engagements, taking the official number of both armies, official returns, etc., it will be impossible to arrive at the conclusions reached by

almost every American writer on the subject. These were evidently written to sell, and to tickle the natural palate of spread-eagleism. Even Ingersoll, the most voluminous writer on the war, and one of the latest, is totally wanting in veracity on many points. Two authors have proved honorable exceptions. Mr. Roosevelt's recent work on the Naval War of 1812 is one that deals with the subject in a calm and dispassionate manner, and in the two works published in 1813 and 1814 by Mr. Smith (an American resident in Canada when the war broke out, but who immediately returned to the States) we not only find his statements moderate and fairly accurate, but also many details which appear in no other work.

In England only one author—James—devoted special works to the subject; he published four—one in Halifax, N.S., in 1816, and three in England a few years later. These are much more reliable than the American ones, and Roosevelt himself is obliged to acknowledge that James has spared no pains to get at the actual official record of the various phases of the war. Still, he errs in allowing his British prejudices and contempt for Americans generally, to crop out unnecessarily in nearly every page of his works. The fact of only one author in Great Britain—that land of authors—writing upon the history of this three years war, shows how completely overshadowed its events were by the gigantic struggle of the Peninsular campaign; and this is further borne out by reference to the Annual Registers for those years, where the trouble with America does not occupy 5 per cent. of the space devoted to foreign occurrences.

Until 1814, practically no troops were sent out, none could be spared: and when we consider the victories won by the other half of the regular regiments then stationed in Canada and the scanty and undisciplined militia, against forces three to five times more in numbers, one cannot help thinking that if England had been in liberty to

put into the field more of the men of Albuera, Badajoz and Vittoria, the American frontier would have been swept from Detroit to the sea.

The most impartial histories of the war have been written and published in Canada, and yet they are the least known and read. Auchinleck's history—which first appeared in the *Anglo-American Magazine* in Toronto in 1855—is the best; but the Montreal work, Coffin's *Chronicle of the War*, would, had it been completed, have far surpassed Auchinleck's; the only volume published, being written in a masterly style, and containing matter from original manuscripts that appears in no other work. That the second volume never appeared is a great loss to Canadian bibliography. We have also Christie in 1818, Thompson in 1832—erroneously stated by Mr. Kingsford in his recent work on Canadian Archaeology to be the first work printed in Upper Canada—Richardson in 1841, each devoting a special volume to the war.

In 1815, appeared the "Letters of Veritas," and "the Canadian Inspector," works of rarity and interest by anonymous writers. Of *Veritas*, the writer in the *Quarterly Review* says,—“it contains within a small compass a greater body of useful information upon campaigns in the Canadas, than is any where else to be found.”

The most unique work resulting from the war, and pretending to be a history of it, is one by a certain Gilbert J. Hunt, published in New York in 1816. This extraordinary book is written in the style of the Psalms, but it is to be regretted that while adopting the phraseology of David the writer has closely followed the method of Ananias. A good specimen of his style is his way of recording how the news of the declaration of war was received in Great Britain which occurs in the third chapter:—

“And it came to pass, that when the princes and the counsellors of Britain saw the decree, their wrath was kind-

led, and their hearts were ready to burst with indignation.

2. For verily, they say, this insult hath overflowed the cup of our patience; and now will we chastise the impudence of these Yankees, and the people of Columbia shall bow before the King.

3. Then will we rule them with a rod of iron; and they shall be unto us, hewers of wood and drawers of water.

4. For verily, shall we suffer these cunning Yankees to beard the mighty lion, with half a dozen fir-built frigates, the men whereof are but mere mercenary cowards—"bastards and outlaws"?

5. Neither durst they array themselves in battle against the men of Britain. No, we will sweep them from the face of the waters, and their names shall be heard no more among nations.

6. Shall the proud conquerors of Europe not laugh to scorn the feeble efforts of a few unorganized soldiers, undisciplined, and fresh from the plough, the hoe, and the mattock?

7. Yes, they shall surely fall; for they were not bred to fight as were the soldiers of the king.

8. Their large cities, their towns and their villages will we burn with consuming fire.

9. Their oil, and their wheat, and their rye, and their corn, and their barley, and their rice, and their buckwheat, and their oats, and their flax, and all the products of their country will we destroy, and scatter the remnants thereof to the four winds of heaven.

10. All these things, and more, will we do unto this froward people.

11. Neither shall there be found safety for age or sex from the destroying sword of the soldiers of the king.

12. Save in those provinces and towns where dwell the friends of the king, for do they say, the king's friends are many.

13. These will we spare; neither will we hurt a hair of their heads; nor shall the savages of the wilderness stain the scalping-knife or the tomahawk with the blood of the king's friends.

14. Now it happened about this time that there were numbers of inhabitants of the country of Columbia whose hearts yearned after the king of Britain.

15. And with their false flattering words they led astray some of the friends of Columbian Liberty; for their tongues were smoother than oil.

16. Evil machinations entered into their hearts, and the poison of their breath might be likened into the deadly Bohon Upas, which rears its lofty branches in the barren valley of Java."

There was little of interest in the Colony apart from the war during the period of 1812 to 1815. In 1812 there were no more than six classical schools between Gaspé and Detroit—roads were few and poor.—Three newspapers existed in the upper Province, and six in the lower. In the latter Province an assembly met on the 21st of February, severely criticised Sir James Craig's administration, passed a new Militia bill, and continued its fight with the Council. The Militia thus organized was embodied in June, and the inhabitants, as a rule, responded cheerfully to the call, although some of them at Point Claire made armed resistance to the draft and had to be punished by a military force. The legislature again met in July of the same year, and in 1813, 1814 and 1815, but in its deliberations we find nothing of great importance, military matters absorbing nearly all its attention. The impeachment of the Hon. Justices Sewell and Monk may perhaps be mentioned. In the upper Province some trouble appears to have occurred in getting the Militia in the Niagara District to take up arms, the great majority in this District being natives of the United States.

The local events in Montreal during this period were not of a very interesting nature, the principal amusements seem to have been to watch the many American prisoners of war going through the City, the assemblies which were held nearly every winter, and the occasional balls given by the militia. Trade appears to have been largely in the hands of the auctioneers, whose advertisements occupied a large portion of the papers of the city, the *Gazette*, the *Herald*, and the *Courant*, the former of which was half in English and half in French; the latter two entirely English.

The old fortifications were being removed; and the whole ground on the north side of St. James Street between Place d'Armes Hill and St. Peter Street, the most valuable land in the city to-day, was now for the first time being offered for sale in lots by the Crown.

John Molson applied in January, 1812, for the exclusive right to run a steamboat on the St. Lawrence, and followed this up by launching the "Swiftsure," a steamer which ran regularly between Montreal and Quebec. We also notice that this year the famous Sir John Johnson was fined ten shillings and costs for not removing the snow from his sidewalk.

In November a very important pastoral letter was issued by Monseigneur Plessis, the Roman Catholic bishop of Quebec, recapitulating the glorious victories of Lord Wellington in Spain and General Brock in Upper Canada, urging the militia to zeal in their military duties, an ordering the Te Deum to be sung in all churches in the Province in commemoration of the success of the British arms against France and the United States. This mandate had doubtless a very important effect in inciting the French militia to that degree of efficiency and bravery in action, evinced at Chateauguay and Lacolle.

Nothing of particular local interest occurred in the following year; but in 1814, we find the 21st of April and the 10th of September observed throughout the Province as

special days of thanksgiving for the results of the war in the Peninsula and Canada.

On the 9th of October, the Church of England cathedral was formally opened.

On the following day a sad, imposing sight might have been witnessed—nine soldiers were marched out on to the common, which is now Griffintown, to be shot for desertion; but at the last moment the punishment of seven was commuted, two only suffering the death penalty.

In December a fire insurance company seems to have been started, and on the 17th we find published the list of subscribers.

In 1816, with the return of peace, the militia regiments were disbanded, and vast quantities of military stores were auctioned off in this city. Sir George Prevost was ordered home in April for an enquiry into his conduct, and was succeeded by General Drummond.

The agitation to have the city streets lighted in some way, appears to have occupied the civic mind this year to the exclusion of every other topic.

The state of literature during these four years was not very dazzling. Three papers were published in Montreal: in 1813, a fourth, *Le Spectateur*, made its appearance, and lasted for eight years. In the spring of the same year a monthly magazine was projected by Samuel Foster, to be called *The Times, or Miscellaneous Magazine*, but I have been unable to find that any copies appeared.

I have no knowledge of any books or pamphlets published in the Upper Province during this period; Dr. Stracham's "Letter of Thomas Jefferson" 1815, though bearing no place of publication on title page, was probably printed by Wm. Gray, Montreal, as the same writer's thanksgiving sermon preached in York in June of the preceding year bears the name of that publisher. Those in Lower Canada seem to have been confined to the yearly Almanacs—con-

taining much valuable information—and some ten or twelve pamphlets, several of which were sermons. The only historically valuable publication bearing on the war was “The Letters of Veritas” before referred to.

Altogether, this period may be called an entirely military one, but it had a strong nationalizing tendency. It welded together, for common defence against an invader, all classes of the community from east to west; it proved the loyalty of the French-Canadian *habitant* and the American emigrant farmer to the British Crown; and it satisfactorily showed of what sturdy fighting stuff the average Canadian was made, which has since been fully borne out wherever Canadians have been in action.

NOTES ON THE INTENDANTS.

There are two strange, yet somewhat wide-spread, errors with respect to the Sovereign Council established in 1663 for the government of New France. The first is that the date of the royal edict creating the Council is March 21, 1663, instead of April (no day), 1663, which a little research will convince anyone is the correct date. This error may possibly have arisen from the erroneous reference to “the edict of March, 1663,” in the royal declaration of June 5, 1675, which confirms the edict creating the Council. The other error is that according to this edict of 1663 the Council was to consist of the governor, the bishop, the intendant, etc.; whereas, the fact is that the edict makes no mention whatever of an intendant, although it appears that on the 21st of March a commission had issued appointing Robert to the office. Robert, however, did not come out to Canada; nor does it seem to have been intended that he should, if one may infer from the wording of Talon's commission: “Considerant que il est nécessaire d'établir en la charge d'intendant *sur les lieux*, une personne capable,” etc.

No history of Canada makes any mention of another person of the name of Robert who, sixty years later, was appointed to succeed Bégon as intendant. Like his namesake, he, too, never came to Canada. He sailed from La Rochelle in the King's ship *Le Chameau* on the 24th of June, 1724, and died that very day while the shores of France were still in sight. He was buried at sea, and his widow and young son continued on to Quebec. Here they were treated with every mark of kindness, thanks chiefly to Madame de Vaudreuil, who came out on the same ship, and who, on their return to France soon after, wrote to recommend them to royal favor.

Equally unfortunate was De Chazol who was next appointed Bégon's successor. He perished on the 27th of August, 1725, in the wreck of *Le Chameau*, near Louisbourg, the famous wreck of which Charlevoix writes that in the course of a single night it brought more grief and loss upon the French colonies than they had suffered during twenty years of warfare.

In more than one history of Canada the name "Noroy" is given as that of the intendant of New France between 1682 and 1703, or else between 1685 and 1689. Yet there was never an intendant known by that name. Champigny was intendant from Sept. 23, 1686 to Oct. 5, 1702, and in the full enumeration of his titles—Jean Bochart, Seigneur de Champigny, Noroy, Verneuil, etc—is to be found the source of this mistake. These titles, however, do not appear in his commission. His signature was "Bochart Champigny."

CORVIA.

Notes.

REMINISCENCES OF OLD MONTREAL.

By MR. JOHN HORN.

The late Senator Thomas Ryan told the writer, that when a young man, and on a visit to Baltimore, he had the honor of dining with the venerable Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who was then the last living representative of those who signed the famous Declaration of Independence.

In 1801 the first application to Parliament was made to lay down water pipes.

In 1805 an act passed for improving the navigation between Montreal and Quebec, and the establishment of Trinity House.

J. W. Dunscomb, of Quebec, is the only living representative of the first Montreal City Council, that met under the Hon. Peter McGill, Mayor, 1843.

MONTREAL, 23rd October, 1820.

This day a meeting of the citizens was held in the Court House, pursuant to advertisement in the public papers, to take into consideration the expediency of applying to the Legislature, at their next meeting; for an act of incorporation for the city of Montreal, Jacques Viger in the chair.

Boston and Montreal Mail Stages, 1807.

A passenger may go from Boston to Montreal, a distance of 312 miles, in four days and a half. This line is furnished with new and convenient stages, good horses, and careful drivers.

A printed notice of 25th November, 1815, says:—St. Paul street, east of the old market, is now lighted by twenty-two lamps, fixed at fifty-four feet distant. The cost of each lamp completely fitted up is not quite \$7. S. Dawson was instrumental in bringing this improvement about.

Part of Notre Dame street was lit by lamps in 1816.

A wharf has been completed within the last year, extending nearly a mile in length, by which shipping of all denominations can be received on a perfect level with the landing, which is beautifully constructed of boarded flooring to a vast extent. A tax on the city at first unpopular.

Montreal, 1842.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED and for sale by Neilson & Cowan, No. 3 Mountain street, in 2 volumes, Royal 8vo., in boards, price 16s.,

THE HISTORY OF CANADA,
From its first discovery to the year 1791,
by William Smith.

~~is~~ This work, which, in addition to its historical narrative, contains a mass of valuable documents no where else to be met with, was printed in 1815, but from unavoidable circumstances remained unpublished till the present time.

As there are but a few copies for sale *here*, those persons that are desirous of purchasing copies must make an early application for them.

Quebec, July 20th, 1826.

The above notice is copied from the *Montreal Herald* of the 9th August, 1826.

THE LATE ABBE BOIS.

(*From La Minerve.*)

M. Louis Edouard Bois, curé of Maskinongé, was one of the most distinguished and most remarkable members of our clergy, In heart as well as in mind he belonged to that phalanx of eminent men whose works have made so deep an impression on the ecclesiastical history of our country—the Plessis, the Holmes, the Parents, the Ferlands. It is to him that we are indebted, in a great measure, for those important historical undertakings which commenced with the publication of the Edicts and Ordi-

nances, to continue through the Relations of the Jesuits, the works of Champlain, the Collection of Manuscripts and the Judgments of the Sovereign Council.

Nearly all his writings remain in manuscript. Those which he has published are only the least of those upon which he lavished his midnight oil. We are thus able to look forward with eagerness to the day when the enormous note books which he has left upon a number of scientific and historical questions shall see the light.

Born at Quebec the 11th September, 1815, Mr. Bois was ordained a priest on the 8th October, 1837. He has been curé of Maskinongé since 1848, and a member of the Royal Society of Canada since its foundation.

Publications Received.

HISTORICAL AND SPORTING NOTES IN QUEBEC AND ITS ENVIRONS, by J. M. LeMoine. Fourth edition, 1889. Quebec: L. J. Demers & Frère. Contains in part first: Quebec to Montmorenci—Quebec to Cap Rouge—Quebec to Indian Lorette—The Huron Chief—Château Bigot; and in part second: Lake St. John, the Land of the Wanashish—Our Northern Trout Lakes—Summer and Winter Sports.

THE EXPLORATIONS OF JONATHAN OLDBUCK, F.G.S.Q., IN EASTERN LATITUDES, by J. M. LeMoine. Quebec: L. J. Demers & Frère, 1889. One of the Sea Side Series, and refers to Canadian history, legends, scenery, sports.

REVUE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES ETUDES HISTORIQUE. Paris: Ernest Thorin, Publisher. 1889.—This review is published in monthly parts under the direction of this Society, which is the successor of the old Institute of France, historical section.

THE COSMOPOLITAN for August, 1889, contains an article on "Social Life at Ottawa," with several portraits and other illustrations. Every article in this enterprising magazine is now illustrated.

THE WESTERN JOURNALIST.—A new paper published in Chicago, intended to "open a field whereon the journalists of America may do battle for their theories and their practices." The first number is 20th July, 1889.