



INTERIOR VIEW OF A BUNKHOUSE

This type of building, used for housing campmen, was common on all frontier works in Canada, particularly during the period 1890-1925

Frontispiece

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY PARENTS
JOSEPH AND ANNIE BRADWIN

PREFACE

FOR twelve years following closely on the beginning of the century, the Dominion of Canada passed for the third time through a period of railway expansion. This activity in railway building culminated ultimately in the completion of a second and yet a third transcontinental extending across the Canadian provinces.

Material progress gives pride to any people. The country heard with much satisfaction of achievements, which, overcoming natural difficulties, bridged great rivers, gridironed the prairies, tunneled mountains and welded the far-sundered portions of the Dominion. But even prosperity may soothe—meanwhile other relationships, equally vital for the welfare of the country, had seemingly been overlooked: these pertained to the labour and housing of men employed on works throughout these various undertakings.

Occasional press reports, which multiplied toward the close of the period, told of discontent among the men at work in camps. Complaints were lodged by the workers themselves with the Federal authorities at Ottawa, resulting at times in official investigations being made locally into the nature and practical operation of wage agreements commonly existing between railway contractors and campmen during that particular period. All of which bespoke unsettled conditions of hire in frontier places across Canada, and a lack of accord in the commoner relationships of master and man.

This uneasiness pervading different camps was not confined to any particular work. Wage agreements during the

period were very similar wherever the contract system prevailed. Protests came from bunkhouse-men in widely different parts of the Dominion—from camps on the Grand Trunk Pacific west of the Rocky Mountains, from works out on the prairie sections, but most often from men on the National Transcontinental, which was hewed in course for eighteen hundred miles across the lands whose many-pronged rivers drain toward Hudson Bay.

What were some of the causes that lay behind this unrest? In answer to this query the present writer has undertaken to show at first hand something of the conditions of work and pay in Canadian camps commonly encountered in the first two decades of the present century. In pursuance of this no attempt is made to study all the various forms of frontier works; a brochure, however, is presented showing somewhat in detail the work of the navy during the construction of the National Transcontinental.

This particular undertaking, extending in operation half-way across the continent, and having always, during its ten-year period of construction, a great number of large camps, gives the needed perspective for studying the navy. The fact, also, that the National Transcontinental was sponsored directly by the Canadian people, being under the control of a Railway Commission specially selected by the Dominion government, affords further freedom to examine some of the camps thereon, as seen in practical operation.

An insight into the methods and conditions of employment on the National Transcontinental will give, to those who desire it, an intelligent cross-section of frontier camps of whatever kind. It affords, also, the further opportunity to survey some of the problems that still confront the campman, and those who hire for work in the isolated places of the Dominion.

For, Canada is still a land of camps! Physical conditions

compel it so. Great natural resources, combined with a climate that varies much, and often with suddenness, throughout its wide extent, give rise to seasonal works of diverse kinds.

There are years when three thousand large camps are in operation throughout the Dominion. Among other undertakings these activities are usually associated with lumbering, logging on the Pacific coast, and the cutting of pulp; railway work both for maintenance and along new construction; mining, in its earlier stages, and, in recent years, increasing numbers of hydro development camps. The number of men actually engaged on such enterprises is never constant, but in average years it may be safely inferred that fully two hundred thousand men in Canada, at different periods of the year, follow in some form or other the life of the camps.

Canada as a country owes much to its campmen. Down through whole generations the camps have played an important part in shaping the lives of all frontier workers; qualities incidental to such environments have characterized their ways. Yet, even in Canada, few of us seem to realize just all that this means. We overlook the debt which the country owes the workers in these important fields of labour. With the strides made by the Dominion since Confederation, in trade, in increasing wealth, and in education, there has been correspondingly a strange lack of recognition for the place and the needs of the bunkhouse man.

And here at the outset, one should be first to acknowledge that already there is noticeable a marked betterment in the material comforts provided for men in camps. Many large employing firms, in recent years, have made definite steps in advance in the matter of housing for seasonal workers. In places, whole townsites, on the frontier, have been planned and builded with care, displaying a vital consideration for

the physical well-being of employees. Such company towns are a credit and a practical indication of what may be expected when greater concern is shown for those who dwell in the bunkhouse.

But such improvements apply chiefly to the large central camps. Employers may make of their mill-site a place of beauty, while, at the same time the bunkhouse constructed at a distant point remains ignored. In tributary camps of whatever kind, whether they be jobbing in the woods for pulp, or sub-contracting on a piece of railway construction, there is still the invariable herding of men. Even the presence of women occasionally in jobbing camps does little to counteract unseemly methods of housing long established.

Camp customs, too, in matters pertaining to pay are deeply rooted. They are a legacy from the days of the camboose and the shanty in the preceding century when even less concern was evinced for the place of the worker in camps. There are still companies operating on frontier works who through their local officials would have their men make bricks without straw. There is in wage-accounting a trend toward petty exactions, if not at times undue coercion. Definite tendencies still lurk unmolested in the camps of Canada which, in their ultimate effects on the individual labourer, are tantamount to lesser forms of serfdom.

The present writer is not unaware of the complexities that beset all employers who have to deal with seasonal and migratory workers. Various bunkmates of all grades and degrees in the coming and going for years among men in camps will rapidly apprise one of the human factor in all of us, and for which due allowance should be made. But even that need not condone the discrepancies too apparent in the handling of bunkhouse men: the clueless labyrinth is to be avoided, one must have some thread in hand or be lost in the maze.

Nor is it sought, in writing of camps, simply to hurl a spear against men who must necessarily tackle the bigger undertakings. Undue cynicism but retards. Canada more than other lands must needs encourage individual success. Where is more necessary than in the wider spaces of the Dominion the man of enterprize and constructive capacity? Should we begrudge ample recompense for genuine initiative when the gains accruing are the result of character and ability? Whatever fruits be plucked in person, much greater benefits will enrich the country tardy in development. Rewards in place make thrift the patrimony of a people.

In view of this any invidious feeling toward large companies employing workers in camps is disclaimed. Antipathy toward railway contractors is not intended. As regards the individual sub-contractors the writer knows neither Greek nor Trojan, he is discussing camp methods in work and pay, not companies and their officials. In particular chapters the system of contracting and sub-letting so generally adopted on new railway construction, both in Canada and in the United States, is discussed in the matter of its direct bearing on the wage of the man in the bunkhouse. The question that is uppermost is not whether the employer shall receive ample profits, but whether the worker in camps, under various pretexts, shall be deprived of his pay.

For it is to be noted at the outset that the matter herein contained is presented always from the point of view of the worker himself. The whole question is considered from the standpoint of one who, throughout many years, was himself an occupant of the bunkhouse and the shack rather than of the office and the residency; wage conditions are viewed from the ground up, rather than from the top down. This in itself has great demerits: one may gaze too warily about, and the pendulum swing too far. With this in mind an effort has been made to obey that hoary and wholesome in-

junction not to take oneself too seriously. If at times a note of asperity has escaped it is not welcomed; pessimism is eschewed, and the contents are presented suggestively.

While the material used has been procured entirely in Canadian camps, the writer, with but a limited experience along American roads, has much reason to believe that some of the conditions as herein outlined applied as well to similar undertakings in the United States. During the whole period under discussion there was a constant interchange of men employed on camp works, between the Canadian provinces and several of the bordering States. There is little reason to consider the work conditions of the navy, in either country, to have been other than uniform.

Several American firms, also, were interested, whether as contractors or as sub-contractors, on the later transcontinentals in Canada. Graduates, too, of leading American universities were not uncommonly in evidence on railway works in various parts of the Dominion, whether as higher officials, with residency staffs, or as company clerks and keepers of warehouse supplies. But while the leading features of the contract system as here discussed, were the continuance of practices long common on new construction in the Republic, yet the full effect when in operation, on the work and pay of the navy, was most apparent in the building of the National Transcontinental Railway in Canada.

And here it may be asked: What good can come now from making public some of the material herein presented? The camps of the National Transcontinental Railway are happenings of a decade since, and more: the roads are completed and the navvies long departed, their sod huts rotted and the poled shacks ashened by the frequent forest fires; even the larger company camps, formerly the centres of activities of hundreds of men, show desolate now to those who search from passing train, their big-log walls in dis-

order, with roof and ridge-pole tumbled about: Is the Now the time to remedy the Yesterdays?

Nevertheless, there are various reasons: Two may be mentioned. Notwithstanding the fact that a score of books have been written in recent years that pertain, directly or indirectly, to the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, there remains to-day too little information, in accessible form, showing the conditions under which men wrought, some forty years since, as navvies on the construction of Canada's first transcontinental. This of itself is sufficient reason for making public those details of life and work in camps during the active construction of the third great through line across the Dominion. They bring to light material which can be utilized later by any one who would construct anew those places which have been cast down.

But, more immediate, while the matter herein presented relates almost wholly to one particular period of camp activity, it is not without direct concern toward the placements and pay of men in the proximate future. While it is true the navvy, as such, has finished his tasks for a time, other bunkhouse men still crowd the works on the frontier, and given the opportunity, conditions in isolated camps, such as marked employment along the National Transcontinental, will surely emerge. The work and pay of men in the frontier places of Canada, even to-day, is not wholly removed from tendencies that commonly confronted the bunkhouse man during the initial decade of the present century.

With this in mind the following chapters are assembled. The writer would seek to chart more clearly certain shoals, that under any circumstances imperil the hire of men on isolated works. Data are now used that were long withheld in the continued hope of improved conditions. But even the discretion of added years may be at the expense of singleness of purpose.

A Study of Work and Pay in
the Camps of Canada
1903-1914

BY

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96 in the "Studies in History, Economics
and Public Law" of Columbia University

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"The most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings."
Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, Bk. VI, Chap. 4.

Let there be no mistake, however. This monograph makes no pretense to settle things; it is not a destroyer of that which is, without indicating by finger-posts that which might be. It is an attempt to obtain for the migratory worker employed in camps of whatever kind more security in the matter of his work and pay.

APPRECIATION is gratefully expressed for the invaluable help in graduate reading received at Columbia University. When, in more mature years, one left at different times the poled floors of the camps for the tiled halls and the class rooms of a metropolitan centre, and listened there from a quiet angle to men at their best, trained by a frequent contact with the world and its needs, there were hours when theory as such seemed not in alignment with human facts, at least as gleaned from camps still fresh in the background. Yet there is always the remembrance of earnestness and purpose, and of words which come only when life has been tested, and decisions are weighted by careful judgments.

Among the men in Kent Hall, who have been of assistance to the writer in giving final form to this monograph, mention should be made particularly of Henry R. Seager. His intimate knowledge of Labour in its various aspects, and his considerateness at all times, have placed me under much obligation.

For their time and help in reading the manuscript acknowledgment is gladly made in this place to Professor R. C. Dearle, University of Western Ontario; to J. R. Mutchmor, B.D., of the Robertson Memorial Institute, Winnipeg; to Dr. G. O. MacMillan, Provincial Normal School, Hamilton; to W. C. Clark, Ph.D., with S. W. Straus Co., Chicago, formerly of Queen's University, and also to A. J. Wilson, B.D., of St. Andrew's Manse, Napanee.

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APPENDIX A

TONNAGE PASSING THROUGH THE ERIE AND THE WELLAND CANALS,
1840-49

Year	Total Tonnage Erie Canal	Total Tonnage Welland Canal	Per cent of total
1840	830,000		
1841	905,000	277,144	30.6
1842	710,000	304,983	42.9
1843	820,000	224,408	27.3
1844	945,000	327,570	34.5
1847	1,660,000	255,836	15.4
1848	1,600,000	246,328	15.3
1849	1,620,000	265,326	16.3

APPENDIX B

IMMIGRATION TO THE DOMINION, 1903-1914

	From U. K.	From U. S.	From Other Countries	Total
1903	41,792	49,473	37,099	128,364
1904	50,374	45,171	34,786	130,331
1905	65,359	43,543	37,364	146,266
1906	86,796	57,796	44,472	189,064
1907	55,791	34,659	34,217	124,667
1908	120,182	58,312	83,975	262,469
1909	52,901	59,832	34,175	146,908
1910	59,790	103,798	45,206	208,794
1911	123,013	121,451	66,620	311,084
1912	138,121	133,710	82,406	354,237
1913	150,542	139,009	112,881	402,432
1914	142,622	107,530	134,726	384,878
Total for 12 years..	1,087,383	954,284	747,927	2,789,494

From Canada Year Book, 1914, page 85.

APPENDIX C

NATURE AND TOTAL AMOUNT OF OUTSIDE INVESTMENTS IN CANADA, 1926

A. Nature of Investment	U. S. A. Capital	U. K. Capital	Other Outside Capital
Public Securities	\$879,000,000	\$437,000,000	\$5,000,000
Railways	435,000,000	951,000,000	35,000,000
<i>Industries:</i>			
Forestry	425,000,000	70,000,000	25,000,000
Mining	300,000,000	110,000,000	25,000,000
Fisheries	7,000,000	30,000,000	10,000,000
Public Services	200,000,000	125,000,000	30,000,000
Other Industries.....	625,000,000	160,000,000	10,000,000
Land and Mortgages..	100,000,000	165,000,000	50,000,000
Banking and Insurance	45,000,000	90,000,000	12,000,000
Total	\$3,016,000,000	\$2,138,000,000	\$202,000,000
Grand total	\$5,356,000,000		

(Meanwhile, Canadian Investments abroad are estimated at \$714,651,000)

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT SHOWING THE INCREASE IN LOANS SINCE 1913

B. Source of Loans	1913	1923	1926
Great Britain	\$1,860,000,000	\$1,995,000,000	\$2,111,000,000
United States	417,143,220	2,475,500,000	3,016,000,000
Other Outside Sources.	139,589,650	323,000,000	183,000,000
Total	\$2,416,732,870	\$4,796,500,000	\$5,310,000,000

Reference: *Monetary Times of Canada, Year Book, 1927.*

A. "In 1924-25-26 half a billion dollars of American, British, and other outside capital has come to Canada to be invested in the development of our natural resources, and in the extension of the economic superstructure of the country—its railways, public services, etc. This has brought the total investment of outside capital in the Dominion to over

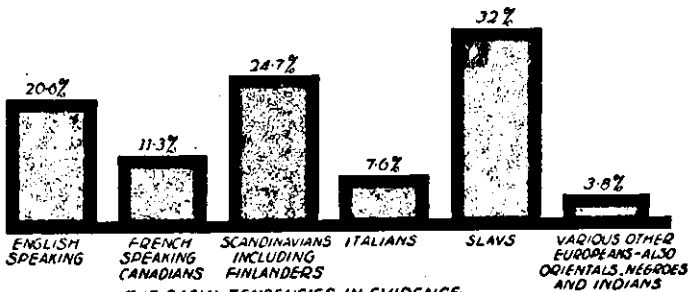
five billion dollars, a large amount, but not to be regarded as dangerously out of proportion to our total national wealth, estimated and probably exceeding twenty-five billions at the present time."—The *Financial Post*, Survey 1927, p. 247.

B. "According to our records there has been invested since 1915 in the hydro-electric industry of Canada approximately \$450,000,000. In the mining industry there has been invested about \$420,000,000, and in pulp and paper and other forestry industry about \$325,000,000.

"There is no exact information to indicate how much of this was American capital, how much British and how much Canadian capital, but from our studies of the trend of capital flow in these industries, we would assume that about 50 per cent of these sums have represented Canadian capital, about 35 per cent American capital and about 15 per cent British capital."—Editor *Financial Post*, March 4th, 1927.

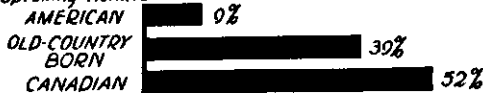
APPENDIX D.

The bar-diagram subjoined shows the various nationals commonly found on frontier works in Canada. This information, based on different seasonal works and relating to approximately 18,600 bunkhouse men, was obtained at 81 points during the years 1923-26, inclusive. While the proportions vary in different localities, the general picture shown is accurate.

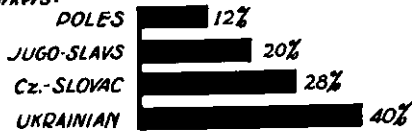


THE RACIAL TENDENCIES IN EVIDENCE AMONG CAMPMEN DURING THOSE FOUR YEARS SHOWED ALSO THE FOLLOWING PROPORTIONATE SUB-GROUPS

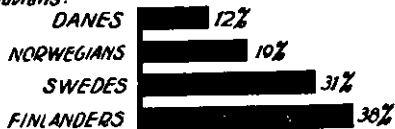
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V I T A

THE author was born at Lynden, Wentworth County, Ontario, Canada, 1877. He received his public school and high school education at Wingham, Ontario. He then took a course in teacher-training at the Model School, Clinton. For five years, following 1896, he taught an ungraded school in Culross Township, Bruce County, Ontario. After a broken period of two years at Toronto University in Chemistry and Mineralogy, he became interested in 1903 in a movement, then in its inception, to bring education to men in the camps of Canada. With this work, which has developed into what is now known as the Frontier College, he has ever since been closely associated. In 1907 he enrolled for study with Queen's University, Canada. His studies there were pursued at intervals, while still continuing his camp activities. In 1913 he received his B.A., with honours in History and Economics. In 1914, Queen's also granted him his M.A. degree.

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