

A VISIT TO QUEBEC*

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I HAVE just returned from a meeting of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters in that lovely city of Quebec whose hospitality knows no bounds. If each one of us would make it his duty to try to understand our French-Canadian compatriots, and for this purpose would visit Quebec, I believe we would contribute towards cementing this country of Provinces into a United Nation, by the interchange of ideas, and the good will that would ensue. The time spent by Canadians in discussing *Dis-unity* could well be spent in discussing *Unity*, to the advantage of our great country.

If we English-speaking people would take as much trouble to learn their language as they are taking now to learn ours, we would all be better off, and come to better understanding. French should become, by choice, the second language of every English speaking Canadian who likes to boast of his Canadian citizenship. The little I have mastered makes me hungry for more, in the same manner as my studies of our common history have given me such pleasure, and produced so many *Tales Told Under the Old Town Clock*.

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I want to tell you a tale to-day of a visit to Quebec City, the capital of *La Province de Quebec*, North America's only walled city (only Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, can rival its great age), selected by Champlain in 1608 as the capital of New France. Proudly poised on its great rock, towering in majesty over the vast Saint-Laurent, raising its monuments to the glories of the past, yet blending its glorious past into the living present. Quebec stands alone amongst the picturesque cities of our continent. To visit its shrines is to lose one's self in the legendry of our western world!

Its streets twist in strange, cow-path fashion between centuries-old houses, standing flush to narrow sidewalks. Its hills catapult down the steep incline of the rock, joining the lofty reaches of Upper Town to the bustling commerce of Lower. Yet the hurry and scurry of the *Basse-Ville* are unlike those of any other North American city: they carry the beholder back to the watersides of the seaports of Old France, to ancient Normandy itself. No matter where one looks, there stands the brave past. High above the river, over the Dufferin Terrace

*An address to the Rotary Club of Halifax, March 7, 1944.

and its great hotel, the Citadel imposes itself, guns peering down awesomely on the broad expanse of water, and out toward the sea. A few hundred yards from the terrace, towards the Parliament Buildings (where legislators address the Speaker in the language of Old France), you will pass through a gateway in the old wall, beneath which stream trams, limousines, armored cars and marching troops, throughout the waking hours. Drive through the narrow confines of Saint John Street, and you will pass again through the walls, this time to emerge in a modern square, with theatres and shops, and, on the rising ground the twentieth-century architecture of *Palais Montcalm*. Up and down the hills as you go, brief glimpses of the battlements of America's only walled city will constantly flash in and out the eye. In peaceful Seminary gardens the mind goes back to the times of Champlain, Frontenac and Monseigneur de Laval; sees visions of the great *chevaliers*, magnificent churchmen, and gentle nuns.

The Plains of Abraham, where Montcalm's soldiers were taken in surprise by Wolfe's men, bringing Canada under British rule, now constitute a modern park, commemorating the days of the Conquest of 1759, before the first stirrings of revolt were felt in the colonies to the south. Broad drives sweep about the monument which commemorates *not victory, not defeat, but the coming together* of the sons of France and Britain to rule the northern half of our continent together. Thence the parkway sweeps along the cliffs which stand above the river, revealing one of the most magnificent panoramas of the north, as the visitor comes down to *Capaux-Diamants*. Circular Martello towers in grey stone, which formed part of the old city's defences, meet the eye as one walks or drives. Over all still broods the tranquil air of Mother Church, for Quebec is a city of many sacred shrines, convents and monasteries.

Yet the past and the present are closely linked. Soldiers in modern battledress march over parade grounds where once the feet of Montcalm's men were heard. Beside ancient houses, great modern office-buildings rise, yet do not seem incongruous in their strange settings. Suddenly an age-old street emerges through the wall to become a modern boulevard. Or you'll walk along a winding way, buttressed by the walls of the aged Basilica, to enter the portals of an up-to-the-minute shop displaying the delicate handicraft materials native to Canada, as well as fineries from distant places of the earth.

If time permits, (and I say this metaphorically), Old

Quebec should be tasted slowly, rolled on the tongue, its full but delicate flavour savored to the last drop. Come and go quickly, and you will depart with senses almost choked by its sights and contrasts. But drink gently of its charms, and its memories will go with you down the years.

My visit to Quebec was made to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters.

I want to say a word or two about the banquet that was held in the main ballroom of the Chateau Frontenac. Seated at the head table were the Directors of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, which would include representatives of the broadcasting stations from Sydney, Nova Scotia, to Victoria, British Columbia. Interspersed were representatives of the Lieut. Governor of Quebec, a representative of the Premier of the Province of Quebec, the Mayor of the City of Quebec, the Archivist of Laval University, the head of the Tourist Bureau, the President of the Board of Trade, and other important citizens. Also included at the head table were representatives of our great neighbour to the South, from the National Broadcasting Company, and the Columbia Broadcasting System.

One of the most thrilling moments that I can remember was at the opening of the banquet, when the whole group stood up and sang *God Save the King*, *The American National Anthem*, and finally *O Canada*, the French singing in their language, and the English in theirs, and while we were singing different words, there was no discordant note. Everybody sang for all he was worth; it was a splendid example of how people can get together with goodwill, and was a real effort toward that *Bon Entente* which is so desirable among people who really want to understand one another.

The French-Canadians certainly gave us a lesson in hospitality, and good fellowship, and there was not a man from any part of Canada or the United States who did not go away with the greatest of goodwill and determination to come back and learn more of Quebec.

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I could not, however, just stay in the Chateau Frontenac, I had to see the sights historical, and while later I was privileged to go and see those things which are of most interest to Nova Scotians, I visited between times several historic spots close to the hotel, which were of particular interest to me in my studies of our common history.

I was privileged to visit the Ursuline Convent, where these good women have been teaching for some three hundred years, and there I saw the burial spot of the French General, Montcalm, and incidentally his skull, preserved in a glass case.

I visited the Anglican Cathedral, which dates back to 1804, and is located on ground formerly occupied by a Roman Catholic Chapel. This was used for forty years, with the consent of the Roman Catholic authorities, as a place of worship for members of the Church of England, before it was burnt down in 1796 to be replaced by the present Cathedral. The Anglican Cathedral in Quebec is so much like St. Paul's in Halifax that it would seem they were both built as a copy of the same church in England.

I was also privileged to visit Laval University, and there I spent some three hours with the Archivist, the Rev. Father Maheur, who, when he found my interest in things historic to be more than superficial, conducted me through the Archives, and showed me numerous documents of intense interest and importance. This reverend gentleman has written several books in the interest of better understanding between Canadians.

Perhaps the chief feature of my visit was at Radio Station CHRC, during the progress of the programme known as "The Montagnards Laurentians," which is recorded every week, and sent to Halifax, to be broadcast on Saturday afternoons for the benefit of the French-Canadian troops on duty in this area. As soon as I put in an appearance, the programme was stopped to introduce me, and the announcer set me my task by saying that most Nova Scotians were, or should be, bilingual. I therefore had to say a few words in French as well as English, to the audience of that popular station. This in itself didn't amount to much, but if you could have seen the spirit of goodwill that was thus aroused, it would have made you determined to be able to speak their language.

After the programme not only the artists taking part, but every operator, announcer, and other members of the staff of the station arrived, taking the particular trouble to shake hands with me, simply because I had said a few words in French, proving to me once more how anxious these people are to make friends, and to have us understand them, and that once they see you are a little interested, their hospitality knows no bounds.

I am sure that the Canadian Association of Broadcasters with their great means of publicity from coast to coast will be

spreading a word of goodwill for Quebec. They will probably want to hold their Convention there again next year.

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In one of my Sunday broadcasts on CHNS, some weeks ago at one of our meetings by the Old Town Clock, I called attention to a plaque erected on a building almost at the corner of Hollis and Sackville Streets, Halifax, pointing out that here was the headquarters of General James Wolfe, where plans were made to reduce the fortresses of Louisburg and Quebec.

Under the guidance of the managing director of Radio Station CHRC in Quebec, I was shown the very places where Wolfe carried out the plans he made some months after he was last reported in Halifax, April 30, 1759. Thence, after the successful taking of Louisburg, and a trip to England, he set sail for the Saint Lawrence with a British fleet under command of Admiral Saunders. I also learned a number of things from my French-Canadian friend about Quebec, and it whetted my appetite for a better knowledge of the siege and of events before and after this turning point in its historical past. May I, at this time, tell you that my friend, Monsieur Narcisse Thivierge, has four sons, all of whom have voluntarily joined up with the Canadian Active Army in this war? I believe that, through this station CHRC at Quebec, he will urge many thousands of French-Canadians yet to join the armed forces, taking their places alongside his four sons, in defence of this Canada we all love so much, under the Union Jack, the Flag that has never ceased to protect us while we have been growing up together. After talking with this man, and reading everything I could find about Quebec, I can better understand why honour is now done by both English and French speaking Canadians to both Montcalm and Wolfe, and to many other men whose statues are to be seen in that historic old city.

No other place in Canada finds past and present meeting as in Quebec. Name after name honoured there, such as Champlain, Hebert, Wolfe, Murray, Kent, etc., is as well known in Nova Scotia or Acadia. With the exception of Port Royal (Lower Granville-Annapolis), Nova Scotia, which was founded in 1605, Quebec is the oldest city in Canada. It is now the only walled city in the New World. In all her historic years, Quebec has seen no more stirring days than those of the late summer of 1759, when Wolfe and Montcalm fought for the mastery of

Canada, and when Wolfe and Saunders arrived off the Island of Orleans from Nova Scotia with a powerful fleet.

On the occasion of my visit I slept in the beautiful C.P.R. Hotel, the Chateau Frontenac, and in the morning when I awoke, I looked out the window. My room was up high on the eighth floor, which enabled me to look over the roof of the front of the hotel, and to see the magnificent river, frozen as far as the eye could see. Not a boat except the Levis Ferry in sight. In the distance was the Isle of Orleans. What thoughts went through my mind. I thought of the days gone by. I was transferred back three hundred years. I thought of Champlain's Fort St. Louis, and the Chateau St. Louis and the Chateau Holdimand. As I stood there looking out of the window, the Union Jack floating in the breeze, I thought of Wolfe over there at Levis, and of the siege, and then of General Murray the following year, looking down the river, awaiting the arrival of British ships, when he was being besieged by Chevalier de Levis, after being defeated in a three-hour battle not far from the spot where Wolfe had defeated Montcalm the year before. I just had to see the historic spots, where the history of Canada was made by those men so well known to you all. Over and over again, I thought to myself, as I gazed at the Union Jack, how France left her children to fend for themselves when they needed her help most. Though Quebec was founded eighteen years before the Pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, the Northern settlement never became as prosperous as the Southern colonies. Apart from the climate, there is no doubt one of the main reasons was the difference of the attitudes of the French and English Governments to their nationals. The people at home supported their families overseas better than the French, both by putting their money into the colonies, and by what is more important, assisting them with armed forces in their hour of need.

England poured some two hundred thousand pounds into Virginia within twenty years of the founding of the colony, whereas it is doubtful if the French sent two thousand pounds into Quebec in the same period of time. There is no doubt that as far as military aid was concerned, the home government of France simply was not there in the hour of need. From historic accounts it did not always send by any means the best men as civil governors.

If Montcalm, an excellent soldier and brave man, had not had to put up with the interference of the civil governor,

Vaudreuil and his associate, the Intendant Bigot, in all their trouble making, it is hard to say what might have been recorded in history. It was with these thoughts in mind that my friend M. Thivierge appeared and away I went to see for myself some of Quebec's historic spots and statues which I want to tell you about to-day. My particular interest was in the men who had made their names famous in Acadia, as well as Quebec. We have so much in common from away back, that any Nova Scotian who is familiar with his own Province's history can find a common meeting ground in Quebec. He will find the French-Canadian only too glad to tell all about their historic past.

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On leaving the Chateau Frontenac, the first statue to be drawn to my attention was that of Samuel de Champlain, whose name we all know in connection with the founding of Port Royal, Acadia, (Nova Scotia), in 1605. During the winter of 1606 at Port Royal (Annapolis), this same Samuel de Champlain instituted his famous "Order of the Good Time," the first Luncheon Club in America. This club was established to keep alive the good cheer and spirit of fellowship amongst the early French pioneers, and was maintained by the leading members of the community. They met in Poutrincourt's great hall, where log fires roared merrily. Each was Grand Master in turn, holding office for one day. It was the duty of the Grand Master to cater for the company, and as it became a point of honour to fill that post with credit, he usually was busy for several days before in a manner becoming to his dignity, in hunting, fishing, or bartering provisions with the Indians. Thus the tables were bountifully supplied with all luxuries of the winter forest. At the evening meal there was less of form and circumstance. And when the winter night closed in, when the flame crackled and the sparks streamed up the wide-throated chimney, and the founders of New France with their tawny allies gathered around the blaze, then did the Grand Master resign the collar and the staff to the successor of his honours, and with jovial courtesy pledge him in a cup of wine. Toast, song and tale followed one another, all joining in the gay revels. As a final item on the programme, the pipe of peace, with its huge lobster-like bowl, went around, and all smoked it in turn until the tobacco in its fiery oven was exhausted. Then, and not until then, the long winter evening was over.

"This Order of the Good Time", indeed, included the follow-

ing distinguished names in its membership: Poutrincourt, the Lord of the Manor of Port Royal; Champlain, who three years later, founded Quebec; Biencourt, the son and successor of Poutrincourt; Lescarbot, advocate, poet and historian; Louis Hebert, after whom it is said Bear River, Nova Scotia, gets its name, and who a few years later was one of the first settlers of Quebec; Robert Graves; Champdore, and Daniel Hay. The spirit manifested by these early pioneers has been maintained down through the years in Nova Scotia. In fact, we to-day in Rotary are following their example.

I stood and looked at Champlain's statue, realizing that here was a truly great man, whose activities as an explorer, governor, and founder of this great city were something which holds the admiration of every Canadian and could be the subject of many, many talks under the Old Town Clock. Only having a few hours to spare, I reluctantly left the spot with all the thoughts of Champlain's pioneering days as we drove down those steep hills. Past the statue of Louis Hebert, who was the apothecary with De Mont and Champlain at Port Royal in 1605, and who, on the repeated request of his friend Champlain, moved some little time later to Quebec to become the first *habitant* farmer.

We made for a spot across the St. Charles River to see a place where another Frenchman, Jacques Cartier, years before Champlain, discovered the Indian village of Stadacona, and viewed in his mind's eye the great citadel of French power which was to be founded by those to follow him. Cartier, no doubt, knew all about Baron de Levy who had visited Nova Scotia in 1518, but unlike de Levy he sailed past our Province and up the Saint Lawrence in 1535. On the spot where he landed is erected a large cross, and from this point a most magnificent view is beheld of Modern Quebec.

From this point we travelled back over the bridge across the St. Charles River, and climbed the steep hills and worked our way up past Kent House on St. Louis Street, the former residence of the Duke of Kent who was in Quebec from 1791 to 1794, in command of the 7th Fusiliers, and who is so well known in our history in Halifax. It was in the very same house that the capitulation of Quebec was signed on September 18, 1759, some thirty-two years before the Duke took up residence there. We then went out of the city along the St. Foye Road, and past the statue erected to the memory of Chevalier de Levis and General Murray, at a point where these two opposed

each other in 1760, some six months after Wolfe's victory. Here it was that Murray lost over one-third of his British garrison, and on April 28 was forced to retire within the walls of Quebec. With the tables completely reversed from the year before, de Levis had mustered a large force and had marched from Montreal to avenge the defeat of Montcalm. After the battle of St. Foye, he forced Murray to withstand a siege. Murray, however, was much better prepared for a siege than Montcalm had been, and did not have to put up with any internal interference. He had much better supplies and defences, and the Mother Country didn't leave him to his own resources. As soon as navigation opened up on May 9, a British ship-of-war arrived near the Island of Orleans to be followed by others. De Levis knew that there was no further hope of help from France and of final victory, and retired with his forces back over the road to Montreal. Thus Murray, although defeated at St. Foye, was able also to claim final victory. One more victory like that, and there would have been no British army left to celebrate it. Britain however, had kept her word, and by sending the British, warship with supplies had turned possible final defeat into final victory for her nationals.

We next viewed the statue of General Wolfe and then drove on to the Quebec Bridge, that marvellous structure some seven miles west of the city, and as far as *Cap Rouge*. We then drove through Sillery and along the lower road back towards Quebec until we came to Wolfe's Cove, the point where Wolfe's men ascended. It was the only possible point to make the ascent. Here Montcalm had placed a regiment to guard against this very action, but his orders were countermanded by the Civil Governor Vaudreuil, who removed the regiment the night before unknown to Montcalm, because he thought they were not needed there, and because in his opinion the spot could be held by a corporal's guard. True there was a guard under command of an officer named Louis de Vergor, who had proved himself both inefficient and unreliable, and his record at Fort Beausejour was not one to be proud of; yet he was the choice of the Civil Governor. True to form, Vergor offered no resistance when he saw the British troops ascending the path after fooling the sentries by speaking French and making them believe they were French troops with supplies arriving in the darkness. I could almost imagine the scene, as the British landed at this cove in small boats, while the fleet away up the river at *Cap Rouge* fired their shots at the defending force strung along the

area to make them believe they were going to attack much further up the river, and while other ships fired from the vicinity at Levis and others further around at Beauport. I could imagine the surprise which Montcalm must have got when daylight broke, to have received the news that the British were lined up ready for battle, and how he must have decided to gamble everything with what troops he had at his disposal, knowing that his other troops were too far up the river to get back to give him any aid. Even when the news was brought in, the Governor did not believe it and ordered one hundred men to go and repel the British. If the Civil Governor and the Intendant had kept their noses out of General Montcalm's business, it is hard to tell what might have been the story.

I could imagine, standing at Wolfe's Cove, with what rage Montcalm must have taken matters into his own hands and proceeded to do what he knew was his duty, even at this late hour. It is hard to realize that when he got his forces lined up opposite the British and gave the order to advance, the battle lasted only about six minutes, when the French forces broke, during which time both Wolfe and Montcalm had received fatal wounds. The British, by holding their fire until the French were only about forty yards from them, in two volleys completely demoralized them and forced those left to retire inside the fortress walls. The British now being in possession of the plains landed guns and laid siege, and the walls poorly constructed soon crumbled and the French were forced to surrender, but the two men who had helped the downfall from inside, the Civil Governor and the Intendant, took flight beforehand.

We left this historic spot and proceeded to the lower town where Champlain's Habitation had once stood, and after a while worked our way back up the hill to the Chateau. There we talked, as broadcasters will, about many phases of our work, and how radio can bring back memories of bygone days and recreate events of the past. When, finally, I boarded the ferry to go to Levis, I gazed at the lights of Quebec, and as we moved across the river, I could again in my mind's eye see Wolfe and Saunders's ships cruising up and down the river. I looked up towards Wolfe's Cove, and thought how true were the words of Gray's Elegy, which Wolfe had an officer read to him the night before landing—"The Paths of Glory lead but to the Grave"; how Wolfe was said to have remarked "I would rather be the author of those words than the conqueror of Quebec", and how he handed over several of his personal belongings to one

of his officers before landing. I could imagine the besieged French in what they thought was their impregnable position, and as I thought of that Union Jack flying there for the past nearly two hundred years, and the way those people have had every freedom and protection under that flag, I said to myself, "This is the hometown of the Royal Rifles, those lads who fought and died for that flag out in Hong Kong, and it's also the hometown of the Royal 22nd Regiment, the famous *vingt-deux* of the last war, who are overseas again this time." Thus with a feeling of complete satisfaction I boarded the train to take me back to Nova Scotia, from whence many names, now famous in Quebec, had their beginnings in the history of Canada as we know it now, and as the train pulled out of Levis and the old city of Quebec faded in the distance. I thought of the most fortunate circumstance of this war. These men of the Royal 22nd Regiment are fighting alongside our boys of the West Nova Scotia Regiment from Lunenburg and Annapolis—and so Port Royal (Annapolis) and Quebec are linked once more as Champlain would have desired. There is no division among these Canadians over there, no petty politics—they are Canadians—united in every sense. It is our duty to be worthy of their sacrifices and to keep Canada as they would like it—A Land United in Purpose and Fact.