

James A. Gibson

ECHOES FROM FAR SHORES: REMINISCENCES OF GOVERNORS-GENERAL

One day when I was three years old I went with my mother to see H. R. H. The Duke of Connaught, Governor-General of Canada, arrive at the Inner Harbour in Victoria, B. C. I had been told that his mother had been Queen Victoria, for whom my home city had been named after its founding in 1843. I had also been told, by my father, that when the news of Queen Victoria's death had been brought to the school in which he had then been teaching in rural Ontario (this was of course 14 years earlier) the children were at once sent home and all the blinds were drawn.

The Duke of Connaught was the first of the Governors-General whom I had seen. In the 57 years since I have seen all of his successors; I have likewise read of the personalities, the careers, the example, of all the holders of the office in the 133 years since it has had its present title. One of the striking impacts on my mind, in retrospect, has been that of the vigour and elegance of language which so many of the Governors have used on public and ceremonial occasions. The more I have read—of both public statements and private correspondence—the more I have been impressed with the continuity, the certainty, and the dignity of the office. The Governors of the 19th century, and indeed until 1952, against a background of public life and upbringing that was British, espoused and frequently supported with grace, influences which contributed substantially to the notion of a Canadian nationhood. Their successors, being Canadian, have been able to add to a virile and comely tradition, well established, and to represent in a contemporary, reasonable and personal fashion the links which bind Canada and Canadians to "Her Majesty's Person and Throne".

From the point of vantage of Britain re-visited, I have thought it might be of some interest to set down some personal recollections of Governors-General over half a century.

On a springtime afternoon in 1915, in the ceremonial setting of Victoria, with the Parliament Buildings and the Empress Hotel reflected in the placid waters of the harbour, I had no knowledge of the difficulties which the Duke of Connaught created for Sir Robert Borden by his Royal Family conception of the duties of the Commander-in-Chief, especially in wartime and to the extent of wearing his Field Marshal's uniform every day; but I had *seen* him.

A good many years later, noting that H. R. H. Prince Arthur had been present, with Queen Victoria, at a meeting of the Privy Council on May 16, 1871, when an Order of Her Majesty in Council was passed admitting British Columbia as a Province of Canada under the provisions of section 146 of the British North America Act, I wondered whether in arriving at the provincial capital some 44 years later, the Duke of Connaught might have remembered that particular meeting at Windsor Castle.

His Grace the Duke of Devonshire I saw for one fleeting moment when he drove past the front of our house in Victoria (I think in 1917) on his way to Sidney. I remember the occasion because it was Sunday, and because my brother and I stood to attention while the car drove past. It was a good many years later that I began to wonder what it must have been like to come to Canada as a creature of Government in London without (so far as is known) any consultation with the Government of Canada.

One pleasant circumstance was that in those days official visitors arrived in Victoria by sea (as they continued to do until the 1950s). When Lord Byng of Vimy stepped ashore on his first visit in 1921, I was watching from an upper window of the Parliament Buildings fronting on the harbour. By the time Lord Byng had gone back to Britain in 1926 I knew something, but only something, about the conflicting views of Lord Byng on the one hand, and of the Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King on the other, as to where the Governor's duty lay in a time of constitutional uneasiness. By the time of his death I had come to the conclusion that in these 1926 proceedings in every important respect Lord Byng had been right and that Mr. King, constitutionally speaking, had been wrong. In particular, I had grown to admire Lord Byng's refusal to turn to Government in Britain for advice as to what he should do, even when Mr. King suggested that this course was open to him. This refusal had helped to confirm my view that in what the everyday practice of Responsible Government meant, the Governor-General was perhaps better

informed than the man who aspired to continue in the office of Prime Minister.

It was not simply a case of being right while he held office in Canada; it was also the scrupulous correctness of his conduct after he had returned to England. For no matter how strongly Lord Byng felt as a person—and two or three of his private letters published more recently bear this out—there was never a syllable of recrimination of any kind. When Mr. Mackenzie King next came to London for meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, Lord Byng was among those who were at the train to welcome him on his arrival.

Lord Willingdon came to Victoria in 1927, a year of widespread celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Canadian Federation, when ceremony and pageantry were in the air. The Governor-General was made a Freeman of the City (it was a nice play upon his family name of Freeman Freeman-Thomas), the first of this description. He was made an honorary chief of one of the local bands of the Coast Indians; and near Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island a wonderful totem pole was presented to him (the terms of gift required that this totem stay exactly where it was). He formally opened the restored first schoolhouse on Vancouver Island at Craighflower. By his sheer graciousness of manner and his evident enjoyment of what he was asked to do, Lord Willingdon seemed to *belong*; and in Victoria in 1927 this said a good deal.

Lord Willingdon's was the first appointment to the office of Governor-General after the Imperial Conference of 1926 had agreed that the Governor-General was hold "in all essential respects the same position in relation to the administration of public affairs in the Dominion as is held by His Majesty the King in Great Britain, and that he is not the representative or agent of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain or any Department of that Government, and that future recommendations to this office should be a matter for the Sovereign on the one side and His Majesty's Privy Council for Canada on the other". The Government of the United Kingdom might be consulted as a matter of courtesy, but they would no longer have responsibility as of right. I think this development would have come about in due course; one should not conclude that it followed automatically from Lord Byng's differences with Mr. Mackenzie King or vice versa; though I think there is no doubt that Mr. Mackenzie King deliberately exploited the *political* aspects of the situation. Not for the first time a system—possibly outworn—made a prisoner of the individual; and I always have felt that it would have been more becoming in the leaders of the political parties—whether in office or in opposition—to have made the people of Canada aware that they recognized this fact.

It has been said that the Earl of Bessborough was appointed to succeed Lord Willingdon partly at the earnest suggestion of George V. I saw him only at the end of his term of office because between 1931 and 1934 I was living in England. On a farewell visit to Victoria in 1935 the Governor-General and Lady Bessborough held a public evening reception in the chamber of the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament Buildings. By its nature as a civic community, and by the nature of its citizens, Victoria would put a brave face on any public occasion; in 1935 the clouds of economic depression were only just beginning to roll back at the horizons of Canada, and I thought the public proceedings just a bit wistful, if not indeed sad. A few weeks later Lord Bessborough and his family were returning to England in the *Empress of Britain*, in which I was embarked on my way back to a pre-doctoral year at New College, Oxford. As this great white ship moved into the St. Lawrence from the pier at Wolfe's Cove a salute was fired from the ramparts of the Citadel; this salute was returned from a minute gun on the top deck of the ship.

The appointment of John Buchan, first Baron Tweedsmuir of Elsfield, was in a considerably different tradition. He was a widely-known figure, as civil servant in South Africa, war correspondent at large, author and publisher, Parliamentarian and outdoorsman. He was the first "commoner" (I mean not a peer of the realm at the moment of his appointment) to be named Governor-General since the time of Sir John Young (later Lord Lisgar) in 1868. The recommendation for the appointment had been made by Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett while he was still in office; it was left to Mr. Mackenzie King, succeeding as Prime Minister, to welcome the new Governor-General to Canada.

The initial announcement was greeted with generous acclaim. I was interested, returning to Britain, to learn that the Warden of New College (the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher) thought it a mistake for Buchan to have accepted a peerage. Though they had been opposed in politics they had been close friends for many years; Fisher evidently felt that the Governor-General could have been "equally happy" as plain John Buchan, and he was unimpressed by the suggestion that a peerage would help Lord Tweedsmuir in his dealings with the President and the Administration in the United States.

Lord Tweedsmuir gave some entirely new dimensions to the office—in the things he did, the variety of people he saw, the travels he undertook into the Canadian north, and from east to west, as well as to the United States (where he and Lady Tweedsmuir were guests at the White House). They in turn were the first residents of Government House to receive in Canada the

President of the United States in office. Lord Tweedsmuir's constant activity proceeded despite the worry of incipient ill-health for, although it was said he could "walk the legs off" any of his ADCs, in Ottawa he was never really a well man. His death in 1940, amid the problems of war, was as sudden as it was untimely—not since 1843 had a Governor-General died in office—and the funeral in Ottawa found many thousands lining the processional route on a bitter winter's day.

I used to meet John Buchan at Oxford when he would come to Annual Dinners at the Raleigh Club, of which he was a senior member. One of the best of all my recollections of these years is of going to see an early showing of the superb film of "The 39 Steps", when I was able to say I had met the author. Not uniquely among the whole list of representatives of the Crown, and in the tradition so richly sustained by his successors, Lord Tweedsmuir had a fine sense of dignity in office and a perceptive sense of "occasion". He was *there*; the feeling came out in his speeches and his writing; and though he once said he dealt in "Governor-Generalities" he did not hesitate to say (at Montreal in 1937) that a Canadian's first loyalty was to Canada and Canada's King, and those who counselled otherwise did a great disservice to the notion of Canadian nationhood. When George VI was about to come personally into His Majesty's Realm of Canada in 1939, which raised for the first time the interesting question what then happened to the Governor-General, Lord Tweedsmuir said, without fanfare and with accuracy and acuity, "I shall go into hiding". So he did: he and Lady Tweedsmuir were present at Quebec when Their Majesties landed in Canada; they were at their own front door at Government House to welcome the King and Queen to Ottawa; and they travelled to Halifax to bid farewell when the Royal Visitors were leaving Canada.

Lord Tweedsmuir remained a notable man of letters. It was in keeping with his instincts as Governor-General and his sensitivity as historian that he should have contributed the leading article to the special number of the *Canadian Historical Review* published in 1939 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the laying before Parliament at Westminster of the celebrated *Report on the Affairs of British North America* by that first Governor-General by name, the Earl of Durham.

When I was first at the East Block, in 1938, the Governor-General's Secretary's Office was still there, presided over by the Assistant Secretary to the Governor-General, and there was still a Governor-General's Entrance, from the days when His Excellency received visitors on Parliament Hill. One of

the changes brought about by wartime conditions was the removal of this office back to Government House, the blocking-up of the Entrance (which, symbolically, I regretted) and the conversion of the spacious rooms into offices for an expanded Department of External Affairs.

In 1940 Mr. Mackenzie King raised the question of changing the title of the office from Governor-General to something else. His suggestion was "King's Representative"; but the King, who was consulted, showed no enthusiasm for the proposal and suggested that the time perhaps was not appropriate for change.

The present title, which had been formally in use since Lord Durham's time, and implicitly since 1867, was given some formal definition in section 10 of *The British North America Act, 1867*, which speaks of "the Governor General for the time being of Canada, or other Chief Executive Officer or Administrator for the time being carrying on the Government of Canada on behalf and in the name of the Queen, *by whatever title he is designated*" (italics mine). The position of the Governor-General was further defined in the Report of the Imperial Conference of 1926; and a section of the Report of the Conference of 1930 touched on the manner and instructions of appointment. From 1930 onward it was clear that the Governor-General is the personal representative of the Sovereign. The title "Governor", of course, has the sanction of long usage in America. It extended to Governors who were elected and to Governors who were appointed by Proprietors, as well as to direct Royal nominees. In the United States the style and title is incorporated into the constitutions of 50 disparate states. One devoted student of the subject has written that "Canada has no more curious vestigial anomaly than this" (the title of Governor General).

The Earl of Athlone, who succeeded Lord Tweedsmuir, had been appointed Governor-General in 1914, but had not assumed the office because of the outbreak of war (he was then a serving officer). From the moment of their arrival in Canada in 1940 he and his wife, H. R. H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, were indefatigable in encouraging the efforts of a wide variety of volunteer agencies. Again, with an innate sense of the nature of the office (he had already served as Governor-General of the Union of South Africa) Lord Athlone made many helpful suggestions out of his experience and observation. During the Quebec Conferences of 1943 and 1944 the Governor-General and the Princess Alice combined to provide most gracious hospitality at the Citadel, where President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill were quartered. During the second conference, as Visitor of McGill University,

Lord Athlone was present at a special Convocation, held in the open air at the Citadel, at which the honorary degrees of Doctor of Laws were conferred on the President and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

When the question of honours and awards for wartime services was given institutional shape through an Awards Co-ordination Committee, Lord Athlone made the sensible suggestion that his office might become the channel for communicating recommendations to the King. This was acted upon, and it worked well.

In 1946, shortly before Lord Athlone was to return to England after six busy years, there was a very pleasing variant in the task of drafting the Speech from the Throne. His Excellency asked the Prime Minister, with characteristic courtesy, whether he might not himself, in the last Speech which he would read to Parliament, pay some personal tribute to the magnitude of Canada's war effort and to the work of all the voluntary services as he and his wife had seen them from coast to coast. Long usage or no, Mr. Mackenzie King could only say, will Your Excellency please write in whatever you would wish to say; Lord Athlone did so, and in due course read out a paragraph which was his own. This useful procedure has been followed during later years.

My own recollections of occasional dealings with Their Excellencies are of the happiest kind. It was pleasant, when I would call at Government House on some items of business (I was 30 years younger then) to be addressed as "my dear boy", and it was equally pleasant, visiting England later in 1946 and meeting Lord Athlone at a large reception, to be called by name. One of the nicest recollections of all was a request from His Excellency whether he and the Princess Alice might "borrow" Mr. King's house at Kingsmere for a few days of a completely private holiday, taking none of their own staff with them, but relying on Mr. King's cook and one senior maid. Mr. King readily fell in with this proposal, and it came about that on a mild afternoon a car brought to the door of a pleasant house two pleasant people, who went in each bearing a plain suitcase. A few days later the car returned and took them back to Government House.

The Princess Alice later became Chancellor of the University of the West Indies; and in 1966 my wife and I had the opportunity of admiring her grace in conferring degrees, in a new university, at an evening ceremony at Mona held out of doors under a velvety sky full of stars.

When the question of appointing a successor to Lord Athlone arose, Mr. Mackenzie King was anxious that the most scrupulous observance of what he regarded as "the proprieties" should be followed. He had three names in

mind, partly as a "carry-over" from 1940, and perhaps from earlier years.

One was the Earl of Airlie, who had been a member of the King's suite during the Royal Visit to Canada in 1939. In the event, Lord Airlie asked to be allowed to withdraw his name from consideration because he wished to see through to a conclusion his duties as a Regional Commissioner in Scotland.

A second was Dr. G. M. Trevelyan, then Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. On instructions he was sounded out personally by the High Commissioner for Canada in London. Mr. Massey has described this interview, which at Dr. Trevelyan's request took place at Canada House. The Master said "I'm no John Buchan", adding that his experience and interests were quite remote from most of the activities that the post would entail. The High Commissioner added that "his mind was obviously made up"; and the matter seems to have been left there.

Before the third name was brought forward, one noble Lord wrote from Britain in a slightly jaunty fashion to say he had nothing particular on at the moment and would he do for the vacancy? He was not really a starter, but he received a considered and courteous acknowledgment.

The third was General the Hon. Sir Harold Alexander, then still serving at his field headquarters in Italy. Mr. King had met him in London in 1937, when Alexander was serving as ADC to the King. A letter was sent to the General in Italy, and he replied, with courtesy and precision, that he was much honoured by the enquiry, and that if he were chosen he would do his best.

In the meantime, and before a formal submission was made, Mr. King had written to Sir Alan Lascelles, the King's Private Secretary, to say that although he recognized that it was no part of His Majesty's duty to express any opinion on a matter on which he might reasonably look to his responsible ministers for deliberate advice, he wondered whether, *if* the King *were* to be in a position to offer an opinion, he would care to express it in terms of any preference among the three names.

The reply from Lascelles was equally in character. The King (he said) fully recognized that it was no part of his duty to express any opinion in such a matter. But *if* he *were* to express an opinion, he would unhesitatingly choose A[lexander], whom he knew well and thought highly of. So far as Mr. King was concerned, this settled the question. Sir Harold's consent having been secured by letter, a formal submission was made to the King and duly approved.

Before the signed submission left Mr. King's library, it had to be diverted and done over again because, by inadvertence, the typist had written

Sir *William* rather than Sir *Harold* (it is possible that Mr. King dictated the *wrong* name—he certainly grumbled at the scrapping of some of his best double-note stock which he used only in communicating with Buckingham Palace). But, in order to avoid any suggestion (as in 1835) that the wrong man had been chosen, the document was re-typed. Before the submission was sent off, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the CCF Party in Parliament were told of the Government's intention. No particular comment seems to have been offered at the time.

The day before public announcement was to be made in Ottawa Mr. King sent substantially similar messages to Mr. Atlee (then Prime Minister) and to Mr. Churchill. The replies which came back were once again "in character". Mr. Atlee said, in effect, thank you very much for letting me know and I hope everything will go well. Mr. Churchill was more expansive: "I congratulate you . . . in Alexander you have one of the most valiant beings alive". On one later day, when the Governor-General came to tea at Laurier House (he had been created Viscount Alexander of Tunis before his departure to Canada) Mr. King asked whether he ever had seen the message which Churchill had sent. On hearing that he had not, Mr. King rang for the duty-secretary, who emerged, perplexed, saying "Mr. King is mumbling something about 'a valiant being'." It was against just such a mumbling that we kept in my office what we called our Hurricane File, and out of it now came a copy of the message he wanted.

The Commission of Appointment for Field Marshal the Viscount Alexander of Tunis was intended to be issued under the Great Seal of Canada. But, as it turned out, too little time had been allowed to send the document to England for the King's signature and back again, and the Commission was issued in Britain under the Great Seal of the Realm (I think the last time this procedure was relied on).

I had some personal interest in Lord Alexander's coming to Canada for two reasons, personal to me, over and above my having been concerned with some of the formal arrangements. One of the two original ADCs who accompanied the Governor-General to Canada was Squadron Leader Anthony Tollemache, G.C., who had been my immediate contemporary at New College, where we had played football and cricket together. The sailing of the *Aquitania* which brought Lord Alexander and his party to Halifax brought a large group of men and women returning to Canada for demobilization from the forces. Among them was my sister, Squadron Officer Isobel Gibson, RCAF(WD); to her and some of her fellow-officers on shipboard Lord and

Lady Alexander showed many friendly courtesies.

Earlier Governors-General had frequently been sworn into office at the place of landing in Canada, sometimes at Quebec, occasionally at Halifax. Lord Alexander took the oath at a splendid ceremony in the Senate Chamber in Ottawa, receiving and handing back the Great Seal of Canada for safe-keeping. My wife and I watched all the proceedings from the Gallery; it was a morning of ceremony one was glad to have seen once at least.

During 1946-47 there was an extensive revision of the "Governor-General's Documents" with the view of consolidating in one document the relevant parts of three previously-separate instruments. In earlier times there had been Letters Patent constituting the office, issued together with Instructions from the Sovereign and the actual Commission of Appointment. Of these, only the third was now considered appropriate: the reason for the second had disappeared, and the intent of the first could be combined with the third.

Behind the changes was a merging of two streams of practical experience and of some personal frustration. As early as 1858 Sir Edmund Head had represented to the Secretary of State of that day (Rt. Hon. Henry Labouchere) the obsolescence and rigidity of some of the royal instructions. It was, he added, "most inexpedient as a general rule that the Governor should be present during the discussion in Council of particular measures . . . his presence as a regular or indispensable rule would check all freedom of debate and embarrass himself as well as his advisers".

It was in fact Sir Edmund Head, distinguished for foresight as well as for sagacity, who began the usage of absenting himself from regular meetings of his Executive Council. The ostensible reason was his indifferent health; the constitutional reason may however have been stronger. The Doorkeeper of the Privy Council Office at the East Block once told me, in 1940, that the last Governor-General who had been personally present in the Privy Council Chamber was the Duke of Connaught, in 1915. There was an interesting and more recent case in 1947 when, to give formal effect to the King's Declaration of Consent for the marriage of his daughter the Princess Elizabeth to Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten, R.N. (later created H. R. H. the Duke of Edinburgh), all members within distance of His Majesty's Privy Council for Canada were summoned to meet at Government House, with His Excellency the Governor-General present and named first in the record.

I remember one day being asked by Mr. King to put down the substance of the changes for his information, the "drill" clearly being to write a memorandum of one page only. This I did; the original was handed to the

Governor-General when he called at Laurier House later that day.

Lord Alexander, in character, brought much of his own personality to the office. He drove his own jeep, painted in the colours of the Brigade of Guards, on his errands in Ottawa and on his sketching expeditions into the Gatineau Hills. It was in an excellent Government House tradition, dating at least from Lord Minto's time, that, driving along in Ottawa one day, and noticing smoke erupting from a house in Lower Town, Lord Alexander stopped his jeep, picked up the portable fire-extinguisher, knocked at the door, raised his hat to the startled housewife, and put out the fire. The Ottawa Fire Department made the Governor-General an honorary member—a rare honour—and to the envy of many distant fire-buffs he was initiated by sliding down the brass pole at No. 4 Station.

Lord and Lady Alexander went on a state visit to Brazil during his term of office, and he was also invited to give the Founders' Day Lecture at the University of California. His residence in Canada coincided with the setting up—in churches, villages and public places throughout the land—of many memorials to those who served and who gave up their lives in the Second World War. Numbers of these memorials Lord Alexander unveiled. In a time of building of thousands of new homes, following the removal of war-time restrictions on materials and labour, it was natural enough that many new school buildings should be required. It seemed equally natural that new schools—in Ottawa and elsewhere—should be named for the Governor-General in office.

Lord Alexander's appointment had already extended beyond five years when he asked to be relieved of office to become Minister of Defence in Mr. Churchill's administration in London. His successor, the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, C.H., became the first Canadian citizen to be appointed to the office. On the eve of his appointment Mr. Massey had been Chairman of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, Humanities and Social Sciences, the hearings of which had taken him and his fellow-commissioners (Very Rev. Georges-Henri Levesque, o.p., Arthur Surveyer, Professor Hilda Neatby and Dr. N. A. M. Mackenzie) into every part of Canada. During a long public career Mr. Massey had been High Commissioner for Canada in London from 1935 and throughout the war years to 1946. Still earlier he had been the first Canadian Minister to the United States (1927-1930), and he had been briefly in the Cabinet just before the general election of 1930 (he had been a candidate, but had been defeated, so that he never sat

in the House of Commons).

Though the appointment of a Canadian citizen had been talked about from time to time (and though there were, or were to be, examples of "native-born" Governors-General in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia) the actual appointment brought out many expressions of opinion, pro and con. A few people felt that the office could never be the same if the "British" tradition were severed; they may have supposed that no Canadian could "stand aside" from the everyday rise and fall of politics in the fashion in which it was expected an "outsider" might still act. On the other hand, staunch Canadians argued that Her Majesty's personal representative should properly by now *be* a Canadian; that such a representative could sustain all of the honourable and useful traditions and usages of the office while adding a flavour that was contemporary and deliberately Canadian. By this latter standard Mr. Massey would have ranked at the very top in any company. His position was enhanced by the fact that he was already a Privy Councillor and was known personally to the Queen and to the Royal Family. Her Majesty (then still H. R. H. the Princess Elizabeth) had with her husband been in Canada the previous year, and was to come to Canada again while Mr. Massey was Governor-General.

In the event, Mr. Massey now threw himself into the challenge and the opportunity of a "Canadian" office with vigour, enthusiasm, and sensitivity. He carried the Governor-General's voice and presence into many Canadian communities for the first time, as well as revisiting many which he had known from earlier years. He attended university convocations and ceremonies of installation (he was later to serve for a term as Chancellor of the University of Toronto); he received honorary degrees and honorary fellowships from many learned and professional bodies. He dealt with a much-expanded *corps diplomatique* in Ottawa. In more than one public speech he said he "thrived" on anniversaries; and he enhanced the office by the zest with which he entered into so many everyday "happenings" as well as official ceremonies. All of the "performing arts" found in him a ready champion. He had earlier, in Britain, served as Chairman of the Trustees of the National Gallery; he and his sons presented to the National Gallery of Canada an unusual and much-admired collection of modern paintings. He encouraged the geographers, the architects, the astronomers, the ex-service men and women, together with the literary expression and the cultural awareness of thousands and thousands of Canadians; and it must have been an enormous satisfaction to him to see The Canada Council brought into being.

My personal connection with Mr. Massey began at dinners of the Raleigh Club in Oxford in 1935. Long before, C. V. Massey (Balliol) had been a founder-member of this discussion club made up of undergraduate and senior members from the Commonwealth. He had been the first Treasurer and the second President; he presented the silver loving-cup from which the toast "The Empire of the Bretagnes" is honoured. He came to the 200th meeting of the Club at Rhodes House, Oxford, when a presentation was made to Professor Sir Reginald Coupland, for a long generation the *paterfamilias* and principal mentor of a staunch Oxford institution. In those years also Mr. Massey would give, once a year, a party in Oxford in honour of the Canadian members of the University; and it was invariably pleasant to be greeted in the Senior Common Room of Balliol, of which he was an Honorary Fellow. He was also an Honorary D.C.L. of the University of Oxford; and when Dr. C. J. Mackenzie was being installed as Chancellor of Carleton University in 1954 the Governor-General came in his Oxford academics. He received, on a later occasion, the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* from Carleton; and at a pleasant dinner given afterwards by the President, Mr. Massey enlivened the evening with witty and unforced reminiscences of many earlier academic occasions at home and abroad.

It would be invidious to single out particular recollections from such a wealth of "occasions" over nearly seven years. But I always had a personal fondness for a broadcast which Mr. Massey made to mark (I think) the 75th anniversary of Canadian Federation. In a matter of minutes he had recreated, verbally, the Quebec Conference of 1864; the Fathers of Confederation, frock coats, top hats, full beards and gold watch-chains—it was a wonderful example of imagery taking hold of the listener. His published addresses, bearing the title "Canadian Occasions", cover an extraordinary range of interests and ceremonies, couched in the language of learning and judgement which helped to make the Report of the Massey Commission a landmark in reporting to the Government and people of Canada. A little book of poems which he wrote and published in wartime London—"The Sword of Lion-Heart"—had a wide readership. It was a spontaneous tribute by a Canadian to the indomitable spirit of the British Isles—and especially of London—during more than five years of war. It had been Mr. Massey's idea that the upraised sword of the equestrian statue of Richard I (Coeur de Lion), bent by bomb blast during an air attack on London, should stay bent; but the Minister of Works decided otherwise.

Mr. Massey was, as his successors also were, Patron of World University Service of Canada (the continuing body of the oldest international organization of students in the world). On one occasion in 1958 when the officers, and the directors of the Canadian Summer Seminar (West Indies) were meeting in Ottawa, Mr. Massey invited this group to call at Government House. The Governor-General had lately entered into the fun-making on stage of the McGill University Revue, "My Fur Lady". In introducing Wilfred Hastings, of the Seminar staff, I had intended to say that he had played the part of the Governor-General in this Revue. But Mr. Massey was too quick for me: he heard the name, took one searching look, and said "Ha! My *alter ego!*"

The first Canadian Governor-General was succeeded by another stalwart Canadian, Major-General Georges Philéas Vanier. In a distinguished career he had combined the Army, the law, diplomacy and wartime service, and diplomacy again, in an extraordinary blending of the courtliness of the French race in Canada with the heightened sense of public responsibility and private example long known through those of British ancestry. He had been grievously wounded in the First World War as an officer of the Royal 22nd Regiment. He was later to command it (after his death his ashes were interred in the Memorial Chapel of the Regiment in The Citadel at Quebec). He was briefly an ADC at Government House in Lord Byng's time. In 1924 he had been posted to Geneva for quasi-diplomatic duties, including a continuing concern for questions of disarmament, and in 1931 he came to London as Official Secretary at Canada House. It was there that I first met him; in 1933 I wrote examinations which I hoped might lead to entry into the Department of External Affairs as a Third Secretary. Colonel Vanier was the official invigilator for these examinations—they turned out to be a civil sort of proceeding because tea was provided at four o'clock on the two afternoons. Over 30 years later, when His Excellency came formally to open Brock University on October 19, 1964, these London examinations were recalled by his accepting the honorary designation of Invigilator-General of the University. He said, with great charm, that he accepted with alacrity because he expected to have nothing to invigilate but success.

In the interval there had been many pleasant meetings. From London General Vanier moved to Paris as Canadian Minister to France, and he stuck at that post with exemplary devotion in circumstances of war and invasion until he left French shores, first in a fishing boat and then aboard a Canadian destroyer in the Bay of Biscay. At a later period in the war he was Minister

in London to seven of the Allied Governments in Exile. When the administration of the Free French was recognized in Algeria, General Vanier took up residence there; and it was both symbolic and moving that he became the first Ambassador of the Allied Powers to re-open an Embassy in Paris. I remember still the thrill of seeing the first resumed telegram on a pink form (the colour which belonged to the Canadian mission in Paris) re-emerging in everyday use after more than four years.

During the Paris Conference on Peace Treaties in 1946 I came personally under General Vanier's direction for several weeks, especially in connection with journeys which the Prime Minister, then in Paris, made to battlefields and cemeteries, in Normandy and at Dieppe, where Canadians had been in combat and now lie buried. The Ambassador was active from morning till night, translating from English to French and, where required, from French to English, with all the grace and courtesy of a *grand seigneur*. Still later, when I came to Paris in 1949 on UNESCO business, General Vanier accompanied me to a ceremony at the Institut Pasteur at which I handed over, on behalf of the Canadian Council for Reconstruction through UNESCO, a credit to enable the Institut to replace much of the precision equipment which had been destroyed or stolen during the war years.

Back in Canada, General Vanier found many occupations, including service as a member of the Canada Council. When he was appointed to succeed Mr. Massey, he continued the wide outreach of his predecessor in myriad matters of cultural, educational, scientific, and social welfare interest. In all of this he was powerfully aided by Madame Vanier. The roles were momentarily reversed on a day of academic pageantry at the University of Ottawa when Madame Vanier was formally installed as Chancellor, and the Governor-General as her husband was seated, a little distance off, as a distinguished and interested spectator.

General Vanier, with Madame Vanier, came one day to Carleton University during my term as Chairman of the National Committee on World University Service of Canada formally to open the annual meeting of the Assembly, and to inspect an exhibition and sale of handcrafts from many countries under the title "Treasure Van". His Excellency wore the academic robes of an honorary doctor of the Royal Military College of Canada; and he made a most delightful and thoughtful speech, as was his habit, partly in English and partly in French.

General Vanier spoke and wrote the two official languages of Canada with quite unusual distinction. From personal acquaintance I know that he

worked tirelessly to find exactly the right word for the particular occasion, and it was a happy thought that one of his sons should have made and published a selection from the Governor-General's many "public occasions". I found particularly moving the eulogy which General Vanier broadcast after the death of Pope John XXIII, whom he had known in Paris when his Holiness had been Papal Nuncio to France. And the delight with which the Governor-General led up to the granting of a half-holiday from school—long an unofficial "prerogative" of his Excellency—suggested that he too remained perpetually youthful in mind and heart.

General Vanier died in office at a moment when plans for the celebration of 100 years of Canadian Federation were well advanced, including as they did the tremendous achievement of Expo '67 at Montreal, and the visits to Canada of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, and of more than 40 heads of state. The ceremonial requirements suggested that the office of Governor-General could not conveniently be left vacant, and to it was appointed, amid widespread public acclaim and appreciation, the Rt. Hon. Roland Michener.

At that moment Mr. Michener was High Commissioner for Canada at New Delhi, a post which since its inception has drawn upon the sensitivity and humanity of a succession of very distinguished Canadians. Because of the urgency of time, a Yukon Aircraft of the Canadian Armed Forces was sent to fly Mr. and Mrs. Michener to London; from London, after a brief visit at Buckingham Palace they flew onward by Air Canada and assumed the myriad duties of Government House within the week.

During his years in the House of Commons Mr. Michener had earned a deservedly high and lasting reputation because of the personal qualities he had brought to the office of Speaker for, quite apart from singular fairness and dignity, he adorned these public tasks with wit and with fluency in the languages of Parliament. He vacated the office because of his defeat in Toronto-St. Pauls (a kind of Parliamentary history has been made when one former Rhodes Scholar defeated another). He was thereafter appointed High Commissioner to India; at a dinner in Toronto in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Michener before their departure, given jointly by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and the Canadian Association of Rhodes Scholars, I had the great pleasure as President of the latter body of saying a few words of good wishes.

It was in the Rhodes Scholar fraternity that I had first met Mr. Michener a number of years earlier. Both before and after his serving as a Member in the Legislature of Ontario and for a time as Provincial Secretary, he was General Secretary for Canada of the Rhodes Trust. In this office he succeeded the Hon. J. M. Macdonnell. His own time at Oxford as Rhodes Scholar from Alberta in 1919 was at Hertford College, of which he is an Honorary Fellow. He was for many years engaged in the practice of law in Toronto; he also served for several years as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Council of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

In the years from 1947 onward the most substantial number of Rhodes Scholars in any one place in Canada was in Ottawa (one day at luncheon at Carleton University in honour of Lord Amory, then a Rhodes Trustee, he looked over the assembled company and said, with a twinkle in his eye, "I assume that a half-holiday has been declared at the East Block.") From time to time on request of the General Secretary I had the pleasant duty of arranging these agreeable functions—sometimes dinners in honour of visiting Rhodes Trustees, sometimes informal gatherings to compare notes with scholars more recently returned from Oxford.

This association was one which I valued highly, and though I moved from Ottawa to St. Catharines at the end of 1963 when I took on new duties at Brock University, it continued with only a minor interruption. On October 6, 1969, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Sir Isaac Brock, the Governor-General and Mrs. Michener spent a happy day under university auspices. They drove from Niagara Falls to the Brock Monument at Queenston Heights, where a wreath was laid, continuing to the spot in Queenston Village where Brock fell in battle in September, 1812; thence to Niagara-on-the-Lake, to inspect the burial record kept in St. Mark's Church, then to walk through lines of school children assembled in Simcoe Park, and then to meet officers of local government in the historic Town Hall. After lunch at Brock University, His Excellency, together with the Bailiff of Guernsey (the island birthplace of Sir Isaac Brock) received the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*; and he formally declared open the then newest building of the new university. As part of the ceremony Mr. Michener also accepted the honorary designation of Invigilator-General which had first been held by General Vanier. It was a wonderful day of pageantry in the open air. The Governor-General's interest was the keener because some of his forbears had settled in Lincoln County; and although he had been born in Alberta he had once gone to school for a year not far from the site of the University.

Over the course of 130 years the office of Governor-General has seen a variety of changes. As the relationship with the Government of the United Kingdom has altered—the Governor-General was their “creation” down to 1926—so has the mentality and the equipment of self-government. The progressive devolution of authority from London to Ottawa—as elsewhere within the Commonwealth—has added to the stature of the office “on the spot” in circumstances where many of the responsibilities may seem to have become nominal. The responsibilities—especially the ultimate task of ensuring that the Queen’s Government is maintained—are still there; under the existing system they always will be. The Governor-General has become, in a sense not perhaps originally intended, a “head of state”; and he has been so regarded in travelling abroad. Mr. and Mrs. Michener have visited various parts of the busy world-community of the 1970s: the Caribbean islands, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg; and, more recently Iran for celebrations commemorating 2500 years of the Persian dynasty.

The Governor-General’s office has one indestructible attribute. As he is the personal representative of the Sovereign, in his own person he can exercise in Canada any of the prerogative powers which the Queen might exercise if she were present in person in Her Majesty’s Realm of Canada. The Governor-General is in this sense a strong contemporary embodiment of the notion of Responsible Government and of the appropriate autonomy of Canadian nationhood; and the extent to which he can continue to be a gracious and sensitive personification of this notion of nationhood will be one measure of the success of his office.