

# History In The Making

AT the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in Toronto on 23-24 May, the announcement was made of the appointment of Colonel C. P. Stacey, O.B.E., as Official Historian (Army) of the War of 1939-1945. At this meeting Colonel Stacey read a paper on "The Nature of an Official History" in which he outlined his plans for the production of Canada's official account of her military contribution to victory in the recent world struggle. It may, therefore, be of interest to sketch something of the general background of this ambitious project.

Although Julius Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, which has so often plagued the high school student struggling with his first Latin prose, may perhaps be regarded as one of the earliest "official" military histories, official war histories as the "authorized version" published under government auspices is a comparatively recent development in historiography. The Germans were the first in this field about the middle of the 19th century. The first British official military history was the account of the South African War which was compiled by direction of the British Government and published between 1906 and 1910.

## Historiography of World War I

Following the Great War of 1914-1919 practically every country of the British Commonwealth undertook to prepare official studies of their respective war efforts. The British official military history, compiled by the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence under the direction of Sir James Edmonds, already comprises some thirty-six volumes of text, appendices and maps, and is still unfinished. The Australian history which was concluded in 1942 consists of twelve volumes: the New Zealand official history comprises four volumes and that produced by South Africa, one volume.

During the War of 1914-19 the Cana-

dian Records Office, under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel the Lord Beaverbrook, undertook the twofold task of compiling historical data relating to the overseas military forces of Canada and of giving publicity to the work and achievements of Canadian troops in the field. The Records Office was accordingly divided into a Historical Section and a Publicity Section. The first named was responsible for the collection of war diaries, the recording of honours and awards and the collection of regimental badges and insignia. This Section was also responsible for the preservation of unit property and for interviewing prisoners of war for historical purposes. The Publicity Section undertook the preparation of short popular histories of Canadian units, various articles and pamphlets for publicity purposes and the publication of the three volumes of *Canada in Flanders*.

The Canadian War Records Office was disbanded at the conclusion of hostilities against Germany and the task of compiling the official record of Canada's part in the Great War of 1914-1919 devolved upon the Historical Section, General Staff, Department of National Defence, under the direction of Colonel A. F. Duguid, D.S.O. In addition to this task the Historical Section was called upon to perform numerous other functions, such, for instance, as the composition of inscriptions for war memorials, investigations relating to pension claims, battle honours, and the historical record carved in stone in the Memorial Chamber in the Houses of Parliament at Ottawa.

Accordingly slow progress was made in reducing the great mass of documentary material into manageable form for publication. In 1925 the *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919*, *The Medical Services* written by Sir Andrew MacPhail was published; and in 1938 the first volume of the *Official History of the Canadian Forces*

*in the Great War 1916-1919, General Series* by Colonel A. F. Duguid, appeared in the bookshops. This volume, which covered the mobilization of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1914 and its operations up to September, 1915, was accompanied by a volume of appendices. Work on the second volume had, unfortunately, to be suspended when war was declared in September, 1939, and has only recently been resumed.

### The Historical Section

Drawing lessons from the earlier war, the Canadian military authorities made arrangements at a fairly early date to lay the foundations for an official history of the war which began in September, 1939. Within a year steps were taken to establish an overseas Historical Section with the appointment of Colonel (then Major) C. P. Stacey as Historical Officer at Canadian Military Headquarters. In 1942 the Section was enlarged to include Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) G. F. G. Stanley; and between 1943 and 1944 further officers were added to the strength of the Historical Section, including Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Sam Hughes, Captain (later Lieutenant-Colonel) W. E. C. Harrison, and Major G. S. Graham. At the conclusion of hostilities no less than ten officers were employed in historical duties at Canadian Military Headquarters.

In addition to the personnel working in London, other officers served in the field as Historical Officers attached to the several Divisional and Corps Headquarters of the Canadian Army.

In 1943 the decision that Canadian troops should participate along with the British and Americans in the projected operations against the island of Sicily made it urgent that some form of historical organization should be set up to cover field operations. No Historical Officer had been present at the Dieppe Raid in August, 1942, and the difficulties encountered by the Historical Section at Canadian Military Headquarters in compiling a detailed record of this operation prompted the suggestion that a special

officer might be attached to the Headquarters of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division in order to ensure that adequate historical "coverage" might be achieved. Despite a mild, but understandable suspicion on the part of the other members of the Divisional staff of this new and unfamiliar species of staff officer, the suggestion was adopted and an Historical Officer accompanied the Canadian troops who landed on the beaches south of Pachino on 10 July, 1943.

### Historical Officers

The duties of this officer were, in broad terms, the collection and preservation of military documents of historical value, the gathering of personal accounts from actual participants and the giving of advice to units and formations on the writing of war diaries.

The Historical Officer at first encountered some reluctance on the part of commanding officers and others to talk freely about the conduct of operations to a comparatively junior officer; but in the end he succeeded in winning their confidence and during the course of the Sicilian Campaign collected a great deal of information which now forms part of the historical record of that Campaign. Owing to the success of this experiment arrangements were quickly and easily made to attach Historical Officers to the Headquarters of 1st Canadian Corps and 5th Canadian (Armoured) Division when those formations proceeded to the Mediterranean theatre of operations.

The next step was the formation of a special field historical organization divided into two sections known as the 1st and 2nd Field Historical Sections, which served in Italy and North-West Europe respectively. These sections were self-contained units, complete with vehicles, drivers and clerks. The officer in charge of a Field Historical Section was attached to a Corps Headquarters and detachments were allotted to each Division. When the Canadian troops in Italy were finally reunited with their brothers in arms in North-West Europe in the early months of 1945, the two field sections

were amalgamated, and the officer in charge was attached to Headquarters, First Canadian Army.

The Historical Officers who served in the field experienced all the hardships and dangers of the various campaigns. An Historical Officer landed with the troops of the 3rd Canadian Division on the beaches of Normandy on 6 June, 1944. During the clearing of the Scheldt Estuary the Historical Officer with the 2nd Canadian Division was killed in actual combat with the enemy.

After a period of active operations the officers with the Field Historical Sections were recalled to Canadian Military Headquarters in London where they were employed in writing accounts of the operations of the formations to which they had been attached. Replacements were sent to the field to carry on the work of collecting material. In this way it was possible for the Historical Section to make a serious beginning on the work of compiling operational narratives while the fighting was still in progress and while the memories of events were still fresh in the minds of actual participants, vivid and unobscured by the passage of time and too much reflection.

In addition to these operational narratives the Historical Section at Canadian Military Headquarters undertook to prepare a comprehensive history of the Canadian Army in England from the time of the arrival of the first Canadian troops in December, 1939. This historical narrative dealt not only with the organization, training and equipment of the Canadian troops during the static period, but also with their historic role in the defence of Britain at the time when that island kingdom was the last bastion of freedom in Europe. No effort was made to produce a work with claims to literary merit; the narrative was intended solely as a work of reference for the Official Historian and not as a finished account for publication. This work is being continued in London, and is well on the way toward completion.

Meanwhile, the Historical Section, General Staff, undertook the preparation

of similar narratives at Ottawa. Among others, a detailed account of the Canadian share in the Kiska Operation has been completed. Since the conclusion of hostilities several members of the Overseas Historical Section have returned to Canada and are presently employed on the preparation of a comprehensive narrative of the history of the Canadian Army in Canada and adjacent regions, along the lines of that being compiled at Canadian Military Headquarters.

In addition to the written records discussed above, the Historical Section has also been responsible for the pictorial records produced by the several war artists who have been employed by the Canadian Army.

### Pictorial Records

During the Great War of 1914-1919 the profits derived from the sale of official photographs and publications were used in part to acquire historical records of a new kind. Approximately sixty artists were employed to paint pictures illustrating Canada's share in the war. Fourteen of these artists were Canadian army officers, while the remainder were civilians. The works of art produced by these men are now in the possession of the National Gallery at Ottawa, where, unfortunately, owing to the limitations of space, they have been displayed all too infrequently.

A similar pictorial record of the recent war has also been acquired. As early as October, 1941, W. A. Ogilvie, then a trooper in the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars, was employed as an army war artist in an unofficial capacity. In the following year the Canadian Government authorized the employment of war artists to serve with the Canadian troops wherever they might be engaged on land, at sea, or in the air. A committee was set up in Canada to select the artists. This committee included representatives of the Historical Sections of the three services under the chairmanship of Mr. H. O. McCurry, Director of the National Gallery of Canada. A similar committee, of which



the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, High Commissioner for Canada, was chairman, was formed overseas.

Among the artists who were commissioned in the Canadian Army as war artists were several who were already serving in a combatant capacity; several were commissioned from the ranks; others were commissioned directly from civilian life. The Army war artists included Majors C. F. Comfort, R.C.A., and W. A. Ogilvie; Captains L. P. Harris, A.R.C.A., G. D. Pepper, A.R.C.A., O. N. Fisher, E. H. Hughes, D. A. Colville, B. J. Bobak and G. C. Tinning; and Lieutenants T. R. Macdonald and Molly Bobak. The last named was appointed a war artist in 1945 to record the activities of the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

These artists served with the Canadian troops both in Italy and in North-West Europe. They were carried on the strength of the Field Historical Sections and in this way became thoroughly familiar and identified with the life of the troops whose activities they were depicting. After varying periods of service the artists returned to London to develop on canvas the sketches which they had made in the field. All of them are now back in Canada completing their programme of work in studios at Ottawa. By the end of the year they will have returned to civil life; but they will leave behind them a collection of sketches and paintings in water colour, gouache and oil, which form a permanent and authentic record of the experiences of Canada's fighting men. It is a record which will grow in interest and value as the years pass.

In addition to the works by Canadian artists the Dominion has recently been presented with seventy-four pictures by British artists who worked amongst the Canadian troops during the early years of the war, before the Canadian War Art programme had been fully organized.

Several exhibitions of Canadian war art were held overseas; in Campobasso, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam and London. During the last year of the war one room of the War Art Exhibition

in the National Gallery in London was permanently set aside for the work of Canadian artists. These exhibitions were widely attended both by the troops and by civilians; and they elicited high praise from the critics in the several countries concerned.

Two exhibitions of these paintings and sketches have been held in Canada. The first was held during 1945 at the National Gallery in Ottawa and more recently a second and more comprehensive show representing all three services was opened by His Excellency the Governor-General on 16 May. It is anticipated that arrangements will be made for travelling exhibitions of all or part of the present exhibition to be sent to the various parts of the country.

### Publications

The work of the Historical Section during the last six years has not been entirely preparatory in character. Several articles dealing with the part played by Canadian troops in England, Scotland, Spitzbergen and Gibraltar, written by members of the Section, appeared during the course of the war in *The Canadian Geographical Journal*. A series of three popular booklets entitled *The Canadians in Britain 1939-1944*, *From Pachino to Ortona* and *Canada's Battle in Normandy* have been written; the first two have been on the bookstalls since the beginning of the year and the third is on the point of publication. All are copiously illustrated with official Canadian military photographs and with colour and black and white reproductions of war artists' sketches and paintings. Work is also in progress on *The Canadian Army 1939-1945*, *An Official Historical Sketch*, a single-volume popular history of Canada's part in the war, which is to be published early in 1947. This book will be essentially for the general reader rather than for the professional officer or the military historian. In this respect it will constitute a break with the traditional official military history which has, all too often, had only a limited interest and small circulation.

Long range plans envisage the publication in approximately five years of a series of four volumes. These volumes will cover the activities of the Canadian troops in Canada, England, Italy and North-West Europe; one volume is to

be devoted to each of these regions. When completed this work will, it is hoped, form a permanent and inspiring monument to the Canadian officers and men who fought in three continents the battle for human freedom.

## Rural Local Government in The United States

By JOSEPH M. RAY

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The problems of local government in rural areas of the United States are very similar to those existing in Canada as may be seen from Mr. Ray's article. The author, recently appointed head of the Political Science Department of the University of Maryland, has for a number of years been Assistant Director of the Alabama Bureau of Public Administration. While there he gave special attention to municipal government.

**F**OR many years the county has been considered the "dark continent" of American politics. Any well-formed person in those parts of the country where the county is the basic unit of local government knows that the level of performance of county government in general falls considerably below that of states, and cities. Why is this? Why cannot the county governments of a given state compare favorably with the state government? Why does the average city turn in a higher order of performance than does the county which includes it?

### Decline in Relative Importance

There are many reasons for the sad plight of county government. Perhaps it should be noted at the outset that county government suffers by comparison because of the decline in its relative importance. It has remained largely unchanged while other governments have expanded in scope and function. Expansion of functions in such fields of activity as health, welfare, and highways has been implemented usually on the county level, but the county's part in such programs has been largely determined for it by statutory and administrative action on the federal state levels. The county has thus come down in its pristine form, with few adaptations to the exigencies of modern democratic government.

### Archaic Governmental Structure and Machinery

One of the most serious burdens on county government has been its form of government. Almost invariably the county in America is governed by a board or commission. This board of several members is entrusted with the conduct of county government. Responsibility is thus diffused and impaired.

The chairman of the board may be elected as chairman, he may be chosen by the board, or the county judge may act in that capacity. The chairman, however selected, rarely is vested officially with superior powers. He is authorized merely as *primus inter pares*. Democratic responsibility works well only with responsible leadership. Leadership in county government is frequently non-existent. When it does exist, it is usually obscured by the governmental mechanism and is thus not responsible. And in too many instances it takes the form of boss or strong-man rule, with little or no popular responsibility.

The board usually performs all three of the basic governmental powers: it legislates, adjudicates, and administers. Its judicial functions are vestigial and minor, but, where the county judge acts as a member of the board, there is a clear overlapping of personnel exercising judicial and other powers. County boards do customarily exercise both legislative and administrative powers. The separation of powers is thus entirely ignored. Indeed, it might well be ignored if, in doing so, the basic objection to it were remedied by establishing clearer lines of responsibility to the people. As the