

Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

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ANNUAL REPORT, 1923

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

(C. MARIUS BARBEAU)

The annual meeting of the association was held in the Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa, on the evening of May 24, and at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. of May 25.

On the evening of May 24 before a large audience the popular addresses were given by Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee, the president of the association, on "The North West Company," and Professor Basil Williams, of McGill University, on "Francis Parkman."

The members present and the affiliated societies represented were: Professor Archibald MacMechan, Mr. Diamond Jenness, Mr. G. E. Wilson, Professor Chester Martin (representing the Manitoba

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Historical Society), Professor Wm. H. Atherton, Mr. John Wallace (representing the Wentworth Historical Society), Major J. Plimsoll Edwards (representing the Nova Scotia Historical Society), Mrs. J. M. Somerville, Mrs. J. B. Simpson (representing the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa), Mrs. E. J. Thompson (representing the Niagara Historical Society), Mr. Pemberton Smith (representing the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society of Montreal), Professor Chester W. New, Mrs. E. F. Colson (representing the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire), Professor Basil Williams, Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee, Hon. F. W. Howay (representing the British Columbia Historical Association), Dr. James H. Coyne (representing the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute), Mr. J. F. Kenney, M. Montarville Boucher de La Bruère, Mr. R. C. Bowen, Mr. A. R. M. Lower, Dr. J. C. Webster, Mr. James White, Mr. Francis J. Audet, Mr. J. B. Harkin, Mr. D. B. Dowling, Brigadier-General E. A. Cruikshank, Mr. H. R. Holmden, Mr. C. Marius Barbeau and others.

At the morning and afternoon meetings of May 25, various matters relating to the activities of the association were discussed, and the addresses and papers read were the following:—

Professor Archibald MacMechan, on "How history should be taught in our schools;"

Mr. Diamond Jenness, on "Two monuments in Arctic Canada;"

Dr. D. B. Dowling, on "Rocky Mountain House and other early posts near the foothills of the Rocky mountains;"

Mr. C. Marius Barbeau, on "Port Simpson;"

Mr. Pemberton Smith, on "The passing of the sailing ship at Quebec;"

M. Montarville Boucher de La Bruère, on "Lafontaine, Rolph et Papineau; épisodes de 1838 et de 1843;"

Judge F. W. Howay, on "The Spanish discovery of British Columbia in 1774;"

Mr. James White, on "Historic aspects of the Labrador boundary question;"

Dr. J. C. Webster, on "Methods of teaching history."

The Report of the Treasurer was presented, and adopted on the motion of Major J. Plimsoll Edwards.

The Report of the Standing Committee on Historic Landmarks was presented, and its adoption was moved by Mr. Pemberton Smith, the chairman.

After the new Constitution was read the final adoption of its clauses was moved by Pemberton Smith, and seconded by Archibald MacMechan and Wm. H. Atherton.

Mr. John Wallace, as representative of the Wentworth Historical Society, brought forward a motion urging the association to help

in insuring the preservation of Burlington Heights, on the Niagara peninsula, as a national park. The following memorandum was appended to the motion:—

THE BURLINGTON HEIGHTS

The matter which I wish to bring to the notice of the association concerns a movement in the city of Hamilton to-day with regard to the preservation and purchase of the Burlington Heights, one of the most interesting historic spots in the Dominion of Canada.

Geology plays a part in the making of the history of any war, but I have no intention of enlarging upon that particular phase of geology in relation to history. We would like to draw attention to the fact that had it not been for this peculiar narrow neck of land, about two miles long, a quarter of a mile wide and over a hundred feet high, the battle of Stoney Creek would never have been fought. The strategy of the war of 1812-14 would have been different. It was due to the military strength of this position in those days that the Niagara peninsula is still under the Union Jack.

Up to 1856 the Burlington Heights were part of the British Admiralty lands abroad, and Downing Street then turned these lands (178 acres—see Statutes of Canada, 1859) over to Canada, but they have, unfortunately, with the exception of two lots, been alienated. The two lots preserved are the Old Military Cemetery, in which we believe are the bodies of British soldiers, Americans who were shot as spies, and between 700 and 900 Irish emigrants who died on the wharves and around Dundas of ship fever (which takes us back to the days of the terrible Irish Famine).

The Wentworth Historical Society has been doing everything possible to have the remaining small part of the original rampart, erected in 1812, reserved for all time. Part of it is now in the possession of a Hamilton citizen, who has proposed to put a mausoleum there. The property adjoining the cemetery is owned by the Armstrong Supply Company whose activities are now invading the edge of the cemetery. Many parts have fallen in and only last week the last of the original markers fell in, due to the erosion caused by the gravel digging.

The Society of which I am a member is strongly of the opinion that the Burlington Heights should be a National and Historic Park. I trust that this association will take some action in the matter.—*John Wallace.*

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The motion was followed by discussion and further elucidation, in which Mr. Pemberton Smith and Professor W. H. Atherton took part.

Professor MacMechan's address on "How history should be taught in our schools," was followed by an interesting discussion in which participated Mrs. E. J. Thompson, Professor Chester W. New, Dr. J. C. Webster, Professor Chester Martin, Mr. J. F. Kenney, Dr. James Coyne, Brigadier-General Cruikshank, and Mr. L. J. Burpee.

Mrs. E. J. Thompson stated that, in her opinion, "children should first be taught the history of their own locality and province and thus be brought to feel the importance of the history of the whole Dominion. If children are shown the places of historical interest in their own neighbourhood, they become conscious of the fact that they are part of its history;" and the speaker added, "For the past twenty years I have tried to impress this point on various educational associations."

Dr. J. C. Webster then developed the following ideas: Canadian history as taught in our schools is dreary drudgery; the school books are uninteresting, devoid of illustrations of any kind. European schools in that respect are far better equipped than we are. Ocular demonstration through wall pictures, according to a French authority, is the greatest influence in the development of a love of country and a knowledge of its history. Moving pictures and lantern slides are equally important. The speaker emphasized the point of how ignorant the people of Canada are of their own historic sites and how indifferent to their history as a whole. For seven years he had himself experimented with various methods of teaching history in the schools of the Maritime Provinces and his campaign had produced valuable results. The Secretary of State for Canada, the Dominion Archives, the Department of the Interior, and the Canadian Historical Association have decided to collaborate in a scheme to provide illustrations for the teaching of Canadian history. Slides, skeleton lectures and other materials will soon be available free of charge for educational purposes.

Dr. Chester W. New supported Professor MacMechan's proposal for an historical atlas, stating, "The Canadian Historical Association should give its hearty support to everything that would make the study of Canadian history in the schools more interesting. It was the experience of probably every teacher of history in Canadian universities that fully seventy-five per cent of every freshman class had acquired a profound distaste for history in general and a special hatred for Canadian history in particular. There was something very wrong somewhere, and the association might be able to get under some of the difficulties in bringing about appropriate reforms. If the plan for the atlas successfully developed the association would probably

have also to see that it was introduced in the schools. Teachers must be encouraged to use supplementary material of this sort. It is our hope that some day a good source book of Canadian history may be prepared for use in the schools."

Professor Chester Martin commended the new educational scheme as expounded by Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee, the president of the association, and by Dr. J. C. Webster, its originator. Enthusiasm for the study of history as it exists in the universities is lacking in the lower schools. What is the use of speaking of Gothic architecture without illustrations to children who know only grain elevators. History must be "put over," according to the American term, otherwise it is of no use. The West will gladly cooperate in any enterprise that will make the teaching of history in the schools more effective and successful.

The resolution was then moved by Professor Archibald MacMechan and seconded by Dr. J. C. Webster, Professor Chester Martin and Mr. Pemberton Smith—That the incoming executive of the association be requested to make an estimate of costs for publishing an album or atlas illustrating the history of Canada, both French and English, to be used as a school-book, with a view to approaching the Government and obtaining its financial support; also the executive should remain actively interested in the scheme of the Dominion Archives to prepare lantern slides on the history of Canada for educational purposes.

The question of totem-pole villages and the destruction of ancient aboriginal art on the northwest coast was then introduced through a letter received from Mr. Harlan I. Smith, the archæologist of the Victoria Memorial Museum. In the course of the discussion Mr. J. B. Harkin stated that the conservation of native art and relics should be of deep concern. Recently it was reported that the picturesque Alert Bay totem poles were to be cut down and sold. There is no doubt that the question of saving native art from total destruction will soon have to be faced. The Departments of Mines and Indian Affairs had recently appointed a committee to report on the matter. Mr. C. M. Barbeau added that since 1915, to his own knowledge, two former totem-pole villages of the Tsimshian had ceased to exist—those of Port Simpson and Ayaensh, between the Nass and Skeena rivers; and others were threatened. Misguided religious revivals among the natives and fanatical mob crazes were to blame. A motion was passed unanimously supporting the committee of the Department of Mines and of Indian Affairs in every effort to prevent further intentional destruction of totem poles and to devise some means for their preservation.

Moved by J. F. Kenney and seconded by C. M. Barbeau—That the thanks of the Canadian Historical Association be conveyed to the

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Department of the Interior, Parks Branch, for the publication of the Annual Report of the Association for 1922.

Moved by Mrs. J. M. Somerville and seconded by Mrs. E. J. Thompson—That this association wishes to record its deep sorrow at the death of Mr. George Durnford, and desires to convey its sympathies to the bereaved family. Mr. Durnford was the charter treasurer of this association at the time when it was known by its former name, The Historic Landmarks Association. He came of a family of interest to the people of Ottawa: his grandfather, Colonel Durnford (afterwards General Durnford), was the Royal Engineer in charge of public works in Canada at the time that John By built the Rideau canal; and Colonel Durnford came up to Ottawa several times to inspect the work while it was in progress.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Moved by F. W. Howay and seconded by Archibald MacMechan—That Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee be elected as president of the Canadian Historical Association.

Moved by J. C. Webster and seconded by Chester Martin—That Mr. Pemberton Smith be elected vice-president of the association. Mr. Smith retired in favour of the former vice-president, Mr. W. D. Lighthall.

Moved by Pemberton Smith and seconded by F. W. Howay—That C.-M. Barbeau be elected to the office of secretary-treasurer.

Moved by Chester Martin and seconded by J. Plimsoll Edwards—That Mr. J. F. Kenney be elected to the office of editor.

Moved by Chester W. New and seconded by Mrs. E. F. Colson—That Professor G. M. Wrong, M. Pierre-Georges Roy, Judge F. W. Howay, Dr. A. G. Doughty, and Professors Archibald MacMechan and Chester Martin be elected as members of the council.

Moved by J. C. Webster and seconded by James H. Coyne—That Mr. Pemberton Smith, M. Æ. Fauteux, Mr. J. B. Harkin, Mrs. Simpson and Hon. W. R. Riddell constitute the Standing Committee on Historic Landmarks, with power to add to their numbers, the first-named to be chairman.

Moved by H. R. Holmden and seconded by Montarville Boucher de La Bruère—That Col. J. F. Cunningham be elected to the office of auditor.

Moved by Wm. H. Atherton and seconded by Mrs. J. B. Simpson—That the association desires to express its appreciation of the services of Col. J. F. Cunningham as auditor for the past year.

Moved by Pemberton Smith and seconded by F. W. Howay—That the thanks of the association be extended to the officers for the efficient discharge of their duties in the past year.

C. MARIUS BARBEAU,

Secretary.