

04.7

224 e

**Early Scottish  
Influence in . .  
North America**



BIBLIOTHÈQUE  
SAINT-SULPICE

....By....

**Jarquhar Stuart Maclellennan, B.C.L.**

# EARLY SCOTTISH INFLUENCE IN.. NORTH AMERICA

LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
CALEDONIAN SOCIETY OF MONTREAL,  
IN ST. ANDREW'S HOME, ON 7TH  
JANUARY, 1898. . . . .

BY

FARQUHAR STUART MACLENNAN, B.C.L.



MONTREAL :

"WITNESS" PRINTING HOUSE.

1898.

# EARLY SCOTTISH INFLUENCE IN NORTH AMERICA.



Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen :

To the love of adventure and gain, the glory of discovery and the renown which attached to successful enterprise along the coasts of the newly-discovered continent of America, we can ascribe the heroism and fortitude which possessed the hearts of the early adventurers and explorers, who in high spirits and full of hope left the known world in search of the plunder and rich rewards they expected to reap in the new. France and Spain were early rivals in discovery and adventure, but the prize was so great that the conflict for its possession was not serious between these great powers. Fur and gold were the two main objects which attracted the attention of the early discoverers. The fiery Spaniard inflamed with the love of gold carried his discoveries over those brilliant countries scorched with tropical suns from Mexico to Peru and in search of the richly-paved streets of the mythical El Dorado which haunted the fertile brain of the ill-fated Raleigh, while the light-hearted Frenchman turned his face towards more northern lands in pursuit of the less splendid but profitable rewards of the chase and the forest, extending his adventure over the valley of the St. Lawrence and the snow-clad hills and plains of the "Great Lone" and "Wild North Land" which extended to and beyond the Arctic Circle. The Briton may have been slow in asserting his rights of discovery in the newly-found Continent, but when he did come, it was to remain until he conquered and his prowess and valour enabled him to unfurl beneath our clear northern skies the flag that proclaimed to the world that he acknowledged allegiance, proudly and devotedly, to the globe-encircling British Empire. Early in the 17th

century, a patriotic Scotchman and favourite at the Court of King James I.—Sir William Alexander—obtained a Royal grant of the Acadian peninsula with Cape Breton Island and the part of the mainland now occupied by New Brunswick and Gaspe. There was already a New England, a New France and a New Spain, and why should there not be a New Scotland? To the whole of this territory Sir William gave the name of Nova Scotia. It mattered not to him that a part of it was already in the possession of the French. By his Royal Charter he had the right to establish an Order of Knights Baronets of Nova Scotia, and in a period of ten years he issued over 100 patents of this new order of nobility, and to each Baronet he gave an estate of 18 square miles. He hoped to have established a solid Scotch Acadia, and thereby drive back the edge of battle between France and England to the very banks of the St. Lawrence. But his dreams were premature, the seeds of international war had been sown and the struggle for possession was only beginning. The infant Colony did not grow, for Acadia was the scene of many cruel and heart-rending conflicts before the glory of France was crushed over 100 years later on the Plains of Abraham by the brave and dauntless Wolfe. This was the first attempt to transplant Scotch settlers in America. The failure of the experiment was not due to any fault of the Scotchmen or to any want of suitability to the country. The scheme was chimerical and premature, and the territory which was the object of the grant was not in the possession of the British Crown, but was under the dominion of the King of France.

In the planting of the British Colonies between New England and Florida, the Scotch played no inconsiderable part, particularly in Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, where there were many distinctly Scotch settlements established in the early days. But as the history of our own country should be our first study and as in its early days under British rule Scotchmen played an important and honourable part, I intend to direct your attention to a very brief review of some of the services rendered to Canada and the British Crown by men of Scottish birth; and while we recall the exploits of

our countrymen in the New World, we must not forget what is due to their allies of French origin who were the pioneers of civilization in Canada.

During the French regime the fur trade was the most important industry of the country. It was profitable, though often carried on under great difficulties. To French explorers we owe much. They penetrated the wilderness through a spirit of adventure as well as for the love of gain. Though the boundaries of Canada in those days were not defined with the precision which marks the outposts of our territory to-day, the early French explorers had advanced our frontiers to the head waters of the Great Lakes, had gone down the Mississippi to its mouth, and had hemmed in the English Colonies on the Atlantic so that their western boundaries were the Alleghany Mountains. Between 1731 and 1745 Verandrye, a distinguished French explorer, and his sons, had gone beyond Lake Superior on to the Lake of the Woods, and to Red River, where they built Fort Rouge on the present site of the City of Winnipeg, and from thence up the Saskatchewan River to the base of the Rocky Mountains. Up the Ottawa, along the Great Lakes and across the plains, the brave-hearted and hardy Frenchmen had established a lucrative trade with the Indian trappers. A new and unique class of men grew out of this trade. They were known as *Courcurs des Bois*, rangers of the woods ; originally men who had accompanied the Indians in their hunting expeditions and become acquainted with remote tracts and tribes. These men were accustomed to set out from Montreal with canoes well stocked with goods, arms and ammunition and to make their way up the rivers and lakes, far inland, where they exchanged their wares for the products of the chase. They adapted themselves to the tastes and habits of the tribes with whom they traded, sometimes adopting the Indian dress and not infrequently taking to themselves Indian wives. As they passed the greater part of the time far removed from the restraints of civilization, amid the perfect freedom of the wilderness, it is not surprising that, when after an absence of perhaps 12, 15 or 18 months they returned to Montreal, the headquarters of trade, they gave way to

revelry and extravagance. Parkman says that "they conducted themselves much like the crew of a man-of-war paid off after a long voyage. As long as their beaver skins lasted, they set no bounds to their riot—and gambling and drinking filled the day and the night." With all the faults which have been attributed to them, they were a necessity of their day, and they carried far inland the claims of the French King to the territory of this Continent to the exclusion of all others. The Frenchmen of those days gave to France a Continent, but France thought little of the gift and fate took it back again. Nearly a century before the cession, the English had awakened to the importance of the Fur trade in North America, and in 1670 King Charles II. of England granted a charter to his cousin Prince Rupert and about 20 noblemen and gentlemen under the name of "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England and trading into Hudson's Bay," but commonly known as the Hudson's Bay Company, by which he assured the Company of the sole trade and commerce of Hudson's Bay and of all rivers and streams flowing into it, which were not already possessed by the subjects of any other Christian Prince or State. The territory was to be reputed a British Colony, and to be called "Rupert's Land." The members of the Company were to be absolute proprietors and lords. They alone were entitled to the exclusive trade of the land and were empowered to make laws and ordinances and to impose penalties and punishments. No English subject was to trade in the country without the leave of the Company, and for these great and exclusive powers and privileges, it was to pay annually a royalty of two elks and two black beavers. The Company began its mercantile operations with zeal and energy. It established trading posts, visited once a year by ships from England, at the mouths of some of the important rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay. It did not attempt to prosecute its trade inland. There was no necessity for the first 100 years why it should. The Indians brought their rich furs to the Posts on the Bay, where they exchanged them for the goods and gaudy trinkets brought there in the Company's ships. Many conflicts took place between the Company and the French, but

the latter were not able to displace the English adventurers, and when the Fleur-de-lis had given place to the red cross of England on the heights of Quebec, the Hudson's Bay Company was firmly established in its trade with the tribes visiting the great inland sea.

We will leave Hudson's Bay for the present and for a moment observe what is taking place in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence. The story of the taking of Quebec has been told so often that I would not now refer to it, were it not for the distinguished and gallant conduct of some of the Highland Regiments in that memorable conflict. The Fraser Highlanders and the Black Watch were with the gallant Wolfe at Louisburg, and right splendidly did they cover themselves with glory. They accompanied him to Quebec and foremost among the soldiers who scaled the steep banks of the St. Lawrence were the Frasers. As they approached the banks in their small boats, a French sentinel challenged them sharply out of the darkness, "Who goes there?" Fortunately in one of the leading boats was a Fraser officer to whom French was as his own tongue, and he replied, "The French." The suspicious soldier again challenged "What Regiment," and the officer replied "The Queen's," which he knew was expected about that time to arrive from Montreal. As they were landing another sentry, more suspicious, ran down to the water's edge and asked, "Why do you not speak louder?" The Captain replied, with wonderful coolness, "Don't make a noise or the English will be upon us," an answer which satisfied the guard. Fate that night was on the side of the Britishers, and in a few minutes the heights were gained and by daylight Wolfe's army was prepared to conquer or to die, for retreat was out of the question. While Wolfe had been conquering at Louisburg and before he came to Quebec, Montcalm had defeated the British Grenadiers and Highlanders on Lake Champlain at the battle of Ticonderoga. After the battle some Highland prisoners were huddled together on the field expecting no quarter from the French or their Indian allies, when a stalwart French officer walked up and sternly rebuked some of his men in French, and then suddenly addressed the prisoners

in Gaelic. Surprise was soon turned to terror, for they concluded that no Frenchmen could ever speak Gaelic, and that His Satanic Majesty in person was before them. You can imagine their relief when they learned he was a Jacobite serving in the French army. After the conquest, and the Royal Standard of England floated on the breeze from Hudson's Bay to Florida and Louisiana, an offer of land grants was made to such of the Highlanders as wished to remain in America, and many of them took up their abode in Old Canada and the Maritime Provinces. Their descendants are still to be found in many of the wholly French portions of the Province of Quebec, where they have become French in everything except their names. Murray Bay and Fraserville, now resorts of fashion, trace their names back to the heroes of Quebec. The peace which followed the cession was of comparatively brief duration. In less than 20 years the war of the American revolution convulsed the Continent. The counsels of the rash and the blind drove the old English Colonies into revolt. Some of the revolutionary leaders were men of Scottish descent, and notably among these were Patrick Henry, the orator, and Alexander Hamilton, the distinguished statesman and political writer. Continental freedom was not a sentiment to alienate the Canadians from the British Crown. The "New Subjects," as the French Canadians were called, had learned to appreciate the freedom accorded them by their conquerors, and the old subjects who had settled in Canada after the conquest were either soldiers who had fought Britain's battles in conquering Canada or their children who inherited the military spirit of their sires. Old and new subjects united with one common accord in defence of their country. Many of them were discharged men and officers of the Fraser Highlanders. Montreal fell an easy prey to the Congress troops, who then pushed on to Quebec, but the united force of English, Scotch and French withstood the siege and in the end repulsed the American force, which retreated, leaving among the slain General Montgomery and his two aides. It is a strange coincidence that Montgomery, the invader of Canada, had fought under Wolfe in his last campaign.



After the ill-fated struggle on behalf of the House of Stuart had culminated in the affair of '45, a Scotch settlement was established in New York State near Albany at the instigation of Sir William Johnson, who was the owner of a large estate there and who formed a friendly alliance with the Six Nation Indians. Sir William died in 1774, and was succeeded in his title and estates by his son, Sir John Johnson, who soon became Commandant of the Militia in the Province of New York. Sir John headed the Loyalists in his State and rallied to his support the Scotch Highlanders, but was eventually forced to take refuge by flight to Canada. His arrival in Montreal was communicated to the Governor-General, Sir Guy Carleton, who soon procured for him a commission to raise the King's Royal Regiment of New York. Although there were two battalions in this regiment, almost all the officers were Macdonells who came from Glengarry in Scotland. On the termination of the war, and the disbanding of the Regiment, many of them settled in Glengarry, Ontario, and gave the name to the county.

Canada had now become a British Colony, and with the influx of a new population had come a change in the life and aspirations of its people. When French domination ended, some of the old traders went back to their native land. The fur trade with the interior stagnated for a time. The Hudson's Bay Company had hardly felt the competition of the French traders in the region beyond the Great Lakes. The Bay Company never had the trade which found its outlet by the St. Lawrence. It was not long, however, until British traders prominent among whom were Scotchmen who had come to Montreal—the McGillivrays, Frasers, McKenzies, McLeods, McTavishes and others—took up the prosecution of the fur trade with a vigor and enterprise which had not been equalled in the days of the French regime. The services of the *courcurs des bois* were enlisted and the trade which found its outlet in Montreal soon increased in volume and extended far beyond Lake Superior into the region of the great illimitable western and northern country from which the Hudson's Bay Company had been accustomed for 100 years to receive the

products of the chase. Competition soon forced the Company to change its methods. It could not afford to allow the base of supply to be tapped without an effort to hold the trade. Like a sleeping giant the English fur company roused to action, left the Shores of Hudson's Bay and penetrated into the interior until its agents met the Montreal traders on the Saskatchewan River, at Fort Cumberland, in 1774, and a conflict began between the rival traders which extended over a period of 50 years, and was terminated only by an amalgamation of the conflicting interests. There was a strong resemblance in many respects between those who carried on this rivalry. The chief agents and factors of the Hudson's Bay Company were Scotchmen from the North of Scotland. They entered the service of the Company when young men, after a close examination, mental, moral and physical. They received twenty pounds a year and board and lodging, and when their apprenticeship was ended they had promotion in view. The hardships and exposures of their life were severe. Many of these Scotch peasants were born to a hard and rough lot at home, but they looked upon the privilege of service in the Company's employ with pride and enthusiasm. The hazardous sea voyage to Hudson's Bay and the first sight of its inhospitable shores, were soon followed by severe task work under conditions which were novel to them. But their hopes ran high, and their robust bodies carried them through hardships which would have been impossible to men of weaker physique. The fur traders of Montreal found it necessary to unite their forces and fortunes in partnership, which was done in 1783, under the name of the North-West Company, and which for a time held lordly sway over the wintry lakes and boundless forests of the Canadas. The Company was divided into a certain number of shares between the Montreal partners, who lived in a lordly and hospitable style, and the "wintering partners" who went off by the streams and lakes to reside deep in the interior among the natives, to instigate business and to gather in the results of hunting and trapping. It had in its employ about 2,000 persons as clerks, guides, interpreters, voyageurs and boatmen. The point of embarkation was Montreal, or more properly

speaking Lachine, from which the goods intended to be bartered for furs were conveyed in boats and canoes up the Ottawa to Lakes Nipissing, Huron and Superior, and thence by a chain of rivers and lakes to Lakes Winnipeg, Athabasca and Great Slave Lake. As the Company became regularly organized, admission into it was extremely difficult. A candidate had to enter as it were "before the mast," serve a seven years' probation, and rise slowly by his merits and services. His goal was of course some day to become a partner. Most of the clerks were young men of good families from the Highlands of Scotland, characterised by the perseverance, thrift and fidelity of their race, and fitted by their native hardihood to endure the trials and privations of the rigorous climate of the north. Occasionally clerks from the inland posts were accorded the privilege of a visit to Montreal to have a taste of civilized life, but these were brilliant spots in their existence. I know of no better description of the North-West Company than that given by Washington Irving, which I will take the liberty of quoting :

"To behold the Northwest Company in all its state and grandeur, however, it was necessary to witness an annual gathering at the great interior place of conference established at Fort William, near what is called the Grand Portage, on Lake Superior. Here two or three of the leading partners from Montreal proceeded once a year to meet the partners from the various trading posts of the wilderness, to discuss the affairs of the company during the preceding year, and to arrange plans for the future.

"On these occasions might be seen the change since the unceremonious times of the old French traders ; now the aristocratical character of the Briton shone forth magnificently, or rather the feudal spirit of the Highlanders. Every partner who had charge of an interior post, and a score of retainers at his command, felt like the chieftain of a Highland clan, and was almost as important in the eyes of his dependents as of himself. To him a visit to the grand conference at Fort William was a most important event, and he repaired there as to a meeting of Parliament.

"The partners from Montreal, however, were the lords of the ascendant ; coming from the midst of luxurious and ostentatious life, they quite eclipsed their compeers from the woods, whose forms and faces had been battered and hardened by hard living and hard service, and whose garments and equipments were all the worse for wear. Indeed, the partners from below considered the whole dignity of the company as represented in their persons, and conducted themselves in suitable style. They ascended the rivers in great state, like sovereigns making a progress, or rather like Highland chieftains navigating their subject lakes. They were wrapped in rich furs, their huge canoes freighted with every convenience and luxury, and manned by Canadian voyageurs, as obedient as Highland clansmen. They carried up with them cooks and bakers, together with delicacies of every kind, and abundance of choice wines for the banquets which attended this great convocation. Happy were they, too, if they could meet with some distinguished stranger, above all, some titled member of the British nobility, to accompany them on the stately occasion, and grace their high solemnities.

"Fort William, the scene of this important annual meeting, was a considerable village on the banks of Lake Superior. Here, in an immense wooden building, was the great council hall, as also the banqueting chamber, decorated with Indian arms and accoutrements, and the trophies of the fur trade. The house swarmed at this time with traders and voyageurs, some from Montreal, bound to the interior posts : some from the interior posts, bound to Montreal. The councils were held in great state, for every member felt as if sitting in parliament, and every retainer and dependent looked up to the assembly with awe, as to the House of Lords. There was a vast deal of solemn deliberation, and hard Scottish reasoning, with an occasional swell of pompous declamation.

"These grave and weighty councils were alternated by huge feasts and revels, like some of the old feasts described in Highland castles. The tables in the great banqueting room groaned under the weight of game of all kinds ; of venison from the woods, and fish from the lakes, with hunters' deli-

cacies, such as buffaloes' tongues, and beavers' tails, and various luxuries from Montreal, all served up by experienced cooks brought for the purpose. There was no stint of generous wines, for it was a hard-drinking period, a time of loyal toasts, and bacchanalian songs, and brimming bumpers.

"While the chiefs thus revelled in hall, and made the rafters resound with bursts of loyalty and old Scottish songs, chanted in voices cracked and sharpened by the northern blast, their merriment was echoed and prolonged by a mongrel legion of retainers, Canadian voyageurs, half-breeds, Indian hunters, and vagabond hangers-on who feasted sumptuously without on the crumbs that fell from their table, and made the welkin ring with old French ditties, mingled with Indian yelps and yellings."

Probably the most distinguished man connected with the North-West Company was Mr., afterwards Sir, Alexander Mackenzie, a native of the town of Stornoway, in the Island of Lewis, Scotland, who emigrated to Canada about 1779, and became one of the principal partners in the Company upon its organization a few years afterwards. Well educated, his mind was bent upon enterprise, and being possessed of a robust constitution and capable of enduring great fatigue, he was well qualified for the voyages of discovery with which his name has become associated. He was one of the "wintering partners," and for eight years had his headquarters at Fort Chippewyan, on Lake Athabasca. It was from this point that his two great voyages of discovery were made. On June 3rd, 1789, accompanied by a crew of four Canadians, two of whom were attended by their wives, one German, an Indian who had acquired the title of "English Chief" through having traded with the Hudson's Bay Company, and his two wives, together with two young Indians, the latter of whom served in the two-fold capacity of interpreters and hunters, he left Fort Chippewyan, entered the Slave River, followed it north to the Slave Lake, across which he sailed, and then entered the Mackenzie River, to which he gave his name. He had not proceeded far when he met tribes of Indians who had never seen white men.

They, however, were not hostile, and their good-will was easily obtained by means of presents. Fish and game were found to be quite plentiful. His object was to reach the Arctic Sea, and settle the question of the practicability of the North-West passage which had been a long agitated problem. Before the middle of July, he had reached a country where at that time of the year the sun never sank below the horizon. It was extremely cold, however, and as the mouth of the Mackenzie River was approached, considerable ice and fog were encountered. Whales were also seen, and an island at the mouth of the Mackenzie River was consequently called "Whale Island." He did not find it necessary to proceed farther north, and began the return voyage about the middle of July. His party was obliged to put up with considerable hardship during the return voyage, and they arrived at Fort Chippewyan early in September after an absence of 102 days without any loss of life or any serious difficulty with the natives. Mackenzie was now satisfied that there was no navigable water channel connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans farther north than the outlet of the Mackenzie River into the Arctic Ocean. He then resolved to find a route westward across the continent direct to the Pacific Ocean by way of the Peace River. Soon after his return from the Arctic Ocean, he proceeded to Montreal, where he consulted his partners and pointed out to them the profits which would accrue to the Company if its trade could be extended westward to the Pacific Ocean. He proposed to visit London in order to ascertain from the reports of the navigators who had discovered the Pacific Ocean all possible information respecting the coast and particularly the latitude of Fort Chippewyan and the Peace River. He also desired to add to his knowledge of astronomy and to obtain a better equipment of astronomical instruments for the purpose of taking observations than he had had, when he explored the Mackenzie River. His partners in Montreal approved of his proposal, and he immediately proceeded to London, where he was well received and every opportunity was given him to obtain the required information and instruction. Being of a studious turn of mind, he quickly acquired the knowledge which he desired,

and in the summer of 1792 we find him again at Fort Chipewyan prepared for the journey to the Pacific Ocean. It was a bold, perilous undertaking in those days. No white man up to that time had penetrated into the unknown recesses, passes and dangers of these great mountains. The difficulties which confronted him were unknown, but he was not a man to be discouraged by difficulties of travel or exploration, and on October 10th, 1792, he set out for Peace River. The principal man in the expedition next to Mackenzie himself, was Alexander Mackay, an native of Sutherlandshire, who was an expert boatman and hunter, and shared the responsibility throughout the journey with Mackenzie. The party consisted of ten men, and embarked in one canoe 25 feet long and less than 5 feet wide, and so light that two men could carry it a distance of three or four miles without stopping to rest. Of course, they had to take with them provisions, goods for presents, arms, ammunition and baggage, the whole to the weight of about 3,000 lbs. It was his intention to pass the winter east of the Rocky Mountains at Fort Fork on the Peace River, to which place he had sent some men early in the season to prepare timber for buildings. This point was reached in about three weeks, and here Mackenzie and his party remained until early in May, 1793, when the ice left the river and the journey westward was resumed. As he ascended the head waters of the Peace River, he found the difficulties of navigation increased. Rapids and falls were encountered, and in many places the river was found to run through gorges. After having crossed the summit of the Mountains, he saw great numbers of beavers and whole acres of large poplars cut down by them. The Indian tribes which he met in the Mountains were clad entirely in furs, and from these tribes, through his interpreters, he obtained much information respecting the rivers leading into the Pacific Ocean. These Indians told him of a large river that ran towards the midday sun and at the mouth of which white men had been seen in vessels as big as islands. The banks of this great river were soon reached, and Mackenzie imagined that he had reached the great Columbia River of which he had heard when in England; but as we shall presently

see, he was mistaken as to this. After having followed the river for some distance, he came to the conclusion that it would carry him too far south, and consequently determined to retrace his steps for some distance and to leave the river and attempt to cross the country in as direct a line as possible to the Ocean. In the meantime, his provisions and ammunition were becoming low, and his men began to murmur, and expressed a wish to return to the Peace River. Being a man of courage and determination, he did not desire to return without achieving his object, and he knew from his own knowledge, and also from the information obtained from the natives, that the sea coast was not very far distant. He told his men that they would be disgraced for life if they should return to civilization without accomplishing their purpose, and they determined to press onward. They soon came to other rivers, which were found to be teeming with salmon. The supply question had, therefore, resolved itself, and as he expected to return shortly by the same route, part of their supplies was buried or *cached* sufficiently deep in the ground to enable a fire to be built over the place where the provisions were hidden, for the purpose of destroying all signs of anything having been left there. He had many strange experiences, and his journal relates that on one occasion he climbed a tree to take an observation of the surrounding country. Most of the tribes which he met were peaceful, although many of them at first appeared to be in mortal terror of white men, and disappeared into the woods almost as quickly as they were seen. When these tribes became aware of the peaceful intentions of Mackenzie and his men, they were quite friendly, many of them insisting upon accompanying him on his expedition. He had to watch his property sometimes, in order to prevent it being stolen by the natives, and frequently Mackenzie and Mackay kept watch alternately during the night. On one occasion after some of their outfit had been stolen by an Indian tribe, Mackenzie summoned the chiefs together, told them that the white men owned the sea and had the power to stop the salmon from coming up the rivers, and that he would exercise this power and thus starve out the Indian tribes and their friends unless the stolen



property was restored. This ruse succeeded, and emissaries were promptly despatched to restore the missing property. On the 20th of July the long-looked-for Pacific Ocean came in view, and in order to record his arrival on the coast, Mackenzie painted in vermilion on the face of a rock overlooking the sea, "ALEXANDER MACKENZIE FROM CANADA BY LAND 22ND JULY, 1793." The return journey was soon commenced, and was practically over the same route as the westward trip. The pemmican was found where it had been left, and they were soon over the summit going down the Peace River again. At one particular part of the River they went down as far in one day as it took seven days to get up, and the party returned to Fort Chippewyan after an absence of 11 months. Mackenzie does not appear to have remained much longer in the north. He returned to Montreal, but continued his connection with the North-West Company. At the commencement of the present century he was a member of the Legislature of the Province of Quebec for Huntingdon County. He did not find Canadian politics congenial, and in January, 1805, in writing to a friend from Quebec, said: "I am heartily tired of Legislation. I sincerely wish that those who thought themselves my friends in being the means of getting me so honourable a situation had been otherwise employed." He shortly afterwards returned to Scotland, where he married and lived until 1820.

After the Jacobite rising in Scotland had been put down and stringent laws had been enacted against the Highlanders, many of the latter were forced to leave their homes and their country. Their lands were being turned into grazing fields for sheep. It may be asked, "Is not a man better than a sheep?" and it is hard to conceive how in any civilized country the question could be answered otherwise than in the affirmative. But the landlords of Scotland in those days evidently thought otherwise. The "Highland clearances" brought many sturdy clansmen and settlers to Canada. In Nova Scotia many thousand Scottish settlers came to the Counties of Pictou, Antigonish, Guysboro and Cape Breton during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. One of the sympathetic men of the period was the Earl of Selkirk, who, though a nobleman of the Scottish

Border Country, had an admiration for the Highlanders and in 1804 he brought out a colony of about eight hundred, which he settled in Prince Edward Island. A second colony under his auspices was settled in the western part of the Province of Ontario. I have already referred to the Scottish settlement in New York State, which came over to the County of Glengarry. Shortly after the Revolutionary War, a large emigration of Highlanders from the Glengarry Estates in Scotland under the leadership of the Reverend Alexander Macdonell, came to Canada and settled with their kinsfolk in Glengarry. This priest was one of the earliest Catholic priests and missionaries, other than French, who had settled in Upper Canada. He was the founder of the Parish of St. Raphaels, the pioneer parish not only of Glengarry, but of Upper Canada. His distinguished namesake, the Reverend Alexander Macdonell, afterwards Bishop in 1804, brought out several hundred of his fellow countrymen who had been members of the disbanded Glengarry Fencible Regiment, which went out of service after the close of the Irish Rebellion. The Reverend Alexander Macdonell had been the Chaplain of the Regiment, and when it was disbanded his faithful soldiers and their families, through his efforts with the British Government, were given passage to Canada, and on arrival here obtained free grants of land. They also settled in the County of Glengarry, and he continued to be their spiritual adviser. He was the first Roman Catholic Bishop of Upper Canada, and as such travelled often on foot from one end of the Province to the other. For 36 years he was a notable figure in the Province. He possessed an influence over his fellow countrymen which was exerted for their welfare and advancement without distinction of creed. He was a true Britisher and loyal to the core. When the War of 1812 broke out, he joined the Glengarry Regiment as Chaplain, and no one was more active at enlisting and recruiting than he was. During the Rebellion of 1837-38 he issued a loyal address to the people of Glengarry, calling upon them to stand firm in their fidelity to the Crown. It was a favorite saying of his that every man of his name should be either a priest or a soldier, and had he not been a priest he certainly would have

made a great soldier, and probably would have equalled any of the eminent men of his name who served with honour and distinction not only in the British Army, but in the Armies of France and Spain. He died in 1840 while on a visit to his native Scotland, and in 1861 his mortal remains were brought to St. Raphaels and from there removed to Kingston, where they were finally laid at rest. Early in the present century the County of Glengarry had become a well-established Scotch settlement, which attracted many of the Highland immigrants who settled in Canada in the first quarter of the century. Glengarry Scotchmen have given to Upper Canada an Attorney-General and a Chief Justice, and a Prime Minister to the United Canadas.

Next to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the most distinguished explorers of the North-West Company were Simon Fraser and David Thompson. Both exercised considerable influence on the history of British Columbia and attached their names to Rivers which they had explored. Fraser entered the service of the Company in 1792 at the age of 19, and became a partner ten years later. In 1805, at a conference held at Fort William, it was decided to extend the operations of the Company beyond the Rocky Mountains for the purpose of occupying the territory and anticipating American explorers who might move northward and establish a claim to ownership by occupation and discovery. This duty was assigned to Simon Fraser, who soon afterwards left for Lake Athabasca and the Peace River. His chief companion was John Stuart. In 1806 he reached Fraser River and gave the name of Stuart River to one of its tributaries in honour of his fellow-traveller. In 1807 canoes from Athabasca reached him, amid the wilds of the Rockies, with letters from the Company urging him to follow the great river to the sea. In the spring of 1808 with Stuart, a crew of 20 men, two Indians and four canoes, they started down the River, which they regarded as one of the main branches of the Columbia. After many hair-breadth escapes and the loss of one of the canoes, he reached the Pacific on July 1st, and found the latitude about 49°. He then knew it was not the Columbia, as the latter entered the Ocean in lati-

tude  $46^{\circ} 20'$ . He found the Indians on the coast so troublesome that he was glad to start back in a few days. Thus was navigated by white men the swift-flowing river to which Fraser gave his name. David Thompson was in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company when Sir Alexander Mackenzie made his two famous trips which I have already described. When Thompson left the Bay Company in 1797, he joined the North-West Company. He made several attempts to cross the Rocky Mountains farther south than the Peace River, which had been used by Mackenzie and Fraser, and finally reached the head waters of the Columbia in 1807, having crossed the summit by the pass now used by the Canadian Pacific Railway. He was also the first to explore the Thompson River, one of the tributaries of the Fraser. In 1811 he followed the Columbia from its source to its mouth in the Pacific, where he was kindly received by the Pacific Fur Company which had been organized by John Jacob Astor, of New York. In the meantime Fraser's associates were actively engaged in extending the trade of the Company into the interior of the country which was now called New Caledonia. Fraser retired from the service of the Company after some years, and was offered the honour of knighthood, but he declined the decoration on account of his limited means. Astor was the moving spirit in the Pacific Fur Company, and in the summer of 1810 organized an expedition from New York in the ill-fated *Tonquin*. One of the most experienced men in this expedition was Alexander Mackay, who had accompanied Mackenzie on his journey to the Pacific, and who lost his life in the Indian massacre of the *Tonquin's* crew on the Pacific Coast. The Pacific Fur Company comprised 33 persons, all but three of whom were British subjects. Another of the traders belonging to Astor's Company was Alexander Ross, who remained on the Pacific Coast until 1825, when he crossed the Rockies and settled in the Selkirk Colony at Red River, where he became the Sheriff of the District. The *Tonquin* reached Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia shortly before the visit of David Thompson in the summer of 1811. The loss of the *Tonquin*, the cruel murder of the crew, and other disasters which attended the ven-

ture, contributed to the Pacific Fur Company becoming a failure. The base of supplies was New York, and it was a long journey round the Horn. The breaking out of the war in 1812 between Great Britain and the United States was felt even on the Pacific Coast, and when shortly after the British War Sloop *Raccoon* visited the Columbia River, with the intention of capturing Astoria and of seizing any vessels which might be found there belonging to the United States, the post was found in the possession of the North-West Company, to which it had been transferred a short time previously. Thus ended Astor's enterprise on the Columbia.

The struggle between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Company for the control of the fur trade, which had been proceeding with great vigour and bitterness during the last quarter of the last century, and had risen to fever heat early in this century, was brought to a crisis by an immigration movement of an important character. The Earl of Selkirk posed as the friend of the Highland Emigrants. He had settled a colony in Prince Edward Island and another in Upper Canada. In order to acquire territory on which to settle a colony in the North-West he bought a controlling interest in the capital stock of the Hudson's Bay Company and purchased from it over one hundred thousand square miles of what is now part of Manitoba and the northern portions of Minnesota and Dakota. Captain Miles Macdonell was appointed Governor of the Company and Selkirk's special representative in the colony. In 1811 the first of the Selkirk Colonists set sail for their new home. It was an ill-fated voyage. Fever broke out before the ship had reached Hudson's Bay. Many of the immigrants died at sea, while the survivors were landed in an enfeebled condition, so late in the season that they could not proceed on their journey of 800 miles to Red River, where the colony was to be established. The poor people were not properly provided for by the Earl's agents, and the food and accommodation supplied were entirely inadequate. The misery of their first winter in the new world was but a foretaste of the hardships in store for them. They reached Red River the following summer, when they began to erect houses

for themselves and for the Company. Owing to the scarcity of food the Colony was moved south towards the open country, where buffalo could be obtained during the winter, and it returned in the following summer. This moving of the Colony was repeated for two winters. There was a scarcity of supplies at Red River and the Governor issued a proclamation forbidding the export of pemmican or other food from the country. This gave the North-West Company an opportunity to begin open warfare on the Colony. The Governor followed up his order by a seizure of 400 bags of pemmican, and the North-West Company then sent two of its most daring and astute partners to remove the Colony. These were Duncan Cameron and Alexander Macdonell. The former was as adroit as he was bold. He spoke to the colonists in Gaelic, threatened them with the Indians and half-breeds, and in the absence of the Governor seized their arms and took possession of their cattle. The Governor on his return was arrested on a charge of stealing the pemmican, and was taken to Canada. Cameron prevailed upon about 150 of the colonists to go with him to Lake Simcoe, in Upper Canada, where they were offered free grants of land. Those who refused to go to Canada started to retrace their steps to Hudson's Bay. The expulsion being now completed, the colony dwellings, with the exception of the Governor's house, were burnt to the ground. The loyal few who refused to go to Canada soon received assistance from the Hudson's Bay Company, and returned with some new arrivals in the fall of 1815 to the scene of the ruined Colony. Cameron, too, had returned, and as his presence was regarded as a menace to the safety of the distressed Colony, he was placed under arrest and dispatched to England by way of Hudson's Bay. He was in custody for 17 months, but was discharged immediately on his arrival in Great Britain. The most serious collision between the two Companies took place in June, 1816, not far from Fort Douglas, in which Governor Semple and 20 others lost their lives. The colonists who took no part in the fight surrendered the Fort to the Nor'-Westers, and abandoning the settlement started for Hudson's Bay intending to return to Scotland. The news of the battle, the death

of the Governor and the seizure of Fort Douglas caused great excitement in Montreal, where the sad intelligence reached the headquarters of the North-West Company. Lord Selkirk himself was on his way to the Colony with over one hundred soldiers who were to become settlers, when the intelligence of the disaster reached him. He retaliated by seizing Fort William, the chief western depot of the Nor'-westers, arrested the leading partners there and sent them prisoners to Canada. When he reached Red River he re-captured Fort Douglas and drove the Nor'-westers out. The settlers on their way to Hudson's Bay heard the news and returned again to the post. The Imperial Government intervened and ordered mutual restitution between the two Companies. There was no further armed conflict in Red River, but much litigation grew out of these stirring events. The partners and clerks of the North-West Company who had been arrested were brought to trial in Toronto and Montreal, but they were all acquitted. The North-West Company was composed of the leading commercial men of Canada, and they naturally had great influence, and it seemed impossible to obtain a conviction against any of the Company's officers or agents. Many of those who had been arrested by Lord Selkirk sued him for false arrest and obtained damages. Duncan Cameron succeeded in getting three thousand pounds as reparation for his arrest and imprisonment. Cameron afterwards returned to Canada, represented the County of Glengarry in the Legislative Assembly, and died in Williamstown, Ont. The Selkirk settlement was now established firm and sure, and its founder in 1818 returned to England somewhat shattered in health, but unsubdued in spirit. Selkirk in his youth was a friend of Sir Walter Scott, whom he asked to take up his cause on his final return to England, but Sir Walter was either disinclined to interfere or his other engagements did not permit him to do so. Lord Selkirk died in France in 1820 within a few days of the death of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. The two great Companies, which had been brought to the brink of ruin through their rivalry, then amalgamated, and the old Hudson's Bay Company reigned supreme until 1870.

Before the time of Lord Selkirk, the Hudson's Bay Company was not distinguished for discovery or exploration. The one inland enterprise of the Company up to that time was the discovery of the Coppermine River by Hearne. To the North-West Company we owe our knowledge of the Mackenzie, Peace, Fraser, Thompson and Columbia Rivers, and positive information regarding the Rocky Mountains, and the overland route to the Pacific. Long before Astor had dreamt his dreams of Columbian fur trade the Nor'-westers had planted on the wild shores of New Caledonia and Oregon the first germs of British domination. Lord Selkirk's motives and character have been the subject of divers criticism. Mr. Kingsford is particularly severe upon him. He says: "To Lord Selkirk we do not owe a single discovery. Judge his conduct as we may, we can only recognize that his one endeavour was to obtain possession of the known localities on the presumed territorial rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, which until his time had never been asserted. No new trade was begun by him. His endeavour was to control that which had been created, and what is more, to exclude those by whom it had been developed." No doubt he was a man of spirit and determination. He invoked the exclusive privileges granted to the Hudson's Bay Company by its charter and attempted to oust all rivals from the territory to which he had obtained an apparent title from the Company. He was not blind to the legal objections which were raised to the rights which he endeavoured to assert, because we find that he entered into an agreement with the Indian tribes that he should give them 100 lbs. of tobacco a year for the lands he had acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company. He took a deep interest in Highland immigration, and the Red River Colony is said to have cost him £85,000 sterling. A reputable historian who cannot be said to have been predisposed in his favour, says he had a religious object in view in establishing the Colony, that it was not his intention that the Colony should be reinforced by further immigrants from Scotland, but that it should be an oasis in the desert and a refuge for retired servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, half-breeds and converted, or, so to speak, civilized savages.



If this was his object, it proved a distressing caricature of such a fancy. It was in some respects a unique settlement. Removed 1000 miles from any well-established settlement, it was wholly isolated from the outside world. A whole year was necessary to receive an answer from an order sent to Europe. The Battle of Waterloo was not heard of there for nearly a year after it had been fought and won. The original colonists were mostly Presbyterians, and they contended that Lord Selkirk had promised them a minister of that church. They never ceased to importune the authorities for a minister of their own faith, but until 1851, when the Reverend Dr. Black was settled in the Colony, they had to be content with a modified service of the Church of England. They had remained faithful to the church of their fathers for nearly half-a-century under conditions which would not have been endured by any other nationality than the Scotch.

Whatever strictures may be placed upon Lord Selkirk's motives, he rendered good services to the Empire. Without doubt his occupation of Red River saved the present Province of Manitoba for the British Crown. To the North-West Company and its partners and explorers in British Columbia or New Caledonia, as it was then called, the British Empire owes a debt of gratitude which it can never repay. Who can doubt that if Sir Alexander Mackenzie and those who followed him into the interior of that wild and unknown land, had not been possessed of the pluck, endurance and enterprise which enabled them to overcome the obstacles of nature and carry the outposts of civilization into New Caledonia, that great and rich Province of Canada would to-day belong to the American Republic, and Canada and the Empire would not have an outlet upon the Pacific Ocean. Take a glance at the map of British Columbia, and the most casual observer cannot fail to be struck with the names of rivers and localities which speak in unmistakable tones of Scottish discovery and adventure.

Not only in the north and west do we find well-defined traces of Scottish influence, but throughout every province of the Dominion the early Scotch settlements have left landmarks which will endure for all time. All honour to the early set-

SCOTTISH SETTLEMENTS  
 CAMP-SUMMIT

tlers, explorers and discoverers, who risked comfort, health and often sacrificed their lives in advancing civilization and moving outward and onward the bounds of Empire. Their descendants of to-day may not realize the difficulties and dangers they had to face, but we can admire the courage and enterprise of the men of Scottish blood who are entitled in a large degree to the honour of preserving the Northern half of this Continent to the British Crown. Long may the connection with the mother land endure, and may our beloved Canada continue to be a bright and shining gem in the world's greatest Empire.

" Britain bore us in her flank,  
 Britain nursed us at our birth,  
 Britain reared us to our rank,  
 'Mid the nations of the earth."

Digitized by Google