

FRENCH CANADIAN SETTLEMENT  
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis begins with a review of early French-Canadian activity in the Pacific Northwest and undertakes principally to discover what motives attracted thousands of French-Canadians to British Columbia from Quebec or other areas east of the Rockies. It arose from the writer's curiosity about the relation between the development of lumbering in British Columbia in the early twentieth century and the influx of French-Canadians, famous as lumberjacks. In the course of his investigations the writer discovered a definite relation between the lumber industry and French-Canadian immigration but found also that many Canadiens came in connection with mining and other industrial activity. Because written source material on the French-Canadian in the British Columbia of the past is almost entirely lacking he hopes that his gleanings will in some measure supply a need. The thesis attempts also to survey the pattern of recent French-Canadian settlement. It indicates the problems endangering the survival of French-Canadian culture and describes current efforts being made to preserve French-Canadian nationalism.

## PREFACE

The writing of a history of French-Canadian settlement in British Columbia grows in part from a boyhood acquaintance with French-Canadian families who came to British Columbia from their native province of Quebec some forty-five years ago in response to the demand for lumber workers. It was the interesting experience of the writer to enter school with the sons of pioneer French families like the La Fleurs, the Parés, the Bouthots and a score of others and to observe the problems and social environment of these settlers through most of the period since their arrival. Thus a university summer course from Mason Wade, the author of two famous books now on the French-Canadian people, was the only stimulus necessary to incite the work of searching through dozens of books and newspapers and quizzing numerous men and women about the coming of the French to British Columbia.

At the present time not over three percent of the people of British Columbia acknowledge French racial origin. With the passing of time and the rapid growth of the Pacific province this French-Canadian minority tends increasingly to become absorbed by the majority which is Anglo-Canadian in culture. The relentless pressure of American cultural influence on Canadians,

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the decline in the use of the French language, the problem of mixed marriages (with non-French or non-Catholic partners) and the inclination to conceal both French ancestry and knowledge of French as a mother tongue all contribute to the trend of assimilation. At the same time there are many among the French-Canadians who are sufficiently proud of the French tradition to resist the tide of the times and fight earnestly to preserve a distinct 'culture canadienne' even within the province of B. C.

The role of the French-Canadian in the history of the province has been a significant one. To a degree not appreciated by most Canadians men and women of French ancestry have been responsible for the opening and developing of Canada's west coast, not to speak of the American states of Washington and Oregon. It is from the realization of this historic background that the French-Canadian who does fight to maintain his language and faith obtains the strongest reinforcement for his convictions. By the same token the Anglo-Canadian may in the light of this evidence be led to give more sympathetic consideration to the 'rights' of the French-Canadian minority afloat on an English sea.

The writer has known from the outset that his British and Protestant background might well lend a bias to this study.



### III

For this reason he approached the task with some misgivings. Only the knowledge that he has always disliked racial and religious antagonism and that he possessed a basic respect for the views of French-Canadians and Catholics enabled him to proceed with a good conscience. Fairness has been the constant aspiration. Whether this has been achieved others may better judge.

The writer must express his sincere appreciation to the clergy in the French-Canadian parishes who have been extremely co-operative in supplying valuable information. Many others also whose names appear on the pages following have furnished data which no printed sources could ever provide. Mr. Willard Ireland, Provincial Librarian and Archivist and Miss Amy Hutchinson, Librarian of the New Westminster Public Library and their staffs have been most gracious in making available to me their newspaper files. Especially does the writer wish to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Margaret A. Ormsby of the Department of History at the University of British Columbia for her invaluable assistance.

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CHAPTER I  
THE BACKGROUND AND BEGINNINGS OF  
FRENCH-CANADIAN SETTLEMENT

With the collapse of French resistance above the cliffs of Quebec in September 1759, the title to the vast territory vaguely called Canada passed soon into British hands. As British merchants moved into Montreal and assumed control of the commercial system left by the French they found themselves to an incredible degree dependent upon the Canadians they had conquered. In the development of their economic empire through the next century the British found the hardy French were to provide the bulk of the personnel, first in the fur trade and later in a timber industry which was to share with agriculture and the mineral industries in deposing the beaver as monarch of the Canadian economy. Political and economic management were indeed surrendered to the British but as Creighton has aptly expressed it "the Pierres and the Antoinnes still kept their old, their key positions as canoeemen, interpreters and guides."<sup>1</sup>

In the great drive toward the west in the next

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<sup>1</sup> Creighton, D.G., The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1937, p. 33.

several decades, in the exploration of the seemingly endless array of mountains, lakes and rivers and in the establishment of trading posts, there was scarcely an enterprise in which most of the personnel were not French Canadians or their half-breed descendants bearing French names. Writers who have made a special study of the role of the voyageur point out that the first three important explorers of the West after the Conquest, Jonathan Carver, Alexander Henry and Peter Pond, all made use of French Canadians.<sup>2</sup>

The first of a trio of great overland explorers to have a great effect upon British Columbia history was Alexander Mackenzie. His first attempt (1789) to discover the great Western Sea brought him to the shores of the Arctic. His companions were four Canadiens, François Barribeau, Charles Ducette, Joseph Landry and Pierre Delorme, the Indian wives of two of these and a German, John Steinbruch. It would seem also that Mackenzie's arduous voyage on this occasion was rendered more easy by the construction in 1786 of a trading post on Great Slave Lake by Laurent Leroux and Fort Vermilion in the Peace River by Charles Boyer in 1787. Laurent Leroux went with

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<sup>2</sup> See, Nute, Grace L. The Voyageur, New York, Appleton, 1931, p. 258, and Brouillette, Benoit La Pénétration du Continent Américain par les Canadiens Français, Montréal, Librairie Granger Frères, 1939, p. 123.

Mackenzie as far as his post on Great Slave Lake on the first voyage.<sup>3</sup> In the unflagging pace (coming 3000 miles in 102 days) set by the resolute Mackenzie the Indians grumbled constantly but to their honour the French-Canadian crew stood by him gallantly.<sup>4</sup>

It was three years later when Mackenzie prepared to cross the Rockies. After spending the winter of 1792-93 on the upper reaches of the Peace six miles from the mouth of the Smokey River, he set out with a crew consisting of a Scot, Alexander Mackay; six Canadiens, Charles Ducette and Joseph Landry from his original party and Francois Beaulieu, Baptiste Bisson, François Courtois, Jacques Beauchamp, as well as two Indians acting in the capacity of hunters and interpreters.<sup>5</sup>

Occasionally Mackenzie had to resort to ridicule or an appeal to racial pride with one of his crewmen but in relating the account of his voyage the explorer paid tribute to the faithful voyageurs who would not

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<sup>3</sup> Brouillette, Benoit, La Pénétration du Continent Américain par les Canadiens Français, Montreal, Librairie Granger Freres, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> Mackenzie's Journal cited by Burpee, L.G., The Search for the Western Sea, Toronto, MacMillan, 1935, p. 435.

<sup>5</sup> Lanctot, Gustave, Les Canadiens Français et Leurs Voisins du Sud, Montreal, Editions Valiquette 1941 (ch. 4 par Benoit Brouillette) p. 165.

turn back when given freedom to do so, who endured short rations, braved constant dangers and cheerfully built a new canoe to replace a wrecked one.<sup>6</sup>

Another partner of the North West Company whose explorations were even more extensive than Mackenzie's, though less significant, was Daniel William Harmon, a New Englander by birth who joined the company in 1800 and the same year left for the west - for Grand Portage and Fort Charlotte, thence to Rainy Lake. For ten years thereafter Harmon explored the Assiniboine and Swan River Country, moving about from fort to fort trading with the Indians, hunting buffalo and studying the country side. Then he went on to explore the western reaches of the South Saskatchewan as well as the Athabaska district. During these and later voyages Harmon made frequent reference to the 'Canadiens'. He refers to his canoeemen and interpreters like Baptiste Lafleur, or Baptiste Bouché (Boucher).<sup>7</sup> He mentions also Joseph La Roque coming with two of John Stuart's men to his station at Stuart Lake.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Mackenzie, Sir Alexander, Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, Toronto, Courier Press, 1911, Vol. II, pp. 122-23, 168, 194.

<sup>7</sup> Harmon, D.W., A Journal of the Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America, Toronto, Courier Press, 1911, pp. 147, 165.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 199.



Harmon's summation of the voyageur's character is on the whole cynical and unflattering yet he says

they are rarely subject to depression of spirits, of long continuance, even when in circumstances the most adverse .....when necessity compels them to it, they submit to great privation and hardship, not only without complaining, but even with cheerfulness and gaiety.<sup>9</sup>

David Thompson, the geographer, was another of the great explorers of the Pacific coast who acknowledged his constant dependence upon the Canadien in the course of his journeys. Before he came to the territory which is now British Columbia he made, in 1797, a famous voyage to the Missouri river accompanied by "seven french Canadians, a fine, hardy good humoured sett (sic) of men fond of full feeding, willing to hunt for it, but more willing to enjoy it....eating full eight pounds of fresh meat per day."<sup>10</sup> The next year when exploring the sources of the Mississippi he was accompanied by the Canadians and an Indian guide.<sup>11</sup>

In June, 1807, Thompson for the first time crossed the Rockies and founded Kootenay House on

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<sup>9</sup> Harmon, D.W., A Journal of the Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America, Toronto, Courier Press, 1911, p. 235.

<sup>10</sup> Tyrrell, J.B., David Thompson's Narratives, p. 209, cited in Lanctot, p. 167.

<sup>11</sup> Lanctot, p. 167.

Kootenay Lake. In the spring he was here with Canadiens Mousseau, Lussier, Beaulieu and La Comble (probably Lacombe). For some time after this Thompson traversed the Rockies twice yearly. Accompanying him were voyageurs D'Eau, Cote, Lussier, L'Amoureux, Vallade, Battoche, Pareil, Du Nord, Villiard, Vaudette and two Indians as guides or interpreters.

The account of every journey of Thompson included the names of numerous French-Canadians whom he depended upon as boatmen and packers. Thompson, like most other leaders of exploration parties who kept journals of their voyages, took time to evaluate the voyageur. His appraisal, like Harmon's, was not an unmixed compliment.

The fact is Jean Baptiste will not think, he is not paid for it; when he has a minute's respite he smokes his pipe, his constant companion, and all goes well; he will go through hardships, but requires a bellyful at least once a day, good tobacco to smoke, a warm blanket and a kind master who will take his share of hard times and be the first in danger. Naval and military men are not fit to command them in distant countries; neither do they place confidence in one of themselves as a leader; they always prefer an Englishman but they ought always to be kept in constant employment however light it may be.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Thompson's Narratives, p. 107.

Thompson's famous contemporary Simon Fraser repeatedly acknowledged in his journals his dependence upon the voyageurs. In his first journal telling of his explorations in 1806 he named some twenty Canadiens.<sup>13</sup> After a year of exploring, with John Stuart, the upper reaches of the river now named after him and establishing two trading posts (later known as Fort St. James and Fort Fraser) Fraser was met by Jules Maurice Quesnel and Hugh Faries with instructions from the Northwest company to explore the great river (believed to be the Columbia) that he had recently seen. After Fraser and Stuart had established a trading post and base at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers they were ready for the epic journey down the most treacherous river and over the worst terrain they had yet encountered. From their new base, Fort George, Fraser, Stuart and Quesnel with two Indian guides and nineteen voyageurs embarked on May 28, 1808 with the Western Sea as their objective.<sup>14</sup> The suffering,

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<sup>13</sup> Brouillette, p. 133. According to the Rev. A.G. Morice, The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, Toronto, Briggs, 1904. p. 55 three of Fraser's Canadians led by La Malice were the very first resident British Columbians. They were stationed at Fort MacLeod upon its establishment in 1805.

<sup>14</sup> Simon Fraser's Journal of a Voyage from the Rockies to the Pacific Coast, 1808 in Masson, L.R. Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, Quebec, 1889, Vol. I, pp. 157-221.

hardships and perils endured by the party during the next two months seem almost incredible to the modern reader who is accustomed to enjoying the beauty of the Fraser Canyon from a modern highway. Trudging over endless portages, scaling almost perpendicular cliffs with ninety pound packs, gambling their lives through suicidal rapids, the voyageurs did not turn back until they were only a few miles from the Sea. Then Fraser, short of provisions, instructed his men to return to Fort George.

The foregoing pages have indicated the role of the voyageur in the exploration of the area now composing British Columbia. It must not be overlooked other contemporary expeditions west of the Mississippi or Great Lakes were manned largely by French Canadians or French Canadian half-breeds bearing French names. Lewis and Clark depended largely on French Canadians engaged at St. Louis or St. Charles and Clark praised the skill of two excellent hunters Labiche and Drouillard who kept him supplied with ducks or other wild game.<sup>15</sup> Sir John Franklin in his journey to the Arctic 1819-22 made use of fifteen voyageurs.<sup>16</sup> Without them his

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<sup>15</sup> Brouillette, p. 168.

<sup>16</sup> Nute, G.L., The Voyageur, New York, Appleton, 1931, p. 242.

journey would have been impossible.

A voyage of quite a different kind was made along Fraser's route some twenty years later by the dynamic little governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, George Simpson. Leaving York Factory on Hudson's Bay on July 12th to make a thorough inspection of the far-flung domain of his company Simpson's travelling party embarked to the tune of Highland bagpipes, a bugle and the loud singing of eighteen Canadiens enjoying one of their voyageur airs.<sup>17</sup> Simpson's Journals are replete with the names of French-Canadian employees of the Hudson's Bay Company - middlemen, interpreters and occasionally clerks in trading, more often listed as steersmen, bowsmen or simply as voyageurs. The biographical appendix in the Athabaska Journal and the personnel lists given in the appendix of "Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia" throw much light on the occupations and personalities of the French-Canadian employees of the company.

rather higher

In the long and bitter struggle between the fur empires of the Bay and the St. Lawrence the North West Company operating from the latter base suffered almost every natural disadvantage. The success in and even

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<sup>17</sup> Rich, E.E., Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1947, Introduction p. XIX.

dominance of the fur trade which the Nor'westers came to assume was due almost entirely to the wise utilization of the voyageur. In contrast with the Hudson<sup>S</sup> Bay Company's unenterprising practice of waiting for the furs to be brought each spring to the Bay, the Montreal merchants established scattered posts along the intricate maze of waterways extending to the Arctic, the Pacific, the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. The fur kingdom of the St. Lawrence prospered in defiance of geography until Selkirk established settlements athwart the lines of the Nor'westers and Colin Robertson inspired the Hudson's Bay Company to fight the North West Company by their own methods and upon their own territory in Athabaska. Robertson's chief complaint was the want of suitable men in the employ of the Company. In a letter to the directors dated 1812 Robertson argued that most of the men, like Orkneymen, engaged for the trade were untrained in the knowledge and skills of the west. Robertson wrote to the company directors, "I would warmly recommend to your notice the Canadians, ...It is from these active subordinate men that the North West Company derives their greatest profit."<sup>18</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company

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<sup>18</sup> Cited in H.A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1930, p. 165. The term 'Canadian' used in the correspondence of the fur trade almost invariably denoted French-Canadians.

completed more successfully with the Montreal merchants after 1815 when they implemented some of the changes in personnel policy recommended by Robertson. It is interesting to notice the American Fur Company of John Jacob Astor founded in New York (1808) employed voyageurs in much the same manner as the Northwest Company.

One of the best evidences of the hearing given to Robertson's suggestion about the use of 'Canadians' in the employ of the company is the large number of French names appearing in the journals or correspondence of Governor Simpson. Beside many references to 'Canadians' as groups of employees, over fifty names of individual French-Canadians appear in the Athabaska Reports and over thirty in the narrative of Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes reports on the personnel of trading posts showed large numbers of voyageurs listed. Fort Saint Mary's in the Peace River employed twenty French-Canadians out of a total of forty men employed.<sup>20</sup> Fort Wedderburn reported thirty-three voyageurs and a Canadian blacksmith out of a total of sixty-eight.<sup>21</sup> At smaller establishments

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<sup>19</sup> Rich, E.E. Simpson's Athabaska Reports, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1938 Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1947.

<sup>20</sup> Athabaska Reports, p. 385.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

like Harrison's House or Berens House over half the employees were French-Canadians.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes Simpson reported on the conduct and character of these workers along with that of others and he often advised his subordinates in their dealings with them. In the fall of 1820 he told Duncan Finlayson to re-engage the best voyageurs for one, two or three year contracts with 'no advance on the wages of this year' or even 'a considerable reduction' since the voyageurs were aware that 'Mr. McDonald brings one hundred men from Canada this year.'<sup>23</sup> The voyageurs, mindful of their importance, sought the highest wages the traffic could bear from the recruiting agencies at Montreal and later at Lachine. On one occasion Simpson advised Duncan Finlayson in the Peace River district, "You will bear in mind it is Canadians you now have to deal with, not cool phlegmatic Orkney men." He described Baptiste Bisson, a hunter employed by the company as the 'best man in the north'. La Mallice, who was a valuable man but difficult to manage, he said, should be handled 'with tact' and Finlayson should remember 'flattery is a cheap commodity'. He should try 'asking' stubborn.

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<sup>22</sup> Athabaska Reports, p. 365.

<sup>23</sup> Athabaska Reports 29 Sept. 1820, p. 63.  
See appendices III and IV for examples of Simpson's personnel reports.



Grignon instead of 'ordering' him and ask Bouche in 'civil and polite terms' to do the necessary tasks.<sup>24</sup> Sometimes the company agents at Montreal obtained a poor quality of voyageur and Simpson complained several times in this regard. On the St. Mary's establishment he reported

The generality of them are really such wretched creatures that the Indians can scarcely believe they are the genuine race of Canadian voyageurs; indeed the striking contrast between them and the servants of our opponent could lead one to suppose that want of phisical (sic) strength and infirmity were essential requisites in the Company servants.<sup>25</sup>

Although the Company was not always fortunate in its selection of French Canadian engagés, Simpson's reports often showed these to be extremely valuable men who contributed a great deal to the success of the Company. Throughout the Northwest they became an accepted part of the fur trade and every fort or trading post had its complement of voyageurs. In times of stress these servants of the Company sometimes demonstrated strong loyalty to their employers. In 1843 near Fort Vancouver at the mouth of the Columbia

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<sup>24</sup> Athabaska Reports, pp. 63-64, 83.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 382....McLoughlin also complained about the quality of Canadians the company recruiting agents were hiring toward the end of the company's reign in Oregon. See appendix I.

River, French-Canadians, former employees of the Company, who had become more or less independent and had settled in the Willamette Valley, refused to co-operate with American settlers in forming a provisional government. Not until the inflow of American settlers had become overwhelming, and Governor McLoughlin had withdrawn his opposition, did the French-Canadians join the association. At the time of the first vote on the proposal fifty of the fifty-two dissentients were French-Canadians.<sup>26</sup>

Records of the personnel employed in the Hudson's Bay Company establishments in the territory which now comprises B. C. are very incomplete. Nevertheless from the letters of Dr. John McLoughlin we can obtain some appreciation of the large numbers of French-Canadians employed in the posts north of Puget Sound. In one collection of his letters covering the period 1829-32 some seventy names of French-Canadian employees appear.<sup>27</sup> In November 1824, a party was sent from Fort George (Astoria) by Dr. McLoughlin to explore Puget Sound and the banks of the Fraser. Headed by James McMillan

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<sup>26</sup> See appendix II.

<sup>27</sup> Letters of Dr. John McLoughlin, B.B. Barker editor, Portland, Oregon, Historical Society, 1947.

the party included beside three clerks and an interpreter twenty French-Canadians.<sup>28</sup> One of them was Jean Baptiste Proveau who had been one of Simon Fraser's voyageurs in the epic journey down the Fraser. Then in July 1827, another group again headed by McMillan came from the new headquarters of the Columbia district, Fort Vancouver, to the Fraser River to select a site and establish a trading post to be called Fort Langley. Sixteen of this group were Canadiens.<sup>29</sup> McLoughlin's letters to Fort Langley sometimes mentioned the French Canadian employees by name (though often misspelled). In a letter of June 17, 1829 McLoughlin mentioned Pierre Charles, François Annance, Aimable Arquoette, Joseph Pin, Pierre Thervien, François Carpentier and Louis Boisvert as being assigned to the Langley post.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes names were given of men intending to retire.<sup>31</sup> Through the correspondence of McLoughlin with the forts it is possible to trace the movement of the personnel from one post to another. In addition to some who became farmers upon retirement (as in the Willamette) there

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<sup>28</sup> Nelson, Denys, Fort Langley 1827-1927, Fort Langley, 1927, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> McLoughlin Letters (Barker) p. 12. Pierre Charles was a half-breed.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

were some who tilled the soil for company purposes. Etienne Pepin who became the farm overseer at Fort Langley is said to have been the first one to plow the soil at Langley Prairie. Mentioned with him were Basil Brosseau, Dairyman, and Narcisse Falardeau. Fort Langley entered agriculture on a large scale after February 1839 when an agreement with the Russian-American company called for payment in farm produce in exchange for the lease of the Alaska Pan Handle.<sup>32</sup> As the company grew and the needs of its trade became diversified, the French Canadians fulfilled a variety of tasks until it could be said of them as Robertson had said of those employed by the North West Company - from 'these active, subordinate men' the company derived 'it's greatest profit'.<sup>33</sup> But the coming of the French Canadians in parties of exploration and for the maintenance of the vast economic enterprise which was the Hudson's Bay Company caused another form of penetration of the Pacific area. The existence of groups of unattended settlements of French-Canadians on the Pacific coast led to the coming of Catholic missionaries, again

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<sup>32</sup> Denys Nelson, Fort Langley, p. 15, also <sup>S</sup>Page, W.N., Sir James Douglas and British Columbia, Toronto University Press, 1930, p. 93.

<sup>33</sup> Simpson's Athabaska Reports, ed. E.E. Rich, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1938, cited in Introduction, page XXXII.

French-Canadian, who were to play their role in the development of Canada's west coast.

The establishment of organized missionary activity in the Pacific Northwest dates from the arrival at Port Vancouver in November, 1838, of Fathers Norbert F. Blanchet and Modeste Demers after a six month journey from Red River. Both men, Quebec-born, distinguished themselves by their careers of missionary effort on the Pacific Coast.

*mère française; père écossais*  
 Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Columbia department, suggested as early as 1834 that the Catholic settlers, mostly French-Canadien, in the Willamette region should seek a resident priest to minister to them. The first appeal to the closest Canadian bishop, Joseph Norbert Provencher, at Red River, brought no response. A second petition caused Bishop Provencher, who had no priest, to bring the matter to the attention of Joseph Signay, bishop of Quebec. Thus began the process which culminated in the final commissioning of Father Blanchet to the Oregon coast. The petitions of the settlers seem to have had the approval of Hudson's Bay Company officials at Fort Vancouver who urged that the Canadian priests be sent speedily. They offered free transportation under company protection as well as a supply of their needs

until the mission had become established.<sup>34</sup> The governor and London committee of the company were not enthusiastic about the proposed missionary enterprise since it was to be south of the Columbia in territory that the company feared would become American. At first the company refused to approve the plan and then gave permission providing that the site be moved further north. Only in March, 1838, did Governor George Simpson indicate that the London authorities had given consent to the proposal.<sup>35</sup> At the same time it is necessary to point out that it was the general policy of the Company to assist Canadian missionaries. James Douglas spoke later of them as having always "pursued their calling under the Company's protection, a boon which they repaid by the most earnest devotion to our cause....."<sup>36</sup>

Francis Norbert Blanchet the first missionary to be appointed, was born at St. Pierre, Riviere du Sud, Quebec, in 1785. He was ordained to the priesthood in July, 1819 after training at the minor seminary

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<sup>34</sup> Edmund Mallet, Memoirs of Archbishop F.N. Blanchet M.S. (unpublished) cited in Lyons, Sister L.M. Francis Norbert Blanchet, Washington, Catholic University of America, 1940 p. 1. Hereinafter referred to as Lyons.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from James Douglas to Sir George Simpson 5th March, 1845, cited in McLoughlin's Letters, 3rd series (1844-46) Toronto, Champlain Society, 1944, p. 185.

of Quebec and completing with distinction his theological course at the Sulpician major seminary in that city. Following his ordination, Father Blanchet was stationed for several months at the Cathedral of Quebec. Then came a seven year period of service in the backwoods of New Brunswick among the Acadians and Micmac Indians. Here he was schooled for his later experiences in the wilds of Oregon. The next nine years he spent at the parish of the Cedars in the district of Montreal. While he was here he was chosen for the Oregon assignment. Although The Cedars was a rendezvous for travellers and voyageurs from all across the continent there is no evidence to suggest that Blanchet was aroused to any missionary interest by these frontiersmen.

Blanchet, a humble man, received the suggestion from Bishop Signay of his appointment to the Columbia country with some concern. He doubted his "divine vocation" for such a trying task. Finally he left the matter in the hands of his immediate superior, the Bishop of Montreal, who indicated to Bishop Provencher at Red River that Blanchet would be released for the Columbia only if the Bishop of Quebec replaced him by a man of equal capacity. Blanchet accepted the Bishop's attitude as guidance for his own decision and signified his acceptance of the new appointment.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Lyons, p. 6.

Father Blanchet set out in March, 1838, for his new post via the Red River settlement. At Red River he met Dr. John McLoughlin who gave him information about the people of Willamette. Here, also, he met Father Modeste Demers, a missionary of some experience who was to be his co-worker in Oregon.

The priests arrived at Fort Vancouver on November 24, and began their work at once. They undertook their task with optimism. Demers worked arduously to master the Chinook jargon in order to facilitate missionary work among the Indians. Both missionaries were pleased with the co-operativeness of the French-Canadian farmers who had prepared a church before their coming.

Within a short time after their arrival the Catholic missionaries encountered Protestant competition led by a Methodist missionary Reverend David Lee. Eager to extend Catholic enterprise among the Indians before Protestant influence should increase Blanchet besought further help from Bishop Signay in Quebec. The slow process of obtaining the approval of the Hudson's Bay Company officials before more help could be brought via Red River was very frustrating to the two Catholic missionaries. Both were pleased when a Belgian Jesuit priest, Father de Smet arrived



in the area via St. Louis in 1840.<sup>38</sup> Although Governor Simpson did authorize the entry of more priests the first two to come made their journey without the help of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Two young priests, Anthony Langlois and <sup>Jean</sup> John Baptist ~~Zachary~~ Bolduc, whom Bishop Signay selected, took passage on a ship from Boston in September, 1841 and arrived at Fort Vancouver a year later via Cape Horn and the Sandwich Islands. Both were to remain in the Columbia district for a number of years before they returned to Canada.

Blanchet and Demers had come to the Oregon country filled with zeal for the conversion of the native inhabitants in the Columbia River Valley, the Puget Sound region and New Caledonia. Only a lack of assistance seems to have hindered the success of their work among the Indians who generally welcomed the missionaries and received their teaching readily. The interest of Father Demers in the Indians

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<sup>38</sup> In the next few decades, Father de Smet was to become the best known of the missionaries of the Northwest. He came in answer to an appeal from the Flathead Indians for a missionary to labour among them. Besides carrying on a successful programme of evangelization among the Indians, de Smet travelled to St. Louis a number of times, seeking and obtaining further help. His presence was a great encouragement to Blanchet and Demers.

to the north of the Columbia brought him in September, 1841, to the lower Fraser. Here at Fort Langley on September 3, he baptized ninety-nine children and 263 other persons in the next three days.<sup>39</sup> The meetings with the Indians and the personnel were held on the cleared prairie near the fort. Demers estimated that on some occasions as many as 3000 came to listen to him. Many Indians came from far afield and the priest hoped to be able to Christianize even the most hostile of the native groups. On this trip Demers baptized in all about 765 people - an encouraging record for his forty-four day absence from Fort Vancouver.<sup>40</sup>

Father Demers initiated an energetic programme of evangelism in New Caledonia around centres like Fort St. James, Fort Alexandria and Williams Lake which was carried on extensively later by other missionaries. While he was on his way back to Fort Vancouver from his missionary journey of 1842 Father Bolduc, mentioned earlier, was accompanying Chief Factor James Douglas in the establishment of a new

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<sup>39</sup> Lyons, pp. 116-117; Howay, F.W. and Scholfield, E.O.S., British Columbia, Vancouver, S.J. Clarke, 1914 Vol. II, p. 607.

<sup>40</sup> Howay and Scholfield, Vol. II, p. 608 and Morice, A.G., The History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, Toronto, Musson, 1910, Vol. II, p. 292.

company base on Vancouver Island, Fort Victoria, later to replace Fort Vancouver as company headquarters.

During the next few years much evangelizing work among the Indians was done by one of Father De Smet's Jesuit assistants, Father John Nobili. Assisted by a young lay brother, Nobili worked extensively in the vicinity of Fort George and Fort St. James and visited the Chilcotin tribe. At the same time Father De Smet was working among the Kootenays in the region of the sources of the Columbia. Among the Indians here he was pleased to find that a French Canadian trader, <sup>Edouard</sup> ~~Edward~~ Berland had done much in the five years since the first missionary visit to maintain Christian belief and conduct among the Indians.<sup>41</sup>

One of the great forward steps in Roman Catholic enterprise on the northwest Pacific coast came with the elevation of Father Blanchet in February, 1844, to the rank of archbishop of the newly-created See of Oregon City and Father Demer's appointment as Bishop of Vancouver Island. Humble about his own abilities, and mindful of the vastness of his diocese comprising Vancouver Island and the districts of Princess Charlotte

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<sup>41</sup> Morice, History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, Vol. II, pp. 294-295.

Island and New Caledonia, Bishop Demers faced his new assignment with anything but enthusiasm. The greatest of his problems was lack of missionaries.

The solution to the bishop's problem of personnel for the ministrations of his diocese was to come at last in the assistance of Oblate missionaries from France. Demers had noted the quality of the four Oblate fathers who had come to the Walla Walla district in 1847 and had asked the Bishop of Marseilles for some of the same order in his diocese. The first Oblate station under Demers' jurisdiction was built at Esquimalt in 1857-58 and was under the direction of Rev. J. L. D'Herbomez. From this post D'Herbomez directed the Oblate establishments already existing in what was then called Oregon as well as those on Vancouver Island and the mainland of what is now B. C. It was the concern which D'Herbomez shared with Bishop Demers for the Indians of the interior that caused him to despatch Fathers Charles M. Pandosy and Pierre Richard to found an establishment beyond the Hope Mountains. Thus was founded the Mission of the Immaculate Conception on the eastern shores of Lake Okanagan on October 8, 1859. Okanagan Mission, as it came to be known, was to provide a key centre of Catholic and to some extent French-Canadian, activity for several decades. During this period, as the

Catholic missions to the Indians extended their efforts, there was to be a predominance of French names among the priests who journeyed tirelessly among the tribes throughout the province. Pandosy, Richard, Durieu, Fouquet, Cherouse, Jayel, Grandidier, Le Jeune were names that became everywhere respected, even by Protestant rivals of the Oblates. But the priests in almost every case were "Français de France" not "Français <sup>du</sup> de Canada". Nevertheless the 'trail-blazing' had been done by the Quebec priest, Father Demers, in co-operation with Father Blanchet and under the direction of Bishop Signay of Quebec. It was the little clusters of French-Canadian employees of the Hudson's Bay Company who had been the chief local supporters of the missionary programme.<sup>42</sup> It was only the patronage of the diocese of Quebec that had permitted the establishment of the Oregon missions and had nurtured the struggling church through the days of its infancy. [With the groundwork done by the French-Canadian voyageurs, fur traders and missionaries the land of British Columbia was prepared for settlement not only by other French-Canadians but many thousands of immigrants from across the seas.

The power of the gold discoveries in such areas

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<sup>42</sup> See appendix VI.

as Caledonia and later the Klondyke to attract immigrants is a familiar story. One of the fascinating aspects of each mining community that mushroomed into being was its polyglot composition. Almost no race or social level could boast immunity to the lure of gold which brought fortune-hunters swarming into the area from every corner of the world. Reports of the time and the Gallic names of numerous mining claims or temporary settlements suggest that French or French-Canadian miners had a considerable share in the quest for gold.<sup>43</sup>

Some of the best known French-Canadian pioneers of British Columbia were attracted by gold discoveries in the southern interior of the Province. One of these was Joseph Christian who had worked with pick and shovel on the Cariboo Road after coming from St. Anicet, Quebec.<sup>44</sup> Christian took part in the promising but short-lived mining boom at Rock Creek in 1861. When the enterprise there failed, he settled at Mission Creek near Okanagan Lake with an immigrant Eli Lequime

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✓ 43 Many of the miners were from France and had participated in the California Gold Rush. (See Ireland, W.E., "The French in British Columbia", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, April, 1949, Vol. XIII, pp. 67-89).

✓ 44 Nelson, Denys, "The Story of August Gillard", Okanagan Historical Society, 1st Report, 1926, p. 18.

from France, who later became well-known in the Okanagan as a trader and stockraiser.<sup>45</sup> Joseph Christian journeyed to his native Quebec village in 1869 and returned with a bride. In the next few years other immigrants from the same area joined the settlement.

check  
against  
Okanagan's  
theater

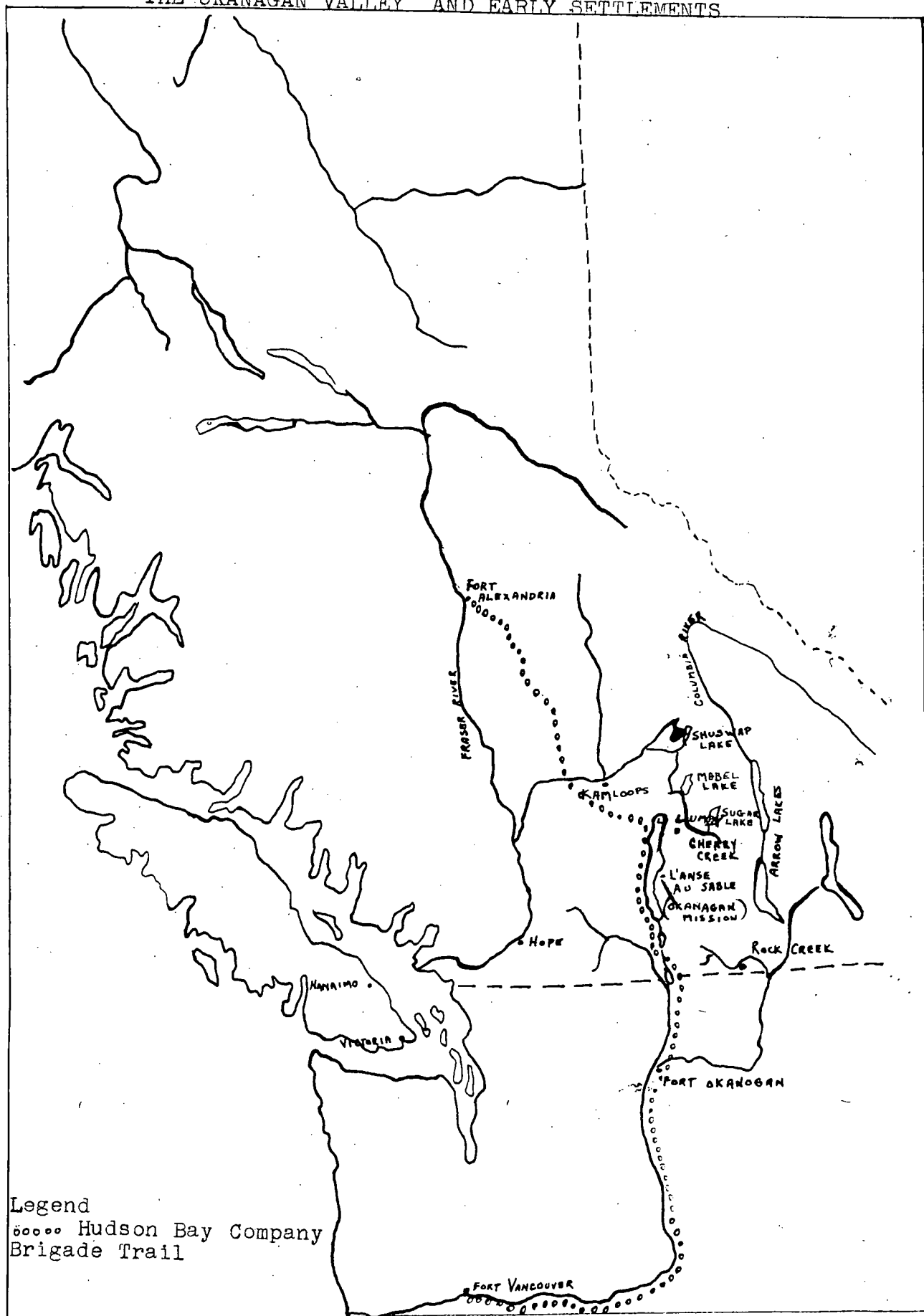
Another pioneer of the Okanagan who came in quest of mineral wealth was Luc Girouard, a native of Nicolet County, Quebec. Born in 1821, Girouard spent two years of his youth on a Boston whaler, some time in the United States army serving under General John C. Frémont and six years gold-mining in California before he came to British Columbia by way of Fort Colville. Girouard became one of the promoters of the Cherry Creek Silver Mining Company, a venture which gave great promise but produced meager results. He pre-empted 160 acres of land at the site of the present city of Vernon. When the "Priests' Valley" Post Office was opened in 1884 Girouard received an appointment as Post Master which he held until 1891. He was credited with planting the first orchard in the district.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Okanagan Historical Society, 4th Report, 1931 pp. 12-13, 6th Report, 1935, p. 57.

<sup>46</sup> Okanagan Historical Society, 2nd Report, "The Cherry Creek Silver Mining Company", 1927, p. 41, 13th Report, 1949, pp. 90-92.

# THE OKANAGAN VALLEY AND EARLY SETTLEMENTS



## Legend

..... Hudson Bay Company  
Brigade Trail

To follow page 27



The famous Okanagan Mission became a focal centre for French Canadian settlement in the Okanagan valley after Father Pandosy, an Oblate priest, revived missionary enterprise in the Okanagan in 1862. He brought with him from Hope, August Gillard, Jules Blondeau and Francis Ourtoland to settle in the country around the mission he established at Anse au Sable. Other French Canadians who took up land in the district were Cyprian Laurence, Theodore Laurence and William Pion.<sup>47</sup> Gillard and Blondeau staked out 600 acres where, the city of Kelowna now is. The interests of various French-Canadians who played a part in settling the Okanagan seem to have been linked in a fascinating manner. William Pion is said to have brought Father Pandosy into the Okanagan and also built the first house in the Valley. Joseph Christian met Father Pandosy in Victoria and was drawn to the Okanagan by the priest's information.<sup>48</sup> Christian, in his turn, is credited with bringing other settlers from Quebec who began farming in the neighborhood of the Mission. Some who came went north to the mines at Cherry Creek and then later moved to the fertile Lumby area. The

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✓ 47 Ormsby, M.A., A History of the Okanagan Valley, a graduating essay, the University of British Columbia, April, 1929, pp. 81, 86.

✓ 48 Ormsby, M.A., A Study of the Okanagan Valley of B. C., a Master's thesis, the University of British Columbia, April 1931, p. 26.

Provincial Voter's list of 1876 for the Okanagan polling division listed fourteen French Canadian farmers at Okanagan Mission.<sup>49</sup> By the turn of the century the French-Canadian settlement at Lumby far outnumbered that at the Mission but a solid core of the original farming settlement remained.

The two founders of the Lumby settlement were Peter Bisette and George LeBlanc, partners in a Cherry Creek mine. Bisette, who came to Lumby by way of a Massachusetts cotton-mill, pre-empted 320 acres adjoining the present site of Lumby on March 6, 1877. The same month (March 27) George LeBlanc pre-empted a similar parcel to the east of Bisette's and members of both families remain to this day in the district.<sup>50</sup> Most of the French-Canadian settlers at Lumby and Okanagan Mission turned to farming, but some became engaged in lumbering or trades like carpentry when mining ventures failed.

When the scene of mining excitement moved to the Kootenays it was a Joseph Bourgeois who staked a claim in the Rossland region in 1880. In 1889, with his

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<sup>49</sup> Printed in the Okanagan Historical Society 3rd Report, 1929, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> Norris, L. Some Place Names in the Okanagan, Okanagan Historical Society Report, 1939, p. 51.

partner J. Morris, he discovered the greatest of all the Red Mountain mines, the Le Roi.<sup>51</sup> By 1901 there was a city of seven thousand and the modern city of Rossland, the "Johannesburg of British Columbia" had become the pride of the Province.<sup>52</sup>

Some idea of the degree of French-Canadian participation in the mining activities of the period in the Kootenays can be obtained from the Voters' lists of 1890, 1894 and 1900.<sup>53</sup> In each community of the East and West Kootenay Electoral Districts a smattering of residents classed as laborers, miners or free miners bore French names. French names are common in the lists for Slocan Riding (Kaslo, New Denver, Slocan district) and Revelstoke district including Nakusp and Comaplix where the French Canadians were employed more extensively in lumbering than in mining.<sup>54</sup> The Voters' List for Rossland Riding in May, 1898, contains a number of miners' names which are clearly French-Canadian.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Howay and Scholefield, Vol. II, p. 472-473.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 474.

<sup>53</sup> Sessional Papers, British Columbia, 1890; p. 721, 1894: 491-499, 477, 495-496, 1900: p. 401, 431.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1900: p. 1212.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 1900: p. 477-498.

A list of names of persons who had moved or in some way became ineligible for voting in the Rossland Riding appears in the Rossland Miner, October 16, 1909.<sup>56</sup>

A similar list in the "Ferne Free Press" of April, 1910, bore out the same evidence.<sup>57</sup> Some examples among them are Joseph Ailegrand, Alphonse Bourgeon, Isadore Beaulieu, Eugene Croteau and Alphonse Dandurand. It would seem that among the flow of laborers who came to mine at each successively productive claim, French-Canadians played as much a part as any other non-Anglo-Saxon element.

One occupation that had attracted the French Canadians in the era of the fur trade and which continued into the mining period was the sale and transport of supplies. In the 1850's Fort Okanagan itself was in charge of four successive French-Canadians, Laprade, Gingras, La Fleur and Duchouquette. Many French-Canadians who settled in the Okanagan were employed as packers along the supply routes which fed and equipped the mining villages. Similarly, the thriving express and freight business up and down the Cariboo trail attracted

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<sup>56</sup> The Rossland Miner, October 16, 1909.

<sup>57</sup> The Fernie Free Press, April 29, 1910.

other Canadiens. Mule trains were the first common means of transport, then camels were introduced as pack animals; but with the completion of the Cariboo wagon road horse-drawn wagons and stages came into use. In some localities in the Cariboo, however, ox-teams were regularly used for drawing wagons.

Shortly after 1860 some of the "bull-punchers", as the ox-teamsters were called, discovered that the land in the lower Fraser Valley was suitable for stock-raising and began to use the grass around the Harrison River and Nicomen Island for wintering cattle. One of the first to do this was Joseph Deroche who, on the north side of Nicomen Island, had a place to keep his cattle during the season when activity in the Cariboo was slow. Deroche and another freighter called MacDonald gradually gave up their ox-freighting and settled on their farms.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps the families of these men tied them down and the opportunity for employment offered later by railroad construction influenced them to stay where they had at first established only seasonal farms. The railroad point opposite Nicomen Island, later known as Deroche, as

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✓ 58 Gibbard, J.E., Early History of the Fraser Valley, 1808-1885, A Masters thesis, the University of British Columbia, 1937, pp. 185-203, 205.

well as Nicomen, became a miniature French-Canadian centre as farmers with names like Beaulieu, Deneau, Parent, Rouleau, Tremblay (Joe Deroche's son-in-law) and Caron took up land in the area in the 1890's.<sup>59</sup>

With the coming of the railroad in the 1880's new French-Canadians came into the Lower Fraser Valley either to work on the railroad or to farm the land which the railroad now made accessible. One region where this occurred was at Hatzic Prairie (first called Burton's Prairie after Ralph Burton a bull-puncher who settled there). Here a Michel LaCroix, a former employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at Babine and Fort Simpson settled before the railroad came and another La Croix, Gabriel, opened a store when railroad construction had begun.<sup>60</sup> Within a few years one of the most homogeneous French settlements in the province had been established at Hatzic Prairie. By 1901 all but three of twenty-seven names listed in the directory for Hatzic Prairie Postal station were French.<sup>61</sup>

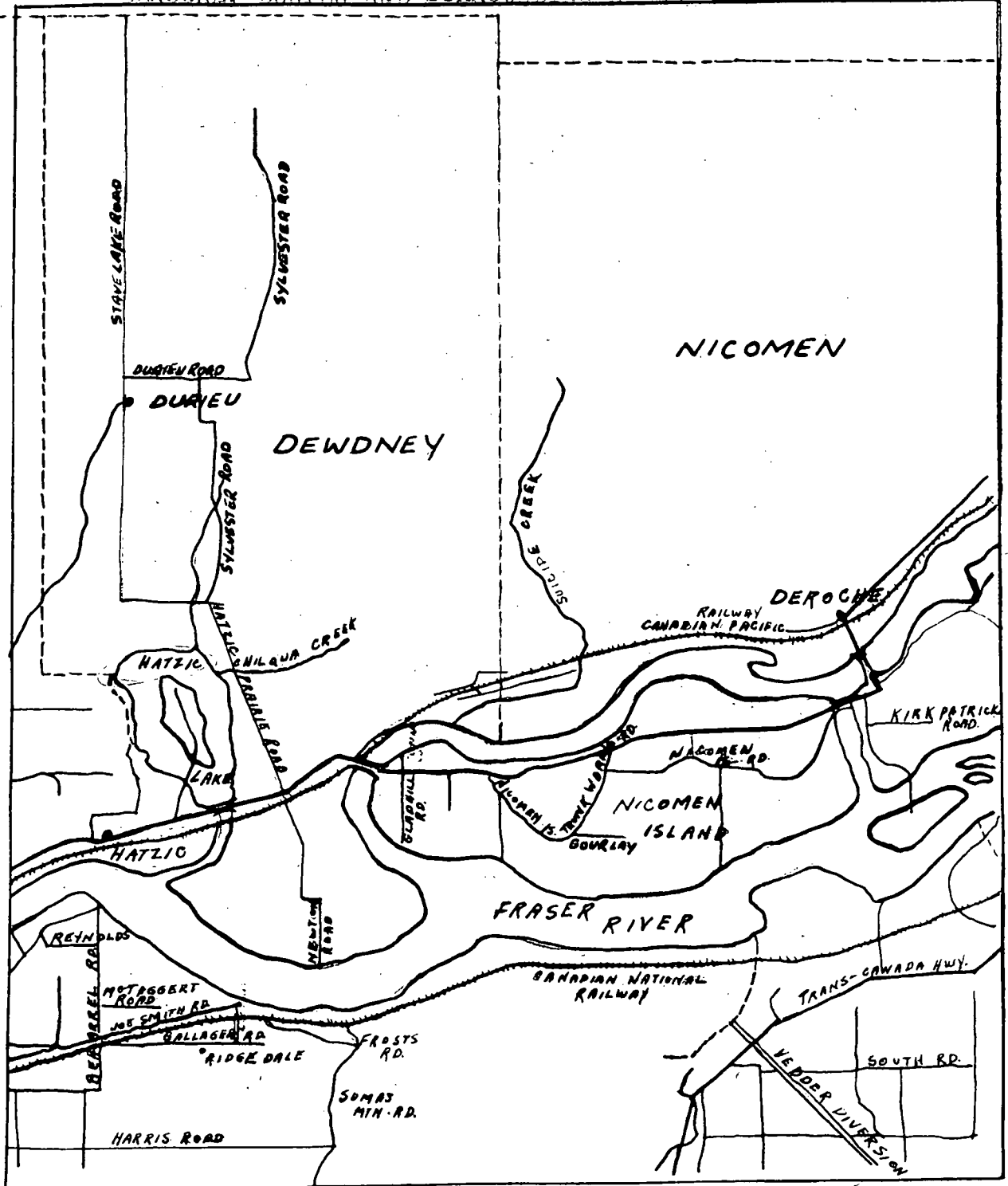
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<sup>59</sup> Henderson's Gazetteer and Directory, Vancouver, 1901, p. 128; 1904, p. 134; 1911, p. 1451 and 1470.

<sup>60</sup> Gibbard, p. 205, 261.

<sup>61</sup> Henderson's Directory, 1901, p. 163.

## DEROCHE, DURIEU AND SURROUNDING AREAS



To follow page 33

One of the key figures in the Hatzic Prairie settlement of French-Canadians (which became known as Durieu-named after the beloved priest, later bishop) was Aimable Lagacé. A native of Rimouski, he homesteaded on "the Prairie" after working by contract on the Canadian Pacific Railway construction. Later, he became postmaster in the district as well as a successful farmer.<sup>62</sup> Another early settler was <sup>Moise</sup> ~~Moses~~ Bouch~~er~~er who came from Three Rivers after working for a time in the cotton mills of Massachusetts. Up to 1910 and 1911 the farming community continued to grow.<sup>63</sup> Some of the residents carried on logging and lumbering in addition to their farming and some of the Bouch~~er~~er family are today engaged in lumber manufacturing.

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<sup>62</sup> From a conversation with his son Louis Lagace at Mission on July 22, 1955. See also the Henderson Directories of 1901, 1904, 1911.

<sup>63</sup> In addition to the many French-Canadians who came to the area were some Frenchmen of France or French-Swiss. One of these was Louis Carrat, born in Geneva in 1864. After residing for some years in Washington where he logged and in California where he worked in the orchards he came to McConnell Creek, adjacent to Hatzic Prairie in 1894. Another settler was Jean Seux who came from France where he had been a teacher. In France, Seux had apparently learned well the art of wine-making. In B. C. the illegal sale of his product brought him into conflict with the representatives of the law. A happy life was maintained in Hatzic community where the French language was regularly used in conversation. From an interview with Mr. Louis Carrat in Mission, July 22, 1955.



Old residents of Hatzic Prairie, the few alive who still remember, love to tell of the early days when they took their butter and eggs down to New Westminster on the old Beaver or by rowboat or by train. Usually they went to Mission by rowboat, down Hatzic Slough and returned to the dock at Bouché's barn. Sometimes a market was found for products at the old store at Dewdney. The great flood of 1894 imposed many hardships on the settlers, but such vicissitudes seemed to strengthen their comradeship. Several of the original pioneers lived to an advanced age. Aimable Lagace died in 1942 at the age of 87 and Louis Carrat, one of the best authorities on the history of the Durieu settlement, died in February 1956, at the age of 91.

As the settlement of Durieu took root and grew, a few other French Canadians began to farm at Mission nearby. There was a close connection between the two communities because an Oblate father came regularly from St. Mary's Mission to hold services for the residents. The first of these, and perhaps the most beloved, was Father Leon Fouquet. Theodore Theroux, who was employed as a lay teacher in the Indian School in Mission in 1901, later was to be a key figure in establishing at Maillardville in 1909 the largest French-Canadian settlement west of the Rockies.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Henderson's Gazetteer and Directory, 1901.

• APR • 56



The old Roman Catholic Church at Deroche

• APR • 56



A dugout canoe belonging to the Deroche family

• APR • 56



A pioneer's cabin at Deroche. It is said to have been built by A. Beaulieu

• APR • 56



The present Roman Catholic church at Durieu

CHAPTER II  
FRENCH CANADIAN SETTLEMENT IN RELATION  
TO THE LUMBER INDUSTRY

As writers of the present day begin to realize that the story of Canada, is rich with sagas of men's conflict against environmental as well as political forces, the completion in 1885 of the Canadian Pacific railway is seen as a marvel of human accomplishment. The welding of the band of steel across the vast territory produced a sense of national destiny and within a very few years a booming inter-regional commerce that beggared the wildest dreams of Canadian leaders.

One of the remarkable effects of the completion of the railroad was the rapid and vast growth of population on the Canadian prairies. It has been estimated that there were probably not more than 75,000 people between the Great Lakes and the Rockies in 1871. By 1901 the population had increased to 420,000 and by 1911 when the wave of immigration was at its height to 1,328,000.<sup>1</sup> One of the major problems for the multitudes of newcomers was obtaining an

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<sup>1</sup> Census of Canada, 1911, Volume I, p. 522.

adequate supply of building materials. Sod houses were very common but as the needs for homes, barns and granaries increased, the supplies of lumber available from eastern or United States mills could not keep abreast with the demand. British Columbia coastal lumbermen, ever on the lookout for new outlets, were quick to take advantage of the expanding Prairie market. The lumber mills in the Kootenay district were even more advantageously situated. Lumbering in this area had begun as an adjunct to mining which created the customary demand for materials for camps, sluice boxes and mine-props. The building of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway in 1895 unlocked an extensive new timber supply at the very time when rapid settlement of the Prairies was in progress. As long as large-scale production was economically practical in the Interior, the fortunes of the "Mountain Mills" rose or fell in relation to the crop or market conditions on the Prairies. Indeed the timber industry of the entire province could never conceal its persistent surveillance of the crop situation. Lumbering journals like the Western Lumberman almost invariably interpreted the fluctuations of their trade in terms of the grain situation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Western Lumberman, (published from 1903-1907 as the Lumberman and Contractor) Vancouver, B.C., Hugh C. Maclean Publishing Company.

At the time when the British Columbia lumber industry was developing, the Eastern lumber business had already begun to show decay. Although total production figures did not indicate a serious decline until about 1910 the best stands of timber in Ontario and Quebec had been exhausted before the turn of the century. The result of this was that some Eastern lumber investors began to transfer their interests to the Pacific Coast where timber was plentiful, comparatively cheap and readily marketable.<sup>3</sup> As lumber capital came west, many of the lumber-jacks who had deforested the valley of the Ottawa and other eastern pine and spruce areas also moved. As early as 1882 Eastern lumbermen like Felix Cardinal were making themselves at home in the company of Douglas firs and Western red cedars along the shores of Burrard Inlet.<sup>4</sup> Directories of the period 1882-1892 showed an

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<sup>3</sup> One example of this transfer westward of Eastern capital was the construction in 1889 of a large mill near New Westminster by James McLaren, president of the Ottawa bank (also a lumberman at Buckingham, Quebec) and another investor Frank Ross. On January 31st of 1889 the B. C. Gazette (p. 71) listed McLaren and Ross as applying for a timber license to cut timber on four limits on the shores of Pitt Lake and in other nearby districts.

<sup>4</sup> Cardinal was listed in the British Columbia Directory for the year 1882-3 as a logger at Moodyville. Williams, R.T., British Columbia Directory, 1882-3, R.T. Williams, Victoria, B. C., 1882-3, p. 238.

increasing number of the French-Canadian names which had long been so common on the payrolls of Quebec, Ontario and New England mills.

Professor Lower has remarked on the significant role of the French Canadian in the exploitation of Canada's forests.

The French-Canadian was the traditional lumberjack. As bushman, river driver and millhand he was reliable, docile, cheerful, efficient and cheap. He had a pride of calling, a low standard of living and an authoritarian type of society behind him to keep him contented with his lot.<sup>5</sup>

As he points out, these men with their esprit de corps, their friendly rivalry between gangs for the best outputs, followed lumbering across Eastern Canada and the prairies and for a long time before the tide of European immigrants provided competition for them, were the labour backbone of the industry.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Lower, A.R.M., The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest, Toronto, Ryerson, 1938, p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> Some idea of their early penetration even before the turn of the century (into the B. C. lumber industry) may be obtained from the following table:

Some French-Canadian Names listed as Lumber workers in B.C. Directories (1882, 1885, 1891, 1892)

Cota, Felipe (Cote Philippe)....	Millhand, Websters Mill, New Westminster
Derrienne, Henry.....	Millhand, Brunette Sawmills, New Westminster
Guibault, Julius.....	Fireman, Royal City Planing Mills
Bruneau, Frank.....	Logger, Moodyville

In places there are numerous hints that early participation by French-Canadians in B. C. lumbering was widespread. A representative of the B. C. Government Travel Bureau, collecting information in the Sechelt Peninsula recently, found that French-Canadian hand-loggers had been working there in the 1880's.<sup>7</sup>

A Pete Genelle opened a lumber mill at Nakusp in 1892, the first in the area.<sup>8</sup> The B. C. Provincial Voters List of 1894 indicated a scattering of Canadien millmen in the Revelstoke, Nakusp, Rossland, Comaplix areas; by

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Cardinal, Felix.....	Logger, Moodyville
Gervaise, Louis.....	Teamster, Moodyville
Godden (Godin) Henry.....	Longshoreman, Moodyville
Guerin, Edward.....	Logger, Moodyville
Lachapelle, Louis.....	Shingle maker, Hastings Mill
Lerange.....	Shingle maker, Hastings Mill
Cote, François.....	Millman, Granville
Desbin (Desbien?) Louis...	Logger, Granville
Gagnon, F.....	Millman, Granville
Toulsaint, M.....	Millman, Granville
Williams, R.T. <u>British Columbia Directory, 1882-3,</u>	
Victoria, R.T. Williams, Publisher, 1882, pp. 207,238,240.	
See also appendix X.	

<sup>7</sup> Mr. John Buckley, to the writer, February 21, 1956.

<sup>8</sup> Johnson, Mrs. K., Pioneer Days of Nakusp and the Arrow Lakes, Nakusp, B.C., 1951, p. 13, see also p. 128 regarding the Genelle brothers and other mills.

1900 the number had increased.<sup>9</sup> Joseph Deschamps, who came from Prescott, Ontario in 1897 worked in Rossland for a time as mill-foreman, then, became partner of a Louis Blue (Bleu?). In a few years he was known as a very prominent Kootenay lumber-man, citizen and advocate of French-Canadian labor importation.<sup>10</sup>

The phenomenal growth of the Pacific Coast lumber industry in the first decade of the twentieth century created an unprecedented demand for unskilled or semi-skilled labour in logging, booming and lumber manufacturing. Thousands of Orientals found employment in the lumber industry. The Japanese, adapted themselves to many different tasks; the Chinese were used particularly in shingle manufacturing, and the East Indians, obtained work at a variety of jobs especially in the mills and yards.

Opposition to the employment of Asiatics gradually developed from many sources. White laborers resented the competition of Orientals whose low standard of living, they claimed, invited payment of low wages. At lumber

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<sup>9</sup> Voters List, Province of British Columbia, 1894, 1900.

<sup>10</sup> Rossland Miner, February 2, 1910, p. 1., August 10, 1922, p. 1. Mills in the Rossland and Nelson areas that Deschamps was associated with were the China Creek Lumber Company, a mill at Birchbank, one at Nelson, one at Goat Creek and several in conjunction with American investors.



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<sup>10</sup> Rossland Miner, February 2, 1910, p. 1.; August 10, 1922, p. 1. Mills in the Rossland and Nelson areas that Deschamps was associated with were the China Creek Lumber Company, a mill at Birchbank, one at Nelson, one at Goat Creek and several in conjunction with American investors.

*Deschamps one  
- recorded - have been  
sufficient  
- done!*

mills Anti-Asiatic demonstrations occurred and incidents of fighting were not uncommon. Merchants criticized industrialists who hired Orientals (usually poor store customers) who, they said, sent most of their pay-cheques back to their native land. Sometimes the employers themselves expressed dissatisfaction with the work they obtained from the Asiatics (especially the East Indians). They relied on them, they said, because of the inadequate supply of labor and the inefficiency of some white labor. Many employers agreed that white workers did superior work but irresponsible absentee-ism on the part of some caused complaints.<sup>11</sup> Dissatisfaction with Oriental workers led to a decision by the management of the largest lumber plant in British Columbia to experiment with imported French-Canadian labour.

The large mill established near New Westminster in 1889 by Ottawa investors James McLaren and Frank Ross, experienced a long period of idleness following the death of McLaren in 1891. The closure of the plant was prolonged by a recession in the lumber trade and the suspension of navigation on the Fraser through silting in the channel. The investment of American capital

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<sup>11</sup> The Western Lumberman, Vancouver, Hugh C. McLean Publishing Company, May 1910, pp. 55-56.

permitted the mill to resume operation in 1905 and it soon forged into a position of leadership among the Canadian coast producers. Under a new group of owners led by Gen. A. D. McRae, the company had reached a point in production in 1909 where it rivalled the largest American mills in daily output.<sup>12</sup> The plant now employed about five hundred men. The sales manager, H. J. Macken was quoted as saying about half of these were Orientals.<sup>13</sup>

Exactly who originated the idea of labour recruitment in the lumbering villages of Quebec may never be known, but the management of the Fraser River Lumber Company decided that a night watchman named Théodore Thérout from the plant would accompany an Oblate Priest, Father William Patrick O'Boyle, on a tour through Eastern lumber camps in an attempt to enlist workers.<sup>14</sup>

Father O'Boyle and Thérout left for the east in July, 1909. On their arrival in Quebec their method of approaching prospective settlers was to arrange for a place of meeting (usually a home or hall) in a suitable parish and then ask the cure to announce the place and purpose of the meeting from his pulpit on Sunday morning. When the people gathered, Father O'Boyle

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<sup>12</sup> Others in the investment group were Edward S. Swift and Louis Swift (of meat packing fame) of Chicago, Col. A.D. Davidson and Senator Peter Jansen of Nebraska. The Western Lumberman, April, 1908, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> The Western Lumberman, August, 1909, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Loc. cit.

presented the offer made by the lumber company.<sup>15</sup> Besides arranging transportation for the workers, the company would provide living accommodations for them and make it possible for those who wished, to build their own homes. The lot and building materials could be paid for over a long period on easy terms.<sup>16</sup> Since wages in Quebec at the time were only about \$39 per month the twenty-five cents hourly wage offered was attractive. In addition to promising better working conditions, Father O'Boyle suggested the agreeableness of the milder climate on the Pacific Coast.<sup>17</sup>

The benefits which Father O'Boyle stressed were not easily discounted. One feature appealed strongly to the home-loving lumbermen. In the East the men

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<sup>15</sup> The biography of Father O'Boyle constitutes a fascinating story in itself. Born in Lindsay, Ontario, in 1875, he won the Edward Blake scholarship from the University of Toronto (upon graduating from Lindsay Collegiate). Declining the scholarship, he went to Ottawa University, thence to the Gregorian University in Rome and the Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas where he obtained his Doctor of Divinity degree. After another short period at Ottawa University, he was transferred in 1905 to St. Peter's, New Westminster. From then until his death in 1949 he gave all his strength and powers to the furtherance of the aims of the Roman Catholic Church in B.C. For a time he was rector at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver. He was credited with establishing Vancouver College and held a high reputation both as a public speaker and as a diligent pastor.

<sup>16</sup> Mr. Jack Thomas to the writer, July 14, 1955.

<sup>17</sup> Mr. Thomas and John Dicaire to the writer, July 7, 1955. Mr. Dicaire said that wages in Eastern lumber camps were often only ninety cents per day. Mr. Lalonde of Rossland gave the figure of \$14.00 to \$16.00 per month in Eastern camps where he worked.

spent the winter months logging in the woods; in the spring they drove the logs to the mills; and during the months until the next winter their work was in the mills. In British Columbia there would be steady mill work and no more months of absence from their families. In reviewing their motives for coming some of the settlers say that the opportunity for a change - to see a new country and perhaps insure a more prosperous future for their descendants - helped them to decide.<sup>18</sup>

Some idea of the recruiting area visited by Father O'Boyle and his assistant has been obtained from newspaper reports of the migrations and from interviews with the settlers or their descendants. The first train of forty families (about 169 persons) was made up of one carload from the area around Quebec city (Quebec, Levis and Montmagny counties) seven carloads from the Ottawa valley (Ottawa, Hull and Rockland) one from the eastern townships and another from the Montreal area.<sup>19</sup> Many of the men were former workers of the J. R. Booth Company in Ottawa and the E. B. Eddy Company in Hull. The priest himself said he had visited every part of Quebec.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Mr. Thomas to the writer, July 14, 1955.

<sup>19</sup> The Nelson Daily News, September 28, 1909, p. 1, and interviews with various settlers.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in the British Columbian, New Westminster, September 28, 1909, p. 1.

When the settlers began to arrive at the Fraser / River Mills on September 27, 1909, they were accommodated in the new houses and hotel built on the mill townsite by the lumber company.<sup>21</sup> Estimates of the number who arrived in what was referred to as the "first contingent" vary greatly. It would seem that not all the cars in the first contingent arrived simultaneously and figures for the number of families that arrived on September 27 from various sources do not agree. Mr. John Dicaire, then a boy of seventeen, says only twenty-two families were on the first train of six or seven carloads.<sup>22</sup> The British Columbian said thirteen cars had left Montreal on September 23, bearing five hundred French Canadians (110 experienced workers). The day of their arrival The British Columbian said that 250 people had arrived on nine coaches. The same paper next day changed the figure to forty families, eighty-four working men.<sup>23</sup> The actual number which arrived is perhaps not so significant as the fact that the settlers /

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<sup>21</sup> Most of the houses then built are still in use today in the municipality of Fraser Mills (a company townsite). The majority of the settlers soon took advantage of a company plan to build their own homes on company-held land in Coquitlam municipality one-half mile away. The rented houses were gradually occupied by non - French Canadian workers in later years, many of them Scandinavians.

<sup>22</sup> John Dicaire to the writer, July 6, 1955.

<sup>23</sup> The British Columbian, Sept. 27, 1909, p. 1. Sept. 28, 1909, p. 1.

(almost all) proved to be very suitable workers and made plans to stay. While the lumber company considered further importations the next spring the first settlers wrote favourable letters to the East and began to set up a French community for the happiness of themselves and later arrivals.

On the company townsite the people enjoyed a happy round of social life. The community centre for square dances and parties was the unoccupied top storey of the general store, a spacious building. The wives and daughters of the company officials helped in planning the festive gatherings and relations between management and workers was very friendly.<sup>24</sup>

(One of the promises made by the mill owners was that a school and church would be provided for the immigrants. At first Sisters of the Child Jesus came daily to hold school in a small building for the children of the immigrants.<sup>25</sup>) This was a courageous performance since dense forest bordered the two mile walk from the end of the streetcar line at Sapperton. A priest, at

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<sup>24</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Thomas to the writer.

<sup>25</sup> Two of the sisters, Sisters St. Augustine and St. Eugenie, who originally conducted the school are still alive today at the Convent of the Child Jesus in North Vancouver. Sister St. Augustine spent most of her life in Maillardville Convent School, leaving only a few years ago.

first, Father O'Boyle, and then Father Edmond Maillard came weekly to hold mass for the people. Looking forward to the time soon when they would be all living together in their new French village, the men lost no time in beginning the erection of a spacious church.<sup>26</sup>



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The Church of Notre Dame de Lourdes under construction in the winter of 1909.

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<sup>26</sup> The Western Catholic, cited in Missions de la Congregation des Oblats de Marie Immaculee, March 1911, p. 224 gives the dimensions of the church as thirty-three metres in length, twelve metres in width and eight metres in height. The steeple was said to be twenty-five metres high.



By this time Father Maillard, a young Oblate from France was becoming a respected leader in community enterprises. He was often on the scene while the men were working. He organized a bazaar as a social gathering and to help raise funds for the church building. (Very proud were the people when on December 11, 1910, Monsignor McNeil, the Archbishop, came to bless the new church and Father Maillard led the grand Mass in his presence. The church building was to serve as the school until such a time as a separate building could be provided. Soon a number of the people were building or planning to build homes near the church. The lumber company subdivided its block of land in Coquitlam municipality into quarter-acre lots.<sup>27</sup> Any of the French-Canadian millworkers could buy a lot (price \$150.00) and the lumber to build a house on installment payments of \$5.00 a month or more.

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<sup>27</sup> The parcel of land owned by the Fraser River Lumber Company in Coquitlam municipality adjacent to the mill townsite was known as D.L. 46. A.D. McRae obtained approval of a subdivision plan from Coquitlam council September 11, 1909, even before the settlers had arrived. Minutes of Council, Coquitlam Municipality, September 11, 1909, p. 74.

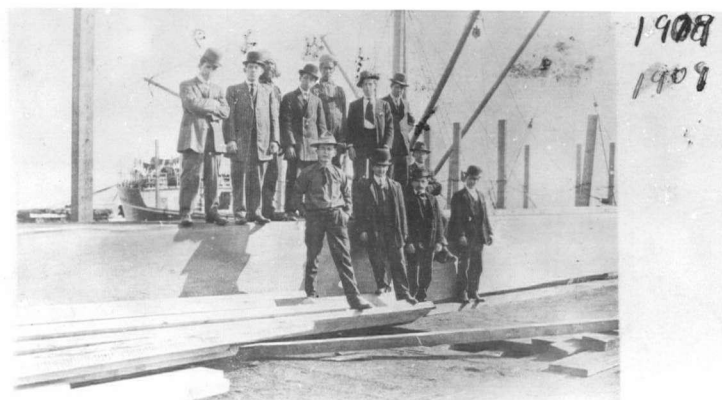
Many of the original homes in the area surrounding / the church are remaining today. The first home is still standing but its individual style has been altered and its exterior covered with asphalt shingles so that the passerby can hardly distinguish it from any other house. In keeping with the tradition established in / Quebec, the Candiens expected to have large families and accordingly built big houses. The writer well remembers how common it was even twenty-five years ago / for families to have twelve to fifteen children.



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The Boileau home and some of the family, about 1912.

Various diversions from the duties of home and work and church occupied the leisure time of the settlers. At first even the new country provided interest. Groups of the young woodsmen attired in their "Sunday-best" would go for long walks or sleigh or wagon rides. The massive timbers which were stacked on the docks at the mill ready for loading onto deep-sea freighters were a novelty to each of them. The frequent rains and partial flooding of the swampy land around the mill were the only discouraging features of the new life but the people gradually became accustomed to these inconveniences.



Canadian lumberjacks on the dock at Fraser Mills.  
(The group includes P. Bouthot, Louis Lafrance,  
George Bouthot, John Dicaire, J. Parent, C. Bouthot  
and Philip Bédard).

With the help of newcomers who arrived in the next few years, the mill sponsored an ice-hockey team which won the Pacific Coast Championship. Then a band was formed. This organization was the pride and joy of the 'habitants' and often represented the community at gatherings outside the district. In the summer the mill and the French village had a baseball team which journeyed, often accompanied by the band and ardent supporters, to neighbouring districts as far away as Sumas. The mill constructed one of the finest baseball parks in the lower mainland.



The French-Canadian band, 1913. The group includes Alex. Payer, Albert Beaulieu, J. Payer, Arthur Dicaire, D. Payer, J. Parent, E. Paré, G. Bouthot, J. Coutu, J. Dicaire, Emery Paré, and J. Labour.

The little French outpost would never have retained its character if the first who tore themselves away from their homeland had not been reinforced by another contingent in May, 1910 and by many others who came in small groups.<sup>28</sup> There is a sort of good-natured "class distinction" in the community today. The élite are the few remaining immigrants of the first contingent and their many descendents. Next and almost as revered are those of the second contingent. Worthy of considerable respect are those who came in the few months following the two contingents. Other arrivals and their families, even though they may have come thirty-five years ago, are in a different class. These levels of prestige are, of course, not relative to economic or social status.

The great industrial promoter of this settlement enterprise seems to have been General A.D. McRae, who was ably assisted by the plant sales manager, Henry J. Macken.<sup>29</sup> Macken often attended to publicity for the scheme. But without a doubt the project would never

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<sup>28</sup> When the second contingent came accommodations were not ready for them. Some had to stay for a few days in railroad cars. Several families, in some cases, crowded into one small house. As late as May 1912 the press reported arrivals of workers from Quebec. After that many others came unheralded. The Western Lumberman, May, 1912, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> Almost every issue of The Western Lumberman which reported the progress of the Fraser Mills project mentioned one or both of these men.

have been possible without the enthusiasm of Father O'Boyle. The Oblate priest, then about thirty-five years of age, tackled the undertaking with the fire and zeal of a crusader. Following his second expedition to the East in April, 1910, (an effort which brought some forty-nine families comprising 166 persons) Father O'Boyle gave his views to the press. He pointed out that statistics gathered by the Dominion government showed that 19,000 people had left rural Quebec in 1909. Some 5000, it was estimated, had gone to urban centres like Montreal but 10,000 or more had gone to the United States. "We want" said Father O'Boyle,

to turn these men west instead of south. These are the men essential to British Columbia. The ordinary European immigrants come from the Old World cities. They crowd our Canadian cities. B. C. wants men who will go to her unexplored and uninhabited areas. The French-speaking Canadian is this man. He will camp in the woods and live on hard tack until the railways and civilization arrive. He is the *coursier-de-bois* of Canada.<sup>30</sup>

He explained that Quebec had plenty of labourers because the mills in the East were shutting down for want of timber. He suggested British Columbia millmen take advantage of this labour supply by acquainting the workers with the better wages and steady employment to be

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<sup>30</sup> The Western Lumberman, July 1910, p. 19.

obtained here. He seemed assured that given the / advantage of living in communities with his own kind, the domestic, socially-inclined Canadien would answer the labour problem in B. C. mills.

As the Fraser Mills experiment progressed, it was publicized far and wide across the province. Interior newspapers like the Nelson Daily News and the Golden Star, hailed the plan as an answer to the labour crisis which was affecting Mountain mills even more than those at the coast since their isolation was repugnant to most white workers.<sup>31</sup> As favourable reports of the talents of the Canadien lumberman at Fraser Mills reached the press, Interior lumbermen spoke of importing thousands of Quebec workers for their mills.<sup>32</sup> But these plans mooted never materialized. It would seem that beyond advertising in the east for labourers, no definite plan for Eastern labour recruitment was undertaken.

There is one exception to this general statement. Some of the Kootenay newspapers make reference to a labour importation programme executed by J. S. Deschamps in the Rossland district. Actually Deschamps undertook

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<sup>31</sup> Nelson Daily News, May 5, 1910, p. 1.  
Golden Star, November 4, 1911.

<sup>32</sup> Secretary W.A. Anstey of the Mountain Lumbermen's Association cited in the Mail Herald (Revelstoke) May 14, 1910, p. 4, and the Daily News (Nelson), May 5, 1910.

a project of this kind before the big coast mill had any such plans. Deschamps, an ardent French-Canadian who had come from Ontario, apparently endeavoured to bring considerable numbers to the Kootenay mills with which he was associated, but he did not succeed in obtaining more than a dozen persons.<sup>33</sup>

It is impossible to determine how many French-Canadian lumbermen who came to the Kootenays were brought by the advertising efforts of the desperate mill-owners but it would seem that in the first decade of the century almost every little milltown had a scattering of Quebeckers. Obscure little towns like Waldo in the Fernie district, had residents like Louis Chenier, lumberman; Patrick D'Amour, lumberman; John Saunier, planerman and Louis Tozier, teamster, working in the mills there.<sup>34</sup> Names given in directory lists for other similar lumbering villages dispersed through the Kootenays amplify the impression of French-Canadians being attracted everywhere as loggers, teamsters,

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<sup>33</sup> Pete Lalonde, one of Deschamps' surviving millmen, says that his employer paid the fare for these men but only two stayed. He claims, however, that there were many French-Canadian lumbermen in the West Kootenays from 1900-1910 at mills near Rossland and at Chase, Creston, Nakusp and other points. - to the writer, July 24, 1955.

<sup>34</sup> Henderson's Gazetteer and Directory, Vancouver, Henderson Publishing Co., 1910, p. 664.



river men and millmen.<sup>35</sup>

The recruiting of the French Canadians by the Fraser River mill was undertaken principally in order to supplant the Oriental workers already employed in large numbers. It was on this account that the project was lauded by the press everywhere in the province and by no less a figure than the Premier, Sir Richard MacBride.<sup>36</sup> But in attempting to replace Oriental labour the enterprise was not entirely successful.

The payroll book at the plant in October, 1911, indicates a division by races as follows - French-Canadian 86, East Indian 173, Japanese 77, Chinese 19, British or European - about 175 workers. On March, 1912, there were 153 East Indians, 80 Japanese and 317 of European ancestry (including about 100 French Canadians).<sup>37</sup>

*Note, no  
Chinese or  
orientals were  
living in  
Henderson*

The coming of the French-Canadians had merely reduced to some extent the number of jobs held by Asiatics.

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<sup>35</sup> Henderson's Directory, 1910, p. 667.  
Wardner, B. C., lumber workers Deline, Guerin, Lachance, Lapoint, St. Jacques.  
Wattsburg .... Bergeron, Houle, Lemorgne, Viger  
Arrowhead .... Boutillier, Cyr, LeCroix  
These are only a few of the examples cited in many towns.

<sup>36</sup> cited in The Western Lumberman, June 1910, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Payroll Books, Fraser River Lumber Company and Canadian Western Lumber Company.

Considerable numbers of Orientals continued to be employed at the mill for years afterward until some of them were eventually displaced by Scandinavian, Greek and other European immigrants.

Two years after the first Canadiens had come to the Fraser River Mills (now changed to the Canadian Western Lumber Company) the plant management expressed great satisfaction with their qualities as workmen. Agents were sent to Quebec to recruit further help and the company proposed to locate fifty or sixty families at its large mill at Golden. It was suggested also that another settlement might be established at Comox near the logging operations. Neither of these plans materialized but apparently there was some success in persuading workers to come as family groups.<sup>38</sup>

The success of the plan must be appraised too, in terms of the extent to which it satisfied the desires of the French-Canadian lumbermen. Almost all of them, it appears, were pleased from the viewpoint of economic betterment. A few considered that they could locate even greener fields and went to the United States.

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<sup>38</sup> The Western Lumberman, November 1911, p. 29.

Several others took employment with other mills at Port Moody or nearby New Westminster. Settlers who came with the early groups say that only a handful were unhappy and returned to their homeland.<sup>39</sup>

It was not long after the settlement plan was executed that the clergy in Quebec began to view the departure of their former parishioners with some misgivings. It had been bad enough to lose the support of some of their people. Fears also grew that the emigrés would become Anglicized in language, customs and religion. These alarms were not without justification, for the quality of French spoken deteriorated markedly, and there were some cases of mixed marriages. Gradually it dawned upon the lumbermen that the little settlement was likely to remain the only substantial French-Canadian centre west of the Rockies - a tiny splinter of French-Canada afloat in an English sea. A few years later the prominent Oblate missionary Father A.G. Morice commented:

For this reason one is permitted to wonder from the point of view of language and race whether this establishment was really advantageous. Drowned in an English and Protestant

environment the French-Canadian is fatally condemned to lose his language and his ancestral customs. His children still understand the first but will become ashamed of the second and his grandchildren will be English with French names badly pronounced unless disguised under a ridiculous translation.

Now the experience is there to demonstrate that an Anglicized Canadien is easily Protestantized by his daily contacts and mixed marriages which follow only too often. May it please God that the children of the founders will make an exception to the rule.<sup>40</sup>

The various pastors who served as cures at the church named Notre Dame de Lourdes recognized the dangers present and some more than others fought strongly for the preservation of the language and of the Catholic religion. The beloved Father Maillard was succeeded as cure in 1911 by a secular priest, Father Pelletier. There is a hint in the records of the time that the change was due to the appointment of a new Archbishop of Vancouver, Mgr. MacNeil to replace Mgr. Dontenwill. Father Pelletier, knowing the attachment formed between his predecessor and the people, took up the reins of duty with difficulty and a degree of sadness.<sup>41</sup> One priest, Father de Lestre, a Belgian, and member of

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<sup>40</sup> Morice, A.G. Histoire de l'Eglise Catholique dans l'Ouest Canadien, Montreal, Granger Freres, 1921, vol. IV, p. 382.

<sup>41</sup> Codex Historicus of the Maison St. Charles at New Westminster, entry for 1911.

the Premontre order is still spoken of affectionately by the parishioners as one who laboured hard to keep them true to the Catholic faith and constantly urged them to use good French in their home and daily associations.<sup>42</sup>

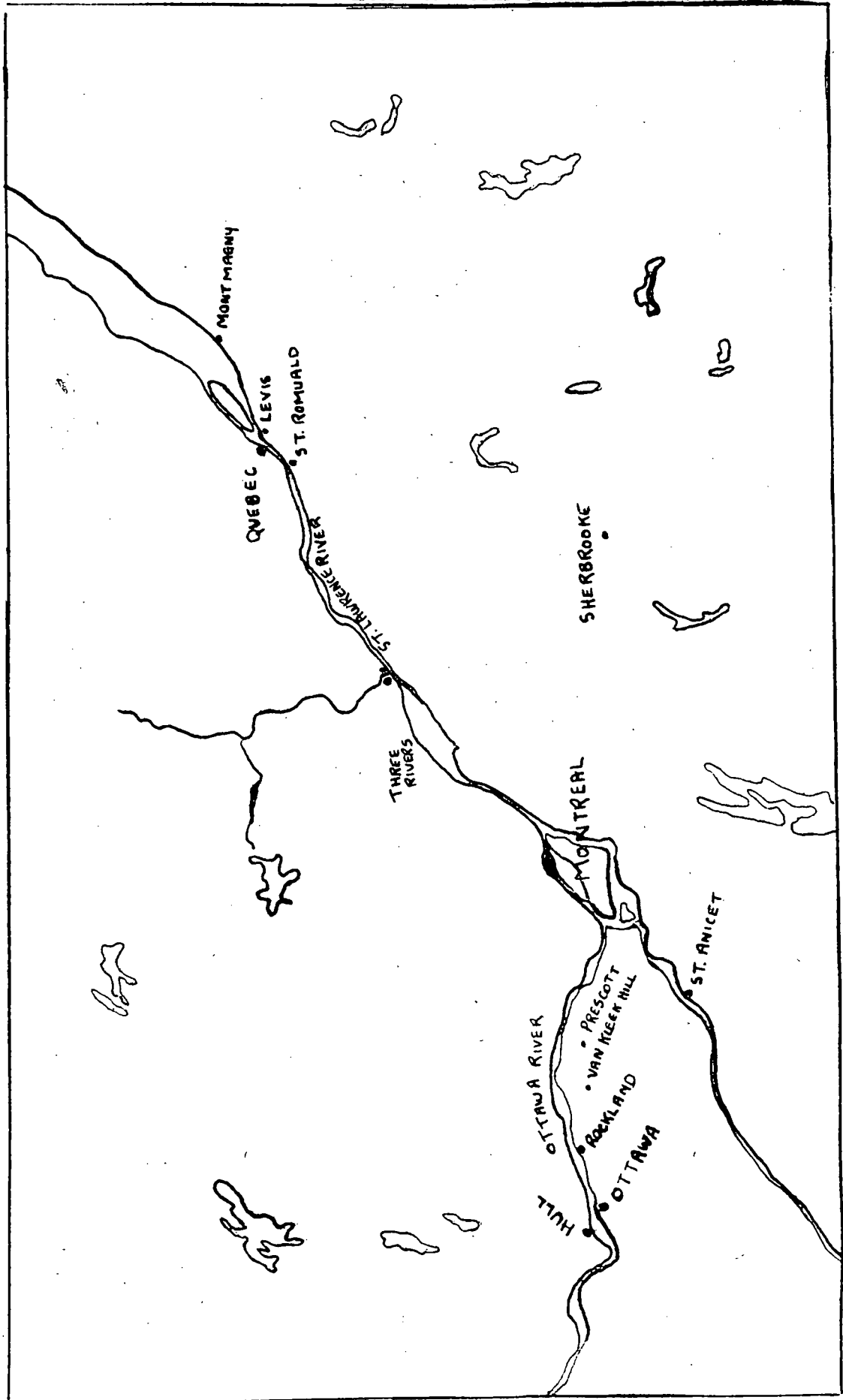
Contact with English speaking settlers came frequently through trade. At first mill employees bought provisions from the company store on the mill townsite or brought them from New Westminster. One of the Canadiens, Jack (Jean) Thomas, drove a mule-team delivery wagon for the mill store. Now an elderly man, he still talks with a mixture of pride and amusement of the white wagon painted with a red circle enclosing a capital letter "F", the trade mark of the company. Then an enterprising settler named Tellier decided to open an independent store at the corner of Laval Street and Pitt River Road and was soon doing a sizeable business.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Mr. J. Dicaire to the writer, July 7, 1955.

<sup>43</sup> Jack Thomas to the writer, July 14, 1955.  
Mr. Thomas has spent most of the remaining years of his employment at his favourite job - on the booms, where he became foreman.

## SOME SOURCES OF LUMBER WORKERS IN EASTERN CANADA



To follow page 61

A short time after its founding the little hamlet on the hillside became known unofficially as Maillard-ville, taking its name from the first curé.

It had no recognized status as a community and was referred to generally by neighbouring settlements in Coquitlam municipality as "Frenchtown". The period of anonymity came to a gratifying end in 1913 when Postmaster General Pelletier, granted the village a post office under the name "Maillardville".<sup>44</sup>

The community had taken firm root by 1912.

Numerous houses had been built and the church, though unfinished, was in constant use. New French-Canadians kept augmenting the original numbers. Many were relatives of former arrivals but some were Canadiens from the Maritimes who, having come to British Columbia, gravitated to a community where they would enjoy the congeniality of French speaking neighbours.<sup>45</sup> In this fashion Maillardville kept growing. Some French-Canadians built houses in the area surrounding D.L. 46, but so also did a number of non-French immigrants.

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<sup>44</sup> John Dicaire to the writer, July 7, 1955.

<sup>45</sup> An interesting example of this kind of immigrant is Dan Amero. He, a Nova Scotian, had come from Adirondack, New York. There, and in Maine and Pennsylvania, he had been a tree-feller. He came to British Columbia in 1911 with thirty-two other French-Canadians. In 1923, after working at Powell River he and some of his friends moved to Maillardville. Dan Amero to the writer, July 25, 1955.



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Tellier's store at Pitt River Road and Laval Street, 1910.



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Lumberjacks on a Sunday sleighride at Fraser Mills,  
about 1911.  
(Included are René Valliers, Jack Thomas, Joe Charlebois,  
Paul Gauthier, Philip Bédore, Joe Parent and Ernest Rochon)





Jeremie Boileau and a company wood-wagon.



A French-Canadian picnic at Booth's farm, Maillardville, about 1920.

With this influx, the public school on the fringe of the Maillardville settlement was gradually enlarged. (The existence of the public school was a menace to the perpetuity of the French community.)

In spite of the disapproval of the priest, some parents sent their children to it as though to get their "money's worth" in education in return for the municipal taxes they were paying. There was also an impression among (some of the parents that the children were taught better in the public school (called Millside school). Some of them were not sure that they wanted their children to remain too French in a province that was so obviously English speaking.

Only five years after the first imported lumber worker arrived at the Fraser River Mills, World War I broke out. If recruiting figures were obtainable it would be interesting to see how the Maillardville community responded to the call to arms. Old residents say that 'quite a few' went into the army. The only available concrete evidence of public opinion during the war is the voting in the 1917 Federal election. It suggests opposition to conscription and the other war policies of the Unionist government. When British Columbians went to the polls on December 17th not one Liberal member was elected while Robert Borden's Unionists

won thirteen seats. The voters in Maillardville, however, cast only fifty-one votes for the Unionist candidate, F.B. Stacey, compared to ninety-three for the Liberal, Peter B. Ramsay. Westminster Electoral District, of which Maillardville was a part, gave 4,074 and 1,792 votes to the Unionist and Liberal respectively.<sup>46</sup> Thus a pattern of pro-Liberal voting reminiscent of old Quebec was established in the French-Canadian community. In Provincial as well as in Federal politics the Liberal candidate generally obtained good support in Maillardville when he could get little elsewhere. Not until the mid-1930's did this precedent crumble.<sup>47</sup>

Even in the first decade of the settlement a few of the French Canadians showed some ability in politics. In 1917 Amedé Allard was elected to the Coquitlam municipal council. He was elected again in 1918 but his political career was terminated by death in a logging accident. He and several other workmen were felling one of the last remaining big

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<sup>46</sup> Canada, Sessional Papers 1920, 4th Session 13th Parliament, Vol. LVI, "Report of the Chief Electoral Officer", p. 275.

<sup>47</sup> See appendices XI and XII.

trees at the Maillardville settlement when he was struck by a logger's springboard accidentally released and suffered a broken neck. Two others of the settlers gained some attention in the community by their political antagonism. Antonio Lanoux, native of Sherbrooke, was an ardent Liberal. George Proulx, native of the same town, was a faithful Conservative. For a time Proulx was a storekeeper and Post Master, and in 1923 he served one term as reeve of Coquitlam. Between 1922 and 1942 there were only five one-year periods when there was no French-Canadian holding one of the five municipal council seats. Emanuel Girard served for six years and Tom Allard, son of Amedé, the first 'Canadien' councillor, held office for ten. Both men belonged to families of early settlers from the East.<sup>48</sup>

When the great depression of the early 1930's settled upon the lumber trade its effect upon the Fraser Mills plant was a series of wage reductions. By September of 1931 there was much discontent among the workers. On September 17th a strike was called

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<sup>48</sup> Data about councillors and reeves and their terms of office from the Municipal Records, Municipality of Coquitlam. Other information from an interview with Mr. Jack Thomas.

in which a number of incidents of violence occurred.<sup>49</sup>

Many policemen were brought in and billeted at the plant. On one occasion ten strikers <sup>were arrested,</sup> two of whom were members of pioneer French Canadian families.<sup>50</sup>

The French-Canadians did not take positions of leadership in the strike movement but a number of them were quite outspoken in their support of the union demands.

The strike imposed severe hardship on a number of the families. A strike kitchen was operated in Maillardville /

by the workers. Some Chinese sympathizers donated

vegetables, Fraser River fishermen contributed salmon /

and others donated meat.<sup>51</sup> Two months passed before

labour and management were able to reach an agreement

and it was not until December 1st that the plant resumed operations.<sup>52</sup>

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✓ 49 The British Columbian, September 17, 1931, p. 1., September 18, p. 1, September 19, p. 1.

50 The British Columbian, September 19, 1931, p. 1, September 25, 1931, p. 4. These were Marcel and Henry Sabourin.

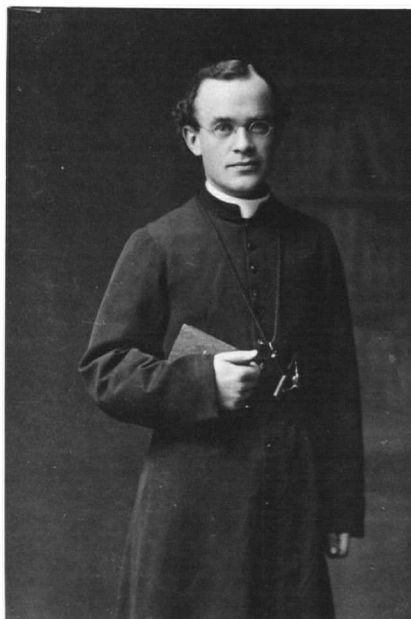
51 The British Columbian, September 24, 1931, p. 1.

✓ 52 The manager at the plant, H.J. Mackin claimed that the strike was inspired and led by outsiders who had only recently come to the mill or were not employed there. The representatives of the union (called the Lumber and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union) said the men had suffered four wage reductions ranging from ten to seven and one half percent and were getting an average wage of only twenty-two cents per hour. Manager Mackin denied this, saying that the plant minimum for boys was twenty-five cents, for men twenty-seven cents and that in actual practice thirty cents was the minimum

For two decades after its founding Maillardville kept along very much the same path. The original families multiplied their progeny and new families from the east came in one's or two's. But it was not until the 1940's that the nature of Maillardville began to alter drastically both for better and for worse.

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wage being paid. The union demanded a general increase of ten percent, immediate union recognition, a closed shop and compliance with all demands by four o'clock in the afternoon of their presentation. When the strike ended, men who had been obtaining less than forty cents per hour were to be restored to the rate in effect prior to the last cut on July 1st. Married men were promised a five percent increase and unmarried seven and one-half percent over pre-strike rates. Shingle sawyers won an increase amounting to about ten percent. None of the other union demands were gained. Actually some of the leading spirits in the strike were outsiders and one or two were candid about their Communist background. Three leaders at a public meeting at the New Westminster Legion Hall on September 29, 1931 were Comrade Lamont, Comrade Bissett and Comrade Tom Ewen. Harold Pritchett, one of the strike leaders was a shingle worker at the Fraser Mills plant and later was to play a prominent part in the operation of the International Woodworkers of America union. - see the British Columbian, September 18, 19, 25, 30, 1931 and November 21, 1931.



Rev. Edmond Maillard, O.M.I.,  
founder of the parish of Notre  
Dame de Lourdes.



An early Corpus Christi procession, in  
Maillardville.



Father  
De Lestre,  
the teaching  
sisters  
and the  
pupils at  
Lourdes  
school,  
about 1923.



Maillardville's  
Pitt River  
Road, in the  
1920's.



The second church  
at Notre Dame de  
Lourdes.  
(The first building  
was destroyed by  
fire, December, 1912)

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## CHAPTER III

RECENT FRENCH-CANADIAN SETTLEMENTSTHE DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH CANADIAN PARISHES  
AND THE BATTLE TO MAINTAIN A DISTINCT CULTURE

The change which has taken place in the population of British Columbia since the 1930's is everywhere evident. Prairie farmers "dried out" during the years of drought, farm workers, small business men and young people seeking employment have come to the Pacific coast in many thousands. The significance of "the great migration" presents a fascinating topic for some gifted writer to evaluate.<sup>1</sup> There are numerous reasons given by the immigrants for this mass movement to the coast. Many farmers were determined that their families unequipped with adequate clothing, nourishment and fuel should never again endure the hardships of Prairie winters. Living in hope of a good crop from year to year and being repeatedly crushed with disappointment was so embittering that many came to the "Coast" in search of work in mills, mines or factories.

As Canada slowly emerged from the great depression, promising new industrial enterprises arose in the New

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<sup>1</sup> A number of times the writer has asked pupils in Junior or Senior High Schools how many of them belong to families who had moved from the Prairie provinces. The fraction in a class has never been less than one-half.

Westminster area. Plants like the Pacific Veneer Company (May, 1939) began operations in the manufacture of plywood. As established mills like the Canadian Western Lumber Company and the Alaska Pine Company commenced to increase production, new shifts were employed. Many coast men who had been on part-time work or on relief obtained steady jobs. When some of the arrivals from the Prairies who had come on chance found employment, word spread to others and the trek to the coast accelerated.

Developments during the war years brought many others. Shipyards, steel plants and lumber mills so often required more men than they could obtain that soldiers on leave were frequently welcomed as temporary help. As the war ended, British Columbia moved rapidly into a business and industrial boom which attracted settlers from the Prairie provinces at an even faster rate. During this new era of prosperity residential lots in Vancouver and New Westminster were bought up rapidly and as desirable lots became scarce, the rural municipalities surrounding the cities attracted the overflow. This settlement pattern continues to the present day. Many thousands from the Prairies and elsewhere have chosen the rural municipalities because they liked semi-rural life where they could obtain

small acreages suitable for gardening and the keeping of livestock. Coquitlam, with Maillardville as its chief centre, is one of the municipalities which has developed in this manner. Its attraction arises from proximity to lumbering and plywood operations and to a variety of active industries in New Westminster.

(One of the natural results of the great influx of immigrants, even before World War II, was a need for more school buildings. Until 1938 the extensive municipality of Coquitlam did not have even one high school. Pupils were able to proceed only as far as the eighth grade in local schools. If they wished to receive secondary education the municipal school board paid their fees for attendance in one of the New Westminster high schools.) Pupils who utilized this arrangement journeyed four miles to New Westminster at their own expense. (The construction, in 1938, of the first high school was a great forward step for the young people of Coquitlam.) Until this time many of the youths, the French-Canadians especially, did not continue beyond elementary school.) Frequently they were able to begin work at Fraser Mills or one of the other plants when they reached the age of fifteen or sixteen. (Once a local high school was provided an increasing number of students continued in school until they had taken at least some secondary training.) The

change in attitude was most in evidence in the French-Canadian element. From that time an increasing number of the young people of Maillardville have completed high school training. Many have continued their education and now are established in professions such as teaching, pharmacy or nursing. Only a very few have chosen the priesthood or a career as a nun in the service of the church.

The advent of a host of 'outsiders' to the Maillardville settlement constituted a threat to the homogeneity of race, language and religion. Many who bought property within the general area of the original French Canadian colony were Scandinavian, Ukrainian or Anglo-Saxon. The erection of a Protestant church in 1944 was a development which probably none of the French residents had foreseen. The Protestant Sunday school which had been operating on the Fraser Mills townsite for many years, generally under Baptist auspices, had obtained most of its following from a few Protestant families, a number of them Scandinavian, in the mill townsite. With the growth of Coquitlam the time seemed to have come to move to a strategic location where the Sunday School would be able to serve more people and where Church services could be held for adults. In the summer of 1944 construction began,

and on September 24th an opening ceremony was held. Although the leaders in the church were Baptist and most of them were connected with the Sapperton Baptist Church in New Westminster, it was decided to operate under the designation "Fraser Mills Hall." Later the name was changed to "Fraser Mills Branch of the Sapperton Baptist Church." It is now called the Allard Street Baptist Church. In actual fact, in spite of a strongly evangelical tone in the church it has constituted no serious threat to the Catholic domination of the community.

*Therese* { The factor that protected the French settlement from becoming Protestant-dominated by a process of infiltration was the presence of hundreds of French Canadians who had come from the Prairies during the years of 'the great migration' and who had gravitated in the direction of Maillardville.<sup>2</sup> Many of these purchased lots in the area to the west of the original Maillardville settlement. (In time, the original parish church, Notre Dame de Lourdes, could not properly care

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<sup>2</sup> A news story in the Vancouver Sun, November 8, 1950, p. 21, telling of the many newcomers to Maillardville said, the French Canadian population had doubled there in eight years. In considering the phenomenal growth of the Maillardville community during World War II a question naturally arises about the attitude of the French Canadians toward the war. Recruiting figures for entries into the armed forces are not available. The writer knows of one or two isolated cases among

for them. On October 25, 1946, a new parish, Notre Dame de Fatima, was erected under Father O.A. Meunier, O.M.I., at a service held in the basement of nearby Alderson Avenue public school.

The first building project of the new parish was the construction of a rectory. This was completed by December 1946 and here the first mass was held on December 8th. The construction of a church was begun in May, 1947 and soon completed. By September, 1948, a parish school using four rooms at the back of the church was in operation. At present the school (now with its own building) enrolls about three hundred pupils. Seven sisters (Les Religieuses du Bon Pasteur) conduct the school with the help of two <sup>(1204)</sup> lay teachers.<sup>3</sup> The parish priest is Father G. Leduc, O.M.I., and his assistants are Father Ernest Denommée and A. Demers.

Almost every well-known French Canadian district

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the young men where resentment of compulsory military service was demonstrated by feigning chronic illness while in service. On the other hand a number of the young men volunteered for duty in the forces and in service won promotions. The voting in the Federal elections of 1940 and 1945 may not be very significant so far as the attitude to war was concerned. In both elections the Maillardville voters gave a majority to the C.C.F. Candidate (C.G. McNeil, then Colin Johnson) although James Sinclair (Liberal) won a majority in the riding. (See Reports, Chief Electoral Officer, Federal Elections.)

<sup>3</sup> Data given to the writer by Father Leduc from the Parish records.

in Saskatchewan and Alberta is now represented in either of the two parishes of Maillardville. Most of the newcomers are from such Saskatchewan communities as Gravelbourg or Duck Lake or Lafleche. Alberta parishes of St. Paul, St. Albert and Légal are represented. There are a few Manitobans from St. Boniface or Winnipeg. The old parish of Notre Dame de Lourdes has also been strengthened by the coming of the immigrants, and some of its most active leaders like Jean Baptiste Goulet are comparative newcomers from Saskatchewan.<sup>4</sup>

(Each of the two French parishes carries on an active programme centred around the school and church.) The Church of Notre Dame de Lourdes has been entrusted to the Franciscan order since 1953 and is at present in the charge of Father Alberic Fréchette. Six Ursuline sisters help Father Fréchette and his assistants by conducting the parish school. Apart from the regular Sunday Mass, there are numerous occasions when the people meet for special parish gatherings, perhaps to honour the curé on his birthday, or to celebrate St. Jean Baptiste day or the anniversary of the coming of

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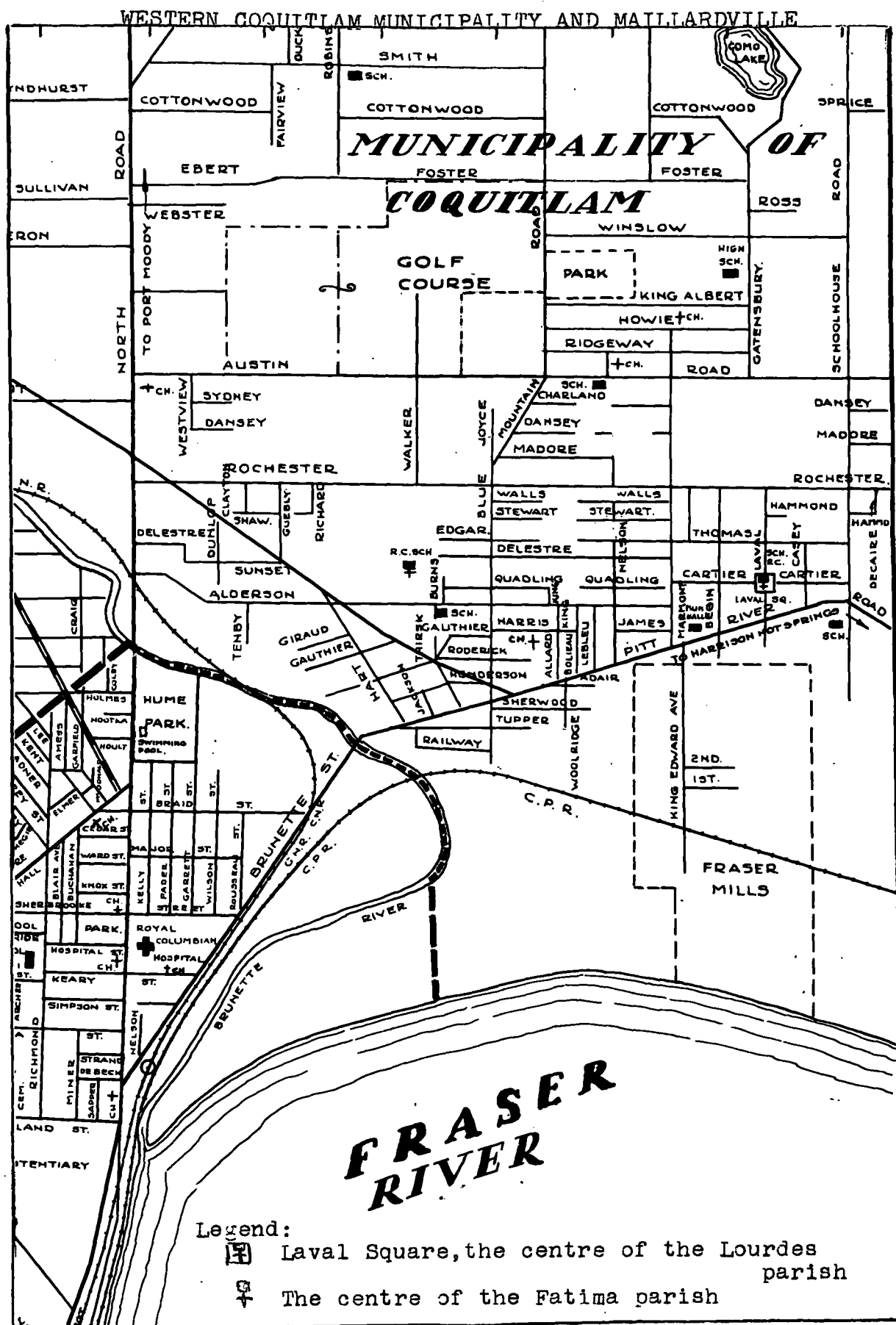
<sup>4</sup> Since his arrival from Clemenceau, Saskatchewan, in 1944 J.B. Goulet has been very active on the Catholic School Board and in other Catholic organizations. The clergy at Lourdes have been: 1909-11 Oblate, 1911-16 Secular, 1916-48 Prémontré, 1948-53 Secular, 1953 to the present Franciscan. Father Fréchette's assistants are Rev. S. Lajoie and Rev. P. Paré. The school enrolls about 540 pupils (150 secondary, 390 elementary) and has a staff (including secular help) of 16. In December 1955, Rev. R. Chabot joined the church and school staff.

the Franciscans to the parish. At these times the children of the school may present a variety programme or the musical talent of the parish may be called upon to provide entertainment. The clergy and representatives of other French parishes are often invited.

The young parish of Notre Dame de Fatima has demonstrated remarkable virility since its foundation. Not a little of the credit for this must be attributed to the faithful pastor, Father Leduc. He is held in high esteem. In March 1955 when the children of the parish school under the direction of the sisters presented a programme in the local theatre, to honour the curé on his birthday five hundred people attended the performance. Last summer (1955) the parishioners gathered to honour the fiftieth anniversary in the priesthood of Father Alfred Demers O.M.I., a retired priest who has given much assistance to the curé.

Each parish also has its French Canadian club or circle (Cercle Canadien-Français), a local chapter of the province wide Fédération Canadienne-Française. Annually representatives from these two circles and from the other thirteen circles in the Province gather for a conference. The purpose of the clubs is to foster / and perpetuate French-Canadian culture, language and religion.





The two parishes share the problem of conducting their schools without any aid from the municipal and provincial government. Assisting the Church in the direction of these institutions, is a joint Catholic School Board made up of three members from each parish.<sup>5</sup> The board has served in an advisory capacity to the clergy directing the schools and as an instrument of negotiation with municipal authorities in an attempt to obtain relief from the tax burden or some degree of aid from the Provincial government.

In recent years there have been some interesting indications in the Maillardville parish schools that the school authorities wish to learn where they can from the practices followed by the public schools. There has been organized as Association des Parents et des Maîtres Catholiques (A Catholic Parent-Teachers Association) which endeavours to raise money for, and generally assist, the schools in any possible way. The parish school teachers participate in the district conventions of the public school teachers.<sup>6</sup> There

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conducting  
for*

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<sup>5</sup> The members of the board are: Lourdes parish: Napoleon Gareau (chairman) Lucien Côté, Mme. S. Hamelin. Fatima parish: Maurice Lizée, Oscar Cheramy and Leo Comeau. (1955)

<sup>6</sup> Some of the teachers shared in the Lower Fraser Valley Teachers' Convention in 1954. La Liberté et le Patriote, November 6, 1954, p. 8.

have been some amusing concessions to bilingualism. For example, in pupils' programmes of entertainment, children who perform in a concert give English and French recitations or songs alternately.<sup>7</sup>

One important feature of life in Maillardville is "la Caisse Populaire" (the Credit Union). Established only in 1947, in three years it had assets totalling \$200,000. It has played an important part in helping newcomers to establish homes. The directors of the Credit Union can tell of many immigrants from other provinces who have built homes for themselves with funds advanced by their organization.

The residents in Maillardville have long been notable for their interest in political meetings, especially in the municipal field. At the present time (1956) one of the six councillors in office in Coquitlam municipality René Gamache is French Canadian. This is Mr. Gamache's eighth consecutive year on the Council.<sup>8</sup> Although comparatively few of their number have run for office through the years, their enjoyment

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<sup>7</sup> e.g. Recitation - "When Grandad Was a Boy", followed by "Marianne s'en va-t-au Moulin" - La Liberte et le Patriote, July 9, 1955, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Other French-Canadians who have served on the council in recent years are Tom Filiatrault (1945, 1946), Alfred Payer (1945-59) and E.J. (Bud) Hammond (1950, 1951). Payer and Hammond both are sons of the early pioneers.

of a good political fight is often a pleasure to watch. This is especially so if one of the incumbents has been antagonistic to French and Catholic interests and the aspirant to office gives his opponent an uncomfortable time during the debates. The issues under discussion need not be vital to French Canadian interests - a meeting is worth attending if an unpopular candidate is likely to be embarrassed by his rival.<sup>9</sup> The French Canadians have developed great skill in heckling and in asking disconcerting questions about municipal administration. A French-Canadian audience often considers this as the best form of entertainment.

The voters of Maillardville began to show a trend away from their traditional loyalty to the Liberal party first in the Federal election of 1935 when they supported the C.C.F. candidate, C.G. MacNeil who was elected for the district (North Vancouver). Similarly, in the Provincial election of 1937 the French-Canadian voters preferred E.E. Winch (C.C.F.) over W.E. Grieve, the Liberal candidate.<sup>10</sup> One explanation

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<sup>9</sup> This was particularly true during the long period (1924-1941) when R.C. MacDonald was reeve. The French-Canadians did not like MacDonald and demonstrated their antagonism by voting against him in Provincial elections even when the electoral district gave MacDonald a majority at the polls. See Statement of Votes, B. C. Elections, 1949.

<sup>10</sup> See appendix XIII.

for this was the growing strength of the union movement / in the lumber industry and the pro-labour policy of the C.C.F. party.

The community, as it has grown, has lost none of the original enthusiasm for sports it manifested in the early times. The passion for baseball which was demonstrated in the days when the lumber company sponsored a team still exists. The old ball park has long since fallen into disrepair and the company no longer sponsors the game. Nevertheless the Maillardville community / ? operates teams in its own name in two leagues, both of which have been champions in their realm. Another source of praise is the gymnastic group of the Lady of Lourdes high school which won first prize in 1954 among all the schools competing in a Vancouver contest. This group has won much publicity for the school and community by presenting brief displays of their talents as a prelude to major sport events in Vancouver and the lower mainland.

Although the French-Canadians in Maillardville are constantly aware of their separation from their compatriots in Quebec and from the other large centres of French Canadian population, the people are particularly favoured with visits from many prominent / churchmen and other leaders from the east. In speeches

delivered to the Cercles Canadien-Français encouragement is given to the people. Among the visitors have been G. Fillion, managing editor of Le Devoir, Rev. Father Herve Blais, provincial of the Franciscans from Montreal and Jean Bruchési, the historian. Such men of note in the east as Gustave Lanctot and Jean Bruchési have sent books for the parish library or scholarship prizes for the students in the schools.<sup>11</sup>

French Canadians in Maillardville as well as the other French parishes receive a form of "mass encouragement" each July and August when scores of visitors from the Quebec, the Maritimes, Ontario and New England arrive in chartered train coaches under the auspices of the Liason Française. These excursions planned by the Eastern organization give the B. C. French-Canadians opportunity to renew acquaintance with relatives whom they have not seen for many years.

One of the major problems in the Maillardville community as in other similar French settlements in British Columbia is maintaining the use of French among the younger people. Although many parents insist on

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<sup>11</sup> La Liberté et le Patriote, Winnipeg, 10 July, 1954, p. 7; 20 August, 1955, p. 7.

French as the medium of expression in the home they know from their own daily experience at work how, difficult it is for themselves as well as their children to avoid the use of the English language in daily contacts. Many of the older children do not attend the parish school but go to the municipal Como Lake High school. Even those who do attend the church institutions are constantly mixing with English-speaking children. (Neither parents nor children can banish the fact that English is the language of the world about them and that its use is so often a matter of necessity, while that of French is a matter of loyalty and affection.) When asked about the likelihood of continued and consistent use of French in the community Charles Lafleur, one of the pioneers, replied after the fashion that many do, with a shrug, "You know, it is difficult; using English, that is the custom."

Two French newspapers attempt to serve the Maillardville community (and the other French Canadians in British Columbia) - La Survivance, published in Edmonton, and La Liberté et le Patriote of Winnipeg. Although La Survivance is often recognized as the official organ for the French-Canadians of British Columbia, the representative of the paper visiting Maillardville in October, 1954, reported that only twenty-five families were subscribers. He succeeded in selling seventy-five more subscriptions before his

? in new /  
in Van.  
le Soleil de  
Vancouver

L'Appel (mensuel)  
de la Fédération

return.<sup>12</sup> Some families, particularly those from Saskatchewan or Manitoba, prefer La Liberté et Le Patriote, but its reading is not widespread. A few residents buy Eastern papers like Le Devoir and La Presse. Since the Vancouver and New Westminster dailies are read everywhere throughout the community, weekly journals, such as the two Prairie papers are at a great disadvantage.

A great source of encouragement to the French Canadians in Maillardville has been the formation since World War II of two new parishes, one in Vancouver, the other at Port Alberni. The Vancouver parish was founded in July, 1946, and services were held temporarily in a rented room at the Good Shepherd Convent. The building was begun in September, 1947 and the new church L'Eglise du Saint-Sacrament was dedicated in June of the following year. The church, led by the curé Father Zéphiran Bélanger, has grown steadily until there are now some three hundred twenty-five families (nearly all French-speaking) served by it.<sup>13</sup> Assisting

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<sup>12</sup> M. Eugene Trottier cited in La Liberté et Le Patriote, October 10, 1954, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> The dedication service at the school was very impressive. In addition to church dignitaries and the pastors from many parishes, Mayor Hume of Vancouver and the French consul attended. Statistics and other data given by the cure. Also La Liberté et Le Patriote August 14, 1954, p. 7, and February 5, 1955, p. 2.



Father Belanger are Fathers Philip Mercier, Lucien Goyer, Jean Louis Lemire and Donald Murphy.<sup>14</sup> In 1954 a fund-raising campaign to build a school was undertaken. Considerable help in the campaign was given by the editors of Le Devoir in Montreal, particularly Pierre Laporte and Gerard Fillion. As a result of the paper's appeals some \$23,000 of the required \$63,000 was raised. Subscriptions came from all over Eastern Canada and the Prairies in aid of the project. The building was started in June, 1954 and by the end of the September was ready for use. Five sisters (Soeurs du Bon-Pasteur) from Quebec arrived during the summer and held classes for several weeks in temporary quarters until the building was ready. The pupils, divided among four classrooms in the first year, numbered 102.

In addition to the usual organizations which operate to perpetuate French culture and Catholicism in the Maillardville parishes, the Vancouver church has the only branch in B. C. of the A.C.J.C. (Association Catholique de Jeunesse Canadien) a religious-patriotic organization originating in Quebec. In connection with

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<sup>14</sup> In September 1955, another assistant came in the person of the Rev. P. Malo. Trained in English, he was expected to help in the work among the English Catholics. La Liberté et la Patriote, September 24, 1955, p. 8. Father Goyer was recalled to Quebec for duty there in January, 1956. La Liberté et la Patriote, January 21, 1956, p. 9.

the church there is also a Troupe Moliere, a drama club which has often staged productions to raise money for the parish. Le Cercle Canadien-Français is very active and participates strongly in the Fédération Canadienne-Française. Both Maillardville and Vancouver have French councils of the Knights of Columbus which work industriously for the furtherance of the church. There is considerable feeling in the parish that the French language can be maintained in spite of the disadvantages of a location where there are hundreds of thousands of English-speaking neighbours. Father Bélanger states that while some members of the parish have long been resident in Vancouver, the majority of them are from various points on the Prairies and some are directly from the East.<sup>15</sup>

The three parishes in the Lower Mainland have an additional aid to the survival of French-Canadian-ism in their twenty-minute weekly radio programme "Ecoutez-Mous" broadcast over station C.K.N.W., New Westminster each Sunday night. Largely musical in nature, it uses local talent and selected recordings either from Eastern Canada or from France. The announcements are made both in French and English. \*

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<sup>15</sup> Father Z. Bélanger to the writer August, 1955.

\* CBU Fm, Radio-Canada's French-language station started Dec 1, 1967.

The fourth and most recent French-Canadian parish to be established is that at Port Alberni. The parish was founded on July 2, 1950 under the name of Notre Dame des Victoires. Services were held for a time in an English Catholic church. Since May 6, 1951, the congregation has been using a temporary church and rectory, actually part of a building which has been converted to use as a parochial school.<sup>16</sup> The building thus employed is the one known formerly as Arrowsmith Lodge, which was used as an army hospital during World War II. Since August, 1950, the men of the two Catholic parishes (the Holy Family Church and the French) have laboured to convert this into a parochial school to serve both parishes.<sup>17</sup> It has been difficult to make the building, with five wings, serve the purpose of classrooms, a Sister's Residence and a temporary church.

The School was officially opened in September 4, 1951. When it began the school had 151 children, of whom seventy-five were French. By 1954-1955 the enrollment had grown to two hundred, of whom ninety-five

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<sup>16</sup> The School has been called the "Father Smith Memorial School" after the Rev. Father A.G. Smith, pastor of the Holy Family church for twenty years.

<sup>17</sup> Father Brazeau to the writer, August 12, 1955. }

were from French families. The school offers all grades from three to twelve and will add grades one and two as teaching sisters are provided.

The founder of the parish, Rev. Father Wilfred Brazeau, O.F.M., is still curé at the church.<sup>18</sup> There are six teaching sisters at the school (Sisters of St. Ann) and it is planned to add more when they become available. Father Brazeau reports there are two hundred forty families on the parish records. The parents use French widely but the speech of the children is a mixture of English and French. French is usually spoken in the home, but as in many settlements where many of the people have not had thorough training in good French, the language is often interspersed with English words and idioms. The great majority of the members of the parish are from Saskatchewan towns like Laventure and Victoire.<sup>19</sup> Some have come from Manitoba and a few from eastern centres like Montreal and Valleyfield. Recent reports from Port Alberni indicate that plans are underway to begin a new church building very soon.<sup>20</sup> *happen*

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<sup>18</sup> From August 30, 1951 to August 7, 1952 Father Fidèle Chicoine O.F.M. was serving at the church.

<sup>19</sup> To the writer from Rev. Father W. Brazeau, August 12, 1955, Father Brazeau was most courteous and co-operative in supplying all the information given here about the Port Alberni parish.

<sup>20</sup> La Liberté et Le Patriote November 19, 1955, p. 8.

Another community which expects to have a French-Canadian parish established soon is Victoria. ? Harper

There, a French-Canadian group registered under the Societies Act in 1941 as "Le Club Canadien-français de la Colombie Britannique", has been raising a special fund toward the establishment of a church for the French-Canadian group.<sup>21</sup> The Cercle Canadien-français in the capital city is one of the most active in the province.<sup>22</sup> One resident reports there are numerous French-Canadian immigrants from all parts of Canada, especially from the three Prairie provinces.<sup>23</sup>

In October of 1954, the Cercle of Victoria was host to representatives from all the others in British Columbia, at the tenth annual congress of the Federation Canadienne-française. Some eighty delegates listened to speeches from various leaders and discussed various methods of facilitating the survival of the French-

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<sup>21</sup> The annual gatherings of the club during the war were much publicized in Victoria and were attended by French-Canadians from all over the island, including some personnel from the armed forces. The Victoria Colonist, June 24, 1941, p. 6.; July 14, 1942, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> The Club raised over \$540.00 on one occasion alone by a bazaar toward a church building. La Liberté et Le Patriote, October 16, 1954, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Mme. G. Terrien to the writer, February 25, 1956. She says also most of the arrivals came after the war.

Canadian race and language. The president, Dr. Léon Beaudoin, a physician from Maillardville, encouraged the members by reference to the example of the Acadians "now on the point of constituting, only two hundred years after their near annihilation in 1755, the second province with a French majority."<sup>24</sup>

In Victoria the French-Canadians are fortunate in having a social centre, the large home of Mr. and Mrs. George Terrien on Joan Crescent, dedicated to their gatherings. From December 2, 1946, the Terriens have called their home "Au Vieux Quebec."<sup>25</sup> Here meetings, conferences, recreational programmes, evenings of enjoying folklore are frequent and official receptions are held for visitors from the East. Victoria has also a very active branch of the Alliance Française which some of the French-Canadians attend although it is usually regarded as an organization representing French culture rather than French-Canadian.<sup>26</sup> Like the French-Canadians in Vancouver and Maillardville, the Victorians

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<sup>24</sup> La Liberté et Le Patriote (hereinafter referred to as La Liberté), November 6, 1954, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> When asked if more French-Canadian settlers continue to come to Victoria Mme. Terrien's reply was "Oh, oui! Principal facteur - le climat doux."

<sup>26</sup> In the early days Victoria attracted "Français de France" who had first come to California. Some immigrants still come there from France and their arrivals are often included in the Victoria news printed in La Liberté.

are often visited by prominent French-Canadians from the east who generally address meetings of the Cercle and encourage the people.

The principal organization in the province as a whole for building morale among the French-Canadians is the Cercle Canadien-français. Generally during the past several years fourteen or fifteen of these cercles have been in operation at centres like Maillardville (2), Vancouver, Victoria, Port Alberni, New Westminster, Sapperton, Kennedy, Cloverdale, Steveston, Kelowna, Penticton, Duncan and Nanaimo. In addition there are unorganized groups at Mission, Port Moody, Langley Prairie, Kamloops, Nelson, Trail, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Vernon, Merritt, Terrace, Chemainus and Ladysmith. The circles and the annual Congress of the French Canadian Federation seem valuable rallying forces among the people.<sup>27</sup>

Within the general organization of the Federation there is an Education Committee (Comite d'Education) which seeks to assist the four French parochial schools. One illustration of the committee's work was its sponsorship of a meeting on October 24, 1954 of all the

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<sup>27</sup> Report of Donat Savoie at La Troisième Congrès de la Langue Française in Quebec, June 18-26, 1952. Quebec, Les Editions Ferland, 1953, p. 67-68. At the 11th annual provincial congress of the French Canadian Federation held October 9-11, 1955 at Notre

French teachers of the four parish schools. When the teachers met, a Council for the Teaching of French in B. C. (Conseil de l'Enseignement du Français en Colombie) was formed. The principal work assumed by this body was to plan a uniform programme for teaching French in the schools and to hold an interschool competition of French students (Concours de Français Interscholaire) for pupils of the first three grades in the four parish institutions.<sup>28</sup>

Leaders in the French Canadian Federation are well aware that there are many clusters of their compatriots, many recently arrived, scattered throughout

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Dame de Fatima parish in Maillardville the president, Dr. Léon Beaudoin reminded the delegates (about one hundred from seven communities) of the need of determined effort to preserve French culture. He reminded his audience of the Association motto "Dieu et Nos Droits - Nous Maintiendrons". He spoke of the "re-Frenchization" (refrancisation) of children at school and at the family hearth. Among other matters a motion was passed that "In view of British Columbia celebrating in 1958 its one hundredth (50eme /sic/) anniversary and the French-Canadian element having played a premier role among the pioneers that the Federation participate in the celebrations" as their compatriots had just done in the Alberta and Saskatchewan centenaries. (from the Report of the Eleventh Annual French-Canadian Federation of British Columbia, October 30, 1955.)

<sup>28</sup> La Liberté, November 6, 1954, p. 9.

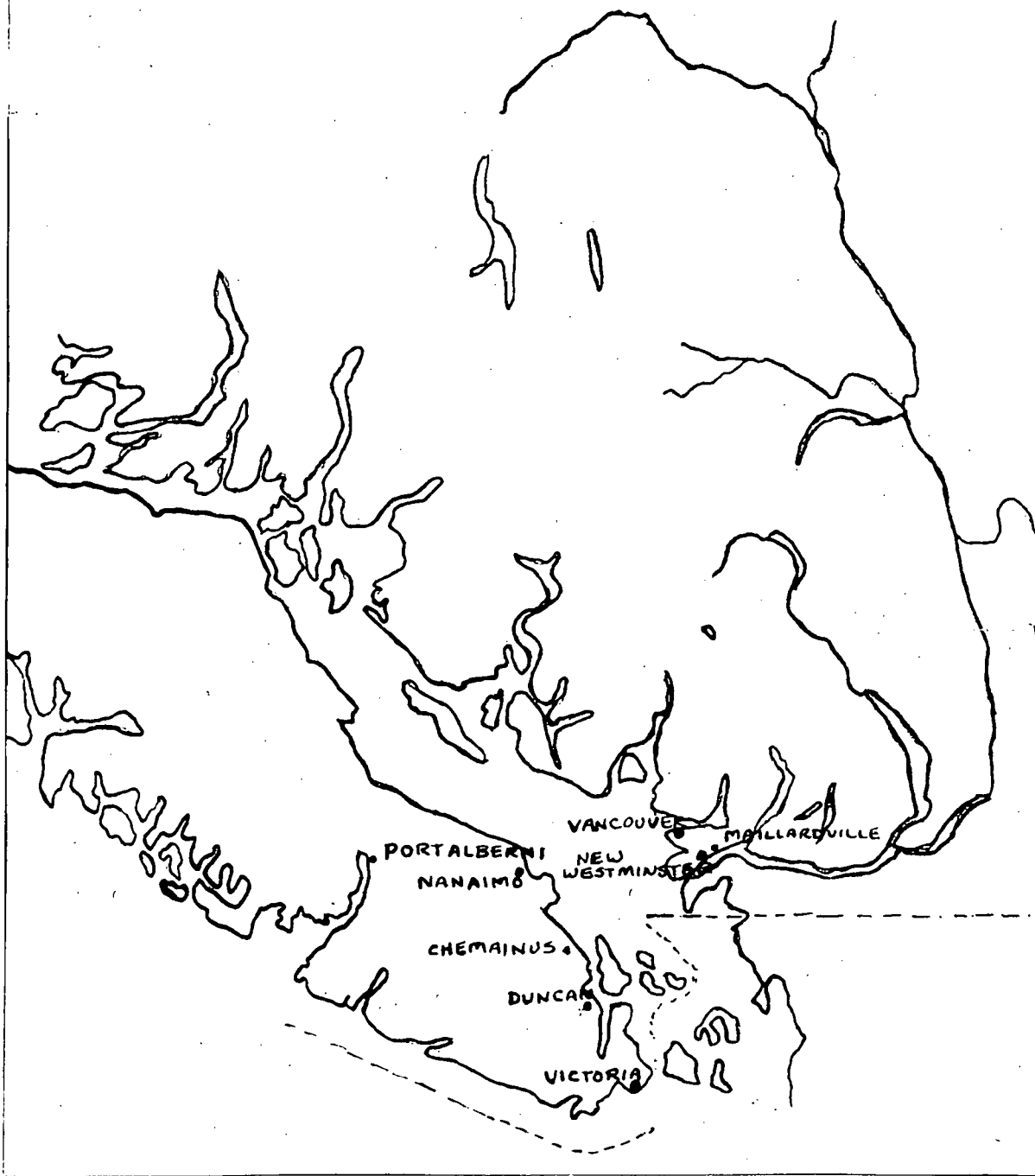


the province who could be organized into Cercles Français-Canadiens if responsible leaders were available. Even a casual glance at the Prince George Directory for 1954 indicates that numerous French-Canadians are located in the little mill-towns in that area. An influx of about forty French-Canadians in the past six years is reported in the Cherryville district about fifteen miles east of Lumby. They have been described as coming mostly from around Montreal and Quebec. Most of them were lumbermen before they came, and here all are engaged in logging or lumbering.<sup>29</sup> Instances like this may be found in many areas.<sup>30</sup> A number of factors determine whether the newcomers will remain French-Canadian - their own will to survive culturally, the nature of their environment and the degree of effort exerted by organizations such as the French Canadian Federation to influence them.

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<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Ann Bourcet, to the writer, August 10, 1955, and Mr. T.J. Tull to the writer, October 4, 1955.

<sup>30</sup> F. Mason Wade when in Vancouver in July, 1954, mentioned to the writer a report of French-Canadians immigrating to the Kitimat project. The writer found over two hundred French-Canadian names listed under Kitimat in the directory. Many apparently had worked at Arvida and were trained in technical jobs as "cranemen," "pot operators," "crust breakers" and "foremen." Prince Rupert Directory 1955, B. C. Directories Ltd., Vancouver, B. C., 1955.



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## CHAPTER IV

THE FRENCH-CANADIAN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA TODAY -  
THE STATISTICAL PICTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In the foregoing pages the story of the coming of the French-Canadians has been related and a description given of their settlements and efforts to survive in a cultural sense. It seems necessary at this point to pause for a moment and analyze so far as available statistics will permit the position of the French-Canadians in relation to the other elements of the province.

Proportionately the number of French-Canadians in British Columbia has never been very impressive. The following table shows their number and their position in terms of percentage in relation to the total population of British Columbia.

✓ TABLE I

The Proportion of B. C. Residents of French Origin.<sup>1</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total population</u>	<u>Total of French Origin</u>	<u>Percent of French Origin</u>
1881	44,459	916	2.6

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<sup>1</sup> Census of Canada, 1881, Vol. I, pp. 298-299;  
Census of Canada, 1901, p. 284; Census of Canada, 1911,  
Vol. II, p. 168; Census of Canada, 1921, Vol. I, pp. 358-  
359; Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. II, pp. 482-498;  
Census of Canada, 1941, Vol. IV, p. 204; Census of Canada,  
1951, Vol. I, Table 34.

TABLE I (continued)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total population</u>	<u>Total of French Origin</u>	<u>Percent of French Origin</u>
1891	Figures not given in Census		
1901	178,659	4,924	2.7
1911	392,480	8,907	2.3
1921	524,582	11,246	2.1
1931	694,263	15,028	2.2
1941	817,861	21,876	2.6
1951	1,165,210	41,919	3.6

It may be noted here that the higher percentage in 1881 and 1901 than in the following forty years can be explained by the fact that up to 1901 French-Canadians were not competing in numbers with the hosts of British and European immigrants that soon began to invade the province. The larger proportion reflected in the census reports following 1931 reflects principally the influx from the Prairie Provinces during and after the depression period.

The number of Quebec-born in relation to the total population and number of residents of French origin can be seen from the table given below.

✓ TABLE II

Number of B. C. Residents, Quebec Born, 1881-1951.<sup>2</sup> ✓

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total B. C. Population</u>	<u>Total of French Origin</u>	<u>Quebec Born</u>	<u>Percentage Quebec Born</u>
1881	44,459	916	396	.89
1891	98,173		2,567	2.6
1901	178,659	4,924	4,329	2.4
1911	392,480	8,907	7,496	1.9
1921	524,582	11,246	8,240	1.6
1931	694,263	15,028	9,226	1.3
1941	817,861	21,876	9,627	1.2
1951	1,165,210	41,919	14,968	.90

Although it is not necessarily true that the Quebec-born are of French origin, it is probable they nearly all are. It should be noted that notwithstanding the great decline in the percentage of Quebec-born in 1951 about one-third of the people of French origin in British Columbia at that time had come from Quebec. A comparison of the number of Quebec-born resident in the province in 1941 with the number in 1951 indicates that some 5,341 born in Quebec entered the province in the ten-year period. It is probable that many of the immigrants who came from the Prairie provinces in

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<sup>2</sup> Figures for number of Quebec born taken from Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. I, Table 23, p. 524 (a review table); 1921, Vol. II, p. 246; 1931, Vol. I, Table 47; 1941, Vol. IV, p. 816; 1951, Vol. I, Table 47.

this decade had originally resided in Quebec. Some persons in Maillardville who have come in the last ten or fifteen years say that they were born in Quebec, moved to Saskatchewan or Alberta many years ago to farm, and then came to the Coast.

The following tabulation shows the comparative distribution of the people of French origin throughout the province according to the censuses from 1881 to 1951.

✓ TABLE III ✓ *agm*

Geographical Distribution of Residents of French Origin.<sup>3</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pop. of French Origin</u>	<u>Chief Centres or Areas</u>
1881	916	New Westminster (218), Yale, (including Cariboo and Okanagan) (270), Victoria District (159), Vancouver and Nanaimo (139)
1891		No figures available
1901	4,924	Vancouver City (598), New Westminster District (488), Victoria City (307), Kootenay, south riding (387), Kootenay, Nelson riding (358), Kootenay West, Rossland (754), Kootenay West, Slocan (255), Yale (501)
1911	8,907	Comox <sup>VI</sup> (248), Skeena <sup>N</sup> (249), Cranbrook <sup>K</sup> (203), Fernie (239), Kamloops (318), Victoria City (340), Ymir <sup>K</sup> (277), (Dewdney, including Maillardville (295), New Westminster city (285), Vancouver city (2,250), Okanagan (414)

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<sup>3</sup> From the Census of Canada Reports, 1881, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951.

TABLE III (continued)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pop. of French Origin</u>	<u>Chief Centres or Areas</u>
1921	11,246	Vancouver <sup>V</sup> Burrard (949), Fort <sup>N</sup> George (323), Kamloops (417), Comox (373), Dewdney (374), Port Coquitlam (438), Victoria City (359), Kootenay East (665), Kootenay West (841), Skeena (380), Delta (316), New Westminster City (321), Vancouver South (582), Yale (185)
1931	15,028	Kootenay River <sup>K</sup> Upper (490), Columbia <sup>K</sup> R. South (403), Okanagan and Shuswap <sup>I</sup> Upper (656), Port Alberni <sup>N</sup> (50), Coquitlam municipality (872), New Westminster <sup>N</sup> (332), Burnaby <sup>V</sup> (450), Vancouver <sup>V</sup> (4,480), Victoria (496) <sup>VI</sup>
1941	21,876	Kootenay R. Upper <sup>K</sup> (556), Columbia R. South (624), Kootenay and Slocan (534), <sup>K</sup> Okanagan Shuswap (937), Coquitlam <sup>I</sup> (1,573), Port Alberni (209), Prince <sup>N</sup> George (263), Surrey <sup>V</sup> (374), New Westminster <sup>N</sup> (788), Burnaby <sup>V</sup> (635), Vancouver (6303) <sup>V</sup>
1951	41,919	<sup>K</sup> Division 1 (Granbrook, Fernie, Kimberley and district) 1,366; <sup>K</sup> Division 2 (Revelstoke, Rossland, Trail, Castlegar, Salmo, Kaslo, Nelson, Slocan, Creston and district) 2,098; <sup>I</sup> Division 3 (Vernon, Armstrong, Enderby, Summerland, Kelowna, Oliver, Penticton and district) 2,473; Division 4 (Lower Fraser Valley, New Westminster, Vancouver and district) 22,862; <sup>VI</sup> Division 5 (South Vancouver Island-Victoria, Alberni, Campbell River, Comox, Alert Bay, Gulf Islands) 6,260; <sup>I</sup> Division 6 (North Thompson, Kamloops, Merritt, Salmon Arm, Lytton, Lillooet) 1,834; Division 7 (Bella Coola Knight Inlet, Coast, Powell River, Westview) 774; Division 8 (Nechako-Fraser-Parsnip, Prince George, McBride, Quesnel, Williams Lake, Burns Lake and district) 2,402; Division 9 (Atlin, Portland Canal, Prince Rupert, Skeena, Queen Charlotte Islands) 819 and Division 10 (Fort <sup>N</sup> St. John, Pouce Coupe and district) 1,031.

It is regrettable that the use, for the tabulation of returns, of large census divisions which comprise many communities does not permit observation of the number of residents of a particular racial origin located in each individual district or municipality. It is however, of some value to be able to see the distribution according to general areas.

More important than the total number of persons of French origin in the province are the statistics which indicate the degree to which the French language and the Roman Catholic faith are being retained by these persons. An analysis of these phases is attempted in the subsequent tables.

The 1951 Census showed that 39,433 people of British Columbia spoke both English and French. The following table shows the contributions of the people of French origin and of English origin to the bilingual groups.



✓ TABLE IV

The Racial Origins of Bilingual Residents and the Percent of Bilinguals in the two Principal Ethnic Groups:<sup>4</sup>

<u>Total B. C. Residents</u>	<u>Total B. C. Bilinguals</u>	<u>Percent contribution to bilingual group</u>
Speaking both languages	39,433	100%
French origin bilingual	18,727	47.5%
British origin bilingual	14,725	37.3%
Other origins bilingual	5,981	15.2%

An analysis such as the following shows clearly the tendency of British Columbia residents to adopt English as their mother tongue and hence become assimilated in terms of language used.<sup>5</sup>

✓ TABLE V

	<u>British</u>	<u>French</u>
Racial origin	766,189	41,919
Mother Tongue	<u>963,920</u>	<u>19,366</u>
Surplus	197,731 (25.8%)	Deficit 22,553 (54%)

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<sup>4</sup> For the data given in Tables IV-XI utilized from the Census report of 1951 the writer is indebted to the article of Richard Arès S.J., "Le Position du Français en Colombie Britannique" Rélations, July 1954, p. 195. This article hereinafter referred to as Arès, Rélations, July, 1954. Arès, also, points out that in comparison with other censuses the French contribution to bilingualism in B. C. has never been so low and the British never so high and that there are almost as many British bilinguals in B. C. alone as in the three Prairie provinces combined: 14,725 as against 16,254 for the three together.

<sup>5</sup> Arès, Rélations, July 1954.

While the English language is being used by 25.8% more residents than there are people of British origin, 54% of the residents of French origin refer to English as their mother tongue.

Also more important than the factor of the numerical strength of the French-Canadian element is the statistical evidence on the survival of French as a mother tongue and the relation between the number of residents acknowledging French as their mother tongue and the number of residents giving French as their racial origin.

The following table shows the position of the two official languages as used by the people of British Columbia according to the 1951 census.<sup>6</sup>

✓ TABLE VI

<u>Language spoken</u>	<u>Number of Residents</u>	<u>Percentage using language</u>
English only	1,113,937	95.5%
French only	727	.06%
Both	39,433	3.4%
Neither	12,113	1%

From this table it is clear that the environment

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<sup>6</sup> Arès, Rélations, July 1954.

of British Columbia has almost eliminated the importance of French as the sole language of residents in the province. Surprisingly, the number of those able to speak French (40,160) approximates the number of British Columbia of French origin. In actual fact, however, some 22,852 of the residents of French origin declare that they have a knowledge of English only. This is revealed in the succeeding table:

✓ TABLE VII

Canadians of French Origin knowing only English (1941,1951)<sup>7</sup>

	<u>Number knowing English only</u>		<u>Number of French Origin</u>		<u>Percent knowing English only</u>
1941	11,276	of	21,876	=	51.5%
1951	22,852	of	41,919	=	54.5%
<u>Growth in Ten years</u>	<u>11,576</u>		<u>20,043</u>		<u>3%</u>

The increase in the number of anglicized persons by the number of 11,576 in a ten-year period is really more than a quarter of all the group itself (41,919). When it is realized further that 23,851 (56.9%) of the people of French origin have now come to acknowledge English as their mother tongue the situation appears very disconcerting.

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<sup>7</sup> Arès, Relations, July, 1954.

Some impression of the extent of survival of the French language may be obtained from the following statistics based on three census reports.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE VIII

<u>Year</u>	<u>French Origin</u>	<u>French Language (Mother tongue)</u>	<u>Percentage of Retention</u>
1931	15,028	7,768	51.5%
1941	21,876	11,058	51.8%
1951	41,919	19,366	46.0%

If one compares the discrepancy between origin and language (7,260 - 1931; 10,818 - 1941; 22,553 - 1951) strictly in terms of numbers, it may be noted this discrepancy has tripled in the twenty-year period.

A more encouraging picture is that shown by a table indicating growth in the number of residents of French origin and growth in terms of the number of residents who call French their maternal language. (Comparison of figures in Table VIII).

TABLE IX

<u>Period</u>	<u>Growth according to origin</u>	<u>Growth according to language</u>
1931-1941	6,848	3,290
1941-1951	20,043	8,309 <sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Arès, Rélations, July 1954.

<sup>9</sup> Loc. cit.

The growth under the first head is more than double that under the second - an indication of the heavy losses in the acknowledgement of French as a mother tongue. Still there is considerable growth in the number of residents of French origin.

If one examines the situation of the French group in terms of percentage of the total population under the following heading there is a noteworthy advancement, especially with respect to the increase in the number of residents in British Columbia of French origin.<sup>10</sup>

TABLE X

<u>Year</u>	<u>British Columbia residents of French origin</u>	<u>British Columbia residents with French language as mother tongue</u>	<u>Of French Origin and Language</u>
1931	15,028 (2.16%) of total population	7,768 (1.12%)	7,290 (1.05%)
1941	21,876 (2.55%)	11,058 (1.35%)	9,932 (1.21%)
1951	41,919 (3.58%)	19,366 (1.66%)	17,721 (1.48%)

Yet, the more significant conclusions arise from the second and third comparisons, the percentages of the people who acknowledge French as mother tongue and who give both their origin and maternal language as French.

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<sup>10</sup> Ares, Relations, July 1954.

It is these residents who may be instrumental in perpetuating French language and culture. They amount to only one and one-half percent of the total population in the province.

To summarize the salient items of the foregoing tables it is important to stress these facts: of the 41,919 British Columbia residents of French origin in 1951, 23,851 (56.9%) now name English as their maternal language; 22,852 (54.5%) disclose that they have no working knowledge of French; and only 17,271 (41.2%) profess French as their mother tongue.

As compared with the other Western provinces, British Columbia has the worst record for losses in the French language between 1941 and 1951.<sup>11</sup>

✓ TABLE XI

<u>Province</u>	<u>French</u>		<u>English</u>	
	1941	1951	1941	1951
Manitoba	84.8%	76.0%	14.6%	22.4%
Saskatchewan	75.4%	64.9%	23.4%	32.7%
Alberta	68.0%	56.9%	29.9%	39.5%
B. C.	45.4%	41.2%	55.6%	56.9%

In the four western provinces there is a rapid increase in the acceptance of English as the maternal language and a marked decrease in the use of French.

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<sup>11</sup> Arès, Rélations, July 1954.

The picture becomes gradually worse the further west one travels. The only really gratifying observation that can be made is that the absolute number of residents of French origin has nearly doubled in ten years (21,876 in 1941, 41,919 in 1951) and that this represents a rise from 2.7% to 3.6% in spite of an overall population growth of tremendous proportions. In this sense, then, there is an enlarged potential for the fostering of French Canadian nationalism.

Keeping in mind that the culture which French-Canadians wish to nourish is Roman Catholic in religion as well as French in language, it is important to examine the degree of survival in this respect so far as British Columbia is concerned. Leaders in the movement to preserve French-Canadian nationalism in British Columbia are painfully aware of the various threats to their culture. Mixed marriages are constantly referred to as a major instrument in facilitating absorption by the English speaking and Protestant majority. Statistics of mixed marriages in terms of loss to the Catholic faith are very difficult to obtain. The annual reports from each parish give always the total of mixed marriages which have taken place during the year. But these marriages may not result in the actual loss of the French and Catholic individual to his (or her) religious and ethnic group. A study made

by Abbe Limoges and reported at the 2nd French Language Congress did not show British Columbia French-Canadians to be special offenders in numbers of mixed marriages.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand Leonidas Joubert, in another analysis placed the number of mixed marriages at 5,312 among the 15,028 French residents in B. C. in the 1931 census.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the actual number of these matrimonial alliances may be they cannot be overlooked as a serious contributing factor in the assimilative process. They were mentioned by Donat Savoie, one of the British Columbia delegates to the 3rd French Language Congress in 1952 as a grave problem threatening the French-Canadian in British Columbia. Attendance at public schools was given by M. Savoie as another undermining influence.

Although the data on mixed marriages does not permit definite conclusions to be made regarding their significance in leading to cultural assimilation, there is ample evidence that the abandonment of the

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<sup>12</sup> Deuxieme Congrès de la Langue Française au Canada, Québec, Imprimerie du Soleil Ltée., 1938, Tome III, p. 154.

<sup>13</sup> Des Groupements Canadiens-français au Canada, "Etudes Economiques", Montreal, Editions Beauchemin, 1935, p. 116.



Catholic faith by residents of French origin in British Columbia has reached a point where alarm is more than justified. The following table shows that losses among the French-Canadians to the Roman Catholic faith in British Columbia far exceed proportionately those in any other province.

✓ TABLE XII

People of Canadian Provinces and Territories of French Origin - Roman Catholic and Non-Roman Catholic.<sup>14</sup>

<u>Province or Territory</u>	<u>Total Fr. Origin</u>	<u>Total Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Non-Roman Catholic</u>	<u>% Loss</u>
Newfoundland	9,841	8,570	1,471	13.9
Prince Ed. Island	15,477	15,040	437	2.8
Nova Scotia	73,760	61,229	12,531	16.9
New Brunswick	197,631	192,530	5,101	2.6
Quebec	3,327,128	3,302,094	25,034	.75
Ontario	477,677	417,570	60,107	12.8
Manitoba	66,020	59,596	6,424	9.9
Saskatchewan	51,930	44,400	7,530	14.4
Alberta	56,185	44,924	11,261	19.9
B. C.	41,919	27,421	14,498	34.6
Yukon	645	484	161	24.9
N. W. Territories	954	880	74	7.9

Here we see that the losses to the Catholic faith in the Western provinces parallel the decrease in the use

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<sup>14</sup> Statistics for totals of residents French origin and Roman Catholic faith taken from Census of Canada, 1951, Vol. I, Table 35.

of French as maternal language - the picture worsens progressively the farther one travels from the "motherland," Quebec. It may be noted also that the percentage of loss in British Columbia is almost double that in any other province.<sup>15</sup>

From almost any viewpoint it can be seen that in British Columbia the prospects for the continuance of French-Canadian nationalism do not warrant buoyant hope. It is the realization of this fact that has spurred ardent Canadiens to promote organizations like the Federation Canadienne-Française with its local "cercles" and to labour and sacrifice toward the goal of establishing of French-Canadian parishes with all possible speed. In the light of the situation as described in the foregoing pages it is not difficult to understand why British Columbia Canadiens visiting in Quebec have been moved many times to make impassioned pleas for help and why Quebec 'patriots' have given many thousands of dollars to aid the French-Canadians here.

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<sup>15</sup> It is interesting that the common statement that losses of faith and language are far greater in the urban areas does not prove true in British Columbia. Of the provinces 41,919 people of French origin, 27,839 are given as urban and 18,411 or 66.5% of these are Roman Catholic. Of the 14,080 rural residents of French origin 9,010 or 64.7% have remained Catholic.

The 14,498 non-Catholic French Canadians are given as Church of England 3,996, Baptist 670, Greek Orthodox 23, Greek Catholic 10, United Church 6077, others 2056. Census of Canada, 1951, Vol. I, Table 35.

## CHAPTER V

FRENCH-CANADIANS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA  
AND THE SEPARATE SCHOOL QUESTION

When 850 pupils in Maillardville's Catholic schools went "on strike" on April 1, 1951 to support their parents' demand for some relief from the burden of "double" school taxes, the story made the headlines of British Columbia papers and was published far beyond the limits of the Pacific Coast province. To many readers this was simply the feeble resurrection of a battle fought on a much larger scale years before in Manitoba and Ontario. To a degree this impression was true, but few realized that the Separate School question in Maillardville had some facets peculiar to the community alone. The demonstration in Maillardville was the "boiling-over" of a broth of grievances accumulated over a long period.

Before describing the school problem as it prevails in Maillardville, it would be profitable to analyse briefly the convictions underlying Roman Catholic education. Father Henri St. Denis, speaking in a symposium at Queen's University in 1945 emphasized that French Canada

does not conceive education divorced from religion. Religion must be at the very base of all conscious living

and must form the soul of all thinking. All education accordingly is a study of God and there is no such thing as secular education, though of course, there can be secular instruction, but then instruction and education are not synonymous.<sup>1</sup>

Father St. Denis explained further that to his church "education must be based upon man's spiritual nature and eternal destiny. It is not confined to man's mere physical ethical and intellectual development. It should educate him for eternity as well as for time." For this reason, he said French Canada has confessional schools permeated with religion.

In commenting on acknowledgments by educationalists outside the Church of the importance of religious instruction and the reasons they offered for banishing religion from the curriculum, he charged that the public schools were attempting to retain the ethical superstructure of Christian ideals while rejecting the religious foundation underlying these ideals. In view of the conflict of religious creeds, textbooks and methods were purged of religious content until in the children's minds has been formed a system of knowledge leaving no room for God or religion. Under the public school system, St. Denis said, young people see religion

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<sup>1</sup> St. Denis, Henri, Rev., French Canadian Backgrounds, a Symposium, "French Canadian Ideals in Education," Toronto, Ryerson, 1940, p. 25.

treated as "a more or less superfluous appendage to modern civilization."<sup>2</sup>

This complaint is expressed everywhere by the defenders of the parochial school. One of the pastors in Maillardville expressed his opinion that the lack of religious instruction is a major cause of juvenile delinquency. He spoke of one father of his acquaintance, distraught with a worry over a rebellious teen-age son who told him "to go to Hell" whenever any question or order was given which seemed to invade the realm of his affairs. The priest felt that the absence of teaching about God and human responsibility before Him was the cause of situations of this kind. The general feeling among the Catholic clergy and other advocates of parish schools is that High School courses such as "Effective Living" (now called "Personal Development") may have their merits in attempting to promote desirable character growth but are a poor substitute for a programme of character training based on religious principles.

The basic Roman Catholic criticism of secular education is its neglect of religion. To the Catholic educator, the school is candidly an adjunct to the

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<sup>2</sup> St. Denis, p. 35. Father Leduc, Notre Dame de Lourdes parish, July 17, 1955.

church and assist it in the formation of Christian character. The fundamental difference in outlook between state systems and Roman Catholic education has produced parochial schools in British Columbia and in many other provinces or states whether or not government financial aid was forthcoming. So far as British Columbia is concerned, the policy of the provincial government is not to give parish schools financial assistance for school buildings, teachers' salaries or operating expenses. It may be wondered then why Maillardville, where the burdens imposed are no greater than in other communities, should be the scene of angry disputes over school costs.

The incessant complaint of the Roman Catholic parents in Maillardville is that in comparison with Protestant taxpayers and users of the public schools, they really pay a "triple" tax.<sup>3</sup> First, as property owners in Coquitlam municipality, they pay taxes upon their land and buildings or businesses, and a large part of the sum thus raised is used for the construction and operation of schools which their own children do not use. Then, in order to give their children a

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<sup>3</sup> Stevenson, Miss Janet, "Le Probleme de Maillardville". Relations, Montreal, January, 1952, p. 11-12. Maillardville School Question, printed text of a radio broadcast over New Westminster Radio Station C.K.N.W. April 7, 1951.

Catholic education, the people contribute another sum for the building and maintenance of their parish schools. Once the school is erected, the building and, of course, the land where it is situated become subject to the usual municipal tax charged on property. The parents have realized, too, that their children are going without a number of benefits which non-Catholic children enjoy regularly (thanks to municipal and provincial aid) - free medical and dental inspection, free textbooks up to Grade VI, books on a rental plan for Junior and Senior High school students, and free bus transportation for pupils living beyond a certain limit.

One factor that seems to have caused deeper resentment (of these handicaps) in Maillardville than in other parishes is the French-Canadian nationalism of some of the parish leaders. In the speech by Father St. Denis mentioned earlier, a remark was made to the effect that "the greatest obstacle to national unity has been the repeated attempts through most of Canada to ostracize the French and the implication that they have no right to remain French-Canadian outside of Quebec." He said further, "Any educational policy that does not make them feel at home anywhere in the country is a source of national strife and discontent."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> St. Denis, H. Rev., French-Canadian Backgrounds, p. 35.

In June 1952, Father Alberic Meunier, founder of the Notre Dame de Fatima parish in Maillardville, was speaking to a Richelieu Club luncheon in Montreal and echoed the same sentiment when he said:

If French speaking Canadians in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have certain constitutional and scholastic liberties the same situation does not exist in British Columbia. The French-speaking minority in that province must fight ostracism on the part of the majority of English-speaking Canadians.

He added

the French-speaking Canadians in that province must fight continually to preserve their faith, their language and their racial characteristics.<sup>5</sup>

So far as the French-Canadian Roman Catholics in Maillardville are concerned, any limitations upon their freedom to foster their religion through the schools affect also the survival of their language and customs. Where a non-French-Canadian Catholic sees only a danger to his faith in secular education, the ardent Canadien sees a triple threat to his cultural existence.

Another grievance exists in Maillardville.

The belief, has been fostered by the pioneers that the

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<sup>5</sup> cited in the Vancouver Sun, June 19, 1952, p. 2.



lumber company management which brought them to B. C. promised to provide free schools. It seems quite possible that promises of this nature were made by the company. Press reports at that time of the settlers' coming spoke of a church to be erected and of the enlargement of the original school in the mill townsite. In view of the French-Canadian's love for his traditional community life, it seems feasible that the original settlers asked for assurances that the same school privileges be granted as they had been accustomed to have in Quebec. At any rate, it is impossible to prove now what verbal agreement was made with the lumbermen almost forty-six years ago.

The issue that provoked the strike of the children of the two parish schools was the failure of the local and provincial authorities to provide bus transportation to the parish schools as was done for the public school pupils. Demands were also made for free medical and dental inspections and for free text books. The provincial government agreed to provide text books on the same basis as in the case of public schools but remained adamant on the other requests.<sup>6</sup>

In retaliation the parish schools closed

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<sup>6</sup> Text of broadcast on Maillardville School Question, the Vancouver Sun, April 2, 1951, p. 1.

immediately after the Easter vacation and the pupils were sent to be enrolled at the public schools. Since there were over eight hundred pupils, the confusion may well be imagined. Although some of the overcrowded schools were already on a double shift, the school board members said that they would accommodate all the new pupils. The Catholic leaders, on the other hand, believed that the school board was "bluffing" and wished to coerce the municipal and provincial authorities by precipitating a problem of accommodation that was impossible of solution. The difficulty caused for the school board was a staggering one, but by double shifting and hiring some fifteen additional teachers (most of them former teachers turned housewives) the situation was handled.

Spokesmen for the Joint Catholic School Board said that they would keep their schools closed until they obtained rights equal with those of the public schools and the system prevailing in Quebec where Catholic, Protestant and Jewish schools all participate in government grants. The children, of course, enjoyed the disruption in their school routine. Some of them were assembled to march along the street carrying signs such as "We Want Justice," "Maillardville Collects Taxes for the Maillardville School."<sup>7</sup> In the press, J.B. Goulet

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<sup>7</sup> Vancouver Sun, April 2, 1951, p. 1., April 3, 1951, p. 2.

presented the Maillardville complaint concerning payment of school taxes to the municipality as well as fees for parish schools. Goulet calculated that if the Catholic school board received the provincial government grant of \$209.00 annually per pupil, it would have over \$175,000.00 annually to operate the parochial schools. He added that the Catholic institutions would cost over one-half million dollars to replace and that they were accommodating pupils for whom the government would otherwise need to build schools.<sup>8</sup>

The Catholic School Board members on April 7, 1951 broadcast a statement of their complaints over New Westminster's radio station C.K.N.W. setting forth the philosophy of Roman Catholic education and enumerating the "penalties" or handicaps which British Columbia Catholics in general, but Maillardville Catholics in particular, were labouring under when they wished to guarantee their children Christian education. The broadcast sought to provoke wider public action by suggesting that with the unusual crowding in the public schools Protestant children would suffer in their daily instruction. It stressed the fact also that the Catholic parents were only now beginning to use the schools which they had been supporting for years past.

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<sup>8</sup> Vancouver Sun, April 3, 1951, p. 2.

The Saskatchewan law on the establishment of separate schools was referred to as providing a democratic method to deal with the problem. The strike did not accomplish its purpose. The parochial schools reopened in September of the following year. The Catholic pupils, parents and school board simply continued to make the best of a distasteful situation.

The outcry in Maillardville demanding government aid for the Catholic schools created an embarrassing situation for the provincial Coalition government, since it as much as the School Board was considered responsible for the situation. The school issue also had an interesting political result in Maillardville. In the community Liberal Association there was some question after the government refused any assistance to parochial schools as to whether the membership would support the provincial Liberal executive. The publicity chairman of the Joint Catholic School Board and a member of the Association had predicted that a majority of the eleven-man provincial party executive would resign.<sup>9</sup> The threatened split did not materialize.

In the year or two following the strike, the Joint Catholic School Board in alliance with other Roman Catholics approached the Provincial government

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<sup>9</sup> Vancouver Sun, September 6, 1951, p. 2.

with appeals for relief from the tax burden or at least for some form of assistance.<sup>10</sup> The appeals have borne no fruit and the only result seems to have been the provoking of some vehement opposition on the part of ardent Protestants to any form of aid to separate schools.<sup>11</sup> ? ~ now.

Since then the protest of the Church and the people against the situation has taken a different form. With the declared policy of the Social Credit government to make no special provision for separate schools, resentment has been demonstrated within the municipality by refusing to pay tax bills on the school property. This matter came to an impasse in December of last year (1955) when three years' taxes totalling \$8,338.07 remained unpaid and the two schools had become liable to sale. Appeals to Victoria for tax relief had proved of no avail since the School Board in District #43 had refused to give the necessary assent to exemption for the Catholic schools. The situation was further

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<sup>10</sup> The British Columbia Catholic Education Association presented a brief to the Premier and Provincial Cabinet, October 20, 1953.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of Protestant opposition are cited in the Vancouver Sun, June 19, 1952, p. 2., (A Resolution from the Women's Missionary Branch of the Regular Baptists of B. C.) and in La Survivance, Edmonton, December 8, 1954, p. 1; a Protestant Committee headed by Rev. W.M. Robertson of Vancouver presenting a memorial of opposition to the Provincial Government.

complicated by the confusion surrounding Section 58, subsection 24, of the Municipal Act which might make possible a tax exemption.<sup>12</sup> Comments from four cabinet ministers on the interpretation of the Act were not precise enough to spur the Reeve and Council to take definite action on the matter. Of course, the whole issue has political aspects and any political officeholder is wary on the matter since the municipality is divided along religious lines.

With over \$8000 owing in unpaid taxes, a moment of crisis came when a former reeve (and a Protestant) offered to purchase the two schools for the value of the unpaid taxes and interest.<sup>13</sup> The offer was rejected by the Municipal Council but the incident made Council, School Board and the French parishes realize that the matter could not remain in abeyance indefinitely.

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<sup>12</sup> La Liberté et Le Patriote, December 10, 1955, p. 7.; January 7, 1956, p. 1; January 21, 1956, p. 7. The clause under discussion speaks of the municipality "granting aid for educational ends if such aid is first of all approved by the School board."

<sup>13</sup> Ironically this prospective purchaser was Protestant R. C. MacDonald, former Coquitlam reeve for many years and once Provincial Cabinet member in the Coalition government. He had always been considered a foe of the French-Canadians and Catholics. Mr. MacDonald's offer was made December 20, 1955 at a council meeting.



APR • 56

The Parish school (Elementary) at  
Notre Dame de Fatima parish, Maillardville.



APR • 56 •

The high school of Notre Dame de  
Lourdes Parish, Maillardville.

## CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The situation as it has been described in the foregoing pages depicts no rosy prospect for the survival of French-Canadian nationalism on Canada's Pacific coast. Of the thousands who have come to British Columbia as fur traders, prospectors, railroad builders, miners, loggers, and millmen through the past century and a half many have lost all kinship with their former relatives. The names of some have become distorted in the speech of English-speaking neighbours, the language of Quebec awakens no response of understanding and the Mass has become a ritual of the forefathers. Scattered everywhere across the province are men and women whose names and appearance betray their family origin as old Quebec. French-Canadians, like other Canadians, come to British Columbia in ever-increasing numbers, but there is an unhappy tendency for these, often bilingual already, to use French less and less until it disappears from the family hearth. The tendency in race, language and religion is all too evidently toward assimilation.

Still there is a beacon of hope appearing here and there amid the darkness. It centers in a French-



Canadian parish church and a parish school. There is also the earnest gleam of the French-Canadian Federation surrounded by numerous miniature flames, the French-Canadian circles, which may yet flash forth to ignite some of clusters of unburning faggots.

The strides which have been taken to preserve French-Canadianism in the last few years are remarkable and in some respects encouraging. It is no easy assignment this, to keep the loyalties to French Canada alive when Anglicizing influences are on every hand and material prosperity encourages religious indifference. French-Canadian leaders await with apprehension the coming Census (1956) to see whether the trend towards assimilation evident in the last few decades will show any sign of abatement.

The separate school question, more vital to the French-Canadian than to other Roman Catholics, remains unsolved. Only a government with a rare passion for justice is likely to attempt to evolve a formula which could give some aid to the separate schools without enraging the Protestant majority. There is always a tendency for politicians to postpone issues involving principle or justice when political expedience is not to be served. The French-Canadian feels he is entitled to special consideration on the separate school question because his forefathers in 1867 entered Confederation

on the understanding of equal partnership. He constantly argues that Quebec would have never have agreed to Confederation had it been thought that equality of race, language and religion was to prevail only in Quebec.

Although the French-Canadian may not often say so, he feels that the British Columbia government has never given fair consideration to the question of parochial schools because it could very safely ignore it. After all, the only minority really pressing for action is and has been almost negligible in political importance. The Canadien, whose flare for logic makes law a popular profession in Quebec, despatches quickly the stock-in-trade argument against tax support for separate schools - the claim that such a policy would destroy the public school system by inviting numerous sects to operate state-supported institutions. He points to Saskatchewan as one province which has solved the seemingly insoluble problem in an amicable way and to Quebec that allows Protestants and Jews (without any equivocation) tax support for their schools.

## APPENDIX I

McLOUGHLIN ON THE INEFFICIENCY OF CANADIAN RECRUITS  
FOR THE FUR TRADE

(in a letter to the Company Governor in London,  
November 18, 1843.)

...these six years we have got only one man, fit to make a bout<sup>1</sup>, he went out last spring and re-engaged at York and returned this fall, one of the great causes in my opinion of our having poor men is that the office for hiring them is at Lachine instead of Montreal as formerly when we used to get first rate men. [sic]

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Rich, E.E. (with an Introduction by W. Kaye Lamb)  
McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, 2nd Series 1839-44,  
Toronto, Champlain Society, 1943, p. 167.

<sup>1</sup> A bout was a bowsman or steersman of a boat crew, the aristocrat of the crew.

APPENDIX II  
THE FRENCH-CANADIAN SETTLEMENT  
IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

The development of the French-Canadian settlement in Oregon provides in itself a fascinating narrative. James Douglas, who had become chief trader for the Company in 1835, reported the total male population at Willamette in 1838 as fifty-one, of whom twenty-three were French-Canadians. The other twenty-eight were staff members of the Methodist Mission established there or other American settlers.<sup>1</sup> Simpson estimated there were five hundred persons in the settlement by the autumn of 1841 (sixty-five Americans and others, sixty-one Canadians ex-servants of the Company and wives and families of these men).<sup>2</sup> The French-Canadians were established in a region known as French Prairie, some fifty miles up the Willamette Valley. Two French-Canadians, Etienne Lucier and Joseph Gervais, had settled there quite early, Lucier as early as 1828 or 1829. Although the terms of service of the men with the company had been completed and the relationship continued only on a commercial basis, the farmers

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<sup>1</sup> Report of Douglas to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Co.; October 18, 1838 cited in Introduction to McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters 3rd series, Toronto, Champlain Society 1944, p. XXXVII.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Simpson to Governor and Committee, November 25, 1841, loc. cit.

purchasing goods or exporting produce through Fort Vancouver, the tie between the Canadians and the Company remained quite strong.

By the Summer of 1844 thousands of Americans were pouring into the district and the Company, realizing the imminent possibility of American envelopment tried to promote a counter immigration scheme by importing settlers from the Red River and establishing them at Fort Nisqually and at Cowlitz farm, both north of Fort Vancouver. However, a series of crop failures, and the attraction of better land south of the Columbia wrecked this enterprise. As it became obvious that organization was necessary to maintain peace and order, with Dr. McLoughlin's blessing the French-Canadians lent their support to the formation of a provisional government. They did not do so, however, without presenting a document setting forth their views and their rights. Their spokesman was a French-Canadian priest - Father Anthony Langlois.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The index volume to the Oregon Historical Quarterlies (Vols. I - XL), 1939, p. 243, lists numerous articles about or relative to the French-Canadians in Oregon.

## APPENDIX III

FRENCH-CANADIANS MENTIONED BY DR. JOHN McLOUGHLIN IN  
CONNECTION WITH THE THOMPSON RIVER POST OR OTHER  
INTERIOR ESTABLISHMENTS.

Jos. Clairmont	)	
Joachim LaFleur	)	
Andre Picard	)	Thompson River
Antoine Rocquelbrune	)	
Narcisse Portelance		
Ant. Plouffe		
J. Be. (Jean Baptiste) Lajois		
Jos. Lapierre		
Pierre Lacourse		
Antoine Felix		

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Letter to A.R. McLeod, Chief Trader 20th March 1831,  
cited in Barker, B. - Letters of Dr. John McLoughlin,  
Oregon Historical Society, 1948, p. 193.

## APPENDIX IV

TWO OF SIMPSON'S PERSONNEL REPORTSON COMPANY ESTABLISHMENTS

1. Port Alexandria, Western Caledonia, Columbia River  
District Outfit, 1827.

## Officers and Men - Their Conduct and Character

1. Campbell, Awasteap	Excessively nervous	Speaks the Carrier language
2. Desloge, Hyacinthe	Generally Improper	Notoriously bad
3. Gregoire, Etienne	Steady	a good horsekeeper
4. McGillivray, Joseph		
5. McDougall, George	Unexceptionable	an efficient trader
6. Majeau, Ambroise	Indifferent	inclined to be troublesome
7. McDonell, Eneau	Obedient	a good lad

from Rich, E.E. (ed.) Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1947. Appendix A.  
p. 200.

2.

Thompson River District Report 1827 - officers and men attached to the district with their conduct and character, as well as the family belonging to each.

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	
Annance, Francis N.	1	2		Clerk
Ermatinger, Francis	1			Clerk at Okanagan /sic/
Deslard, Joseph	1	1	1	An able, good steersman and a most active hand with horses
Bourdignon, Antoine	1		1	A good careful man but weak
Gingrais, Jean	1		1	A handy man, more interested for the service in the absence than before his superior
Karonhitikigo, Laurent				A good foreman and obed- ient in other respects, not adapted for horse driving
Laprade, Alexis	1			An obedient good man
Lecuire, François				Slow and awkward. He is this year from Red River
Moreau, Joseph	1	1		Active and knows his duty well but careless and has little inclination for /illegible/ jobs
McDonald, Archibald	1	2		Clerk in charge of district
Picard, Andre	1		2	Ingenious - speaks the Okanagan well - is weak as a voyageur
Shoegaskatsta, Louis				A most submissive man but not adapted for the duty of this place
Satarakass, Pierre				Another good quiet Iroquois but the same defect with the last
Lafentasia, Jacques	1	2	1	Interpreter, but not sufficiently resolute with the Indians - very thoughtless



	<u>Women</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	
LaCourse, Pierre	1		3	A good man - steersman and boat builder - is now gone back to Spokane to make boats

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from Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia,  
Appendix A, p. 229.  
Note: It is impossible in most cases to distinguish between  
French-Canadians and French-Canadian half-breeds. Most of  
the men with French names were French-Canadians who had  
taken Indian wives. A few of the most useful men like  
Annance were half-breeds.

## APPENDIX V

Simpson's attitude toward the request of the Catholic mission to import further help was the cause of much dismay on the part of Bishop Signay and the missionaries Blanchet and Demers. He had been friendly and helpful in arranging for the transport of the original missionaries to the Columbia but for some reason his attitude changed. Some blame has been placed on the reports of the Anglican chaplain the Rev. Herbert Beaver who was sent to Fort Vancouver by the London office of the Company but returned after a brief stay and described conditions at Fort Vancouver as being in a deplorable state.

In contrast, the warm attitude of Dr. McLoughlin, the 'governor' of the Columbia district was one which called forth many expressions of thanks from the Catholic missionaries and their superior in Québec. James Douglas, Chief Factor, too, showed a friendly spirit toward them and wrote to Governor Simpson telling him that he thought he (Simpson) "did wrong in throwing obstacles in the way of the Canadian Catholic missionaries". The Jesuits, led by Father De Smet, a Belgian, Douglas regarded as foreigners. He said "I prefer Mr. Blanchet's people to them". Douglas said the Canadians "instead of being restrained, ought to be encouraged and allowed

a free passage in the Company's inland craft to any part of the district they may wish to visit".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> McLoughlin's Letters Fort Vancouver, (ed. E.E. Rich, with an introduction by W. Kaye Lamb), Toronto, Champlain Society, 3rd series, 1944 - a private letter of James Douglas to Sir George Simpson, 5th March 1845, p. 184-185.

## APPENDIX VI

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS FROM THE PERSONNEL OF THE NORTHERN  
POSTS (UNDER SUPERINTENDENT PETER SKENE OGDEN) TO THE  
MISSION OF BLANCHET AND DEMERS, NOVEMBER 1841.

	£	s.	d.
William McBean	3	0	0
Louis Gagnon	2	0	0
Jean-Baptiste Boucher (c)	2	0	0
Jean Baptiste Boucher (d)	1	0	0
P. Gun	1	0	0
W. F. Lane	2	0	0
Pierre Letendre	2	0	0
William Norwick	1	0	0
P. S. Ogden	2	0	0
William Thew	1	10	0
Joseph Brunette	0	10	0
Jean Couturier	1	0	0
Paul Fraser	2	0	0
O. LaFerte	2	0	0
J. Tubault (Thibault?)	1	0	0
Pierre Roy	1	0	0

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Cited in Morice, History of the Catholic Church  
in Western Canada, Vol. II, p. 286.

## APPENDIX VII

LISTS OF FRENCH-CANADIAN NAMES APPEARING UNDER THE  
HEADINGS DEROCHE AND NICOMEN IN HENDERSON'S GAZETTEER  
AND DIRECTORY

1901

Deroche

Beaulieu, Arthur - farmer  
 Beaulieu, Hypolite "  
 Deneau, Antoine  
 Deroche, Joseph - farmer  
 Parent, Felix "  
 Rouleau, Adolph "  
 Tremblay, Amede "

Nicomen

Caron, Simeon - farmer  
 Chartres, Edward "  
 Rouleau, George "  
 Tremblay, Emery "

In the ten years subsequent there were few changes.

By 1911 two more members of the Deroche family, Isadore and Oliver, were listed as farmers.

## APPENDIX VIII

LISTS OF FRENCH NAMES APPEARING UNDER "HATZIC" OR  
OR "DURIEU" IN THE HENDERSON'S GAZETTEER AND DIRECTORY

1901Durieu

Lagace, A. - postmaster	Morin, E. - farmer
Bergevin, Oliver - farmer	Leduc, Baptiste - farmer
Bernier, Joseph - "	Martin, Theophile - "
Boucher, Moise - "	Pigeon, P. - "
Carrat, Louis - "	Rouleau, George - "
Chomat, Xavier - "	Seux, J. R. - "
Cote, Octave - "	
Cyr, Alfred - farmer and logger	
Cyr, Zoel - "	
Dion, Albert - "	
Moresau, F. - "	

1904

little changes except that names Brisson and Fontaine added and three of the above names had gone.

1910

By this time Fred Cyr was listed as a "logger" only. New names added were Regis Hudon, farmer; Michel Lacroix, fisherman; Jean Boucher, farmer; Dellow Fontaine, lumberman; J. Lagace, baker; Xavier Landry, farmer; Wm. Lihon, farmer, Wm. Marquette, farmer and three Taillards, all farmers.

1911

A few more arrivals had enlarged the ranks. Newcomers were George Paul, farmer; Richard Emanuels, logger and Xavier Lagace, farmer.

## APPENDIX IX

NAME, PLACE OF ORIGIN, APPROXIMATE TIME OF ARRIVAL,  
LENGTH OF STAY AND OTHER PARTICULARS REGARDING EARLY  
DURIEU RESIDENTS - according to Louis Lagace, son of  
 the first homesteader.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place of Origin</u>	<u>Approx. time of arrival and occupation other than farming</u>	<u>Length of stay</u>	<u>other particulars</u>
Bergevin, O.	Three Rivers, was in California, then Nevada	1886	Until death	
Bernier, J.	Quebec, then North Battleford	1890-2	Until very old	Died in old people's home, Kamloops
Bouchier, M.	Three Rivers, cotton mills in Massachusetts	1885	Until death	
Chomat, X.	France		Moved to Washington State	
Cote, O.	Quebec	1886	Until death	
Cyr, A.	Campbelltown, N.B.	1880's	Moved to New Westminster	
Cyr, J.	To Vancouver in 1880's	Logged for Brunette Saw Mills		
Cyr, Z.	Logged in Mt. Pleasant district of Vancouver			
Dion, Albert	Montreal district	early days	Moved to Shuswap	
Hudon, D.	Quebec	?	?	



<u>Name</u>	<u>Place of Origin</u>	<u>Approx. time of arrival and occupation other than farming</u>	<u>Length of stay</u>	<u>other particulars</u>
Moreau, F.	Quebec	first to settle at Allan's Lake, Durieu	did not stay long	
Leduc, B.	Quebec. Logged for Cyr at Durieu	very early	until near death	
Martin T.	Quebec	came with A. Lagace, homesteaded at McConnell Creek, logged here		died at Kamloops old people's home
Pigeon, P.	Ontario			
Rouleau, G.	Quebec	farmed and logged	till death of T.B.	
Seux, J.R.	France	before 1900	till death about 1940	
Brisson, J.	Montreal district	was farming partner to L. Carrat at first		
Fontaine A.	Michigan	drove shingle bolts down creek to Stave Falls	lived at Hatzic Prairie till death	
LaCroix, M.	quarterbreed Indian			
Landry, X.	Manitoba			
Marquette	from Eastern Canada			
Taillard, J.	from France		stayed only a few years	
Taillard, H.	" "			
Taillard, P.	" "			

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place of Origin</u>	<u>Approx. time of arrival and occupation other than farming</u>	<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>other particulars</u>
Landreville	Lowell, Mass.			moved to Vancouver
Garneau, X.	Quebec	became section foreman for B.C.E.R.		
Roberge	Montreal district	1894		
Cardinal, F.	Quebec	1890		

## APPENDIX X

SOME OTHER NAMES OF FRENCH-CANADIAN LUMBERMEN IN  
EARLY DIRECTORIES

1885

Laurea, Noel                      Logger, Moodyville

1891

Charbonneau, John	Millhand, Brunette Sawmills
Dione, Joseph	"                      "                      "
Dubois, Frank	Labourer, New Westminster
Labellicos (?) Joseph	Logger, Millside, New Westminster
Lafreniere, B.	Labourer, New Westminster
Lebargé	Royal City Planing Mills
Louise, J.	Millhand,                      "                      "                      "

1892

Giroux, Victor	Sash and Door Maker, New Westminster
Julien, E.	Millhand, Brunette Sawmills
Labree, E.	Labourer, New Westminster
Laduke, Joseph	Labourer, New Westminster
Legendre, Edward	"                      "                      "
Laplant, J.	"                      "                      "
Lavelle, M.	Lumberman, New Westminster

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Williams, R.T., British Columbia Directory,  
 Victoria, B. C., 1885, 1891, 1892.

## ✓ APPENDIX XI

MAILLARDVILLE VOTING IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS.<sup>1</sup>

1912-1953

<u>Date</u>	<u>Government Elected B.C.</u>	<u>District Candidate elected</u>	<u>Maillardville voting</u>
1912	Conservative (MacBride)	W.J. Manson (Conservative)	no distinct Maillardville polling division
Sept. 15 1916	Liberal (Brewster)	John Oliver (Liberal)	Oliver 100 Manson (Cons.) 30
Dec. 2 1920	Liberal (Oliver)	Catherwood (Cons.)	Catherwood 39 Martyn (Lib.) 105
1924	Liberal (Oliver)	Catherwood (Cons.)	Catherwood (Cons.) 15 Smith (Lib.) 184
1928	Conservative (Tolmie)	Lougheed (Cons.)	Lougheed (Cons.) 114 Whiteside (Lib.) 283
✓ 1933	Liberal (Patullo)	E. Winch (C.C.F.)	Winch (C.C.F.) 148 Miss E. Johnson 257
✓ 1937	Liberal (Patullo)	E. Winch (C.C.F.)	E. Winch (C.C.F.) 367 Grieve (Lib.) 315
1945	Coalition	E. Winch (C.C.F.)	Winch supported no Liberal candidate

<sup>1</sup> Data from The British Columbian, March 29, 1912; September 15, 1916; December 2, 1920; June 21, 1944; July 19, 1928; November 3, 1933; Statement of Votes, Provincial Elections, 1937, 1945, 1949, 1952, 1953. Parliamentary Guide (1911-54) Montreal; Gazette Printing Company.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Government Elected B.C.</u>	<u>District Candidate elected</u>	<u>Maillardville voting</u>
1949	Coalition	R.C. MacDonald <sup>2</sup> (Coal.)	MacDonald 500, 247 Hartley (C.C.F.) 809, 297
1952	Social Credit	Wicks (S.C.)	Wicks 640, 262 Ainley (C.C.F.) 487, 188 Cox (Lib.) 329, 183
1953	Social Credit	Wicks (S.C.)	Wicks 474, 204 Pattern (C.C.F.) 627, 245 Emery (Lib.) 325, 161

It may be noted that the Maillardville voters supported the Liberal party candidate until after 1933. The Liberal candidate at that time was a New Westminster business woman, Miss E. Johnson. In spite of the prejudice of some voters against women in politics Miss Johnson won a substantial majority in the Maillardville polling division. Beginning in 1937 Maillardville consistently supported the C.C.F. candidate except at the 1952 election. It is interesting to note that although the Social Credit party was re-elected and Lyle Wicks was returned as Dewdney member in the 1953

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<sup>2</sup> The reason the above table gives two totals for Maillardville beginning in 1949 is that by this time another polling division had become necessary, parallel to the development of the second French-Canadian parish in Maillardville. The first figure given in each case above is for Maillardville, the second for Alderson Avenue. From 1949 Maillardville was included in Dewdney Electoral District instead of in Burnaby.)

election, the Maillardville electors had changed their minds about Social Credit and resumed the support of the C.C.F. party. Maillardville's loyalty to the C.C.F. is probably related to the strength of the trade unions (particularly the International Woodworkers of America) in the district.

## APPENDIX XII

MAILLARDVILLE VOTING IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS<sup>1</sup>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Government Elected</u>	<u>Voting in B.C. (Members elected)</u>	<u>District Member Elected</u>	<u>Maillardville Voting</u>
1911	Liberal- Conservatives (Robert Borden)	Cons. (Lib. Cons.) 7 Liberal 0	J.D. Taylor (Cons.)	No district polling division
1917	Unionist (Borden)	Unionist 13 Liberals 0	Stacey (Unionist)	Stacey 51 Ramsay (Lib.) 93
1921	Liberals (King)	Liberals 3 Cons. 7 Progressive 2	Munro (Lib.)	Munro (Lib.) 204 Stacey (Cons.) 47
1925	Liberal (King) (no clear majority)	Liberals 3 Cons. 10	Barber (Cons.)	Barber (Cons.) 81 Munro (Lib.) 295
1926	Liberals (King)	Cons. 12 Liberals 1	Barber (Cons.)	Barber (Cons.) 129 Manuel (Lib.) 330
1930	Conservatives (Bennett)	Cons. 7 Liberals 5	Barber (Cons.)	Barber (Cons.) 188 G.G. McGeer (Liberal- Farmer - Freight Rates) 603
1935	Liberals (King)	Liberals 6 Cons. 5 C.C.F. 3	G. MacNeill (C.C.F.)	MacNeill led in all four polling divisions 330 votes against Munn (Lib.) 265

<sup>1</sup> Data from the British Columbian, September 21, 1911; December 6, 1921; October 6, 1925 and September 14, 1926. Also the reports of the Chief Electoral Officer, 1930, 1935, 1945, 1949, 1953. Parliamentary Guide (1911-54) Montreal, Gazette Printing Company.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Government Elected</u>	<u>Voting in B.C. (Members elected)</u>	<u>District Member Elected</u>	<u>Maillardville Voting</u>
1940	Liberals (King)	Liberals 10 National Government (Cons.) 4 C.C.F. 1	Sinclair (Liberal)	MacNeil's total for four polling divisions well exceeded that of Sinclair MacNeil 387 Sinclair 290
1945	Liberals (King)	Liberals 5 Prog. Cons. 5 C.C.F. 4	Sinclair (Liberal)	Sinclair (Lib.) 356 Johnson (C.C.F.) 379
1949	Liberals (St. Laurent)	Liberals 11 Cons. 3 C.C.F. 3	Goode (Liberal)	D.G. Steeves (C.C.F.) led in 15 of 26 Maillard- ville polling stations
1953	Liberals (St. Laurent)	Liberals 8 Prog. Cons. 3 C.C.F. 7 Soc. Cred. 4	Regier (C.C.F.)	Rene Gamache, Social Credit, led in 15 of 27 polling stations

The Maillardville voters consistently supported the Liberal party in Federal voting until after 1930 even when their electoral district, the province or the nation voted against the Liberals. This reflected strongly the Quebec background of the people. Following the Fraser Mills strike in 1931 and paralleling the growth of unionism in the lumber industry the electorate has supported the C.C.F. party. Only when Rene Gamache, one of their own number ran as a Social Credit candidate did a majority of the French-Canadians turn somewhat dubiously against the C.C.F. candidate.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. Manuscript Sources

1. Municipal, Ecclesiastical and Employment Records
2. Theses and Graduating Essays
3. Periodicals

### II. Printed Sources

1. Government Reports or Publications
2. Newspapers
3. Periodicals
4. Pamphlets
5. Books - General
6. Books Relevant to the British Columbia Field
7. Directories and Genealogical Dictionaries
8. Reports and Briefs
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### III. Maps

### IV. Photographs

1. From the Collection of Mrs. W. Bouthot
2. From the Collection of Mrs. J. Thomas
3. Photographs taken by the Writer

### V. Personal Communication

1. Letters
2. Interviews

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

The main interest in this thesis is in French-Canadian settlement after 1900 and particularly in relation to the lumber industry. Good sources of information are sadly lacking. For the story of Maillardville, the writer was dependent largely on interviews with old residents and descriptive accounts given in the British Columbian (New Westminster) and the Western Lumberman (Vancouver) in the period 1909-1912. Some scattered references were made to the settlement project in other newspapers. For information on the current picture the writer made extensive use of interviews or correspondence with residents and his own files of newspaper clippings from the Winnipeg weekly, La Liberte et Le Patriote or La Survivance (Edmonton).

The Jesuit publication, Relations was found helpful because of its occasional reports on the French-Canadians in British Columbia and their problems.

## I. Manuscript Sources

### 1. Municipal, Ecclesiastical and Employment Records

Codex Historicus de la Maison St. Charles at New Westminster (1889-1913)

Parish Records, Our Lady of Fatima Parish (Maillardville) The Church of the Blessed Sacrament (Vancouver), Notre Dame des Victoires (Port Alberni)

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Minutes of the Council Meetings, Coquitlam Municipality, 1909-1913.

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....., A Study of the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, a thesis submitted as partial requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History, University of British Columbia, April 1931.

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This journal, which in the days of its greatness hailed Fernie as "the Pittsburgh of Canada" is replete with data useful to the social historian and the student of mining history.

Golden Star, Golden, B. C. 1910-1912

From this publication the reader obtains a good picture of the vicissitudes of a small town, whose destiny seemed linked to the lumbering industry.

Mail Herald, Revelstoke, B. C. 1910Nelson Daily News, Nelson, B. C. 1910, 1911

This paper in the early part of the century gave specially good news coverage not only of the Kootenay district but of the Province at large.

✓ Rossland Miner, Rossland, B. C. 1909-1913

This journal more than any other of the Kootenay area demonstrated to the writer the variety of historical material which may be obtained in the files of a seemingly commonplace newspaper. The economic history of the community, the social and cultural life, the religious interests of the time, the hopes and aspirations of people living in a boom economy, the very "flavour" of the era all are here.

Vancouver Daily Province, March 21, 1939; June 26, 1945; June 19, 1952.Vancouver News Herald, October 13, 1938.Vancouver Sun, February 21, 1946; November 17, 1949; April 2, 3, 6, 1951; September 6, 10, 12, 1951; June 19, 1952; August 18, 30, 1952.Victoria Colonist, June 24, 1941; July 14, 1942; June 27, 1945.Victoria Times, June 23, 1941; August 11, 1942; December 3, 1947.La Liberte et Le Patriote, Winnipeg, Manitoba, January 1954 - February 1956.

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Hughes, Everett C., French Canada in Transition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1943.

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This is really a treatise endeavouring to correct mistaken attitudes of the Anglo-Canadian toward the French-Canadian and much of its reasoning is skilfully presented.

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Wade, F. Mason, The French Canadians 1760-1945, Toronto, Macmillan, 1955.

This scholarly and imposing work is by far the most thorough history of the French-Canadian people yet written. The book has been prepared with a reasonable impartiality - as much as is possible when the author's sympathies have been aroused in favour of the French-Canadians. Its great value is lessened by the absence of a bibliography.

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A clever economic interpretation of the development of Canada after the Peace of 1763.

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- ✓ Mackenzie, Sir Alexander, Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, Toronto, Courier Press, 1911. This is a volume that everyone who is interested in the exploration of Western Canada should read.

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- ✓ Rich, E. E., (with an introduction by W. Chester Martin) Simpson's Athabaska Reports, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1938.  
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III. Maps

1. Map showing the Durieu District - based on a map of the Lower Fraser Valley printed by the B. C. Government Travel Bureau.



2. Map showing the Maillardville District - based on a map of New Westminster prepared by the New Westminster Board of Trade.
3. Map of Quebec showing the sources of lumber workers, prepared by the writer.
4. Map of the Okanagan prepared by the writer from a map by Dr. M. A. Ormsby.
5. Map showing the distribution of French-Canadian settlers in south western B. C.

#### IV. Photographs

1. From the Collection of Mrs. W. Bouthot  
 Father Edmund Maillard, first cure of the parish named after him.  
 The first store in Maillardville, at Laval and Brunette Streets.  
 Meeting of Lower Mainland French-Canadians.  
 A French-Canadian picnic at Booth's farm.  
 The French-Canadian band.
2. From the Collection of Mrs. J. Thomas  
 Joseph Boileau as a teamster, hauling firewood from the mill to the townsite.  
 Lumberjacks on the Docks at Fraser Mills shortly after their arrival, 1909.  
 (The Pitt River Road) Brunette Street in the Early Days.  
 The First church at Notre Dame de Lourdes, Maillardville under construction, 1909.  
 The Boileau home, 1910.  
 The second church of Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish.  
 Pupils of L'Ecole Notre Dame de Lourdes with Father de Lestre and Sisters of the Child Jesus.  
 An early Corpus Christi procession.  
 French-Canadian Lumberjacks going for a Sunday sleighride near Maillardville, 1909.
3. Photographs taken by the Writer.  
 The school at Notre Dame de Fatima parish, Maillardville.  
 The present Catholic church at Durieu.  
 The old Catholic Church at Deroche, erected for work among the Indians and early settlers.  
 Log cabin of an early settler, reported to have been constructed by Arthur Beaulieu.  
 Isadore Deroche's dugout canoe.  
 The parish high school at the Notre Dame de Lourdes.

## V. Personal Communication

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Fraser Mills, B. C., July 14, 1955.