B.C. historical NEWS

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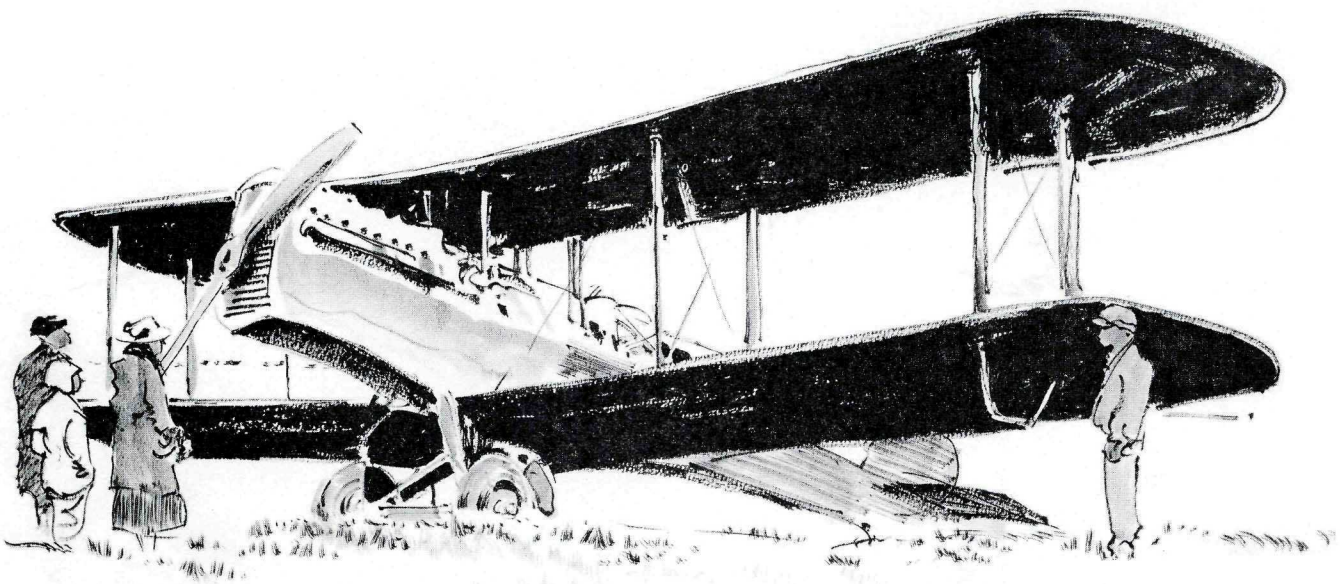

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BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL NEWS

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The Convention is over and, from my own point of view, it was a success. The Okanagan Historical Society made us very welcome and the friendliness that was shown on all sides will be long remembered. These are not platitudes but plain facts. We had tours of three Government institutions, and I have never before met with so much desire to explain the workings of their respective projects in layman's language.

We spent an afternoon at the Federal Research Station at Summerland and to me the highlight of the tour was what the modern stomach will be digesting in the fruit and vegetable line in the not too distant future. I'm glad I have an historical stomach and still like my fruit and vegetables as nature proudly displays them.

The field trip on Saturday, through the south Okanagan, had many points of interest, but the Mount Kobau Astronomical Observatory and the White Lake Radio Astrophysical Observatory were the highlights. These two projects, apart from political controversy, are history in the making. The scientists at both places gave us an insight as to why the sites had been chosen and the type of viewing, both optical and audio, which they were doing. The peak of Mount Kobau is 6,148 feet and the gravel road is excellent. In answering some of the comments on the observatory the astronomer explained that the construction will be more an engineering than an optical feat. The instrument will weigh as much as a 115-seat passenger jet and be built to the same exacting tolerances. It was quite a coincidence that the Vancouver Province of May 15th carried a splendid article by Mark Wilson dealing with the physical aspects of the future role of Mount Kobau. I would recommend that all who visited the site should read it. The White Lake radio telescope was an entirely different operation and needed a great deal of imagination to envisage the kind of research they are doing. Of one thing I am sure, after the lecture by one of the scientists, we need have no fear of finding that little green men have invaded earth in their flying saucers. He was quite emphatic that there was no evidence to support any form of human life, as we know it, within our planetary system.

All the speakers at the Convention seemed to have an underlying theme that should be of concern to those who feel that "progress" can be not only ruthless, but also very shortsighted. In this age of computers and social welfare the rape and plunder of our country are

no better than in the days when law and order rode on horseback with the appelation of "the hanging judge". Each speaker dealt with an unrealistic future planning, whether it be the Mount Kobau Observatory that has been virtually abandoned by the Federal Government, or the Provincial Government's stingy allocation of parkland for a preserve for the California Big Horn Sheep in the South Okanagan. We all saw a stretch of country in this beautiful valley that is unique in the whole of this vast Dominion of Canada and as yet none of it has been set aside for a Provincial Park. Our guest speaker at the banquet, Mr Victor Wilson, gave us a year round glimpse of the Okanagan Valley and spoke of people dedicated to the purpose of setting aside a portion for a park. It is not enough to wish; the least we can do is to lend support to the many worthwhile efforts being undertaken in the interests of the generations to follow. We cannot all make history but yet we're all a part of it in the making As an Association, our aims and objects are to preserve for posterity the accomplishments of all the minor contributors which in their day and age seem small and insignificant, yet they are the missing pieces that complete the jig-saw picture of history. What kind of picture will we fit into? Will it be beautiful or ugly? That's for each of us to decide.

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Minutes of the Fourth Council Meeting for 1968-69 of the British Columbia Historical Association held on Friday May 23rd, 1969 at the Penticton Inn, Penticton, B.C. Present: Mrs Jordon (Pres.), Mr R. Brammall (V.Pres.), Mrs G. Bowes (Treas.), Mr P. Yandle (Sec.); Delegates: Mr G. Bowes (Vancouver), Mr D. Kay (East Kootenay), Mr Ford (Alberni & Dist.), Mr Schon (Nanaimo), Mr Bracewell (Victoria).

Minutes of Council Meeting held on February 9th, 1969 were read and adopted on motion. Arising out of the minutes, Mr Brammall reported that the matter of insurance for the picture of Captain Vancouver had not been placed. Before insurance could be placed at a stipulated monetary sum, the picture would have to be appraised by someone in authority acceptable to the insuring company. Council asked Mr Brammall to continue in the matter of getting an appraiser and insuring the picture to its appraised worth, which Council still considered should be around $1000.

Discussion took place regarding where the picture should be displayed, and Mr New considered that it should remain in the Victoria Maritime Museum for another year. Moved New, Seconded Bowes, that Victoria Maritime Museum retain the picture on display for the balance of this year and for the following year - Carried. Mr Bowes asked Council that after Victoria it should go to the Vancouver Centennial Museum. After discussion Council agreed that Vancouver would be given first priority at that time. It was further asked by Mr Bracewell, and Council agreed, that all arrangements and any or all costs including transportation should be made by the next museum granted the picture on loan.

There has been no action by the Government to provide any protection, either physically or morally, for the petroglyphs at Cranbrook. Mrs Jordon stated that the Provincial Parks Department had ignored the matter completely. She had written to the Hon. Ken. Kiernan, Minister of Recreation and Conservation, on May 5th asking for protection of the petroglyphs and that a reserve be placed on the site. As yet, no answer. Mr Kay spoke on the original discovery of the petroglyphs and wondered how effective a fence would be other than to draw attention to their existence. Since they are on private land and the whole area covered with brush it would probably be best to leave them alone. The East Kootenay Society are fed up with frustration. The Government does not seem to be interested in any way and probably the whole matter should be dropped. Council felt that as a reserve had been asked for the site, it might happen that an answer could come from the Minister and a further report made.

Considerable discussion took place on the question of an increase in the per capita rate from the member societies to the Association. It was the general feeling that the News was fulfilling a communication need, and societies so isolated as the Kootenays and Alberni no longer felt cut off from the Association. It would be expected that opposition would arise due to a reluctance to change, but economic reasons dictated the need for revision. Mr Schon felt that there was more reason for affiliation than just the News, and if member societies did not wish to raise their own individual members' dues they should find ways and means of raising additional revenue to cover the cost. On a recommendation put forward by Mr Brammall, Council suggested $1.00 per single member and .75¢ each person of a double membership.

Council was pleased to hear of a request from a Society in Golden for affiliation. It was moved Yandle, seconded Brammall, that Golden be accepted - Carried. Council was notified that Mrs Jordon would not seek reelection and that Mr and Mrs G. Bowes wished to withdraw from services on Council.

Moved New, seconded Bowes, that the meeting adjourn - Carried.

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Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Historical Association held in Penticton, May 23rd, 1969.

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mrs Jordon, with the reading of the minutes of the Meeting held in Victoria on May 25th, 1968. Moved Ford, seconded Brammall that the minutes be adopted as read - Carried.

Arising from the minutes of the last Annual Meeting was the question of an upward revision of the per capita levy. It seemed to be the concensus of opinion by members that an increase could be expected at this time. Mr Schon (Nanaimo) spoke in favour of an increase, thereby assuring the Association sufficient funds to continue to publish the News which he felt did much to hold the Association together. He therefore made a motion, seconded by Mr Ford,

That the per capita be increased to $1.00 per individual member and $1.00 per family membership, which membership would be entitled to one copy of each issue of the News.

Speaking as seconder for the motion, Mr Ford said he was in full support as a delegate from the Alberni & District Historical Society and appreciated the publicity given to his Society through the Society Notes and Comments section. Mr Kay (East Kootenay) stated that the question of a raise in the per capita levy had been raised by him to his own society. There had been quite an objection to any raise as many of them were pensioners. However he pointed out that the current levy could not possibly continue the News with the added postal rates. By a majority vote they had been in full support of the continuance of the News, as such isolated groups now had a tangible tie. An M.L.A. member of their Society, Mr Leo Nimsek, thought that a grant from the Government could be obtained for such a purpose. Mr Bowes (Vancouver) spoke in support of the motion and considered the News a unifying force to membership in the Association, but there were other benefits of affiliation in addition to the News and the Annual Convention. The motion carried unanimously. Mrs Jordon reported that considerable correspondence had been entered into with various Government Departments regarding the preservation of the petroglyphs at Cranbrook. To date there had been a long silence, but she still hoped that the Hon. Ken. Kiernan would reply to the letter she had written on May 5th. Council will continue to pursue this matter. The President thanked Mrs Yandle for her work on the News an d the meeting showed its appreciation.

The sites of the next conventions as approved by the retiring Council were Nanaimo, May 28th -30th, 1970, to be followed by Victoria in 1971, and the Gulf Islands in 1972. Mr New asked that the request from the Gulf Islands be held in abeyance.

The Secretary reported quite an active year and that his duties had been discharged to the best of his ability in carrying out the business of the Association. He further reported as Editor that since the last Convention four issues of the News had been published. The subscription list outside the Societies was growing and the money turned over to the Treasurer. Considerable expense had been added by the increased postal rates for mailing. Single copies that had been mailed for 3¢ now cost 8¢ and some small postal stations had charged as high as 11¢. He had investigated the possibility of second class mail privileges but had been given by good authority from the Main Post Office in Vancouver that representation could be made to Ottawa, but that there was absolutely no chance of it being granted. He thanked all those who had written letters of appreciation and encouraged member Societies that had material for publication to pass it on to the News.

The Treasurer's report was read by Mrs Bowes. Cash on hand in General Fund, $2,188.68. Receipts $566.97, making a total of $2,755.65. Disbursements $971.84, leaving cash in General Fund as of April 30th, 1969 $1,783.81. Publication - $2428.15. Total Cash on Hand, April 30th, 1969, $4211.96. Moved Mrs Bowes, Seconded Dr Akrigg, that report be accepted - Carried.

Both Mr New and Mr Brammall stressed the fact that some $2400.00 of Cash on Hand was monies held in trust by the Association for members who had paid advance subscriptions to the now defunct Quarterly; and as yet no disposition has been made for this trust fund. The President asked that all affiliates be sure to have delegates present for the New Council who would hold a session later on in the day. Mr Brammall explained that under the Constitution all member societies were entitled to one member on Council for each 100 members. A society with over 100 members would be entitled to two representatives. These representatives, plus the Provincial Archivist, made up Council. Council then at its first session would elect its own officers for the ensuing year. The Secretary and Treasurer could be members at large, as was the case of the present Secretary. Members could attend Council meetings if they wished.

The President was pleased to announce that Golden had asked for affiliation, which had been approved by the retiring Council. Moved Yandle, seconded Kay, that the General Meeting go on record welcoming Golden to the British Columbia Historical Association - Carried. The Secretary was instructed to notify Golden of acceptance.

Annual reports were heard from the following societies: East Kootenay - Mr Kay; West Kootenay - Miss Johnson; Alberni & District - Mrs Ford; Gulf Islands - Mrs Claxton; Vancouver - Mr Lawrence; Victoria - Mr Bracewell; Nanaimo - Mr Schon.

Mrs Jordon expressed thanks and appreciation for the very fine book display of the Okanagan Historical Association.

Under New Business, Mr Gordon Elliott (Vancouver) protested the lack of foresight and complete disregard by the Civic Government of Vancouver to do anything realistic to preserve the old Gastown area. He was also very critical of the new postal rates. He asked that members send unstamped postcards, which he would supply, to the Postmaster General protesting the increased cost and the poor service of the Post Office. He would supply a second card to be sent to Mayor Campbell of Vancouver protesting the Civic Government's lack of policy for the preservation of Gastown.

A vote of thanks was given to Mrs Bowes for the arrangements and programme for the Convention. Mrs Jordon was also included for her very fine leadership during her term of Presidency.

Meeting adjourned on motion at 12.00 noon.

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Minutes of First Council Meeting of the 1969-70 season of the British Columbia Historical Association, held in Penticton, May 23rd at 5.00 p.m. Present: Mrs Jordon, Mr D. Kay (E. Kootenay), Mr D. New (Gulf Islands), Mrs Ford (Alberni & Dist.), Miss Johnson (W. Kootenay), Mr Bracewell (Victoria), Mr R. Brammall, Mr J. Lawrence (Vancouver), Mr D. Schon (Nanaimo), Mr P. Yandle (Sec.- member at large). Visitors: Mrs Dewdney (Pres. Okanagan Historical Soc.), Mrs Kay, Mr Ford, Mrs Brammall, Mr G. Elliott.

First order of business was the election of officers. Mrs Jordon as retiring President took the chair and called for nominations for President. Mr Yandle asked that Mr New, Past President, take the chair since he intended to nominate Mrs Jordon for President as he understood that she would serve another year if elected. She was elected by acclamation. First Vice-President: Mr Brammall by acclamation. Second Vice-President: Nominations: Mr Bracewell and Mr Schon. A ballot was necessary and it was learned that the Secretary had no vote in this election under the constitution as he was not a delegate but a member at large, and until his office had been voted upon he was not constitutionally a member of Council. Mr Yandle stated that he would not serve on any board on which he did not have the right to participate in the election of officers under whom he would have to serve. The problem was resolved by withholding the election for 2nd Vice-President and dealing with the election of Secretary. Mr Yandle was elected by acclamation. On the ballot for 2nd Vice-President Mr Bracewell was elected.

None of the delegates was willing to accept the position of Treasurer and it seemed that an impasse had been reached. Arising from the discussion Mr Ford nominated Mrs Brammall, his reason being that as it was vitally important to have a treasurer to conduct the business of the Association, and since none of the delegates wished to take on this office, he could therefore nominate a member at large. Mrs Brammall was elected by acclamation.

Two Executive Members elected by acclamation - Mr Nash (Victoria) in absentia, and Mr Schon (Nanaimo). Mr Ford was elected Auditor by acclamation.

The elections having been decided, Mr New returned the chair to Mrs Jordon and on motion it was unanimous that all election ballots be destroyed.

Signing officers. Moved Brammall, seconded Schon, that they be the Treasurer, together with either the Secretary or President. Carried.

Moved Brammall, seconded Bracewell that the per capita for the ensuing year be $1.00 per single member and $1.00 per double membership (married). Carried.

<u>New Business</u> Mr Schon raised the question of obtaining affiliates to the Association. He stated that he knew of several groups which were very active and thought that some procedure should be initiated by Council to approach such societies. The President stated that

any member of Council could and should invite any known historical group to affiliate. Arising out of the discussion, Mr Schon would draw up a letter of invitation outlining the benefits of affiliation.

Mr Schon asked Council if any of the member societies could give information on publishing manuscripts. It was the consensus of opinion that this was a costly business and needed careful study inasmuch as the market for such items was an unknown quantity. Mrs. Dewdney explained that their Annual Report is let by contract and the cost for 2000 copies was covered by their membership of 900.

Mr New stated that in the past it had been customary to have an Honorary Patron and Honorary President, but that in recent years this had not been done. After discussion it was moved New, seconded Schon that the Secretary write to the Lieutenant Governor asking him to be Honorary Patron and to Dr Margaret Ormsby asking her to be Honorary President. - Carried.

Council expressed its sympathy to Mr H.B. Nash who had not been able to attend the Convention due to sickness in the family. Mr Brammall said he would write to Mr Nash on behalf of Council.

Moved New, seconded Bracewell that the meeting adjourn. - Carried.

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The following letter received by the President is the anticipated answer mentioned in the minutes. Maybe perseverance and persistence does have its reward.

. . . . . "On reviewing the file, we note that in May, 1966, we were negotiating with the owners of Block 5, L. 4836, Plan B-67, namely Wineberg Land and Investment of B.C. Ltd. We had requested from the company an asking price for the whole Block, but received no reply and unfortunately neglected to pursue the matter.

We do not anticipate any difficulty in obtaining the specific land occupied by the petroglyphs as Mr Wineberg has offered to donate to the Province a small parcel containing the Indian carvings. However, we believe it is essential that a larger surrounding buffer zone be acquired too, and will now reopen negotiation with Mr Wineberg.

We are sending a copy of your letter to the attention of the Department of the Provincial Secretary as jurisdiction of the Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act comes under the Honourable W.D. Black, Provincial Secretary.

In the meantime, we wish to thank you for your reminder and continuing interest in the important historic resources of British Columbia.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) Ken Kiernan.
Minister

SOCIETY NOTES AND COMMENTS

The reports from the member societies given at the Annual General Meeting of the Association were summaries of the year's activities. Most of the contents of these reports have appeared in previous issues of the News. Where there have been activities not previously reported the News will quote that section of the report.

ALBERNI

..... Our society contributed to the sending of Mr Jack Peters to Hazelton, for the Official Signing Ceremony of the KSAN project. We are proud to have his signature, representing the West Coast tribes, on the document..... Miss Buchowski, the Regional District Librarian, and Mr Palmer are now giving invaluable help with our current 4-day exhibit at the Arts Festival. This has an ethnic theme, representing the twelve groups who have contributed so much to the history of our area. The various groups are researching their own histories, and the work of these committees will form the basis for additional research. We are pleased by their support, and look forward to additional developments in the future.

The collection, filing and cataloguing of historical documents is progressing. We are continually amazed at the diversity of the contributions.

The biography of the first non-native permanent settler, Mr Daniel Clarke, was diligently researched by Mr W.R.H. Prescott. This was supplemented by a tape-recorded interview with two of Mr Clarke's sons.....

GULF ISLANDS

..... Programmes during the past year have included Mr New's travelogue on his tour of the Eastern Mediterranean, Captain Archie Phelps' slides of early ships in the area, and Mr Campbell's studies of flowers native to our islands.....

In its capacity as Associate Member of the B.C. Museums Association, the Branch was represented by four of its members at the annual Seminar and Workshop in Vernon. Nearer home, we were hosts to two graduates in Museum Technology from the Vancouver City College, whose account of their course in Museum Display led to the most significant undertaking of our year.

For this, credit goes entirely to the Saturna members and community who led by Mrs Hindmarch with the guidance of one of the technicians, Mrs Louttit, inspired the local children to delve into the history of their island, each following the aspect which most appealed to him. The result was an excellent two-day exhibition showing Indian artifacts, pioneer furnishings, books and records, with original illustrations of historic incidents, all displayed with no small degree of professional skill.....

WEST KOOTENAY

April meeting: Mr Herb Clark, retired Master Mechanic of Cominco and one-time Mayor of Trail, recalled some amusing and interesting reminiscences of Trail as he saw it on arrival in 1907. He traced the slow build-up of improvements over the years, replacing the hastily-built cabins, offices and stores of the early period.

Concluding the evening, members viewed a short movie on the very interesting subject of a reconstructed pioneer village not far from Toronto, showing the farm and domestic life of the "Pennsylvania Dutch" immigrants and their descendants.

In April a few members motored down to Kettle Falls on the Columbia River, about 30 miles south of the border. The falls themselves (spectacular but not high) have been buried under Roosevelt Lake for some 25 years since Grand Coulee Dam has been operating. They were exposed for a few weeks in April when the river was at its lowest level due to work being done at the Dam. Indians from the Colville Reservation nearby used to camp and fish near the Falls, so while some children saw the falls for the first time, others looked for Indian artifacts in the portion of riverbed which was dry.

May meeting: We were invited by the Rossland Historical Museum Association to hold this meeting in their building, when we would tour the Museum and explore the tunnel under their guidance. This invitation was given long before our own quarters were inundated by that sneaky Trail Creek which overflowed and caused so much damage on April 23rd. This proved to be a very interesting evening, and we would heartily recommend to anyone passing through this district, a stopover to inspect this well-planned complex of museum and renovated portal leading into the Black Bear-Le Roi tunnel, all located at the western entrance of the City of Rossland.

NANAIMO

Nanaimo activities have been reported up to date in the last issue. Of interest, though, was Mr Barraclough's birthday which fell on the 2nd day of the Convention. The members present celebrated with him by having a special birthday cake at the luncheon.

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Presidential Address, British Columbia Historical Association Convention, Penticton, May 23, 1969, by Mabel E. Jordon (President)

"DOCTOR GEORGE" - FATHER OF WESTERN CANADIAN GEOLOGY.

George Mercer Dawson, or "Doctor George" as he was familiarly known within the Geological Survey of Canada in his time, was a very remarkable man. Is is almost incredible that any one man could have accomplished so much in a short span of 51 years, yet Dawson, physically handicapped as he was, left ample proof of his outstanding achievements. For this reason I wish to direct attention perhaps more to the man than to his work, or at least equally so.

First and foremost, as the title of this address implies, George Mercer Dawson was an eminent geologist. However, he was also a surveyor, a geographer, an archeologist, a scientist, a cartographer, an ethnologist of note, an explorer, a keen naturalist, an able administrator, a prolific and authoritative writer in his field, and quite a poet when so moved. In addition he was clever at sketching with pen and ink and pencil, painted with water colours, and was an adept photographer, leaving a very fine collection of early photographs of the Canadian west with the Geological Survey at Ottawa. He became an authority on glacial phenomena and was thoroughly familiar with the geology of most of Canada, contributing largely to original and authentic information in the years 1873 to 1900.

However, before reviewing some of his work, a look into Dawson's background reveals an interesting family, one which probably accounts for his high academic proficiency leading to his chosen profession. George was born at Pictou, Nova Scotia in 1849. His father was Sir William Dawson, a geologist and educator and was also born at Pictou.

In 1855 when George was six years of age the family moved to Montreal where his father became Professor of Geology and Principal of McGill University. Sir William served as Principal for thirty-eight years and was knighted in 1884. He helped found the Redpath Museum of Botany and Geology, and wrote numerous papers and books on these subjects, some of which are considered classics, and he was a pioneer in paleobotany in Canada.

Back-tracking still further we find that Sir William's father, George's grandfather, James Dawson, had a successful shipping business in Pictou. With the advent of steam, however, his sailing ships became outmoded and the losses caused him to change his interests. He launched a successful publishing firm, Dawson Brothers, in Montreal, which in the 1880's and 1890's did a considerable amount of government printing including a number of George's official Reports. James was very fond of George and wrote frequently to him, giving much grandfatherly advice.

With such a background and growing up on the McGill campus, it is not surprising that George absorbed knowledge easily. When

he was eleven years of age he suffered a severe illness, thought to be caused from playing in the cold water of a stream which then flowed in the grounds. This illness prevented him from further growth and left him with a humped back and what was considered a delicate constitution. From that time George's health was his father's first consideration. He hired private tutors for him, whereas he had previously attended public school, and got the very best medical attention available for him.

At eighteen George became a part time student at McGill for two years after which he sailed for England to enter the Royal School of Mines in London to complete his professional training. This he tackled with much enthusiasm. Now twenty and physically strengthened he was probably still at some disadvantage for a note records that a wheel chair would be made available at the school should it be needed.

His one sister, Anna, he positively adored and kept in close touch with her, writing to her almost every week for many years no matter where he was, whether at school in London, at work in Ottawa, or out in the field in the wilderness of the northwest. Some of these letters have been privately published by a niece and the contents give added interest to his career. George remained a bachelor but occasionally expressed his opinion about the role of women. Just one hundred years ago in June 1869 to be exact he wrote to Anna from London as follows:

> "I think I will presently become if not a Woman's Rights man, something like it, for really it is quite painful to think about ((with)) what small and stupid things women's minds are often occupied - why should they not, at any rate know as much as others, for not only would it give them something better to think about, but it would open such boundless fields of pleasure of a rational kind to them - why for instance should women not know geology, chemistry, etc. - for geology and chemistry are only in reality the knowledge of things which we meet with every day, and if we know nothing about them but what a dog or cat know, such as their external form and appearance, they would pass by without noticing or obtaining any enjoyment from them."

He also noted that a certain lecturer at the London school for a Saturday class was a lady. Curious, he attended one Saturday just to see what the lady looked like. He remarked that "she seemed to lecture pretty well, but was not by any means fascinating in appearance being rather old and quite too fat!" On the other hand he was not so certain about some of the courtesies which should be accorded to ladies for he wrote to Anna asking, "I wish you would tell me what is the proper way of signing myself when obliged to write to ladies."

Whether George actually contemplated marriage is not clear, but it seems he was at one time very fond of a certain lady named Emma and was rather despondent when the relationship was terminated.

After he completed the four years required at the Royal School of Mines, thoroughly enjoying the field work involved during the summers in Scotland, he obtained his degree, won two awards, and was made an Associate of the School of Mines. He returned to Canada in 1873 and had been back a very short time when he was appointed geologist-botanist to Her Majesty's British North American Boundary Commission. He was then only twenty-four years of age. His report to the government on the Geology and Mineral Resources of the 49th Parallel from Lake of the Woods in Ontario to the Pacific Ocean is now a rare item and did much to make the potentialities of Canada known to the world at that time. There is little doubt that this led to his permanent appointment to the Geological Survey of Canada as Chief Geologist and Paleontologist in 1875 when only twenty-six years old, and in 1883 he was appointed its first Assistant Director.

Thus his two years' work with the Boundary Commission established his reputation as a profound scholar and a skilled observer. The 387 page Boundary Report just mentioned, and also some of the letters written to his sister Anna, contain a striking first-hand account of the work, the terrain, the natives, and the flora and fauna as observed by him, while any hardships and inconveniences were scarcely mentioned. All of this proved to be invaluable experience for the years to follow in the fulfillment of some of his goals. It would take too much time here to deal with all the work involved while he was on this Boundary Commission assignment, and also his work during the next twenty years of exploring, mapping, geologising and so on, mostly in British Columbia and the Yukon.

Here again I would draw attention back to the man. It was remarked by one who knew him that to look at George Dawson one would not think him capable of one day of hard physical labour, yet he climbed, walked, and rode horseback as well as anyone and could do as much field work as the biggest and strongest of his associates.

His twenty years work in western Canada with the Geological Survey has special interest to British Columbians. He had a very real effect on the province in that he was responsible for a great deal of mining capital being attracted here through the medium of his authoritative publications which were widely read abroad. Many of of his official papers and reports are specifically about British Columbia, for instance note these titles:

The Geology of British Columbia (1881)
The Mineral Wealth of British Columbia (1889)
Report of the West Kootanie District of British Columbia (1889)
The Occurrence of Jade in British Columbia (1887)

to name just a few, as well as The Distribution of Some Important Trees in British Columbia, and Glaciation of British Columbia, all of these mentioned in the 1880's. There are many others of great importance to the west such as his reports on the Cariboo, the Cassiar, Clinton, Kamloops, Similkameen, Vancouver Island, and especially the Yukon and also the Queen Charlotte Islands.

His traverse from the Skeena River to Edmonton in 1879 is covered in a letter he wrote to his sister Anna and gives some idea of the rugged life and conditions of the early explorers and geologists. He also made a traverse and boat log of the Arrow Lakes and part of Kootenay Lake in 1889 on which he wrote the report about West Kootanie previously named.

Attention was drawn to the Yukon in much the same way as to British Columbia although it was not intended as publicity in any mercenary or commercial sense. The purpose of these expeditions by the Geological and Natural History Survey, as the G.S.C. was then known, was the gathering and correlating of information and recording it for Canada. The effects of Dawson's Reports were obvious, however, as for instance the Yukon, which became an important placer gold producing district some years after he was there in 1887. In later years he must have felt some satisfaction from these results which proved his geological observations and anticipations of the mineral wealth in the various areas he explored as in the Kootenays, the Cariboo, the Yukon and so on.

On that expedition to the Yukon he made a journey by boat of over 1300 miles with one portage of 50 miles. This journey was from the Liard River valley to that of the Yukon beginning at Telegraph Creek, up the Dease River, the Upper Liard and Frances Rivers to a point near the source of the Pelly, then down the Pelly, up the Lewes and across the Chilkoot Pass to the coast, all the while making a geological and geographical reconnaissance of the territory. His surveys achieved a high degree of excellence, his information was phenomenally complete and accurate, and notwithstanding his handicap he somehow managed to rival the Indians in surmounting extreme hardships in the wilds without complaint. His insatiable passion for exploration and discovery must have sustained him throughout these strenuous adventures.

An interesting sidelight to Dawson's work in the north is relevant today. In 1887 he published a geological map of the Northern Portion of the Dominion of Canada East of the Rocky Mountains. This included the Arctic islands about which sovereignty is now being questioned. He compiled this information after making a careful search through all the accounts left by various Arctic explorers and examining the geological collections brought back by them. To accompany the map he published the extensive notes and comments giving his authority for each and every item, as well as naming the various maps of reference. The bibliography alone is a treasury of information. In fact, one can say of all Dawson's undertakings such as this that "his reports, maps and papers are models of careful description and lucid exposition, and his contributions to the literature of geology and other sciences in Canada are illuminating in content and far-ranging in scope".[1]

For twenty years Dr Dawson surveyed, mapped and reported for the Geological Survey of Canada, from 1875 to 1895 when he was elevated to Director. To select any one incident from all of his travels for special attention is difficult. Of particular interest

to me is the thorough job of field work he conducted for his Report on the Rocky Mountains between Latitudes 49° and 51°30' in the years 1884-85, the report being dated the following year.

One problem which had often to be overcome in this field work was the crossing of rivers, especially so when the spring run-off was at full stream as it usually was in June and July when the work had to to be well under way to take advantage of the short season in the mountains. In this connexion one incident can be related here which took place in East Kootenay when Dawson attempted to cross the Elk River in June of 1884 on this Rocky Mountain expedition. This information is from his own diaries about which I shall say something later.

He and his party were coming down the Upper Elk River valley searching for a suitable place to raft across the river. It was pouring rain and after searching all day they eventually found what seemed to be a favourable spot. Soaked to the skin, they dried off before the fire, ate their meal and retired for the night, presumably to a tent or lean-to which would be the best they could muster. (There were no helicopters to lift them in and out of their work places as some of the G.S.C. men have today!)

The next morning was spent making the raft, but this proved unsatisfactory as the current was altogether too strong, and the water too deep to try poling across. With all the rain the river was in extra high flood and still the rain continued. To quote Dawson, "(the) raft was ignominiously landed on the same side by the current" . . . "most aggravating delay owing to rain and conditions of river."

The following day his packer found a more suitable place three miles farther down, but as a raft was useless they had to devise some means of making a boat. This was done by making a wood frame and using the canvas pack covers sewn together for a covering. The canvas, being worn and torn, had to be patched in the hope of keeping the water out long enough to ford the river. On test the boat was found to be far from watertight, so it had to be taken out and thoroughly dried. The next step was to melt what lard they had in their supplies along with some candles and paint the bottom of the canvas boat in another attempt to make it leakproof. Dawson records that all the while it was still raining, causing more delay, hampering the boat job, and keeping the stream high and swift.

On the fourth day they succeeded in crossing the Elk River with all supplies, and swam the horses across. The boat was pulled to pieces and the precious nails and canvas recovered for possible future use. This is but one instance of the kind of problems experienced by the early explorers and geologists such as Dawson, Tyrrell, Thompson, Fraser and others. They surely had to be cast in the right mold to do such work and one rarely finds mention of any complaint in their notes and diaries except it be about something which might hinder their work.

While on the Pacific coast on some of his earlier travels Dawson was headquartered at Victoria. Present day Victorians might be interested in some comments made by him in 1876. He wrote "Two or three years in this dead and alive place would cause anyone to lose all idea of the value of time, and quite spoil one for anywhere else". . "I don't think anything will induce me to spend another winter here, the most out-of-the-way Hudson Bay post on the continent would be preferable". These remarks were made in a letter to his sister Anna. Several times he invited her to come west with him, but perhaps such remarks account for the fact that she declined each time. However, he must have liked the Pacific coast for while there he wrote some of his poems. One verse goes like this:

"To rest on fragrant cedar boughs
Close by the western ocean's rim,
While on the top of giant pines
The live-long night the sea-winds hymn,
And low upon the fretted shore
The waves beat out for evermore."[2]

One other notable contribution made by Dawson which is of international interest was his role of British Commissioner on the Behring Sea Arbitration in 1891, in recognition of which he was made a Companion of the Order of St. Michael & St. George (C.M.G.) and was decorated with this order by Queen Victoria. This work took two years, and anyone familiar with this controversy knows that the British case was proved.

When his superior, Mr A.R.C. Selwyn, retired in 1895 Dawson was the logical successor as Director of the Geological Survey. He served in this post for six years, then died quite suddenly in office, felled by an attack of acute bronchitis at the age of 51 years. Thus ended the brilliant career of a man who gave unstintingly of himself at all times, never expecting special consideration because of his small stature and handicap. He was, in fact, a giant in his field, receiving many honours, and was called "a prince among geographers" by Mr A.O. Wheeler, "the wizard geologist of Canada" by another person, and was frequently called "The Little Doctor".

His name is perpetuated by several physical features such as the city of Dawson in Yukon, Mt. Dawson which is the highest peak of the Dawson group in the Selkirks of West Kootenay, as well as Dawson Glacier in that group; also Dawson Bay on Lake Winnipegosis in Manitoba, and the Dawson Range of mountains in Yukon.

Before closing I think the story of Dr Dawson's long lost diaries should be told here. An acquaintance of mine now with the Geological Survey of Canada and who has covered much of the same terrain in East Kootenay as did Dawson, had the advantage of Dawson's geological field notes in his work. These geological note books are in the G.S.C. Archives at Ottawa, and are distinct from the personal diaries about which I shall tell.

Dr Leech, the acquaintance mentioned, felt sure that somewhere there must be personal diaries left by Dawson. By chance he saw reference to something of the sort in an obituary to Dawson written by a brother-in-law wherein he referred to some "copious journals". Since

1950 Dr Leech had been on the lookout for some clue to these journals. Contact with Dawson's niece, who has many of his private papers and letters, said she had never heard of the diaries but if they ever did exist they seemed to have disappeared. It was suggested that they were probably burned at some clean-up.

After fourteen years a clue turned up. In 1964 the niece of Dawson contacted Dr Leech at Ottawa to say that in going through old papers two long-forgotten receipts were found. These were from McGill University marked "for papers of G.M. Dawson". These papers were in storage and it was arranged to have them 'disinterred' in the presence of the niece, Dr Leech, and others, in the library at McGill. All met as arranged, and there on the floor was an old tin trunk. In the words of Dr Leech, "when the box was opened, what a glorious moment!", for the box was full mostly of the long lost journals and diaries, dating from 1872 to 1899 including his time with the Boundary Commission and the Behring Sea Arbitration, up to two years before his untimely death. Some interesting letters were also there, one from John Rae the Arctic explorer among them. These diaries, actually buried in the depths and forgotten at McGill for sixty-three years are now at the Redpath Museum at McGill which George's father helped to found.

We may hope that someone with a facile pen will before long write a full biography of George Mercer Dawson, the Man and his Work. Many tributes were made at his passing. I would like to close with one written by Clive Phillipps-Wolley at that time; it is an "Ode to Doctor George".

Hope she has fooled us often,
 but we follow her spring call yet,
And we'd risk our lives on his say so
 and steer by the course he set--
Down the Dease and thelonely Liard
 from Yukon to Stikine--
There's always a point to swear by,
 where the little doctor's been . . .
He loved his work and his work mates
 and all as he took for wage
Was the name his brave feet traced him
 On Northland's newest page--
That and the hearts of the hard-fists
 though I reckon for the work well done--
He who set the stars for guide lights
 will keep him the place he won,
Will lead him safe through the passes
 and over the Last Divide
To the Camp of Honest Workers
 of men who never lied--
And tell him the boys he worked for, say
 judging as best they can,
That in lands which try manhood hardest,
 he was tested and proved a man[2]

1. "Men and Meridians" by Don W. Thomson.
2. "Life and Letters of George Mercer Dawson" by Lois Winslow-Spragge.

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