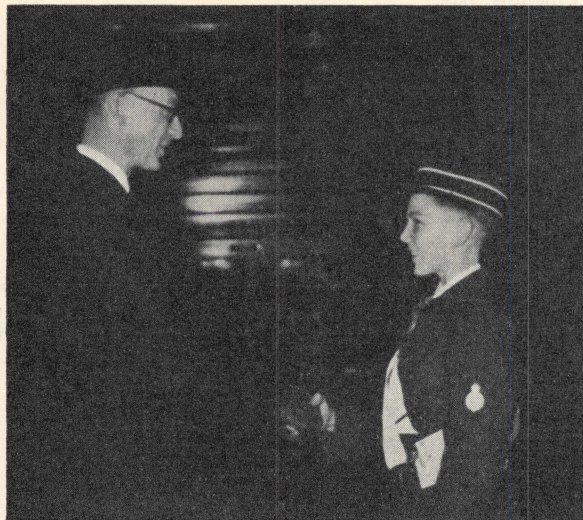


CANADIAN JOURNEY

The Overseas Secretary's visit to Canada was an event of historical interest, and this account of his journeyings will be welcome on both sides of the Atlantic.



Young Canada's Welcome

As I said farewell on October 7th to fellow Secretaries and other B.B. friends at Euston, I felt that Canada was a long way off and that I was starting out on perhaps a rather lonely adventure in far away places. But I was wrong. Once on the other side of the Atlantic, the chain of B.B. friendship and hospitality that stretched across Canada banished any sense of loneliness. In fact, the moments I had to myself were few and far between. And as for the feeling of distance from home, it was not present even in a physical sense. One could not feel anywhere else than "at home" amongst the kindly, open-hearted Canadian folk, with their many British ways, especially when so often those met were already enthusiastically within the fellowship of the B.B.

Now that I am back home again I still cannot help feeling that Canada—at any rate in a B.B. sense—is very near, just out of sight round the corner, as it were. And that is the feeling I want my readers to share in, too, for the B.B. in Canada has definitely arrived. The Officers and Boys there are taking their places with us all, not as mere distant Canadian cousins, but as real brothers in all that is best in B.B. enterprise. In some places in Canada during the past few years things have been accomplished that I doubt have ever been equalled here at home, except perhaps in the early pioneer days of the B.B. Something of the sterling quality of the progress made in so amazingly short a time will, I hope, be evident from this very inadequate account of a wonderful five weeks.

The Atlantic, though perhaps winning an early round or two on points, had not given me a knockout nor even driven me to the ropes, and after the smooth sail up the St. Lawrence I landed at Quebec City on a beautifully warm and sunny day, and began to enjoy three or four weeks of most delightful Fall weather, which the Canadians had reluctantly to admit continued far later than usual.

The Irish and Scottish accents of several of the Officers at the station to welcome me on arrival at Montreal were a good antidote to the rather "Continental" first impressions gained in the French city of Quebec. Soon with the Battalion Executive I was immersed in questions of Battalion procedure, Badge regulations, and all the other things that B.B. men talk about—and, of course, the usual digressions!

A first view of the B.B. in Montreal

The following morning, Sunday, I had my first sight of the B.B. in Canada—and what a fine introduction it was! A Battalion Church Parade, some 350 strong with four bands, to an important Church in the centre of the city. The whole Service was broadcast, including a splendid commendation of the B.B. from the Minister and a few words from myself. Afterwards the Battalion marched to the Campus of McGill University, where I took the salute and inspected the Parade, which, drawn up in line in the autumn sunshine amidst the grey buildings and trees of McGill, made a delightful picture. And the wonder of it—simply this, that two short years previously not a single one of the sixteen Companies forming the Battalion had been in existence! The parade would have done credit to a much older Battalion. An address to a Men's Brotherhood in the afternoon, the sermon at a B.B. Evening Service at a crowded Anglican Church, followed by an informal gathering and refreshments for the Company, friends and neighbouring Ministers in the Parish Hall, brought the day to a close.

Would that it were possible to give you a similar detailed account of each of the thirty-two days of my trip, but that must not be—both Editor and readers have to be considered! So I must confine myself to glimpses of high-lights and leave to your imagination the details of meetings of Battalion and Officers' Councils and of Life Boy Leaders; addresses to gatherings of Clergy and theological students, to Toc H Branches, to Hi-Twelve, Lions, Optimists' and Rotary Clubs and to Schools; courtesy calls on Mayors; scores of interviews with Bishops, Clergy, Ministers, Church Officials, Chief Constables, Government Officials and others; and, of course, informal conversations with many groups of B.B. men, and now and again, but not often enough, with B.B. Boys.

The Governor-General's Welcome

At Ottawa, through the kind offices of the Brigade President, I had the honour of being received at Government House by the Governor-General, His Excellency Lord Tweedsmuir, who is Dominion Patron of the B.B., and in a most friendly interview he expressed his pleasure at the progress which the movement was making in Canada, and his desire to help it in any way he could. He charged me with a message of congratulation and encouragement for further extension, to be given to all B.B. units as I visited them throughout the Dominion.

Toronto's achievement

Six and a half hours' train journey brought me to Toronto, where it was delightful to meet face to face those whom for four years I had known so well by correspondence. Countless letters had passed to and fro relating to the revival of B.B. activity there from zero to a Battalion of 21 Companies, and as a result the establishment of a Dominion organisation linking up the Brigade throughout Canada. The Hon. Albert Matthews, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, had inspected the Toronto Battalion and visiting contingents at the Dominion Council Meetings in May last, and as a result of the impression then made received me very cordially, and the B.B. has evidently in him a very good friend. A splendid dinner was given by one of the Churches with which a Company is connected to afford an opportunity for the Officers of the Battalion to welcome me, and was an example of the appreciation which exists of the good work which the Brigade is doing. There were some 80 Officers present, and, as well as many men with Old Country B.B. experience, it was pleasing to meet here, as elsewhere, a number of young men who have come up as Boys and Staff-Sergeants through the ranks of Canadian Companies

and who are now taking their places as junior Officers—the first-fruits of leadership produced from within.

At a Toronto Company Church Parade Service it was surprising and pleasing to observe the B.B. Crest forming the design for a small stained glass window—a symbol of the way the movement has established itself in the esteem of the Churches. This impression was borne out in a more general way in visits to the Church Youth Departments' Dominion Headquarters, where in some cases the value of the B.B. as a Church organisation for Boys has now been fully realised.

The Epic of Hamilton

Toronto B.B. men, not content with spreading the good news in their own great city, have during the past year frequently been speeding in their automobiles along the splendid new forty miles concrete highway which connects Toronto and Hamilton. The great extension effort of October, 1937, when over 200 Officers and Boys from Toronto spent a Sunday of Church Parades in Hamilton at the invitation of some of the Churches there, was described in the *Gazette* of last March. At that time the B.B. was unknown in Hamilton except for memories of Companies which had existed thirty or forty years ago. The sequel which I saw in October, 1938, was amazing—a splendid turn-out of 231 Boys with their

morning I inspected the Hamilton and Dundas Companies prior to their march to one of the important city Churches, where I spoke to them on the inspiration of our Founder's life, and afterwards took the Salute as the Companies marched past to the music of two bands—and one year previously there was not a single B.B. uniform in Hamilton! Then quickly back along those familiar 40 miles to Toronto, where, in the afternoon sunshine, the Toronto Battalion, some 600 strong, looked splendid, drawn up in line on a spacious assembly ground, the "parking lot" of the T. Eaton Company. After inspecting the ranks and observing that the experience and training of four years was evident in the high standard of turn-out, I was proud to march with the Battalion to the Church. The playing of the bands was excellent and the march discipline good. At the Service it was an inspiration to address such a magnificent B.B. congregation, and then afterwards the Battalion marched past with a fine swing, and I had an opportunity of congratulating the Sergeants at the close of the Parade.

On to Western Ontario

London, Ontario, treated me to a fog, just to make me feel at home, but it did not last long, and summer seemed loth to leave; crickets were chirruping, and that pleasant city compared very favourably with old London. Three enrolled Companies and one



Canada Lines up

Officers gathered in a Church to welcome me and to hear the message I brought them—as fine a sight as any B.B. man could wish to see! What a testimony to the enterprise and hard work of the men who had, within a year, formed the five Companies in Hamilton and one in the neighbouring town of Dundas! An Officers' Council is working well, and had arranged, in honour of my visit, a public dinner at which the Chaplains of all the Companies were present to join with civic representatives in paying tribute to the Brigade. The Secretary of the Officers' Council who is also Captain of one of the Companies—had on that October Sunday in 1937 been literally lured from a sick-bed by the music of a Toronto B.B. Band and the sight of the beloved B.B. uniform. All the latent Old Country B.B. spirit had welled up within him, and soon he was once again immersed in the B.B., probably even deeper than in his Boyhood days in Scotland. This is but one of many such re-dedications to B.B. service, the results of which I saw in enthusiastic B.B. ventures in various places.

Between Hamilton and Toronto, as cities, there exists a certain rivalry—something of the Leith-Edinburgh variety. Toronto is sometimes known as "Toronto the Good," but perhaps more often by less favourable appellations—certainly never as "Toronto the Humble"! A happy feature, however, is that the B.B. men know and appreciate each other so well that they are for ever chaffing about their respective cities, e.g., with pointed references to the pleasant little escarpment, 300 feet or so high, which even the Hamilton Scots have deluded themselves into calling their "mountain"!

Founder's Day in Canada

The scenes witnessed on Founder's Day were indeed a wonderful living memorial to the genius of Sir William Smith, scenes no doubt enacted similarly in every continent that day. In the

in process of formation represent the B.B. there, and there are prospects of further extension. I attended the second Birthday Party of the 1st London—these affairs are always dinners in Canada, never a mere tea or supper. An inspection of all the Companies followed, and this was attended by all the Chaplains. Then I gave a talk to the Boys and their friends—and what an appetite they had for autographs! A radio broadcast at 8.15 a.m., and an address to 1,700 students at the Central Technical School were other rather unique features of my visit.

Windsor, Ontario, has gone one better than its namesake here at home, for in the former there is a Battalion of seven Companies, some of which have been in existence since 1931. Though somewhat overshadowed by its huge U.S.A. neighbour, Detroit, just across the river, Windsor is a busy and prosperous city with magnificent schools, eight of which I visited and spoke to the Boys about the B.B. A frank discussion of local problems with the Battalion Council and the friendly atmosphere of a social evening augured well for a strengthening and extending of B.B. work in the future. Again delightful weather favoured the Battalion Church Parade Service in which the Chaplains of four Companies took part. There is close touch between the B.B. and the Probation Officer and others interested in the prevention and cure of juvenile delinquency, which presents a very real problem in this Border city. Prominent men from both Windsor and Detroit at a luncheon meeting were much interested in the Brigade's efforts to provide "the good gang."

Westward to Winnipeg

At Winnipeg, 36 hours' journey west of Toronto, there was a real thrill in meeting the oldest and largest Company in Canada, the 2nd Winnipeg, founded in 1907 and continued without a break even through the war years. 104 Boys were drawn up under a



Toronto Marches

large staff of Officers to receive me, and then went on with their usual weekly programme, ending with three inter-squad basketball matches—a really strenuous game in Canada. After many years of the 2nd's isolated existence, three other Companies have been formed during the past two years, and these all looked very promising. The Enrolment Service of the most recent Company was held on Sunday morning, and was attended by the other Companies, a parade of some 230 strong. A heavy fall of snow, and the thermometer at 20 degs.—the first real winter I had seen—made me realise the necessity for the alternative arrangements that had been made, should the Boys not be able to march to the Church. Though I have been at countless B.B. Enrolment Services, I do not think I was ever at one conducted more impressively than by the Chaplain of this new Company.

Turning Homewards

Then back East again for a day each in Toronto and Montreal to fulfil engagements and say farewell. And what a send-off I was given! In Toronto many of the Officers came to the Station at close on midnight, some forming an impromptu pipe band much to my embarrassment. I heard an onlooker remark: "A Scotsman must be leaving"! "Auld Lang Syne" and "See you in 1943!" followed as the train drew out. At Montreal on the following night my departure was at a rather earlier hour and, as well as many Officers, a splendidly turned out Guard of Honour of N.C.O.s, representative of the Battalion, was drawn up in the cathedral-like station "concourse." After it had been inspected and addressed, and a presentation received from a deputation of Life Boys, I was escorted down the long platform to my Pullman, the musical honours this time being provided by a Bugle Band. After "For he's a jolly good fellow" I was given the last of the many "Tigers" I had received—"Tiger" is a fourth resounding cheer given in addition to the usual three—and the train steamed out carrying me homeward, tired but with the happiest of recollections of the B.B. in Canada and fully convinced that, excellent as has been its recent progress, far greater things lie ahead for it in the coming days.

Canada Itself

While the main interest of my tour was in meeting and seeing and helping on the B.B., many memories and impressions of Canada itself remain with me—the beauty of the autumn colouring; the delightfully wooded nature of much of the countryside; in the cities, the splendid wide streets and avenues so well planted with trees; the magnificence of the principal railway stations and the somewhat crude simplicity of the smaller ones; the excellence and variety of fruits and vegetables; the extensive use of cream, ice cream and ice water; the heat of many of the stores and office

buildings; the important part the furnace in the cellar plays in every household. Niagara Falls, while very magnificent, were not quite as tremendous as I had expected, and happily the recent destruction by an ice-jam of the Honeymoon Bridge relieved my Canadian hosts of any obligations in that direction!

Attendance at two Rugby games in Toronto and Winnipeg provided interesting interludes, but the "huddles," the "downs," the padded and helmeted players, the three referees and numerous linesmen and timekeepers, the small proportion of time during which the ball was actually in play, the "yell-boosters," who, with their backs to the game, "conducted" the home team supporters, all combined to make me feel for once that I was far from home, and let me see another side of Canadian temperament.

Visits *en route* of a few hours to Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis and New York gave me vivid pictures of those great cities so full of evidence of the power and influence of the almighty dollar in U.S.A.

The return voyage on the *Queen Mary* gave one a great admiration for that magnificent and speedy ship, but it was interesting to find that even she could be somewhat disconcerted by a storm in the English Channel!

Officer and Boy

And what are my impressions of the Canadian B.B. Officers and Boys?

The Officers are men just like ourselves at home, but many of them possess a breadth of vision, a missionary spirit, an enthusiasm and a drive which has carried them on to accomplish big things. The ubiquitous automobile helps them to overcome the handicaps of distance, but still it takes real enthusiasm to motor 350 miles each way to encourage by your presence a "neighbouring" Battalion's parade, or, as some are now planning, to motor 1,500 miles to attend the next Dominion Council Meetings and another 1,500 home again! Their loyalty to the Brigade as a whole is shown by the keenness with which already the project of a Canadian contingent for the Brigade's Diamond Jubilee in 1943 is being planned. And the B.B. wives are backing up their men folk splendidly, though sometimes they may refer to themselves rather ruefully as members of the B.B. Widows' Club!

As for the Boys—those Boys concerning whom many experienced Canadians shook their heads and said they would never take to B.B. discipline—they are just as keen and loyal B.B. fellows as could be found anywhere. They have the advantage of all staying at School until they are at least 16. Education in the State schools is free, and there are very few private schools, so many of our class distinctions do not exist. The telephone is much more widely used than here at home—Canada ranks first in the world for telephone conversations per capita—and so it is no unusual thing for a Captain to be able to speak by 'phone to most of his N.C.O.s



Windsor Parade

as well as to his Officers. Company transport is generally arranged by getting the Boys' parents and Church friends to lend their automobiles. Ice hockey and baseball are the chief outdoor games.

Believe me, I'm telling you that in spite of these superficial differences, and some marvellous language variations—with their "yeps" and "nopes," "punks" and "pinch-hitters"—they are real swell guys, and you would be sure tickled to death to know them.

W. H. McVICKER.

THANK YOU, LONDON!

A Message from Winnipeg

For weeks the chief topic of conversation was the forthcoming visit of Mr. McVicker. Ever since word came to us, far from the Atlantic shore, at the very edge of the prairie, nearly 5,000 miles from the heart of Empire, we had only two thoughts on our minds: "Would we be good enough for him?" and then, "Would he measure up to our ideal?" Now we know. We took to him from the first sound of his soft Irish brogue and then we realised what we should have known all along. The B.B. could not have a man as Secretary who would not measure up!

For thirty-one years we had worked—and here at last was one from the very centre of the great empire of the B.B. As he talked to the Company after the inspection, our minds ran back over the years, some great and good, some rough and rocky, some full of doubt and weariness, some inspiring and encouraging, but all of them of the very nature of things, full of the real effort of B.B. work. Then it was that the tears welled up in the eyes almost to the spilling point, as happens when the Scot is greatly moved. There he stood, the embodiment of the Brigade, telling us in his quiet way that he felt very much at home, though five thousand miles from his own fireside; telling us of the good wishes of the Boys in the Homeland; telling us some of the things he had seen. We, for our part, felt in him a friend, the envoy of the thousands in the lands across the seas. Then, on the Sunday, the great Church Parade. No bands were there to stir the emotions nor were they needed; simply a few hundred Boys and their friends, listening to a quiet, assured leader. Is it any wonder that all of us felt, in the words of the Jubilee song,

"For fifty years the work's been done,
And now it's ours to carry on;
Stedfast as our fathers were—
Sure in the faith that won."

Four days—how quickly did they pass! Now all we can say is "Thank you, London. Send him back again soon."

JOHN TURNBULL.

B.B. OFFICERS HONOURED

Two B.B. Officers were honoured, last month, each in a unique way. On the 14th of December Mr. Charles Fraser, President of the Inverness Battalion, was accorded the Freedom of the Burgh in recognition of his life-long services to the Boys of Inverness, as Captain of the 6th Inverness Company, Battalion Secretary for many years, and subsequently Battalion President, which office he still holds. We believe this is the first occasion on which the Freedom of a City has been conferred on anyone for B.B. work.

And in December, too, Mr. Malcolm Osborne, R.A., Captain of the 141st London, was elected President of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers. Mr. Osborne is a well known Officer in the West London Battalion, and his name is famous in art circles to-day as one of our most distinguished living etchers.

B.B. Officers everywhere will be delighted to hear of these well deserved honours.

THE BOY HIMSELF

The Bound Volume of the Gazette awarded monthly to the contributor whose paragraph heads this column is earned this month by the 6th Birmingham Company Magazine.

King's English in Camp

"Please can I have a lend of yer needle and cotton?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"I wantter lend yer needle and cotton."

"Oh, yes—to whom?"

"Oo to wot?"

"To whom do you want to lend it?"

"Nobody—I wantter lend it."

"You want to *what*?"

"I want to—er—borrow it, please."

Ten minutes later.

"Please will yer borrow me yer clothes brush?"

"With pleasure—who's got it?"

"*You* have—I want to lend it off you."

"You want to *what*?"

"Oh, please give us yer brush."

(To be continued till Lights Out.)

* * * *

A recruit was asked to run the line for his Company—did not know much about his job. All went well until a dispute arose as to whose throw-in.

The Captain of his team suddenly descended upon the recruit with "Whose ball is it?" "Why," said the recruit, "It's ours—we brought it with us!"

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In the N.C.O.'s Examination the Boys were asked a question about the correct wearing of the uniform. On descending to the boots one candidate said: "The boots should be well polished and worn on the right and left feet."

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The Boy had been asked to approach the Vicar on behalf of an aged relative for the loan of the Parochial Bath Chair. Permission was readily given as the relative concerned was, in the Vicar's own words, "An old parishioner." On arrival home the Boy was asked for the Vicar's verdict and with all seriousness said, "The Vicar says that as you are an old perisher, you can have the Bath Chair!"

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In a General Knowledge paper the question appeared: "How does a frog breathe?" The Boy sat puzzling over this problem for some time; not being conversant with the peculiarities of a frog's anatomy, he treated it with the contempt that he felt it deserved and wrote, "In and out."

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True Story from Devon

Life Boy Leader: "Here, you two, come back. You have been swearing."

Boys: "Yes, Miss, us have."

Leader: "Well, if you do this again, you will have to leave the Team."

Boys: "Us won't do it any more, Miss. But, Miss, who told you?"

Leader: "Never mind. A little bird told me."

One Boy to the other: "Goo! And us been feeding those little blighters every morning."

Readers are invited to send paragraphs on the life and mind of the Boy. The contributor who occupies the head of the column will receive a bound volume of the Gazette. Paragraphs need not be "jokes"; we welcome more serious items.