

ACROSS CANADA

Overseas Secretary, Wm. H. McVicker, reports on his recent transatlantic visit.



A
Typical
Canadian
B.B. Boy

ON the other side of the Atlantic trams are street-cars, the "Underground" is the "Subway", shops are stores, rubbish is trash, P.T. is calisthenics, punctures are flats and flats are apartments, but Boys are still Boys, bless 'em! The real B.B. and L.B. spirit is there in Canada even though in winter ear muffs are a "must" outdoors, and shorts are unknown even in The Life Boys.

The Canadian way of life presents to the visitor from the United Kingdom other important differences. The fact that front gardens have no fences dividing them from each other or from the "side walk", is perhaps symbolic of the more free and less formal atmosphere of human relations in general. Then, too, one is impressed by the growth of the community. On the outskirts of every town and city are to be seen new housing developments, very modern factories, luxurious new banks, and great shopping centres with enormous car parks. Communications are being provided to meet the future needs of the increasing population of people and automobiles (which already average $1\frac{1}{2}$ per family). Magnificent "Thruways" are being driven through city, suburb, and open country alike. Excellent new schools are noticeable everywhere and even they cannot keep pace with the expanding school population—sometimes a two-shift system is necessary. Boys and girls for the most part remain at school until 17 or 18, and many have part-time jobs—the resulting dollars not infrequently providing a second-hand car.

This situation of great material prosperity spells out life in Canada to-day. Though this background is very different to that in which the B.B. was originally founded, yet many thoughtful Canadians felt that, just because of his situation of prosperity and great individual freedom, the Canadian Boy needs discipline and a faith to live by—those qualities which the B.B. and L.B. nine-year plan can help to achieve in Canada as in so many other parts of the world.

It was good, therefore, to meet many men and women tackling with great devotion their tasks as B.B. Officers and L.B. Leaders, often in lonely situations without the fellowship of other enthusiasts. Our movement is not at present strong—one Battalion of 15 Companies in Toronto and about a score of other Companies scattered singly or in small Groups across the 3,000 miles from coast to coast. Everywhere there are also Life Boy Teams and sometimes L.B. strength exceeds B.B. because of the scarcity of Boys of B.B. age in new housing areas. A word of caution was given regarding the unwise practice of combining L.B. and B.B. for joint Church parades, displays, etc. There is need for more Training Courses, both B.B. and L.B., but the vast distances make these impossible on a national scale, and, when held locally, the small numbers present difficulties.

Highlights of the tour were many and varied. To

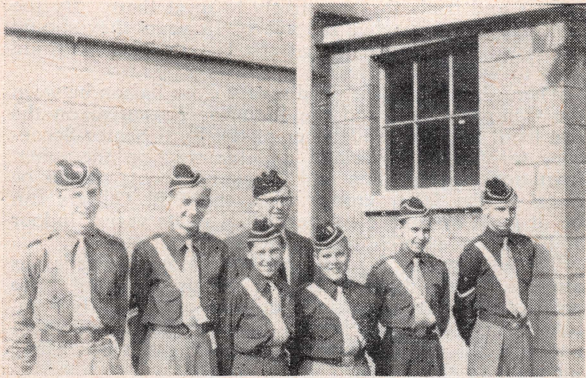
address a congregation of Canadian members of our movement in Montreal's Christ Church Cathedral on the actual anniversary of the first B.B. meeting in Glasgow seventy-six years previously, was a memorable privilege, and a living symbol of the worldwide outreach of our Founder's inspired genius. Here and throughout my tour the gracious message which our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, had asked me to deliver was received with loyal appreciation. In Winnipeg, the unexpected early snowfall did not affect the warmth of the welcome officially extended by the Lieut.-Governor of Manitoba and less formally by B.B. friends, old and new. It was pleasing to meet the 5th Winnipeg in whose first enrolment service I had taken part 21 years previously. Here too I experienced my first TV interview. Further west in Calgary an "Honour Guard" at the airport, introduced me to a keen Group—at present three Companies and one Team but soon to be more. A Church Parade in a beautiful new Church with the lesson so splendidly read by a Boy, a "Thanksgiving Supper", Company visits and a



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At Montreal on October 4th.

wonderful excursion to the Rockies are lasting memories. In Vancouver local Officers and Boys greeted me with musical honours at the airport late at night. A banquet, Company and Team visits, a reception by the Mayor, a lunch with Chaplains, a "bull session" for which the Officers had prepared 28 questions, three services on the Sunday and numerous interviews, etc., gave me opportunity to make many new friends.

Back in Ontario for the last ten days of my visit every available minute was filled by B.B. and L.B. engagements and also by interviews at the Headquarters of the principal Churches. Visits were made to Orillia—a lovely town with an excellent Company and Team—and to Hamilton, where as well as other engagements a squad of B.B. Boys joined me in two TV broadcasts. In Toronto, following a reception by an Honour Guard of 50 at the airport the programme included a pleasant Dinner and Social Gathering attended by a hundred, a visit to the Battalion's well-equipped Camp site on the lovely shores of Lake Muskoka, a reception by the Mayor, two more TV interviews, visits to Companies and Teams, and, a memorable Church Parade Service and



TV Boys in Hamilton

March Past. This great gathering with the attendance of civic dignitaries was a fine climax to my tour.

In addition to the local events, I was privileged to take part, in Toronto, in meetings of the Dominion Executive and the Annual Council Meeting, with 50 attending, including representatives from Montreal and Vancouver as well as Ontario. Led by the Dominion President, Dr. J. R. Petrie, a distinguished economist and Churchman, and an Executive of earnest and able men, the B.B. in Canada is looking with confidence to the future. To inaugurate a policy of advance, it is intended to set up an Advisory Board composed of men, prominent in the life of both Church and community,



to assist in efforts towards the appointment of a full-time B.B. official working from a modest headquarters. Such a step is very necessary if the B.B. is to make its contribution to the Boys' work of the Churches.

Arising from my conversations with Church leaders, another important forward step can be taken in the field of Church relationships. This is the proposal that a Consultative Committee should be appointed, composed of official representatives of the Boards of Christian Education of the various denominations, together with representatives of the B.B. Such a body can dispel misunderstanding and ensure useful co-operation.

In conclusion I wish to pay grateful tribute to the warm friendliness and generous hospitality received everywhere. I trust that my visit, and the films and slides frequently shown, have helped our brothers to realise more fully their honoured place in the B.B. world family. May The Boys' Brigade and The Life Boys in Canada maintain a steady onward march.

W. H. McVicker.

THE COMPANY AND THE CHURCH

Address to Brigade Council by
H. J. C. Bashford, Esq., M.A.

A YOUTH Service Officer recently, speaking of The Boys' Brigade, compared it with other Youth Organisations in efficiency, social purpose and success. He appeared to think of the B.B. as just another organisation and had failed to realise that the Brigade is almost unique in that it is not only based on the Church but has as its Object the creation of citizens, not of the State alone but of the Kingdom of God. There is a danger of failure to give priority to the training of Boys as citizens of God's Kingdom, and it is necessary to give real thought and study to the task of determining what the Kingdom of God means.

A B.B. Company cannot exist without a Church. The Church in any area is the colony of the People of God—in fact it is the Kingdom of God in that place. "Going to Church" and "Being the Church" are not the same. A B.B. Company should be part of this Community of the People of God, and provide faithful and loyal members and leaders for the Church.

Let us consider the practical implications of this:

1. The Act of Worship is the essential foundation and must be an activity, not a passivity. The Company should ensure that its members share this act, integrating themselves with the congregation, sharing in Sunday School and other activities, not as a separate group but as examples of loyalty, faithfulness and leadership. The Bible Class should be an essential feature of B.B. life. The Company should be a spearhead of the Church.

2. The People of God, including the B.B., should study and plan to serve the common life of the community. "You have no idea how difficult it is," said a Durham shop-girl, "to make my counter my altar." The essential link between everyday life and the Church should be studied and the B.B. should be ready to lead where necessary, to emphasise the need to play a part in the Family of the Church. Problems which should form part of Church activity, and therefore of B.B. activity include the questions of why people do not come to Church, how far the Church to which the Company belongs is fulfilling its duties to the community.

3. The third problem is that of Witness. Within each Church Christ should be seen in the actions and behaviour of the People of God, and therefore in those of the members of the Company.

Some of the ways in which we can fulfil the "showing forth of Christ" are by genuine and real welcome and hospitality to overseas visitors and strangers; by being willing to help and to get to know our neighbours; by simple acts of kindness such as cutting firewood for the old, sitting in, visiting sick children, reading to the blind—and by doing these things in the name of Christ.

The Church is the People of God in any place and the B.B. members are part of it. They should have high standards and can offer leadership, and be ready to study and fit themselves for service.

Their obligations are: (a) Worship (b) Planning the life of the Church to serve the common life of the community (c) Witnessing for Christ by practical service.

To bring the Kingdom of God to reality it is essential not only "to go to Church," but "to be the Church."

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(In the brief discussion which followed the view was generally expressed that we must all make greater efforts to lead more of our Boys to communicant Church membership.)