

Surveyors of The Past

BY CHARLES FAIRHALL

RODERICK M. McLENNAN

1805-1908

Civil Engineer, Land Surveyor,
Explorer

RODERICK McLENNAN was born in Lancaster, Ontario in 1805. No details of his early life or education are available other than that he graduated as a Civil Engineer.

By Letters Patent dated July 20, 1846, signed by Earl Cathcart, Governor of British North America, he was appointed Land Surveyor for the Province of Canada. A Declaration to this effect was signed by Louis Papineau, Prime Minister, on the same date.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. McLennan moved to the United States and settled in Macon, Georgia. He bought a plantation and married a Southern lady, Harriet Georgia MacArthur. Their son became a Civil Engineer and was active in the construction of the early New York subways.

Between 1849 and 1864, Mr. McLennan was engaged almost continuously by the South-Western Railroad Company in the location and construction of railway lines. Letters of Recommendation by the Company and the Atlantic & Richmond Air Line Railway Company attest to his competence, energy and sociability.

During the Civil War, Mr. McLennan obtained a commission as a captain in the Confederate Army and was captured by Union forces and imprisoned at Fort Jefferson. Intercession on his behalf by the British Ambassador secured his release, and as his wife had died of fever during the war years, he returned to Canada.

It is a tribute to his robust physique and boundless energy, characteristic of his Highland Scottish ancestry, that he started a second career and family at an age when most men would be considering retirement. Upon his return, he married Helen MacLennan, also from Lancaster, Ontario

and fathered three daughters and four sons. All four boys became engineers; one of them was also a Dominion Land Surveyor and worked in Western Canada. His son, Colin, a graduate of Royal Military College, served briefly in the Imperial Army in India, and became the Chief Hydraulic Surveyor for Ontario Hydro. Another son, Mason, was the father of Alex B. McLennan, O.L.S., of Timmins, Ontario, who supplied the material for this biography of his grandfather.

Mr. McLennan was then employed as Engineer in charge of location and construction of the Intercolonial Railway in Eastern Canada.

The year 1871 marked the beginning of the most exciting and colourful epoch in the short history of this fledgling nation, namely, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Roderick McLennan was ready to play his part in it.

In June of that year, upon the recommendation of Sandford Fleming, Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. McLennan was appointed to take charge of the surveys and exploration through the district lying west of Jasper House.

Wrote Fleming, "You will commence the survey of this district by means of one or more parties to be placed under your direction; one of these to commence work at Jasper House (said to be 3,372 feet above Sea Level) and endeavour to find the most practicable line for a railway from that point in a southerly direction towards Henry House, and from thence through the 'Yellow Head' or 'Leather' Pass in a westerly direction to Tête Jaune Cache.

"You will also have a general examination made of the country lying between Tête Jaune Cache and the eastern end of Quesnel Lake on the northern end of Clearwater Lake with a view to ascertaining whether it would be advisable to attempt the location of a line through that country.

Should the examination demonstrate the impracticability of all these

routes, you will then direct the exploration to the westward with the view of finding the most practical route for a railway from Tête Jaune Cache to Quesnel Mouth. Should you not succeed in finding such a line through the mountains about Cariboo, you will have to find a location by following generally the waters of the Fraser River."

In his excellent book 'The National Dream', author Pierre Berton chronicles the toils and hardships, the jealousies, the dreams and aspirations of those early pathfinders. It was truly a prodigious task to find the route for a railway through three ranges of mountains from the Prairies to the Pacific Coast.

Writes Berton, "No life was harsher than that suffered by the Canadian Pacific Survey Crews, none was less rewarding. It was a lonely, remote existence the surveyors led in the field, cut off from news of family, friends or the world at large - why did they do it? Not for profit certainly, there was little enough of that - nor for adventure, there was too much of that.

"The answer seems clear: each man did it for glory, for the ever present hope that his name would be enshrined in the history books as the one who had bested all others and located the route for the great railway.

"By 1880, it seemed every notch in each of the mountain ranges and the intervening trenches had been combed as carefully as a Japanese sand garden. Moberley's men had toiled up the slopes of the Howse, Jarvis had almost starved at the Smokie, Combie and Horetzky had struggled over the Pine and Peace, Roderick McLennan had lost all his horses probing the Athabaska, Moberly had braved the avalanches in the Selkirks and scoured the Gold Range, while Fleming himself, not to mention a score of others, had come through the Yellow Head."

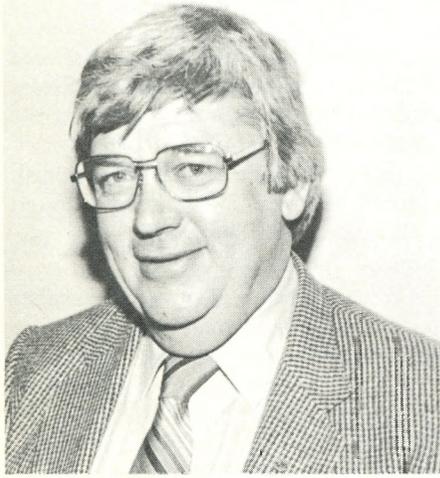
In 1872, much to the chagrin of Walter Moberly, the government decided to abandon all surveys in connection with Howse Pass and to adopt the Yellow Head Pass as the gateway from the east to British Columbia. In a letter to Mr. McLennan dated April of that year, Sandford Fleming so notified and directed him to "take up the survey on the most direct route that can be found between Tête Jaune Cache and Bute Inlet".

Wrote Fleming, "I trust the exploration between Quesnel Lake and the North Thompson will prove a success, if so, you will follow it up towards Bute Inlet.

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Surveyors of The Present

BY BILL STRETTON



BRYAN THOMAS DAVIES

BRYAN DAVIES, President of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, is a popular man, with definite ideas on such matters as supporting the Canada Council of Land Surveyors in arriving at solutions to the problems which the various Associations have in common.

Bryan was born in 1936 in London, England, where his father was a builder. They came to Canada in 1948 and settled in Oakville, where his father established a contracting business. Bryan and his two brothers attended Oakville High School.

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Should there be no opening through the mountains nearer than Kamloops, you must then endeavour to ascertain the practicability of a line via Bonaparte River."

In 1875, after his arduous tasks in British Columbia were completed, Mr. McLennan was appointed Engineer-in-Charge, Grade 1 of C.P.R. construction north of Lake Superior at an annual salary of \$2,160 per annum "exclusive of travelling and other expenses allowed".

In a letter dated February 1881, Engineer-in-Chief, C. Schreiber, praised Mr. McLennan for his 10 years service noting "Mr. McLennan had charge of one of the most difficult sections of country west of the Rocky Mountains".

Mr. McLennan died in Toronto in 1908. ●

Bryan studied chemical engineering at the Royal Military College in Kingston, but his studies there ended in 1956, when he suffered a serious shoulder injury while playing football, and was given a medical discharge from the Navy.

Later in 1956, he was employed by Ken McConnell, O.L.S., as a draughtsman, in Oakville, but he speedily transferred to the more active life offered by the firm's survey department. He was articled to Ken McConnell, and remained with the firm for four years. In 1961, he moved to the Ontario Department of Public Works as a party chief, and he qualified as an Ontario Land Surveyor in 1965.

Bryan joined the firm of Horton and Wallace in Whitby in 1965; and became a partner in 1980, on the retirement of Graydon Horton and the firm was renamed Horton, Wallace and Davies. They operate a general survey practice in Whitby which is an expanding residential and light industry town of 40,000. They have three other offices, in Cobourg, in Trenton and in Belleville.

In 1958 Bryan married Judith Crawford, and they have two children: Bryan (24), an articled law student; and Mary Ellen (22) a languages student at Trent University. Judith is Executive Director of the Ontario Ladies' Golf Association.

When Bryan Jr. was eight years old

he took up the game of lacrosse, and thereby began a new career for his father, who was successively: an organizer and later President of the Whitby Lacrosse Association; executive member and President of the Ontario Lacrosse Association; and President of the Canadian Lacrosse Association. Currently, he is Secretary of the International Lacrosse Association, and expects to retire gracefully following the World Lacrosse Championship Games to be held in Toronto in 1986.

Bryan is also Secretary of the Whitby Rotary Club, and Past President of the Durham Region Y.M.C.A. his hobbies include building model railroads, riding on real ones, and visiting railway museums. He and Judith enjoy playing golf, cross-country skiing and canoeing. He played basketball at the Y.M.C.A. until his knees refused to cooperate. He reads a good deal: spy stories, naval history and books on astronomy.

Since his election to Council in the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, Bryan has been Chairman of each of the three Zones, Vice President, and most recently has been Chairman of the Role of the Surveyor Task Force, which will publish its report in 1983. Presently, he is Chairman of the Insurance Program, and helps to promote Lorraine Petzold's program of promotional talks to lawyers, lending agencies and realtors. He is finding his visits to sister associations enlightening, and has enjoyed his membership in the Canadian Council of Land Surveyors, C.I.S. and A.C.S.M. He strongly supports the Technicians and Technologists Association and feels that they deserve the support of individual surveyors. ●

