

The King's First Visit to Canada

By IAN SCOTT
(An Old Shipmate)

On a cold day in January 1913 I drove from Devonport Station in a swaying two-horse brake to the dock where lay H.M.S. Cumberland. By my side sat my shipmate Prince Albert, now His Majesty King George VI. As we went we talked eagerly of the adventure upon which we were bound—the cruise to Canada.

We were already firm-standing friends. We first met at Osborne in 1909, and during our two years at this college and the following two at Dartmouth, my bed was next to his. As may be imagined, we had got to know one another really well.

After this schooling we had to put in six months on a training cruiser before becoming midshipmen. This trip was to be our first real taste of sailor life. Previously we had been to sea for ten days only, on H.M.S. Eclipse.

It was, therefore, unlucky for us that, on our way to the New World, we steamed right into one of the worst storms that the Atlantic had known for years. In the Bay we were battered down for three days, the top-heavy old Cumberland rolling 35 in the heavy seas. Of the seventy odd cadets inhabiting a small space amidships in an atmosphere that one could lean against, Prince Albert was amongst the first to find his sea legs. The majority of us continued to suffer from sea-sickness for some time.

Touching at Tenerife and St. Lucia, we cruised in the West Indies and spent ten days under canvas at Bermuda, where we completed our musketry course and took full advantage of the glorious beaches and perfect climate.

Summer was approaching as we reached Halifax, Nova Scotia. This was the King's first sight of Canadian soil, and will be his last at the close of his present trip. What thoughts this fine harbour must have aroused in the young Prince's mind! High on the hillside overlooking the sea, his great-great-grandfather, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, built his home at the time when he was Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America, over a hundred years before our visit.

We were overwhelmed with hospitality by the good people of Halifax, and before we left for Charlottetown, the capital of Prince Ed-

ward Island, we played some "rugged" against local teams. Prince Albert played an enthusiastic game much appreciated by the spectators, for this part of Canada is keen on football.

Prohibition was in force in Prince Edward Island, though it cannot be said that Charlottetown was strictly 'dry', for in the drug-stores 'alcoholic tonics' were on sale. The chemists did a roaring trade in this 'medicine'!

The farmers of Prince Edward Island were pioneers of the silver fox industry. Prince Albert, myself and other cadets went to see for ourselves how these animals were raised. On his coming visit the King will be able to note the progress made in the intervening years.

Our next stop was at Gaspé and here we were in a sportsman's paradise indeed. Gaspé then was only a hamlet of frame-wood houses, perched at the head of a thickly wooded inlet. The country was entirely unspoiled and the only sound that broke the stillness was the roar of streamlets entering the sea.

It was at Gaspé that we had a most unusual paper-chase. Prince Albert, Surgeon-Lieutenant Grieg—now Sir Louis—myself and one other cadet were chosen as the hares. In the case of Prince Albert this was a particularly suitable choice, for he was always a keen and capable runner. It was an adventurous day. Under-estimating the wildness of the country, we set out into the thick woods, and soon found that we were completely lost in their black depths.

We could not even back-trail on account of the darkness. We sat down to think of a way out. The hounds came up. They were also lost and had long ago forgotten the thrill of the chase in their anxiety that they might not get back to the ship in time. At last Lieutenant Grieg climbed a tall tree and collected bearings.

Very late that night a party of tired cadets, including the second son of the King of England, reached their ship once again and climbed wearily into their hammocks.

From Gaspé we sailed up the St. Lawrence, passing magnificent scenery on either bank, Tadoussac, Isle Aux Coudres, Isle d'Orleans, What magnificent memories will flood back into the King's mind as he keeps over the rail of the Empress of Australia and views

again the places he visited in his boyhood.

We saw Quebec for the first time just after dawn. Like a mighty citadel it stood high and proud above the fast narrowing river. Pale blue lines of smoke rose vertically in the still air.

Quebec has ever been the landing place of famous Englishmen from the days of Wolfe to George VI, and the moment I landed there with Prince Albert has left a deep impression on my mind. There was much to remember both of past and present. We roamed freely round the winding streets of the old town, close down by the river-side, up onto the Heights of Abraham, and eventually as far afield as the Montmorency Falls.

One of the high lights of our trip was an excursion arranged to Niagara Falls. One evening about seventy excited cadets piled into a special train and headed south-westwards through the night. It was our first experience of Canadian trains, and the new type of sleeping car fascinated us and brought out all the mischief, Prince Albert not excepted.

We were so glad to escape the exacting discipline and routine of the Navy that I am afraid there was very little sleep that night.

There was a thrill in seeing the station names, Three Rivers, Montreal, Kingston (Fort Frontenac), Oshawa, all country that the King will now visit again. We could almost see in our imaginations Red Indians stalking through the dark woods beside our fast running train.

In those days much more water went over Niagara Falls than is the case now and the unsightly power-stations were less in evidence. Prince Albert stood wrapt in wonder at mighty Niagara, across which Blondin had once offered to wheel his grandfather, King Edward VII in a wheelbarrow.

Later he and I donned oil-skins, and shot down in a lift to the foot of the Falls. We climbed out upon cranky wooden walks, behind us the slippery, dripping face of the rock, before us a solid wall of water, falling like a dark green curtain. The uninterrupted roar of the falls was shattering. Just a trifle frightened, we clung to the handrails, gazing spell-bound through the spray at this display of unleashed power. This is one experience which I am sure the King will never forget.

Few people realise that the King has already entered the U.S. After we had returned in the lift, we crossed the Peace Bridge to the American side, just so that we could say we had trodden the soil of the U.S.A.

We returned to Toronto, and from that city made the long passage back to Quebec by water.

Our Unfinished Saga

(Lord Tweedsmuir Governor-General of Canada, in London Times "Canada Number")

How many people understand how long Canada's history. We are only beginning now to read the first chapters—the wanderings which brought the early inhabitants out of Asia across the Bering Strait, the first impact of Europe when Leif LUCKY and Thorfinn Karlsefni touched at the Maritimes, other Northmen by way of Hudson Bay may have reached Great Lakes.

Nearly four centuries ago the earliest French adventurers entered the St. Lawrence, and from that date onward there is story rich in romance—the struggle of the Norman colonists with savage Nature and savage men, the heroism of the missionaries, the long strife with Britain, and then the slow conquest of West and North in which the former antagonists entered upon noble rivalry.

There is no greater saga in all history than that of Canada's steady triumph over time and space, and happily that saga is finished.

The journey entailed crossing Lake Ontario, and passing through the Thousand Isles, one of the most famous beauty spots on the North American Continent. We made the St. Lawrence, and while shooting the rapids Prince Albert had a real thrill. The river steamer struck bottom, lurched. But she was specially designed to meet such a contingency, and we took no harm, although the incident gave us cadets something to talk about for days.

On board the river steamer were many Americans, a few of whom gave us much amusement. They were ardent souvenir hunters and we became their lawful prey. It was fatal to leave a coat lying about, for on return one was sure to find a brass button missing. They may have had suspicions that a Royal Prince was amongst us, yet he escaped lightly. I lost five buttons, while he missed only one.

At Quebec again Prince Albert and I went sick, he suffering from a slight chill and I from a bad tooth. I spent my time playing whiskey-poker with my future King, although we had extremely little money to settle our mutual debts. We cadets received an allowance of only one shilling a week and that went for Prince Albert, too. He never wished nor received any special privilege throughout his Naval service.

Our next stop was at Cape Breton. There Prince Albert by visiting a steel works and going down a coal mine had brought home to him the fact that the Dominion does not entirely rely upon its agricultural produce. Cape Breton was our last port of call in Canada.

After putting in at a little fishing village west of St. George's Bay, Newfoundland, we went to St. John's, which the King reached on June 13th next. Public interest has been aroused by the tragic internal conditions of Britain's oldest overseas settlement, reminding me of the time I learnt against the rail of the Cumberland beside Prince Albert and noted the desolateness of the coast and the poverty of the struggling fishing hamlets with their frame buildings and drying racks. The black line of the New World dropped down below the horizon and the Cumberland's cruise was over.

Now that Naval cadet I know as well is back. But under what different circumstances! He sailed as an Admiral on a mighty man-of-war and the beautiful woman at his side will be the Queen of England. In those far off days when I learned to be a sailor at the feet of a Prince, how hard was it to realise that such things would come to pass, that my command would become King of Great Britain, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.

The King is going back to his friends. They will remember him.



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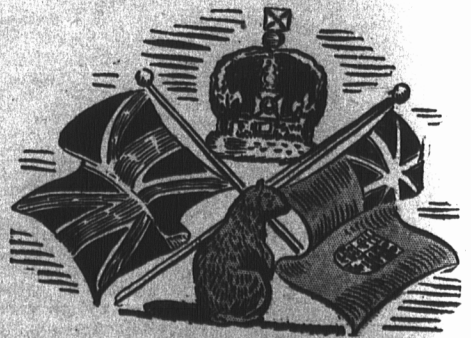
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GREETINGS!

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