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AROUND  
THE WORLD  
IN  
EIGHTY YEARS



*Privately printed by*

R. ERIC SMYTHIES

VICTORIA, B.C., CANADA

1968

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Converted to machine readable text  
Douglas C. Smythies  
2010

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THE MORRIS S PRINTING COMPANY LTD., VICTORIA, B.C.

## *Introduction*

If this record seems to resemble that of a rolling stone I think it is the result of circumstances over which I had little control, and my first choice (so far as I had any choice) would have been for a more settled life with a better chance to gather moss. My early life was "unsettled" owing to the long state of political and economic chaos in Argentina where my parents (who were both English) had their home on an Estancia that was called "La Independencia," which did not save it from being engulfed in the general ruin of the 1890's, with a revolution in 1890 and another in 1893.

I just had time to grow up in England and be educated and trained as a mechanical engineer, emigrate to Canada and start in what could have been a promising business of my own, which I left to serve in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in the First World War. Picking up the threads again after being demobilized in 1919, I had the experience of feeling really prosperous for a time in the Big Boom of the 1920's, followed by the corresponding devastation of the Big Bust of the Great Depression in the 1930's, which was no more than over when the Hitler War was upon us and my uniform exhumed from mothballs before Canada had officially declared war on the Nazis. I had long planned to retire from high-pressure business at about 60 if possible, and I was 58 in 1946. There seemed little point in returning to business life for two years or so, and it seemed a better idea to my wife and I to set out in search of a retirement Utopia in a nice, warm, sunny climate, with reasonable cost of living, good medical and library facilities and an agreement with Canada about non-duplication of income taxes. This may seem a very simple specification but it proved surprisingly hard to find a place to fit it, and after living in Barbados, Mexico and Hawaii and exploring many Caribbean Islands, Florida and California, we finally returned to Victoria as being the best compromise we knew for ourselves, all things considered. Since our return in 1961 we have visited the Fiji Islands and, in 1967, South Africa where we have a number of relatives we had never met before. We both have relatives in Australia and hope to visit them soon unless immobilized by the increasing decrepitude of old age; it looks like a close race against time.

R. E. S.

## AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY YEARS

In the middle of the nineteenth century Great Britain had surplus people and surplus capital to invest in other countries, and there was a popular belief in the wisdom of what was known as geographical distribution of investments to avoid the error of having "too many eggs in one basket."

Some of the baskets in foreign countries proved to be very unreliable, as for instance some Latin American republics that were notably lacking in anything resembling political or economic stability.

My father went to Argentina in 1866 when he was 17, with the approval and financial backing of his father who was a clergyman and rector of a fair-sized country parish in Leicestershire. A young fellow of 17 might not be well informed about international politics or economics but his father might be.

I have no memory of ever seeing either of them so had no opportunity to ask them if they had weighed the wisdom of investing or settling in a country with such a lurid past.

Three centuries of ruthless oppression and exploitation as a colony of Spain was followed by fifty years or so of sanguinary civil strife between the Provinces with interludes of combined efforts to exterminate the native Indios, or at least drive them so far south into Patagonia that they would cease to be a menace for a generation. It is now another century since my father went there and Argentina has still not achieved stability.

A considerable number of British people made the same mistake at about the same time and most of them suffered the same fate as my father, who worked hard for 25 years or so developing his Estancia in the province of Santa Fé, only to be rather completely ruined in the long period of chaos with a revolution in 1890 and another in 1893.

My two oldest brothers, George and Bertie, had returned from school in England in time to be called up for military service in the upheaval of 1893. Being born in the country made them liable for this despite having legal status as British subjects.

I suppose that father might have been able to salvage something from the wreck of his property in time, but he died in 1896 at the age of 47 after a short illness. George and Bertie survived their military experience and shifted for themselves as best they could in Argentina, while my mother was left in England with her six younger children and very little money.

Fortunately we were well supplied with aunts and uncles, some of whom rallied round to help us, with a few comments on the fallacy of thinking that orphaned nephews and nieces might be cheaper by the half-dozen.

Custom decreed that we should all go to boarding schools of the kind the British call Public because they are private. The only member of the family I saw much of was my brother Dudley, about 18 months older than myself, though we went to different schools when he was 11 and I was 9½, after which we met only in the holidays.

When he was 16 he went to sea as a cadet in a sailing ship making voyages to Australia and back to England, which took about 11 months, so we met hardly at all. We were never all together under one roof

as a family unit and in due course became scattered about the world, as did so many British families in the heyday of the Empire.

My brother Wilfred was also a sailor but died at the age of 22 of black water fever off the west coast of Africa, then known very aptly as the White Man's Grave. Soon afterward Bertie died in Argentina from the bite of a poisonous reptile when he was far from medical help. At least that was the report that reached us in England for what it was worth, observing that sudden death in various forms was always likely to be just round the corner in that distressful country, and the reported cause might not be the real one.

My oldest brother George remained in Argentina till he was 37 in the year 1911, when he decided to move to Kenya for a change. At the same time I decided to emigrate to Canada, when I was 22.

My mother had the experience of being reduced to penury and bereaved of husband and two older sons within a short space of time, but she was not the type to wilt under such "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." My oldest sister went to India and the other two to South Africa. They all married at about 21 or so and I am well supplied with great-nephews and great-nieces, scattered about in England, South Africa, Australia and Canada, with several of them married now.

At the tender age of 9½ I went to a boarding prep school of 200 boys in a town about 30 miles from London. As in other schools of the type and times, the general atmosphere was somewhat austere to put it mildly, and might be described as being composed of about equal parts of monastery and barrack, but I do not think it did me any real harm.

Academically I was behind my age group as my education up to that time had been extremely sketchy, a result of having no settled home. Needless to say I found my first two years or so fairly tough going in the classrooms. Otherwise it was not so bad as I had certainly not been spoilt or pampered, and did not suffer from homesickness so much as some of my classmates.

After 12 months in the prep school we were transferred to the senior school of 600 boys in the heart of the City of London, where it had been since it was founded in 1553, on a site of 5½ acres and in buildings that had once been part of the Grey Friars Monastery.

The atmosphere of the Senior School was even more austere if possible and was accentuated by the cold and gloomy cloisters, with stone plaques on the walls inscribed with grim trivia such as, "Here lies a benefactor, let no-one move his bones," so that one could not help feeling anything remotely resembling joy would be frowned on as unrefined.

One should not criticize one's Alma Mater and I can honestly say I have always been grateful that I had the type of education, character training and discipline for which the public schools of England are noted. In view of the disaster by which my family was overtaken in Argentina I was doubly fortunate.

I was still there when the school took a great leap forward to modernization in 1902. The site of 5½ acres in the heart of London was sold to the post office and a fine, new school built on an estate of 1,200 acres in the beautiful Sussex Weald country some 40 miles away. We even had such startling innovations as electric light and central heat though the latter especially caused some head-shaking among the more conservative and we were solemnly warned of the danger of sitting on the radiators, which were,

however, seldom warm enough to present the slightest danger, though vastly better than no heat at all in the average English winter.

More important than such concessions to comfortable living was the complete reorganization of the faculty which needed modernizing even more than the buildings. Many of the older members of the teaching staff were pensioned off and replaced with younger men, including a new headmaster with new ideas about education and how such a school should be run outside the classrooms.

I was about 13½ at the time and thought the changes added up to a vast improvement. I suppose I have always and instinctively been in favour of progress and opposed to keeping up old customs for sentimental reasons, long after they have ceased to have any point.

While the school was still in London I had applied for transfer from the classical to the modern side. This was on my own initiative as I had no-one to advise me in such matters and there was no career master, though the head of the modern side did function quietly and unofficially in that capacity.

Each year a dozen or so of the most brilliant scholars on the classical side competed for scholarships to Oxford or Cambridge, usually with success. The proportion of students from such schools going on to university was much smaller than it is now, and was in practice limited to those who planned a career in teaching, the church or the diplomatic service and so on.

The teaching of science was in a very early stage and those planning to qualify as engineers, architects or accountants usually served for three or four years as articled pupils with established firms, a form of training that was both thorough and practical, and cost as much in time and money as a university course.

My school had a long-standing connection with the City of London, and a boy on leaving with a good reputation could usually find a start in life as a junior in such organizations as the Bank of England, Lloyd's, the Stock Exchange, or one of the well-known merchant houses of the City.

In the course of history some alumni had become aldermen or even Lord Mayor of London, both positions of some distinction and associated with the prior attainment of substantial wealth.

This type of career did not appeal to me, however, as I have always rather disliked the idea of living or working in a large city, and had decided at an early age that I should probably emigrate. The fact that I had no close home ties in England was a factor in this decision.

In the many years I have spent in Canada I have often found myself involved in discussions with parents, about the relative merits of boarding schools for boys and girls, as compared with keeping them at home and sending them to the non-private day schools, usually called public schools in Canada and the United States.

I have always been a staunch advocate of the advantages of letting children be educated and trained by people who are professionals at the job, rather than by their own parents the great majority of whom are rank amateurs (and too often bungling amateurs) who botch the job.

Far too many fond mothers seem to be horrified at the mere mention of the word discipline, which is connected in their minds with something harsh and punitive, instead of connoting good training and orderly conduct, in which so many Canadian and American children are notably lacking.



From observation I am convinced that children going to a day-school are far too likely to derive their notions of behaviour outside the classrooms, from the friends and classmates whose parents have the lowest standards in such matters. And if their own parents try to exact a higher standard the youngsters call them tyrants, and often regard as permissible any means they can think of to do what they want, rather than what their parents wish them to do.

Any well run boarding school relieves the parents of much of the less pleasant part of the job of training children in the way they should go, both in the classrooms and in extracurricular activities. It is customary for senior students who have shown capacity for leadership to have responsibility for much of the everyday routine, such as keeping order in the living quarters and so on. It is up to the faculty to select the seniors for this chore wisely and back them up if necessary, in keeping the general tone of the school at a high level.

Many youngsters respond more readily to group pressure of their contemporaries than to guidance by parents or teachers, and it is most important for such pressure to be in the right direction.

In non-private day-schools it happens too often that a class or a whole school may be under the baleful influence of a clique with subversive ideas, bent on undermining the efforts of teachers to keep up a good standard of scholarship and behaviour, and very little can be done to improve matters. If this occurs in a private school and the malefactors are intransigent, their parents can be quietly asked to remove them.

Reference to my school days would be incomplete without mention of the cadet corps or O.T.C. as it came to be known, which was organized soon after the school moved to the country. Many well informed people in Britain and France were convinced that Germany planned war as soon as the time seemed opportune. The handwriting on the wall of international politics was too plain to be misunderstood. I am not a war-like type but it seemed a patriotic duty to be trained and prepared, so I was one of the first to join the corps. We were already well versed in barrack-square drill which was part of our regular routine, but I enjoyed the miniature rifle range where my performance was much better than on the cricket field, for which I had neither liking nor aptitude.

Some of the foremost military critics forecast the outbreak of war for 1910, then only six years ahead of us. In the event they were only four years out in their reckoning, not a serious margin of error as these things go.

After I left school I served for four years in a unit of the territorial army, the 1<sup>st</sup> Hampshire Royal Garrison Artillery. We trained in the coast defence batteries in the Isle of Wight, which were equipped with naval guns of all sizes up to 12" calibre. When war actually came I served in the navy but that is another chapter.

As the time for me to leave school approached some of my relatives arranged that I should enter the service of one of the large railways in India that were built by British capital and engineers. The idea was acceptable to me but there proved to be a serious obstacle.

It seemed that before going to India it was desirable that I should have some experience in railway administration in England, and the English railways did not take kindly to the notion of training someone like myself, only to see me go off to India just as I became useful to them. This was understandable but it would have saved their time and trouble and me from a humiliating experience, if they had said so frankly

instead of pretending to fall in with the idea and then setting an academic booby-trap into which I fell with a sickening thud.

I was directed to present myself at the London headquarters of a certain line, to sit for an examination the syllabus of which should have been straightforward enough for anyone fresh from seven years at a good school. The syllabus did not mention, however, that the exam could not possibly be passed by anyone who was not fluent in the Welsh language, which would I believe rule out the great majority of the Welsh people nowadays.

The line in question ran to Wales and the final part of the exam consisted of writing down from dictation, the names of a number of the stations in that country. The most notorious

of these had 58 letters, Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrdrwanbwllantysiliogogoch, but I could not pronounce it to save my life. I do not know if the examiner gave me this one but he might as well have talked Chinese or Zulu so far as I was concerned.

Perhaps this unpleasant experience was a blessing in disguise because it resulted in someone asking me what I really wanted to do, to which I replied that I would like to be a mechanical engineer, though without any serious expectation that it would be feasible for me. However, the kindly old great-aunt who had been a sort of fairy godmother to me, undertook to make it financially feasible, for which I have been eternally grateful to her memory.

It was arranged that I should become an indentured apprentice in a shipbuilding and marine engineering plant in Southampton. In return for a premium of £150 sterling I had the privilege of working in the different departments of the engineering side of the plant, for a period of four years, the last 12 months of which would be spent in the drafting office. Pay was merely pocket-money of a few shillings a week.

For the first three years it meant putting in a 54-hour week, starting at 6 a.m. daily for six days per week, with Saturday afternoons off unless required to work overtime, which happened sometimes. In order to take full advantage of the training it was necessary to attend evening classes on three or four evenings a week from October to May inclusive, and to study textbooks in what spare time one had. The schedule did not leave much time or energy for fun and games, but I had little money for such frivolous diversions and my work provided plenty of physical exercise.

I was surprised by the relatively small number of apprentices who did seem to take their training seriously, both in the plant I was in and other plants in the vicinity. There was too much absenteeism and attendance at the evening classes in the local technical institute was much lower than it should have been.

From observation I concluded that many of them had no special wish to be engineers and were there mainly because their parents did not know what else to do with them. Some had definite leanings that were out of line with their parents' ideas. I remember one large young fellow who was very fond of horses and whose most cherished possession was a revolver of heavy calibre, that he was obviously itching to use. His one idea was to go to the wild west where men could be men, and he may have done this unless the war caught up with him first. It was a waste of everyone's time and his parents' money to try to make a would-be cowboy into an engineer.

Lack of keenness in my fellow apprentices was a help to me as there was little competition for some of the things I wanted to do, such as going out on the trials of ships we built or repaired. This often meant overtime work and uncertainty about the time of return, which could interfere with any arrangements they had planned for fun in the evening.

Experience gained on trial trips invaluable to me when I went to sea later on, to round out my training and see something of the world while deciding to which country to emigrate.

Some of my relatives poured cold water on the idea of seagoing, for various reasons, one being the risk of falling victim to the temptations that beset seafaring men in sinful foreign ports, another was the hazard of being unable to settle down ashore again, which I fully intended to do after I had gained the experience I needed. I had a strong hankering for a settled life in a home of my own such as I had never experienced.

My naval uncle was very scathing about my going to sea in the engineroom. He exclaimed, "Engineers! we called 'em Ashcats when I was in the service!" He was good to me and I have pleasant memories of him but he belonged to the time when engineers in the navy were not commissioned officers, and senior officers of the executive branch strongly disliked having a lot of dirty, oily, smelly ironmongery below decks, and the ugly funnels above, nestling among their nice, white sails and belching black smoke over everything; to say nothing of seeing ships, sails and men covered with coal dust every time the bunkers must be filled.

Later on when I told this same uncle that I planned to emigrate to Canada, he tried to dissuade me on the ground that (he said) Canada was an agricultural country, where an engineer would find small demand for his services.

It was true that many Britons of the well educated class thought it was the natural function of the "Colonies" such as Canada and Australia to supply the Mother Country with raw materials for industry and cheap food for factory workers, taking in exchange the products of the factories.

The education of such folk was largely classical and did not include the subject of economies. They were naturally disposed to regard details of money and trade as rather beneath their dignity, and some hardly distinguished between capital and income in their personal financial affairs.

So they did not readily grasp the fact that if the people of the "Colonies" meekly accepted their ideas on the subject, they would soon find themselves either bankrupt or with a standard of living much lower than that of the industrialized Mother Country.

If Canada exported iron ore worth about \$15 for instance, and bought it back in the form of a motor car for something like \$1,500 or \$2,000, it would be a poor transaction for Canada. This is a very rough illustration but the basic principle is there.

At the time Canada was best known to most Britons as an exporter of wheat and it was not generally realized that there was extensive development of mining, lumbering, fishing, general manufacturing and the use of vast potential resources of hydro-electric power.

In due course I was very glad I had not let myself be dissuaded from going to Canada by this mistaken advice. I suppose most young people have the experience of being offered advice by older folk, which is

naturally well meant. The problem is to sift the good grain of first-hand knowledge or experience from the chaff of misinformation or mistaken notions gleaned from heaven knows where. It is a mistake to resent advice or to let a shut mind reject it automatically.

Young men of my generation in England were hampered in choice of a career by the operation of the social caste system, that left-over relic of feudalism. Priority went to commissioned rank in the army or navy, for which the pay was so small that it was generally considered impracticable without private means to support the social status involved, and in the piping times of peace there were not enough commissions to go round in any case.

Some of my relatives felt I was letting the family down in choosing to be an engineer, but there was no prospect of my being a "gentleman" of private means, and I did not notice anyone shedding tears over my decision to emigrate.

I thought it curious that many of the wage-earners with whom I associated in the shipbuilding plant had the idea that a "gentleman" did not have to work for his living, and this despite being strongly socialistic in politics. They were prone to repeat the popular clichés of the doctrinaire socialists such as, "from each according to his ability and to each according to his need," without having any real grasp of the full implications of such idealistic nonsense. I came to the conclusion that the tenets of socialism were far more widely held among the mass of the voters, than was realized by the traditionally conservative class.

At the same time I felt that the ideas of the socialists about economics were just as far from reality as the ideas of those to whom they were politically opposed, if in a different way. My views have not been shaken by the course of events in the past half-century or the present economic troubles of Britain.

The final year of my apprenticeship was spent in the drawing office which was a "white-collar" job, starting at 9 o'clock instead of 6 a.m., thus allowing more time for study and the opportunity to put into practice the theory, design and mathematics I had learned in evening classes at the technical institute.

With the approach of my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and the end of apprenticeship it was necessary to think about getting a job in the engineroom at sea, the next step in my career. Owing to the depressed state of the British Merchant Marine such jobs were hard to find. Many men with excellent qualifications as Captains or Chief Engineers were unemployed or glad to take anything they could get at small pay, as better than nothing.

I was offered a job by one of the large passenger lines but it did not fit my plans as it would have meant several years at sea before I could sit for the exam for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer's Certificate. The firm offered to keep me on as a junior in the drawing office at 28/- a week, equal to \$7 United States then, and on which I could live without luxuries to which I was not accustomed in any case.

So I did this for several months until one day a telegram arrived from a firm of consulting engineers in Glasgow, asking me if I could join a ship in the Roath Basin, Cardiff, the next day, to which I sent off a prompt acceptance with thanks.

Then I had to scurry round winding up affairs and packing a bag in order to take the train the next morning, knowing that it might be three years or more before I should return. Tramp ships could be away

from Britain for any length of time up to three years before a member of the crew could claim to be paid off or repatriated at the owner's expense. That was a risk I had to run but in the event I was lucky.

I had no idea what the ship would be like or where she might be going or even what my pay would be, but those details were unimportant in relation to the business of getting on with my career. It seemed like setting out to keep a blind date with fate but in those days when a job was offered, it was wise to take it and not boggle over details.

I thought I had a fairly good idea what my duties would be and the kind of life I should lead as the "dogsbody" of the engineroom staff, doing the hottest, dirtiest and meanest jobs the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> engineers were glad to be able to pass on to me, in the way of the sea. It was the customary experience of a young engineer on his first voyage, going down to the sea in the hot, oily, smelly bowels of a tramp steamer.

In due course I found that the mental picture I had formed of the experience awaiting me, was very close to the reality.

So I arrived in Cardiff one wet and windy morning in January, and hired an ancient, horse-drawn cab to take me to the docks, where my ship was loading a cargo of coal destined for Marseille. The export of coal was still an important item in the national economy, though the trade was beginning to feel the competition of the cheap, low-grade coals mined in countries like Japan, India, New Zealand and others.

The first thing I noticed about the ship was the Lascar quartermaster on watch at the gangway. I was glad to see that the ship carried a Lascar crew because I knew from talks with my brother Dudley and with other men who had served at sea with Asiatic crews, that either Chinese or Lascars were much to be preferred to the type of white men who might be willing to ship as sailors or stokers, especially stokers in tramp ships.

I had heard many discussions about the relative merits of Lascars and Chinese, the consensus being that the Lascars were more docile and amenable to discipline, but the Chinese were tougher and less likely to collapse in an emergency. Opinion was unanimous that the majority of white men who were still willing to be stokers or sailors in tramp ships were rough, tough, undisciplined and the bane of the existence of the deck officers and engineers who had to be responsible for them.

I found the chief engineer in his cabin on the upper deck amidships, and introduced myself to him. We looked each other over and while I had no idea what he thought of me, I knew his appearance was not exactly prepossessing at first glance. He was tall and had a prominent paunch, also a very gloomy expression enhanced by a heavy mustache of the drooping or "walrus" type. He wasted no time on the amenities but announced without preamble, "No sick men allowed on board a tramp ship my boy."

I knew he was putting me on notice that I should probably be very seasick but would have to keep on my feet and stand my watches in the engineroom, even if I felt like death, all of which I did in due course. The warning was unnecessary as I knew enough about the sea to be fully aware that the worst bout of mal de mer is not regarded as a reason for a member of a ship's crew to take to his bunk.

It was the custom in many ships of the size and type to carry a junior engineer to stand the chief engineer's watch for him, and that was to be my job, one advantage of which was that the Chief naturally had the best watch, from 8 a.m. to noon, and from 8 p.m. to midnight, thus allowing most of the night in bed, unless called out for some reason.

The Chief must decide how much responsibility to let me have, because he would be technically responsible for any errors I made. In the two or three days before the ship sailed and for the first few days at sea, he kept a fairly close eye on me and quizzed me from time to time in order to find out if I had really worked and studied as I should have done during my apprenticeship.

I managed to field all his questions about the engines and boilers, including some that I think he fully expected would baffle me. Once he made up his mind about me he left me very much alone while on watch, sometimes never coming down into the engineroom for weeks at a stretch. The ship was owned and registered in Glasgow and of the nine white men on board seven were Scots. The chief engineer was

Welsh and I was the only Englishman on board, often referred to as, "the bloody Sassenach," sometimes in the spirit of good, rough, shipboard fun and occasionally in more serious vein.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> engineers were typical Clydeside mechanics, good men at the job for which they were well trained as apprentices in marine engineering plants, for a minimum of four years and sometimes as much as seven years, from the school-leaving age of 14 till 21. They were physically and mentally tough and had that pride in their craft that would not let them be baffled by those "unforeseen" contingencies with which engineers at sea must cope. They are only unforeseen in the sense that one never knows what will happen next or when, but can be sure it will be something and that in mid-ocean there is no well-equipped repair shop nearby to help.

The Chief had told me in my first interview with him that they did not encourage the Lascars to learn English, as it might help to give them wrong ideas about race equality. So it was necessary to have at least a smattering of their language, Lascari Bat, which is one of the many dialects of India. Actually it is mixed with some English words for which they have no corresponding term, and is a sort of lingua franca in general use by seafaring folk and quite helpful in finding one's way about ashore in the seaports of the Orient, and in countries other than India.

I had picked up some words from one source and another before I went to sea, and had managed to acquire a phrase book in Cardiff. I have always had a certain facility for picking up live languages by ear, much more readily than I could learn Latin or Greek from textbooks at school.

As the Chief kept very, much in the background most of the time, my immediate boss was the Second, who spoke with a very marked Glasgow accent and used some words that seemed almost like a foreign language. One of the first things he told me to do was to open a certain steam valve, and when I asked him where it was he replied, "Awa up forrbye the lum," which I was able to translate as, "On deck near the funnel."

I was not always so successful and he was very sensitive about any suggestion that his speech lacked purity, especially from a despised Sassenach like myself; he also had a very quick temper. He was irked when he noticed that the Lascars understood me better and asked me how I had learned Lascari. Hoping to be helpful I was so naive as to try to explain tactfully that it was his Scots accent that baffled them, at which he took umbrage quickly as usual and poured on my well-meaning head the vials of his wrath in such a volume of vitriol, that I resolved on the spot to leave all such good deeds in future strictly to the Boy Scouts. I am sure that any student of linguistics who heard him speaking to the Lascars would regard it as a memorable experience.

The ship docked in Marseille on a fine, sunny Sunday morning in what would be early spring there, and the weather in great contrast to the typical English winter we had left behind only 10 days before.

The mooring lines were no sooner made fast than a welcome committee of young girls with an older chaperone (if that is the word) came on board. In my youth and ignorance I was surprised to see them allowed on the ship at all, especially on Sunday, but it was only for mild fraternization and the distribution of business cards with little maps on the back, to facilitate finding them where they lived.

The French have poetic names such as, "Daughters of joy" or "Butterflies of the Night" for these girls who make a career of entertaining men, with what some regard as the height of hospitality. I was

surprised to find they were not done up and bedizened like the far-famed citizeness of Babylon but dressed neatly in quiet good taste, while their behaviour on the ship was decorous, like working girls of a good type anywhere. Some of my shipmates recognized former acquaintances among them and there was much gossip and reminiscing, with exchange of news of mutual friends and other ships in all parts of the seven seas, who had been promoted and who was expected to be in Marseille again before long.

The girls tried to extract promises to visit them ashore but I am afraid business was far from brisk owing to lack of money. It was too early in the voyage and my shipmates had either banked their surplus cash from the previous voyage, or spent it all on riotous living ashore before signing on again for another spell at sea, each according to his custom.

We were all nominally on a monthly wage but during a voyage received only very small sums doled out by the Captain at his discretion from time to time when the ship was in port, and always with the impression that it was a favour and was grudged. I never did understand whether any of us could, if it came to a point, claim the full amount owing to us at the time.

There was some grumbling with suitably sulphurous comments on the alleged parsimony of the Captain, but we all knew really that it was a good system of enforced saving, and were glad at the end of a voyage when we were all paid off automatically with a good round sum in gold sovereigns and those wonderful, crisp Bank of England five-pound notes. Even the thriftless ones felt they had better value in riotous living in the United Kingdom than in most foreign ports. The system suited me well enough as I had not acquired a taste for reckless spending, and was bent on saving as much as possible toward a "grub-stake" for the emigration I planned.

All ship captains know that the less money men have the less is the risk of them getting into trouble ashore, especially the kind of trouble that means the Captain must try to ransom them from the clutches of the local police, or possibly even cause serious and costly delay to the ship. Once upon a time it was possible to simply abandon troublesome crew members with a feeling of "good riddance," but now all countries have more or less strict immigration rules that preclude such a simple solution, ships being heavily fined for crew members left behind.

Discharging the cargo of coal in Marseille took about 10 days, after which we went with empty holds to Torrevega in Spain to load salt for Calcutta. There was no harbour at Torrevega then and the ship anchored about two miles from the shore. The salt was brought out in 30-ton lighters propelled by large oars with man-power.

I had somehow acquired the popular belief that most Spanish men were indolent by nature and given to putting everything off till "mañana," but I had to revise the notion after seeing those stevedores of Torrevega at work. I doubt if they had a trade union then and were probably paid by the ton rather than by the hour, but they loaded the ship in record time without the aid of modern mechanical equipment, just old-fashioned shovels. Their diet seemed to consist largely of bread and cheese and garlic, with some fish at times.

When we sailed the ship was if anything somewhat overloaded, with the Plimsoll mark below the waterline. There were no port officials to bother about such a detail, and when we arrived at Calcutta after burning some 700 tons of bunker coal the Plimsoll was just on the waterline.



It was customary for the charterers to give the Captain a bonus on the tonnage of cargo carried, and in theory the bonus was supposed to be shared with the chief engineer whose co-operation could help toward the most favourable results. There was a widespread belief that such men might be able to retire early if they wished to do so, but there would be an element of luck in this, depending on the type of ship and the sort of cargoes carried.

There was no opportunity to go ashore in Torrevega and little apparent inducement to do so. It looked like a collection of small, white-washed houses on a sun-baked strip of sandy shore on the edge of an arid hinterland.

The salt came from a natural salt factory consisting of a large, shallow lagoon with a subterranean syphon connection with the sea, so that the water was evaporated by the warm, Mediterranean sun and the salt left behind to be shovelled up and loaded into ships with no further processing. The Second cut a jaunty figure as he leaned on the rail with his hat at a rakish angle and a large cigar at a different but equally rakish angle, while he looked at the village on shore. Removing the cigar for a moment and spitting nonchalantly in the sea he made the terse comment, "Och! a hundred hooses and twa' whoorrs." The last item was a rough estimate of course but I thought him well qualified as an authority.

Most people find passage through the Suez Canal for the first time an interesting experience. It is well named "The Gateway to the East" as the whole atmosphere seems to change from Occidental to Oriental on arrival at Port Said.

Anchored in the harbour waiting our turn to enter the canal we were boarded by Arab bumboatmen eager to do business with us, if only to swap some of their strangely assorted wares for an old pair of pants. I think their real object may have been to obtain entry to one's cabin with a view to pilferage. They are reputed to be among the world's cleverest thieves.

The Chief enjoined me strictly not to leave the engineroom without being sure the stout steel door was double-locked. He said, "The blighters will steal the main bearings of the engines or the milk from your tea if you take your eyes off them for a moment." Only the word he used wasn't blighters.

Steaming down the Red Sea for the first three days or so after leaving Suez, the weather was nearly perfect. Then the following breeze began to die down and the thermometer in the engineroom to creep up, till I began to wonder how high it would go by the time we were off Aden. The engineroom was not well ventilated and as the temperature rose to 120°F. it became uncomfortably hot to work in for four hours at a time. The next time we passed Aden some months later the maximum was 145°F. which was much worse of course, though by that time I had become adjusted to the condition about as well as I could be.

It was actually cooler in the stokehold where a strong draft came down two large ventilators to supply air to the six furnaces. This was just as well because the job of stoking marine boilers with coal is hardly a fit one for human beings, especially when the coal is of poor quality.

With good coal in the bunkers we used about 20 tons a day for steady steaming at 8 knots, and the stokers had a comparatively easy job. By the time we reached Calcutta the bunkers were empty and were replenished with Indian native coal, which was so poor that we used 30 tons a day or more and the stokers had a tough time to keep steam up to the required pressure. Even worse than stoking was the job of

trimming, or shovelling coal in the cramped space of the pitch dark and dusty bunkers, to where the stokers could reach it easily.

To my knowledge no-one succeeded in inventing a satisfactory mechanical stoker for marine use, though a number of clever men tried. When the crack transatlantic liners, *Mauretania* and *Lusitania* were coal-burners they used 1,000 tons a day, or 5,000 tons for each 5-day crossing on the New York run. Every pound of coal was shovelled into the furnaces by hand and the ash and clinker raked out and shovelled into the hydraulic ash-ejectors. The coming of oil fuel for ships has been a great boon.

I had often heard and read of the balmy, spice-laden breezes that give notice of the approach to tropical shores some time before land can be seen. Ceylon quite lived up to its reputation in this respect and as I never had the chance to go ashore there, I was saved the disillusion experienced on finding that sometimes distance lends enchantment. Other exotic tropical shores were not nearly so pleasant to the olfactory sense at close quarters, to put it mildly.

Tramp ships had no wireless in those days and according to custom we passed close enough to the Point de Galle, to "make our number" with a string of flags to the signal station there, so that the news of our passing would be relayed by telegraph to the agents in Calcutta, the owners in Glasgow and Lloyds in London.

Some days later we arrived off the mouth of the Hooghly River and picked up a Bengal pilot for the difficult passage of some 80 miles to Calcutta, difficult because the ship channel is narrow and winding between the mudbanks, the currents very strong even to a high tidal bore at times, and a low-powered ship must on occasion anchor to wait for the tide to turn.

We did anchor that night at a place called Budge Budge, opposite a large factory building that I learned was a jute mill. Later on I was agreeably surprised to see the extent of modern industrial development of various kinds in India, most of it promoted by British capital, technical knowledge and enterprise. It gave the lie to much of the subversive propaganda so actively spread by agitators about the alleged "exploitation" of the native population in favour of British industries. The tragedy was, then as now, that efforts to raise the living standards of the mass of the people were thwarted by the too rapid increase in population.

Years later when I travelled about the United States on business bent, I met many Americans who held forth to me about the iniquity of the system under which (they said) the poor, downtrodden Indian coolies were forced to toil under the tropical sun to grow cotton, for which they received a mere pittance, despite which they were expected to buy back the cotton after it had been sent to England to be made into shirts, and all this at a fabulous profit to the greedy, grasping grinders of the faces of the poor.

It was quite a bedtime story but typical of the sort of thing widely believed by Americans, who are basically kind-hearted and seem curiously susceptible to such propaganda, while not allowing themselves time to ascertain the true facts. They are taught by their history books to think of King George III as a black-hearted tyrant, whose oppressive ideas still probably form the basis of the policies of successive British governments, or so they seem to want to believe.

They have allowed themselves to become obsessed with dislike of even the most beneficent form of colonialism, with results that are only too plain now in the deplorable state of some of the newly

independent countries of Africa, or for that matter India as well. It is of course possible that some of them may be influenced by the notion that cotton is better grown in their own deep south by negro share-croppers, rather than by the coolies in far-off India.

Arriving at Calcutta the ship dropped anchor in the river off the Maidan, a spacious savannah which was a centre for much of the social and sporting life of the city. It took three weeks to discharge the salt that was loaded at Torrevega in 4 or 5 days, owing to the customs department rule that the salt must be carefully weighed as it was hoisted from the holds, and before it was taken ashore.

This delay to the ship must have increased the cost of the salt to the consumers but from the viewpoint of the ship's engineers it was not unwelcome, as it gave us a chance to carry out needed maintenance to the main engines and auxiliary machinery.

I was especially glad of the long stay in port because I was able to see something of my sister Inez and her husband and small son and daughter, in the evenings and weekends, when I was not on duty aboard the ship. Before the last of the salt was unloaded we heard that our next assignment was to be a six-months time charter in the Calcutta coal trade, which meant carrying coal mined in India to sundry ports in the Far East, such as Rangoon, Colombo, Bombay, Karachi and others. It was not regarded with pleasure by mates and engineers as it meant the ship would be driven as hard as possible, so that the largest number of voyages could be made within the charter period. There would be a minimum of opportunity for any form of relaxation ashore, while the Captain and Chief Engineer would be paid a bonus by the charterers, based on the tonnage carried by the ship.

A special drawback for me was that sometimes cargo would be worked at night, which involved my staying up all night and getting what sleep I could in the daytime, despite the noise, dense clouds of coal dust over everything, and getting up for meals if I wanted any food at all, a most comfortless existence, to which by tradition of the sea the "dogsboddy" is automatically elected.

The coal was loaded in Calcutta in the Kidderpur Dock, which the ships entered through lock gates at high tide. It was a long dock with berths for 10 or 12 sea-going ships of good size. Only one berth was equipped with modern cranes for handling cargo, and it was always the last to be filled. It was cheaper to use hand-labour, with long lines of men and women coolies carrying coal in baskets on their heads, tramping up one gang-plank, dumping the contents of the basket in the hold, and going ashore for another lot down another gangplank.

I shall remember the coal dock at Calcutta as long as I can remember anything, but words fail to do justice to the scene. Most of the time eight or ten ships would be loading simultaneously, with six or eight long lines of coolies tramping up and down the gangways to each vessel. There was a permanent fog of coal dust and the whole scene reminded one of Dante's *Inferno*, especially at night when the cooking fires in the coolie lines on shore glowed and reflected through the black fog, while the coolies looked like hundreds of lost souls wandering about in search of something to drink, and keeping up a dirge-like chant that was both continuous and extremely monotonous.

Fortunately it took only three or four days to load the ship as a rule and it was a relief to get away to sea again, and see the decks and hatches washed clear of the mess of black dust. It was not so easy to get it out of one's clothes and bedding and everything one possessed.

Our first load was destined for Rangoon in Burma, a short run of four or five days till we anchored in the River Irawaddy opposite the city, for the cargo to be discharged into lighters. The only way to get ashore involved hiring a native sampan, which I did on Sunday morning, in order to see something of the town and especially the famed Shwe Dagon Pagoda with its gilded roof, which I thought quite came up to its reputation as something unique.

When the ship was in port the engineers put in a full 8-hour day at work on maintenance jobs, most of which were in the engineroom, which was uncomfortably warm for hard work. We usually had Saturday afternoon and Sunday off when in port though one deck officer and one engineer must be on board and available at all times day and night, in case of need. The usual native bumboatmen came on board with the customary assortment of merchandise, including sewing materials, proprietary remedies for sundry ailments and trinkets of the cheaper sort to take home as souvenirs or gifts for friends. Some of my shipmates bought hundreds of Burmese cheroots to take home and smuggle ashore. Their story was that any question with the Customs officials could be readily solved by a gift of 50 cheroots, but I have no personal knowledge of any such transaction taking place.

Some hours before the ship was due to leave for the return to Calcutta, I was taken ill with one of those bad intestinal upsets that were even more common in the tropics in those days than they are now. There was some talk of getting me to a doctor but the Captain decided to dose me himself from the ship's medicine chest. He prescribed castor oil as he said "To get it over with." The Chief said that was all wrong and gave me a sort of cocktail of laudanum and opium, a recipe of his own.

By then I was feeling like death and past caring what happened to me, but I must have had a strong constitution because I survived in spite of the well-meant ministrations of the amateur medicos. I am sure they both wanted me to get well if only because the Captain would not want the red tape involved in accounting for a body, and the Chief would dislike having to stand his watch in the heat of the engineroom. It was no joke to anyone in good physical condition and he was decidedly overweight.

I stood all my watches on the trip to Calcutta though by the time the anchor was dropped there I was so weak I could hardly climb up the steep steel stairs from the engineroom to the main deck. The Captain hurried ashore and came back with a doctor who looked me over and said I should go to hospital and be fed on calves foot jelly and essence of chicken.

I noticed the Captain's face getting longer at the thought of such expensive luxuries for a mere junior engineer, so I piped up and suggested I might go to stay with my relatives ashore, which was adopted unanimously and with evident relief. My brother-in-law was engineer-in-chief of the Bengal-Nagpur railway which gave him the status of a "Burra Sahib" or executive, and a very pleasant bungalow in a lovely tropical garden setting, complete with peacocks stalking sedately about, flaunting their gorgeous plumage in the bright sun and making their uncouth noises.

My sister and her husband were very good to me and I enjoyed a brief interval of gracious living, while the resilience of youth and a good constitution helped me to a speedy recovery from a most unpleasant and even dangerous experience.

Many years later in what I suppose was advanced middle age I had several narrow escapes from a similar experience in tropical countries, where it is wise to be constantly on guard against infected food or drink.

Once in the island of Barbados I lost 10 pounds in one night but had the advantage of approved remedies in our own bathroom cabinet, and was spared the efforts of amateur doctors experimenting with the limited resources of a ship's medicine chest.

My brief respite from the discomforts of life aboard ship in the Calcutta coal trade came to an end all too soon, when I reported on board just before departure for Colombo in Ceylon, a few days steam southward down the Bay of Bengal.

Again we anchored in the harbour and had small chance to go exploring ashore, where the scenery looked very attractive from the ship. The Singalese coolies worked hard and discharged the 6,000 tons of coal in five days or so, without the help of any modern equipment for handling the stuff, just shovels and the ship's steam winches.

It was part of my job to make running repairs to the winches between ports, working in the afternoons when not on watch in the engineroom. It was a fairly tough life with long hours of work under conditions that were physically trying, mainly owing to the heat.

On watch in the engineroom was rather like being stewed alive in one's own juice, and "working at winches" in the afternoons resembled being grilled alive on the hot steel deck by the tropical sun almost directly overhead.

While the ship was at sea my hours of work added up to about 80 per week, though in case of trouble it could be 24 hours per day till the job was done. My very modest stipend was by the month with nothing said about overtime. However, I was getting what I wanted from it, which was the technical experience plus the feeling of self-confidence that comes from doing a tough job under difficult conditions, and knowing one has done it well; the pay was relatively unimportant.

On our return to Calcutta I found an invitation to spend a weekend at Curraghpore, a "railway" town about 70 miles away on the mainline of the Bengal-Nagpur, and the site of the main repair works for the rolling stock.

I believe my brother-in-law was largely responsible for planning the place, including the living accommodation for the native workers and the white executives and foremen. The latter were responsible for training and supervision of the native artisans, and I was impressed with the quality of the work being done in the machine shops and other departments. They were building some of the passenger coaches and what the British call "goods wagons" and Americans call "freight cars," and planning to build some locomotives in the near future. I had noticed that some of the engines in use were made in Germany, and was told that it was the policy to buy equipment on the open market, with no pressure to "buy British," though the whole railway had been financed by British capital.

It was a favourite complaint of critics and agitators that India was "exploited" for the benefit of British industry, but I saw much evidence of the falsity of such canards.

The Bengal-Nagpur was said to be the second largest railway in India, and from what I saw of it I thought it was well managed. The crack train was the Bombay Mail which gave a daily service over the 1,500 miles from Bombay to Calcutta on a 36-hour schedule, with an average speed of 42 miles per hour including stops. This was comparable to the best long- distance trains in North America at the time, in the

year 1910, and the first class coaches were equally luxurious, lacking only air-conditioning which did not come into general use on the American railways for another quarter century.

As it happened our next trip with coal from Calcutta was for the B-N Railway, which illustrates the fact that it is cheaper to transport goods by sea than by land. The coal needed by the railway for its own use could be carried 3,000 miles by ship at lower cost than it could be carried 1,500 miles by its own trains.

Our first trip to Karachi provided some mild excitement of a kind that seafarers always have in mind though it actually materializes rather rarely. When "making our number" to the signal station at Point de Galle, Ceylon, we were asked to keep a sharp lookout for a liner called the *Trieste*, carrying mail and passengers to Bombay and said to be drifting helplessly with her single propeller shaft broken, in bad "monsoon" weather. Her passenger list was said to include an ambassador and other assorted V.I.P.'s which might not increase her salvage value but helped to make for bigger headlines in the newspapers of the world.

Our only chance was to actually sight the stricken vessel and the monsoon season meant poor visibility. In those days passenger liners had wireless but tramp cargo ships had not. The *Trieste* was actually sighted and taken in tow by a British cargo ship called the *Lowther Range* that had left Calcutta 24 hours ahead of us, also bound for Karachi. Owing to the stormy weather they had quite a struggle towing her to Bombay and lost two or three men overboard, including the 2<sup>nd</sup> engineer, while replacing tow-lines broken in the rough seas.

Some weeks later we were again in the Kidderpur Dock in Calcutta at the same time as the *Lowther Range*, when they heard that the salvage award was 80,000 pounds sterling, a really substantial sum in those days, part of which would go to the owners and the rest to the members of the crew. The prospect of salvage was always exciting.

Our second trip to Karachi coincided with the end of our six months charter in the coal trade and the news that our next job would be to take a cargo of wheat in bags to Hull in England. It seemed odd at the time for a country like India in which large scale famine seemed to be endemic in one district or another, to export a staple food-stuff like wheat to relatively well-fed England, but it was our job to carry the stuff not to reason why. The nine white members of the ship's company were glad to be homeward bound, especially when it meant surcease from the discomforts and other drawbacks of the Calcutta coal trade.

Relatively short voyages were a drawback to the Calcutta coal trade, because every time we returned to Calcutta the entire crew was paid off and a new lot signed on a day or two before sailing again. It seemed a matter of luck whether the new crew would contain a larger proportion of experienced stokers than the last lot, or too many "jungli wallahs" with forged papers who had never been to sea before and would have to be taught from zero the ungente art of stoking marine boilers with low grade coal.

When a new crew was needed the Captain would go ashore to see a functionary known as the God Serang, who could apparently produce any needed number of Lascar sailors, stokers, serangs, sekunnis and tindals, all of course supposed to be experienced men with discharge papers from other ships in which they had served; all this for a suitable fee of course. Being a wily Oriental the God Serang received a fee from the men for whom he found jobs and I used to wonder if he was supposed to be responsible for supplying men with experience at the job for which they signed on. There were certainly times when I felt I would like to have him in the stokehold with me at sea and put him to work at trying to keep steam up in our boilers with the low grade native coal, when the boilers were designed to burn good Welsh or Yorkshire stuff. It was difficult enough for really experienced stokers and almost impossible for the raw recruits fresh from the jungle, even after they had recovered from seasickness and found "sea-legs" of a sort.

I was fortunate in that the tindal who was in charge of the stokehold in my watch and the oiler came back each time we took on a new crew, as they were both very good men at their respective jobs, which made a world of difference to me.

I got on well with the Lascars and had no trouble with them. The oiler in my watch was an elderly man with a long, wispy beard that gave him a venerable look. He knew his job and I found him completely reliable. On the occasion of a Moslem festival the Lascars would hold a service of some sort on the after hatch, just outside their quarters and dressed up in their best clothes. My oiler seemed to have the status of a lay reader, presiding over the affair, standing up in front of the congregation and holding a copy of Koran from which he was apparently reading. I did not know if he could actually read but if not he put on a very good act, reciting from memory while seeming to read.

When we were on watch if I noticed the steam pressure dropping below the correct figure, I would tell the oiler to tell the tindal I wanted to speak to him. The oiler would say, "Accha Sahib" and go to the stokehold. Then the tindal would appear and I would look at him and the pressure gauge, whereon he would say "Accha Sahib" and vanish to the stokehold again; they could read the gauge at any rate.

In a short time the needle of the gauge would begin to creep up and all would be well. Thus would the dignity of man be respected and protocol preserved while the main engines turned over at a steady 60 revolutions per minute and the ship maintained her usual speed of 8 knots.

For the first few days of our passage from Karachi to Hull everything went smoothly, though the weather became perceptibly warmer as we approached the Gulf of Aden. We passed Aden at 8 o'clock one morning, when the sea was glassy and the temperature of the water 93°F. and the air temperature in the engineroom 145°. The stokehold was slightly more bearable owing to the draft coming down the two large ventilators to supply the air necessary for combustion in the furnaces.

At 10 o'clock I was startled by the sudden loud clanging of the engineroom telegraph, while the pointer whirled round from "Full Ahead" to "Full Astern," something that rarely happened at sea and almost surely indicating an emergency of some sort, such as a "man overboard."

This time it was a case of two men overboard, both of them stokers in my watch apparently crazed by the heat, who had gone up on deck and over the side into the clear blue water that certainly looked enticing if one did not think about sharks.

To get a large, slow speed, triple expansion engine from full ahead to full astern was a rather complicated operation, and while I was working at the controls as quickly as possible, the second engineer came running down the steep steel stairs to take charge. He explained the cause of the trouble and told me to go up on deck and see what happened.

I saw the two stokers swimming about in circles, not as if trying to get back to the ship, and one of our lifeboats being rowed toward them by four deckhands, with the Mate at the tiller and the carpenter in the bow holding a boathook; to complete the picture there were several very large sharks swimming about quite near the stokers but apparently not making any move to attack them. They could certainly have gobbled up the stokers with time to spare before the lifeboat reached them.

The two swimmers were pulled into the lifeboat, brought back to the ship and laid out on a hatch looking very limp. Two of the ship's officers went to work to apply "artificial resuscitation" according to the Board of Trade instructions and diagrams with which all British ships are equipped.

However, the stoker *serang* took a hand in the proceedings by respectfully asking the Mate to let him cope with his errant subordinates, and the Mate was obliged by recognized custom to agree. Whereon the *serang* removed the heavy leather belt he was wearing and proceeded to strike eight bells on the still limp, half-drowned swimmers and chased them down to the stokehold to shovel coal again. This seemed brutal but was certainly effective. The *serang* presumably knew the men as shirkers and felt they had caused him to "lose face," so dealt with them according to his lights.

It was understood that the owners had obtained a good freight rate for carrying the cargo of wheat to Hull, probably owing to the Ship being the only suitable one available in Karachi at the time. So we had orders to clear out the coal left in the largest bunker and have it washed out to receive bags of wheat; the coal was stored in the alleyways to be used up before that in the other bunkers.

This meant that we must put into two ports en route to Hull to take in more bunker coal, and the first of these was the small island of Perim, about 120 miles or 15 hours steaming after passing Aden.

It was a pitch-black, moonless night when we arrived there, suitable for deeds of darkness, such as the formation of a syndicate consisting of the Chief and second engineers and the chief officer, to purchase a case of Scotch whiskey from the ubiquitous Arab bumboatmen.



The Second roped me in to help him pull the case up from the bumboat and take it to the Chief's cabin, while the Chief went up to the bridge to engage the Captain in conversation on the other side of the ship, a simple plot that worked smoothly, though I would have preferred not to be a party to such a nefarious scheme.

It was an understood thing that we were not supposed to have liquor in our cabins, though just how much force the rule had in law if it came to the point I never knew. In the navy it has plenty of force and it is a serious offence for any officer except the Captain to drink in his cabin. In this case the chief engineer was exempt from the rule perhaps by tacit consent. Most of the time at sea he was under-occupied with me taking his watch, and he guzzled steadily in moderation.

I was 22 at the time and practically a teetotaller, not on principle but because I did not like the taste of any liquor I had encountered, and was bent on saving as much money as possible toward my project emigration, as soon as I decided where to go.

We sailed from Perim before daylight and when I went to take over the engineroom from the Second at 8 o'clock it was obvious that he had lost no time in sampling his share of the Arab's merchandise. He was in a state of alcoholic euphoria, without a care in the world, but I would have been fully justified in refusing to take over the watch owing to the condition of things in the engineroom.

This was a dilemma I had not encountered before. It was of course the Chief's watch and in any case I should report to him my reasons for refusing to relieve the Second. So far as I knew he might be in the same condition and the last thing I wanted to do was to stir up trouble of any sort. Being the "dogsbody" of the engineroom staff, I couldn't win.

So I decided on the spot to take over the watch and do the best I could to get things straightened out in the four hours before the Third relieved me at noon. I was quite certain he would not take over from me unless all was as it should be then.

This sort of thing went on for 48 hours, till the Second had consumed his four bottles of Scotch singlehanded, which is fairly hard drinking even for the tropics, though I suppose the intense heat plus the liquor causes a very high rate of evaporation through perspiration, and helps to stave off some of the more obvious effects of heavy drinking.

The morning after we left Perim the Chief told me casually to take indicator cards from the main engines in the afternoon instead of working on the winches. It seemed an extraordinary order and I never did figure out the reason. It was certainly not necessary and was regarded as something to be done by two men working as a team, at some time when the temperature was not so excessively high, because it was a very hot job working around the cylinder heads. It could as well have been done three or four days later under much cooler conditions.

The job had been done once before while I was in the ship and then it was done by the Chief and Second together, when it was comparatively cool and while I was on watch in the forenoon. It occurred to me that the Chief thought I probably would not know how to do the job, as I think many juniors on their first voyage would not.

As it happened I did know very well and actually did it and worked out the results singlehanded in less time than the Chief himself took, with the Second helping him. This was because I used my slide rule for the numerous small calculations involved. When the Chief noticed the slide rule in my hand he said, "What the hell is that bloody thing?"

It was a bit of a shock to realize he had never seen a slide rule before, and when he told me to show him how it worked I was faced with the problem of trying to explain the rule to someone who had never heard of Logarithms, without making him seem ignorant -- a tough task. I did the best I could while he pretended to understand.

Owing to the large size of the engines the actual business of using the indicator without help resembled doing fairly strenuous gymnastics for two hours or so, in a very high temperature. When I had finished I was as close to sheer physical exhaustion as I have ever been, before or since.

The indicator may be likened to a graphic recording barometer or some such instrument that draws diagrams, from which the exact horsepower developed by the engines may be calculated, and the trained eye can tell if the valves that control the flow of steam through the cylinders are in good order and working efficiently. This is important because if the valves become worn or even slightly out of adjustment, the result is a serious waste of steam and therefore of fuel, which is a major item in the cost of operating a ship.

As we steamed north toward Suez the temperature dropped steadily and was a most welcome relief. In the Mediterranean the weather was bright and sunny but felt chilly by contrast. Our next stop was Algiers for more bunker coal, which we hoped would be of better quality than the Indian coal we had burned for many months, but this proved a vain hope.

The coal came alongside stacked in neat rectangular piles on barges and looked well enough to a casual glance. When we tried to burn it at sea it behaved more like the slag from a smelting furnace, and ran through the gratebars in long streaks, destroying the bars in the process. It was fortunate that we had an unusually large supply of spare bars, which may have saved the ship from total loss in a very bad storm in the Bay of Biscay.

It is about 400 miles from Finisterre to Ushant and when we were half way across the weather became worse rapidly and developed into a real hurricane, with winds over 75 miles per hour, and mountainous waves.

It was vitally necessary to keep the steam pressure up so that the engines could develop full power, as otherwise the ship might turn over and sink. It would be impossible to launch lifeboats in that sea, so all hands would probably be lost with the ship.

Some of the Lascar stokers collapsed under the prolonged strain and the second and third engineers took over the stokehold, where they did a wonderful job for 48 hours without relief, and under the most difficult conditions.

They told me to stay in the engineroom and make sure nothing occurred in the way of hot bearings or other such troubles, which would necessitate stopping the engines for even a minute. Such things are more likely to happen when the ship is rolling and pitching in a very rough sea than in relatively calm water.

When we arrived in the English Channel there was very little wind but dense fog, and as usual plenty of traffic. It is an eerie feeling being in the engineroom well below the waterline, hearing the foghorns of several other ships and knowing that the bow of one of them may come crashing through the steel plates of your ship at any moment, followed by a flood of water.

When the fog cleared we were near Dover and found we had only just enough coal left to take the ship into that port, "with swept bunkers," meaning the last shovelful of coal we could scrape up.

I never heard whether the owners wanted to know why the unscheduled visit to Dover was necessary, but I would think in the nature of things they would expect an explanation. I suppose it might have been blamed on the unusually bad storm in the Bay of Biscay. I doubt if they were told that they very nearly lost the ship and cargo and crew owing to the exceptionally bad quality of the coal we took in at Algiers.

When we arrived in Hull we heard that the next voyage would be to Rio Janeiro with a cargo of coal, also that we might have a bit of leave to visit our homes if we had any, which I had not. I did, however, manage to have a brief holiday for which I went to Southampton to stay with friends.

I rejoined the ship shortly before she was ready to sail for Rio, with orders to put into Las Palmas to "top up" the bunkers. This because coal was relatively expensive in Rio. We left Hull with bunker coal stored in the boarded-up alleyways as well as with the holds and bunkers chock full.

The process of getting out of the docks of Hull was liable to be complicated at best, as it meant going through many lock gates, with much "manoeuvring" which means stopping and starting, going ahead and going astern and changing speed. It took us a good part of a night to get clear and drop the pilot.

The occasion was made memorable for me because the Second and Third had been ashore for a good-bye visit to the pubs of which there were a large number near the docks as in most seaports. When they came on board they were both very sleepy, and during a long wait between signals on the telegraph they both went into a very sound sleep, sifting on the floor with backs against one of the large cast-iron columns that supported the engines, and sloped at a comfortable angle.

That was all very well though I was mildly wondering what would happen if the next ring of the loud gong of the telegraph would wake them, when it happened and it didn't. So I had to try my best at doing three things at once, answer the telegraph, operate the steam reversing gear and the main throttle valve, always a three-man job when entering or leaving port.

This went on for a while till the Chief came down and looked the situation over solemnly, as if he had been to a pub or so himself, as I expect in truth was the case. Finally he decided to wake the sleepers up, but none of them said anything and I resumed my usual job of answering the telegraph.

We had a good run of about ten days to Las Palmas and were glad of the change from typical English winter weather. I think it rained copiously every day of the three weeks or so the ship was in Hull.

A few days after we left Las Palmas the coal in the starboard alleyway was on fire, and we had a fairly tough time getting it out. I had just finished my breakfast one morning when the Goanese messboy called my attention to the steel deck outside the messroom door, where a large round bulge like a blister had

formed in the past few minutes, just where I might have stepped on it unless I happened to be looking down at the deck, so I narrowly escaped having a very hot foot.

It was obvious that the coal stored in the alleyway was burning, a rather startling idea as we must have had over 7,000 tons of the stuff in the ship, including the cargo, the bunkers and the alleyways. The ship was a long way from the nearest land, we had not sighted any other ships since we had left Las Palmas, and we had no wireless with which to broadcast our position or call for help.

Coal is not normally regarded as an especially dangerous cargo but ours had become ignited through a combination of circumstances. A steampipe ran through the alleyway and the coal was in contact with it. The pipe was covered with asbestos insulation but the metal flanges were not and were in direct contact with the coal, just beneath the steel deck on which a tropical sun blazed down. So the coal had evidently reached the temperature at which ignition took place.

I sent the messboy to fetch the chief engineer who promptly sent me to the bridge to notify the Captain, then to the engineroom to start a pump to supply seawater to the firehose under high pressure.

In order to reach the seat of the fire it was necessary to do a lot of digging, and the diggers were working in the cramped space of the alleyway. The closer they came to the fire the more air got to it and the more smoke and fumes were given off. For a time it looked as if the blaze might get out of control before it could be extinguished, but fortunately the firefighters won the battle.

Rio Janeiro has one of the finest natural harbours in the world, surrounded by magnificent scenery. When we arrived and dropped anchor there the place had a curiously martial appearance owing to the presence of Brazilian, British and American warships anchored here and there. Suitable sound effects were furnished by occasional outbursts of gunfire from the land, and we were informed that an attempt at a revolution was in progress, the whole place was under martial law and we must not go ashore till it was lifted. That was no hardship as it wasn't our fight and none of us wanted to be involved.

At the time Brazil and Argentina were engaged in an armament race and Brazil had managed to acquire from the builders in Britain, two of the largest battleships afloat, the *Sao Paulo* and the *Minas Geraes*, equipped with guns of 12-inch calibre on both broadsides like their prototype in the Royal Navy, H.M.S. *Dreadnought*, commissioned two years before in 1908. British people were convinced that the Germans planned to start World War I when they thought the time propitious as they evidently did in 1914. For some time prior to the actual outbreak of hostilities the atmosphere of international diplomacy was tense, and any incident such as the attempted revolution in Brazil was regarded as possibly leading up to the major conflict between Britain, France and Russia on one side and Germany and Austria on the other. Communication by wireless was comparatively new and the sudden arrival of British and American warships in Rio was an early instance of the use of wireless for controlling the movements of the "pieces" about the chessboard of international politics.

Both Britain and the United States had extensive commercial interests in Brazil and a number of civilian citizens living there. The British engineers who had brought the two new battleships out from the builders' yard were still on board and were in a somewhat precarious position after the Brazilian crews had mutinied and killed their own officers.

After ten days or so martial law was lifted and we could go ashore so I proceeded to live up to my sobriquet of "The Tourist," either plain or bloody. Many of the fine buildings were badly pock-marked by bullets, and windows shattered. I remembered my mother reminiscing once about being a passenger on a ship between Britain and Buenos Ayres that put into Rio en route, when the place was in a political uproar that resulted in Brazil becoming a republic, instead of being ruled as a monarchy by a member of the reigning family of Portugal.

After we had discharged the cargo of coal we heard that the ship was to load manganese ore for Antwerp, which suited me very well, Antwerp being one of the continental ports that rated as "home ports" for British ships. So I could claim my discharge there and would have done so except that I was saved the trouble by the ship going from there to Cardiff.

I had put in the twelve months in charge of a watch that was necessary as a qualification before I could sit for the examination for a Second Engineer's Certificate, the next step in the career I had planned for myself.

The passage from Rio to Antwerp was uneventful except for what the engineers regarded as a serious nuisance, caused by careless stowage of the manganese ore in the holds. Instead of being spread evenly it was very uneven with hillocks of ore here and there about the four holds. This resulted in some distortion of the steel hull of the ship, so that the bearings that carried the propeller shaft from the engineroom amidships to the stern, were pushed slightly out of line, causing them to run hot.

Fortunately the weather was fair and we did not meet any storms, so managed by keeping a small stream of seawater running over each of the "plummer-blocks," as those particular bearings are called. The water drained to the bilges and was pumped overboard by the bilge-pump. It was a source of anxiety to the engineer on watch and we had to keep a close eye on the bearings during the passage to Antwerp, which took about a month.

The manganese ore was unloaded into barges to be taken via the canals to the Krupp Works at Essen, doubtless to be used as an ingredient in the special steels for the manufacture of armaments, for the First World War that was to begin less than four years later.

Our stay in Antwerp was prolonged by the trade union rules that limited the tonnage of cargo to be unloaded in a day to 600 tons, less than half what could be done quite easily with the available equipment, and a prime example of the union policy of "Go Slow" and "Make Work," thereby adding considerably to the cost of the material.

On passage from Antwerp to Cardiff the weather was stormy and the ship with no cargo in the holds bobbed about like a cork, which made being on watch in the engineroom very unpleasant. Every time the stern lifted on a wave the propeller came out of the water, which took the load off the engines, causing them to race at high speed, so that when the propeller was again suddenly immersed there was danger of a breakage serious enough to cripple the ship.

Just before I joined the ship a year before, under exactly similar conditions the propeller had broken, necessitating costly repairs and delay. Trying to avoid this meant the engineer on watch must keep very close to the throttle valve, and try to catch the critical instant to shut off the supply of steam without

actually stopping the engine, which would bring sulphurous language down the speaking tube from the bridge.

It was a very tricky operation, nerve-wracking for four hours at a stretch, and made more so by the fact that it was impossible to attend to closely and carry out the normal routine of the watch as well. I had plenty of previous experience when we were returning to Calcutta with empty holds, and I disliked it intensely. So it was with relief that I contemplated a spell ashore after we reached Cardiff, to be spent in final swotting for the exam, then emigrating to Canada if I passed;

When we arrived in Cardiff we heard that the next trip would be to Rio again with coal. The Chief's home was in Cardiff and the Second and Third both planned a brief holiday in Glasgow. They all asked me if I would stay on board for a few days which I was under no actual obligation to do but did not like to refuse. Nobody warned me I should have to cope with a very angry Captain as soon as darkness fell and he wanted to work on his papers in his cabin.

The dynamo needed some repairs and the Second worked hard at taking it apart before he skipped ashore to see if any new pubs had been opened in the twelve months or so since he was last in Cardiff.

In my innocence I assumed that the Chief would have told the Captain the dynamo would be out of commission for at least two or three days but apparently not. So at the onset of dusk there came a messenger from the Captain asking me to start up the dynamo, and I had to explain why it could not be done. He was extremely annoyed but there was nothing he could really do about it; I was only the dogsbody in the engineroom and was leaving the ship for good in two or three days, and I felt sure he knew I didn't like him very much anyway. He was not at all popular with the mates and engineers.

My last memory of the year I spent in the ship is pleasant as it is of the wonderful feeling of the double handful of gold coins and crisp Bank of England notes with Which I was paid off, real money that I had earned literally by the copious sweat of my brow and every other part of me in the heat of the engineroom in the tropics.

With the exam for a Second Engineer's Certificate looming ahead of me I had done a certain amount of studying as opportunity offered, both at sea and in port. I had also picked up odd bits of information and advice from men who had passed and obtained their certificates.

I had been told for instance that the Board of Trade surveyors in the various ports where the exams were held had a tendency to bear down on young men like myself of the minimum age at which it was possible to comply with the requirements as to apprentice training and sea time, before taking the exam. They were said to ask what were known as trick questions that comparatively few would be able to answer, especially in the viva voce part of the test.

It was said that the best way to prepare for this eventuality was to go to one of the established Crammer's schools for a short course beforehand, and I did this at a well-known school in London. Among other items of good advice from the proprietor was a suggestion to visit the display of models of marine engines in the South Kensington Museum. This was a very good display designed to trace the evolution of the marine engine from the very earliest types.

In due course I had reason to be very thankful that I had spent some hours in that section of the museum. The exam took four days and what was regarded as the toughest part, the viva voce, was on the last day. Candidates who had failed one of the earlier parts did not reach the viva voce test.

It was with some trepidation that I went into the examiner's office and sat facing him across his desk. After a few preliminary remarks he pushed a sheet of paper and a pencil across to me and told me to draw a rough diagram of the valve gear of an oscillating cylinder engine. It was certainly a trick question if only because the type of engine was obsolete, and I doubt if any had been manufactured for some years, though possibly one might be found still in operation in some remote part of the world.

I would never have been able to comply with the examiner's request if I had not studied the models in the museum. As it happened I was able to produce the diagram he wanted and after that it was all plain sailing. He chatted with me about my voyages, occasionally interjecting a question that I was able to answer easily enough, and the ordeal was over, to my great relief.

My decision to emigrate to Canada had been made as the result of discussing the pros and cons of different countries with engineers I had met on ships in the various ports I had been in. At the time there was a boom in emigration to Canada and the passenger ships running to Canadian ports had their accommodation fully booked.

I did manage to secure a passage in a 4-berth cabin in the *Empress of Britain* of the Canadian Pacific Line, for which I paid the sum of 11 pounds sterling. It was much too crowded for comfort and caused me to resolve that I would never cross the Atlantic again unless I could have a cabin to myself. In the event my next crossing was at the expense of the Admiralty, when I went back to serve in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in World War I, and shared a cabin with a very good friend I had made in Toronto, who was going on the same errand.

I stayed in Quebec for three days and concluded it was not a promising place for a young Englishman to seek a career, so took the train for Montreal and after three days there moved on to Toronto, where I stayed for 25 years, less the time spent on active service overseas in the R.N.V.R. in World War I.

Canada and the United States were enjoying a boom that lasted for two years after I arrived in mid-1911, and collapsed rather suddenly in mid-1913, some twelve months before the outbreak of war in 1914.

The summer of 1911 was very hot and I remember that in Toronto the official temperature was recorded for several weeks after I arrived, as 103°F. in the shade at mid-day. Many people were taken to hospital suffering from heat prostration, but I did not feel it so much as I had but recently come from doing my daily stint in a ship's engine room in the tropics, and in much higher temperatures.

Jobs were fairly plentiful and skilled artisans were especially in demand, but there was a marked prejudice against Englishmen in some quarters. I had heard and read about this before I left England and had not been in Canada very long before I encountered it in operation.

English people were naturally inclined to resent this strongly but in time I came to understand that it was not entirely without cause. I met Englishmen of the working class who indulged the national propensity for grumbling to the full in Canada, continually making the most trenchant criticism of the many things of which they did not approve.

I think it is fair to say of them that they were not adaptable and in that respect temperamentally unfitted for emigration. It is also true that there were large numbers of immigrants from Scotland and Ireland, who came from the social class that persists in nursing ancient grudges against the disliked Sassenach, and welcomes any opportunity to annoy or embarrass any English who cross their path.

I had brought letters of introduction from relatives in England to Canadians who were, I found, in the category often referred to as "wealthy and socially prominent," but it did not take long for me to discover that such letters in Canada were not regarded in the same light as in England, and in any case it seemed better to "paddle my own canoe" in hunting a job.

I came across a number of young Englishmen who had been educated at one of the private boarding schools known as "Public Schools," where they had excellent education in the classics, also character training and discipline, but little or no training for any specific vocation.

They were first-class material as officers in the armed services but there were not enough commissions to go round in time of peace, and few of them had the private means needed to support that mode of life. Many came to Canada with some vague idea of learning to farm and then taking up some of the homestead land being given away by the government.

Learning to farm by working as virtually unskilled labour on an established farm, was "doing it the hard way," especially in the harsh winters of the Canadian climate, wages were very small and living accommodation extremely primitive.

It was not surprising in the circumstances that a number of the young Englishmen of this type ended by enlisting in the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, and I think it is true that the enviable reputation for devotion to duty enjoyed by the R.C.M.P. today, was built up by the men of the "Old School Tie" class



from Britain, in the earlier days of the existence of this unique service. In those days the pay was too low and the standard of discipline too high to attract the majority of young Canadians, most of whom were more intent on making money in a business of some sort.

The Canadian banks did not employ women then but recruited many of their junior clerks in Britain, to come to Canada on a contract at a salary of \$40 a month, on which it was barely possible to subsist without a supplementary allowance from home.

One thing we did not have to contend with in the second decade of the twentieth century was the current passion for university education, which is all very well when not carried to absurd extremes as it is today in some ways, I am convinced.

Because things were booming I had little trouble in finding jobs despite being English, which was definitely a handicap where I was, in Ontario. In other parts of Canada that might not have been the case, specifically I think in the west, but it takes time for a newcomer to find these things out and some have to be learned the hard way.

There was certainly a demand for men with the kind of technical training I had, though pay was not high and some of the jobs available offered only subsistence rather than a reasonably comfortable living. I had my experiences of what English people called "roughing it" in the Colonies, taking it for granted that living conditions in the "Colonies" were in the nature of things primitive and lacking in the amenities of civilized existence.

After trying various jobs for 18 months or so I stumbled more or less by accident into a job with an engineering firm, that had the Canadian agencies for several well-known English concerns of world-wide reputation.

These included makers of electrical equipment of all kinds, steam engines, gas engines, pumps and other assorted engineering items. I began as what was known as a "trouble-shooter," going out in response to calls received from customers about real or imagined trouble experienced with some item purchased from the firm.

For a time all went well and I liked the work for which my experience qualified me fairly well, though my knowledge of electricity was limited, and I had several narrow escapes from being electrocuted in the process of "learning by doing." Incidentally I did have the opportunity to learn much about the business part of the operations of the firm, by which I mean the buying and selling and office routine, and what was very important in Canada then, the matter of getting paid for what was sold.

At the time Canada was developing rapidly and working capital was limited, so much business was done on credit; there were many instances of firms going bankrupt through extending credit to their customers unwisely, and in fact the firm for which I worked experienced that fate after I had been with them for about two years. This was sad for them but gave me the opportunity I wanted to start in business for myself, an example of the old proverbial saying about the ill wind...

The firm's troubles began when a general business depression started in mid-1913, in both Canada and the United States. In those days the economy of both countries was very much of the alternate "boom or bust"

type. It was quite possible for the "bust" part of the cycle to be brought on by a serious crop failure in the mid-west United States or the Canadian prairies.

When so much business was done on credit, people generally were disposed to panic on slight excuse, banks called in loans to business firms some of which could not pay at short notice, unemployment increased rapidly and bankruptcies multiplied.

This sorry state of affairs had existed for more than a year when the outbreak of war in 1914 had the initial effect of giving panic and economic depression a great impetus. One large firm making electrical equipment reduced its staff and ordered a salary cut of 25% for those not discharged.

I was in the early stages of starting my own business as the Canadian agent for an American firm in Cleveland, Ohio, who were manufacturers of electric motors and dynamos, and specialized in equipment for electric welding, a process in which I had become much interested. It was in a very early stage of development but I was convinced it had a tremendous future, and was happy to stake my own future on this new process.

The outbreak of war put me in a very difficult position. My problem was whether to drop everything and join the Canadian army or return to England to rejoin the territorial army unit to which I had formerly belonged during my time as an apprentice, or possibly go to sea again as an engineer in the merchant marine for which I was qualified. In the end I did none of those things immediately but went overseas on active service in the R.N.V.R. a year or so later.

When it came to the point I found it was not so easy for me to simply drop what I was doing and go off to the war, without feeling I had let down the American company whose agency I had in Canada, and a Canadian friend who had undertaken to give me the financial backing I needed in order to start the business, not possessing enough money of my own for the purpose.

Also I admit making the same error of judgment about the probable length of the war that was made by many people better fitted than myself to have opinions on the subject. At the very beginning the fighting was so fast and furious, and the casualties so heavy, it really seemed that it could not last long at that rate, and would be settled one way or the other in a few months at most. I thought it more than likely that if I did go off at once to the war, it would be over before I got close enough to it to see action.

It was not long before Canadian industrial firms began to realize that the war offered interesting possibilities for supplying munitions of all kinds to the British and Canadian armies. I believe one of the first orders of the kind was given to a manufacturer of farm machinery for a large number of horsedrawn wagons for the Army Service Corps.

The war on land soon settled down to the frustrating stagnation of trench warfare, with trenches stretching from Switzerland to the sea. Then reports came that the British artillery was so short of shells that the batteries were rationed to two or three shells per gun per day, and the making of shells in Canada quickly boomed into a major industry.

All this was grist to my mill in supplying electric motors to power the machine tools that made the shells and other items that made the war possible.

However, there came a time in 1915 when my business was going well and the only limit to its growth was in the number of motors that the factory in Cleveland could send to us. They were working to full capacity on war business in the United States and we could not expect any special favours from them.

I am not a war-like type but felt that to retain my self-respect I could not stay out of active participation in it indefinitely. By then it looked as if it would last a long time, perhaps several years as in fact it did. Also by then the business seemed established and on a firm footing, and my silent partner and the American company agreed to my going.

The papers contained articles about the Admiralty sending a mission to Canada to recruit young men with experience in sailing yachts or motor boats, for manning some hundreds of small, fast motor vessels, for anti-submarine work round the British Isles, in the Mediterranean and elsewhere.

The contract for these vessels was placed with a well-known firm in the United States, but America was technically neutral at the time, so it was arranged for all the various parts to be made in the United States and shipped to Canada to be put together and launched on the St. Lawrence River.

These small submarine-chasers were 80 feet long, had a maximum speed of 19 knots and carried a complement of 9, including 2 officers, 2 motor mechanics and 5 deck-hands. Armament was supposed to consist of a gun mounted on the fore-deck and four depth-bombs in launching racks at the stern. These bombs were quite formidable weapons when conditions were favourable for their use, as they contained 300 pounds of the powerful explosive TNT. Additional bombs were carried as spares in the magazine.

As usual in war-time this project for coping with enemy submarines was supposed to be highly "classified" but that did not prevent a great deal of rumour and gossip about it, much of which had little relation to the truth.

However, the idea appealed to me strongly because it seemed as if the experience I had had could be put to exceptionally good use in such craft, and the whole project had many advantages as compared with the deadly dull trench warfare in which the army seemed to be indefinitely bogged down.

I had done a lot of sailing in yachts on the south coast of England and on Lake Ontario, also motor boat cruising and racing. The territorial army regiment in which I had served during my apprenticeship trained in the coast-defence batteries in the Isle of Wight, which were equipped entirely with naval guns from the .303 Maxim machine gun up to the 12-inch calibre. It was reasonable to suppose that my experience in the engineroom at sea might be useful too, as the motor mechanics we had were nearly all garage hands with little or no marine experience.

The members of the recruiting mission that came to Canada made a tour of the country, visiting the yacht clubs on both coasts and the Great Lakes. I do not know exactly how many young men they gathered in but think it must have been several hundred altogether.

We were to start with the rank of Sub-Lieut., R.N.V.R. with the prospect of promotion to Lieutenant in 12 months if satisfactory. We were to receive pay at British navy rates for our rank, which were small by Canadian standards, 7/6 per day for Sub-Lieuts., equal to about \$1.85 or so at the time. As officers we had to pay for our food and there was no additional allowance for being married, which I was not then though some of my Canadian fellow officers were. It was in keeping with the tradition that commissioned

officers in the armed services of Britain were supposed to have private means, which few of the Canadians were fortunate enough to possess.

I felt badly about leaving the flourishing young business I had built up but I was rather between the devil and the deep sea. Being 27 and single, and believing the war would probably last another three years or so, as in fact it did, I felt I should take a more direct part in it than supplying electric motors to munition plants, which could be done by older men with family responsibilities.

My partner suggested that I should continue to draw my modest salary while I was away and it would have been quite a help, but I declined the offer and said I would manage on my naval pay and hope the business would be there for me to come back to when the war was over. I had kept my own salary to a minimum to help build up working capital which the business needed.

I think the beginning of my career as an officer of the King's Navy would be a good place to start a new chapter.

**A**long with some 40 or 50 other young men on the same errand I was ordered to proceed to England as a passenger on one of the regular liners plying between Montreal and Liverpool. The passage was uneventful with little outward evidence of the existence of a state of war, except the complete black-out at night and extra look-outs for which duty some of us volunteered our services.

On arrival in London we were met by an emissary from the Admiralty who escorted us to Whitehall, where we were informed that the first part of our training course would consist of four weeks at the naval college at Greenwich, that impressive complex of buildings renowned as the scene of some of the revels of King Charles II and his girl-friend Nell Gwynne. It was of course of more interest to us as the home of Greenwich Mean Time and Zero Longitude.

Before going to the college, however, we must visit a tailor and order uniforms. For this purpose we were given a uniform allowance of 15 pounds sterling and a price list of items that added up to this sum less sixpence. The list must have been drawn up by a confirmed optimist as it fell far short of the minimum necessary to equip us for the job we were going to do. Anyone familiar with the history of the Royal Navy would take parsimony of this kind for granted as traditional since the time of Elizabeth I, or perhaps even earlier. Good Queen Bess was well known for wanting a navy capable of coping with formidable forces such as the Spanish Armada, while extremely reluctant to part with the necessary cash.

The Officers' Mess in the college was a very dignified affair, especially for evening dinner, with masses of antique silver of historic interest adorning the long table.

Some of my young fellow officers from Toronto were not so much impressed by the dignity of their surroundings, as they were intrigued by the prospect of personally investigating the night life of Leicester Square and Piccadilly, to see if it was really as bad as they had heard tell. I think it quite came up to their worst fears or fondest hopes as the case might be.

Some of these youngsters were sprigs of the families sometimes referred to in the social notes as "Wealthy and Socially prominent," who had helped the city to become known as "Toronto the Good," paraphrased by frivolous critics from Montreal and elsewhere as "Toronto the Stuffy."

I think they made the mistake of giving their sons too much pocket money, thereby helping to cause inflation in those circles devoted to entertaining members of the armed services in their lighter moments on leave. There was some slight fuss about the young Canadians returning from their revels in the small hours, climbing over the high iron railings of the college to avoid signing the book in the lodge at the gates, which automatically involved an interview with the Admiral Superintendent later on, referred to colloquially as "being on the mat."

Our course at the college was short but intensive and called for concentrated study if one wanted to do well in the concluding examination. For the second part of the course we went to Southampton where we

were attached to H.M.S. *Hermione* for instruction in signalling, gunnery, seamanship and such items, including the actual handling of the M.L.'s, and firing the 13-pounder gun which was already "washed out" for us. It was a very useful weapon but I felt forced to agree with the experts who had decided it was just a bit too heavy for the rather frail construction of our small ships; the weight of the gun made them slightly "down by the head."

In due course I was appointed second-in-command of M.L. 497 which was about to be commissioned in Portsmouth dockyard. I felt it would be a memorable experience to take part in the process of commissioning a ship (even a small one) in the senior base of the Royal Navy, which had played such an important part in the long history of the service, and where Nelson's famous flagship, H.M.S. *Victory*, was embedded in concrete as a lasting memorial to the man and his service to his country.

I must admit that I felt somewhat disillusioned by the actual experience, probably my own fault for entertaining romantic ideas, the result of being brought up to glamourize the navy, as were most British youngsters of my generation.

In any case we could not expect the business of commissioning one of the 80-foot M.L.'s to be regarded by the dockyard staff with the same importance as that of the battleships and cruisers to which they were accustomed.

In keeping with traditional custom in the navy it was my job as second-in-command to supervise the receipt and proper stowage of the numerous items of stores and equipment delivered to us by the stores department, including some things I had never seen or heard of before, and the use or purpose of which eluded me and everyone else so far as I could find out.

We were all somewhat taken aback by the number and importance of the items of equipment that were missing and apparently not available, such for instance as a gun of any size or sort, and a patent log, that very useful instrument that trails behind the ship at sea and furnishes an accurate record of the mileage run. It is naturally of vital importance at all times to know exactly where the ship is, and when out of sight of land in foggy weather the patent log is essential for this.

Without a gun we were faced with the prospect of searching the seas for signs of submarines and wondering what we should do if we saw one. We had some non-military rifles of the type used for hunting such game as deer, and some calibre revolvers, but no depth bombs. We did have some lance bombs consisting of a small bomb mounted at the end of a broom stick, to be thrown at the enemy in the unlikely event of a U-boat allowing us to come close enough before blowing us out of the water. The lance bombs had the reputation of being as dangerous to the throwers as to the target, so it was only necessary for us to cultivate the spirit of the light brigade at Balaclava, to do or die but not to reason why. Another surprise came with the arrival of the crew from the barracks where they were supposed to have been trained in seamanship and other subjects of a nautical nature. Fortunately there was one old "Salt" who had served in sailing ships and could splice rope, heave the lead, steer a compass course, chew tobacco and spin yarns till further orders.

The other four deck-hands were young landlubbers who had expressed a preference for the navy when registering under the Lord Derby scheme as being willing to join the armed services when called upon to

do so. One of the first things we wanted to know was, which of them was to be the ship's cook and was he experienced in the culinary art?

It was obvious that none of them wanted the job but after some shuffling around one admitted that while in the barracks he had watched a man peel some potatoes and make a rice pudding. Subsequent experience forced us to conclude he had not watched the man very closely.

However, we showed him the galley with its petrol stove of American make and somewhat uncertain temperament, and hoped for something edible for lunch. The cook had been a junior bank clerk in civil life and he may have been better at banking than at cookery, or it may have been the fault of the petrol stove which caught fire rather frequently and had to be doused with chemical extinguisher, but most of our meals had a queer taste and contained some rather odd ingredients like bits of cotton waste from the engineroom and so on.

The engineroom staff consisted of the chief motor mechanic, an experienced garage hand and a youngster who was, I think, an apprentice to the motor trade. They made a good team and seemed to get along well together though lacking experience of marine engineering, which I could supply when it was needed.

In the matter of living accommodation the officers were much better off than the crew, in keeping with the traditions of the sea. We lived in the stern of the ship, our sleeping cabin equipped with two comfortable bunks with spring mattresses and electric lights for reading in bed if so inclined. The other cabin was for eating or drinking in, all very neat and compact but not exactly spacious.

The crew lived together in a sort of glory hole under the fore deck, which must have been somewhat cramped when they were all there. At sea of course half of them would always be on watch. At the worst, however, I suppose we were all much better off than men of the navy in the good (?) old days of Nelson's time, just over a century before.

One drawback we all had was the difficulty of sleeping when out on patrol at night. Even in comparatively calm weather the little ships were "lively," and it was rather like trying to sleep on horseback and a horse with an uneven gait at that. The officers' bunks with their spring mattresses were comfortable enough but the motion of the ship, added to the rough grinding noise of the propellers just beneath us, and the ever-present and all-pervading smell of the petrol fumes, was a combination that Morpheus found it hard to beat, especially in my case; I have always been one of the world's worst sleepers.

This difficulty in sleeping was a factor in deciding how long at a time it was practicable for the ships to remain at sea, and the length of the M.L. patrols varied widely at different bases, from 24 hours to several days. Sometimes my ship was sent out with rather vague orders to "Return when recalled," which overlooked the fact that having no wireless there was no means of recalling us; so we had a problem.

Our fuel tanks carried 8 tons of petrol which could last us for 2 or even 3 weeks at economical speed with occasional periods when the engines were stopped. We had no refrigeration for food but could manage for the same length of time without going hungry, with careful planning.

On one occasion of this sort when we returned to the base after an unduly long patrol and the skipper went to the base office to report as usual, the patrol commander gave him a severe "blast" for "showing

great lack of intelligence," which seemed most uncalled for. We had all thought we were carrying out our orders "come hell or high water" in the traditional "do or die" spirit of the Royal Navy.

The real trouble was that many of the non-sea-going jobs such as C.O. patrols at a base of relatively minor importance, were filled by older officers who had emerged from retirement to serve during the war, and were known as "dug-outs." I had occasion at the time to think that it would have been better to let some of these dug-outs remain in retirement. I was very much interested some years later when reading Admiral Beatty's book, to see that the author made this criticism from his lofty pinnacle, exactly confirming what I saw from my worm's eye view of the naval organization.

Many of the M.L.'s experienced engine trouble much too frequently, caused by a combination of lack of marine experience on the part of the garage hands who were in charge of them, plus in some cases a tendency to report "engine defects" which were largely imaginary, because the chief motor mechanic did not want to go to sea for reasons of his own. Some of the base engineer officers ashore were old-timers who had retired before the internal combustion marine engine came into general use, and were not well equipped to check on the validity of reported defects.

In the course of my experience I formed a very high opinion of our 6-cylinder engines with a maximum speed of 500 r.p.m. which gave us our top speed of 19 knots. With a good mechanic in charge these engines were exceptionally reliable and would run continuously, day and night for long periods without trouble. At top speed the engines developed 250 h.p. so we had a total of 500 h.p. in the ship.

As the war went on and many oil tankers were torpedoed the air force had a prior claim to available supplies of high grade fuel, and the stuff put into our tanks was graded down till finally toward the end of 1917 it was no longer dignified by the name of petrol or gasoline, but was called No. 3 war spirit whatever that meant.

Our engines ran surprisingly well on the low grade fuel but were hard to start on it in cold weather. This could be overcome by a little ingenuity such as "scrounging" a gallon or so of good fuel on which to warm the engines up, after which they would run as well as ever, which in M.L. 497 was very well indeed.

On occasion 497 was the only one of the six at the base that was ready for sea, the others being unavailable owing to engine defects or periodical refit with most of the crew on leave, or some other reason.

Among other items of equipment not available when the ship was commissioned were the recognition lights, special coloured electric bulbs used at night to either challenge another ship or reply to one that challenged us. Lacking these meant we could not be at sea during the hours of darkness as we might be fired on by our own ships.

Submarines made a practice of coming to the surface at night in order to run their diesel engines to charge their batteries, and to let the crew have some fresh air and do calisthenics in the interest of physical fitness. There was always the possibility of finding a U-boat at night and we had to keep a very sharp lookout for them, the problem being to make sure it was a submarine before starting to shoot, hence the coloured lights used in different combinations which were changed frequently for obvious reasons. When



challenged by another ship at night it was well to make the correct reply without delay because if we were not quick we could be very dead.

In due course when the process of commissioning was supposed to be complete, the skipper received orders that began with a stereotyped preamble, "Being in all respects ready for sea you will proceed. . ." and so on. I used to wonder what would happen if the captain of a ship ever had the temerity to reply to the effect that he was most certainly not ready for sea owing to certain essential items of equipment not being available for issue to his ship.

Also what would happen if he meekly went off to sea (as we did) and ran into serious trouble as a direct result of something missing such as the patent log that we should have had but did not? As it happened I had worked out a substitute for the missing log in the form of a piece of squared paper, on which I plotted a curve of the engine revolutions in relation to speed of the ship in knots, and this proved to be quite accurate enough for our purpose, though of course it was more trouble than just reading the log. I have no idea whether my curve would have been accepted as evidence in a court of enquiry about an accident to the ship, but it would be a lot better than nothing. Fortunately we had no accident.

The passage of some 500 miles round the coast from Portsmouth to our base at Liverpool served as a short shake-down cruise for the crew. It took longer than it should have done as it was mid-winter and the nights were long, and lack of the recognition signals meant we must put into any convenient port before dark; but it was all good practice for the crew including the engineroom staff. We could also check the accuracy of the compass before going out on patrol at night and finding we were not sure of our exact position, a very uncomfortable feeling. Some of the lighthouses and other aids to navigation were discontinued during the war, so that they would not help the enemy.

It helps the morale of the crew if they have confidence in the capability of their officers, especially in the matter of navigation and when the members of the crew are inexperienced landlubbers with no previous experience of sea-going. It is likely to shake them at any time to realize that the officers don't know just where the ship is or the course to steer to get to any required destination. This is not so simple as it might seem if only because it is necessary to allow for the effect of tidal currents which are often very strong and very variable in the coastal waters of the British Isles.

The R.N.V.R. had experienced very rapid expansion under the stress of war conditions. The qualifications of some of the newly-appointed officers were so dubious that one could not help wondering why they were given commissions.

Some of my fellow Canadians were much better qualified than the officers under whom they served in the M.L.'s, who were of the same rank but had three months seniority because they were in Britain instead of coming from Canada. So far as we could see no attempt at all was made to sort out the competent from the inefficient in our branch of the service.

I was more fortunate than many as my skipper was an Englishman of a good type who had been for many years an enthusiastic sailing yachtsman, taking part in cross-channel races which call for a considerable knowledge of seamanship and coastal navigation. He left much of the running of the ship to me as second-in-command, in accordance with tradition in the navy. He did not have my experience of engines

or of gunnery which latter did not matter much so long as we had no gun. When the skipper was on leave I was in responsible command as there was usually no replacement for him.

The area we were supposed to patrol from Liverpool extended from Barrow-in-Furness to the north coast of Anglesea and west to the Isle of Man, and was mainly notable for unpleasant weather and dense traffic going in all directions and at all hours of day and night. It was no joke on pitch dark nights with none of the ships showing any lights, or in the daytime with dense fog. The frail wooden hull of an M.L. stood no chance at all in a collision with a steel-hulled ship, and at night or in fog the M.L. would look so much like a submarine on the surface that any other ship would be more than likely to try to ram us if she sighted us ahead, or shoot if her gun would bear on us. It seemed like an existence made hazardous by our friends though there were no enemies within 100 miles so far as any of us knew.

The degree of risk intensified suddenly with the entry of the United States into the war in the spring of 1917. Rumour said that when the folk in Washington asked those in Whitehall what naval help was most urgently wanted, the reply was "Destroyers for escorting convoys and any vessels suitable for hunting down submarines," or words to that effect.

I don't know if this is true but it does fit the facts within my own experience. We began to see American destroyers coming in with convoys and some of them going into Cammell Laird's shipyard at Birkenhead to have the rivets in their hulls tightened up after crossing the Atlantic with a convoy. They were more formidable in appearance than our own destroyers but apparently not so well built. At least this was the opinion of an old friend of mine who held a senior executive post in Cammell Laird's organization.

The Americans also sent over some submarine chasers somewhat like our M.L.'s but larger, being 110-feet in length to our 80-feet, with a complement of 22 to our 9, and to our envy a much larger and better gun. Altogether we thought they were better craft for the job we were trying to do, being more seaworthy and equipped with a really useful gun.

When we met the Americans in port we fraternized with them but when we saw them at sea we used every effort to avoid them. We learned quickly that some of them were even more trigger happy than the gunners on our own merchant ships; they didn't wait for poor visibility but blazed away at us in clear weather and broad daylight. Fortunately our maximum speed was 3 knots faster than theirs so we could get away from them, while reflecting that this kind of fun and games was all very well, but not exactly what we had come over from Canada to do.

Shortly before the Americans arrived our gun was installed but it was a sore disappointment, being a 2½ pounder Vickers that had belonged to the Japanese and had seen much use as the rifling of the barrel was badly worn, either in fighting the Russians or in target practice; it was so bad as to seriously affect the range and accuracy of the weapon. We never had the opportunity to see if we could hit an enemy submarine with it but I doubt if it would have been much use in combat.

Soon after the Americans came into the war we did have some excitement in our area. We were sent out one day to search for a submarine minelayer said to be coming to visit us, though we were not told why; that came out later. We had no means of detecting submarines under water so it was rather like looking for a needle in a haystack, unless one surfaced within sight of us, which they naturally tried to avoid

doing. We did our best but were not able to prevent this one from laying his mines in the vicinity of the Mersey Bar Lightship.

A large American passenger liner that normally plied between New York, Southampton and Cherbourg hit a mine and docked in Liverpool with a hole in her hull. It turned out that the American General Pershing was on board and the Germans evidently knew it, and exactly when the ship was due in Liverpool. Our intelligence people obviously knew the submarine was coming to try to sink the ship and hopefully Pershing too, so it was an example of the efficiency of the intelligence on both sides!

Another passenger ship that was in use as a troopship also hit a mine but did not sink, while a third ship, a smaller one of the tramp cargo type did sink in the channel; altogether a fair night's work for the U-boat though doubtless disappointing for them that General Pershing suffered no more than some slight inconvenience.

Rumour said that the Americans were much upset by the incident and refused to send any more ships to Liverpool unless we could provide what was known as a "War Channel" into the port, which meant a channel that was swept by the mine sweepers every day. Up to that time there was no minesweeping at Liverpool at all, presumably because the Admiralty did not think the risk of mines was sufficiently serious, or they simply did not have the necessary ships and gear to spare.

However, needs must when the devil drives or our American allies must be placated. Orders went forth for a trawler here and some drifters there to be detached and sent to Liverpool to form a mine-sweeping flotilla and one of the most experienced officers was appointed as port mine-sweeping officer, or P.M.S.O. for short. He had been at Dover which was naturally a hot spot for submarine activity, and had been blown up three times, being wounded and the only survivor twice. He proved to be what Canadians call a "hustler," a fellow who gets things done without waste of time, and my M.L. 497 was placed at his disposal for the month or so that it took to get the mine-sweeping organized and working smoothly as a daily routine.

We laid out a war channel of some 50 miles in length and supervised the placing of the buoys to guide the sweepers and the ships that would use the channel. I came to the conclusion that mine-sweeping was one of the least attractive jobs done by the navy, being dreary and monotonous as well as distinctly hazardous.

Another incident occurred about this time but my memory is not as clear about it as I could wish, perhaps because I was not directly involved. One night the pilot ship hit a mine and sank quickly with the loss of 31 lives including 19 pilots, the only survivors being a man and a boy.

I do not know if the mine was one of the same batch or another lot. Some of the German mines were equipped with a device that caused them to be inactive for varying periods after being laid, so that it was never possible for us to be sure the channel was safe even when it was swept every day.

The weeks we spent under the orders of the P.M.S.O. were certainly strenuous but we felt we were really being of some use to the war effort. This was a pleasant change from the feeling of futility that plagued us when we were out on patrol without either a gun or depth-bombs, supposed to be searching for submarines and wondering "So what?" if we saw one. It would have been quite useless for us to try to ram a U-boat as they were stoutly built of steel and the M.L.'s were of very frail wood construction, not designed to ram anything more than a rowboat, and not a very heavy one at that.

When the depth-bombs were finally issued to us the feeling of futility was somewhat lessened though we still had the 2½ pounder gun that was nearly worn out. It was doubtful whether it would have been effective in causing a submarine to submerge so that we could drop depth-bombs. It was my belief that one good, modern .50 calibre machine gun would out-shoot and out-range us.

In addition to being very frail the M.L.'s were very vulnerable, in that they were loaded with highly combustible fuel and explosives. Under normal conditions we were in far more danger from fire and explosions than from the enemy. Fortunately we were well supplied with chemical fire extinguishers which were used at least once a week on the average to put out petrol fires, started in most cases in the galley stove or the engineroom bilges.

The worst fire I remember occurred when we were in the dock at Fleetwood, just after we had been up on the slipway there for our periodical overhaul. It was a tidal dock so we had to wait till the lock gates were opened at high tide, before we could go to sea.

The cook went to fill his two-gallon container from one of the after fuel tanks, and managed to spill a quantity of petrol over the stem of the ship, including the four 300-pound depth-bombs in their brackets. The skipper was on leave so I was in charge and was in the chartroom laying out our course for return to the base, when I suddenly heard the too familiar cry of "FIRE."

I snatched an extinguisher from its bracket and leaped out onto the deck in one instinctive movement, as the result of much practice, and I don't mean mere fire drill. I saw the entire stern of the ship including the depth-bombs engulfed in flames and black smoke, and ran toward the conflagration, shouting orders to the crew to bring me all the extinguishers in the ship, and the refills from the magazine where they were stowed.

It was only possible for one person at a time to get close enough to the fire to use the extinguishers effectively. It seemed obvious that the fire must be put out quickly if we could do it at all, and I could only guess how long it would be before the 1,200 pounds of TNT in the 4 depth-bombs would reach the ignition point. Two of the four fuel tanks were under the deck beneath my feet, and the cook had not managed to replace the filling plug of the one from which he had drawn petrol for his stove.

Altogether the situation seemed precarious and I remember thinking how foolish was Casabianca, the lad in the poem that begins, "The boy stood on the burning deck<sup>1</sup>...." The crew kept passing extinguishers to me as I emptied them, and refilling the empty ones with the precious fluid of which we fortunately had a good supply in the magazine. By the time the fire was out there was very little of the extinguisher fluid left, and we all felt it was a narrow escape. The fire had probably been caused by someone carelessly tossing the butt of a cigarette where the petrol had been spilled.

Soon after we returned to the base we had another job that made a welcome change from routine patrol duty. The new battleship H.M.S. *Ramillies* was damaged in launching on the Clyde and was towed to Liverpool to be dry-docked for examination and repair.

She was a most tempting target for any submarine that happened to be around, especially in view of the very low speed of the tow. So several M.L.'s were detailed to "screen" her, which meant hovering about at

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<sup>1</sup> One important difference, nobody had fled.

a suitable distance and keeping the sharpest possible lookout for an intruding periscope. We all felt relieved when the *Ramillies* was safely in the river at Liverpool, where she promptly signalled an invitation to the M.L.'s to "Come aboard and have a drink," which was accepted with alacrity.

It was about this time that I applied for two weeks leave for the purpose of being married to an English girl who was also in uniform and on active service as a member of the V.A.D., in the First Western General Hospital in the suburbs of Liverpool.

We had done most of our courting on the links of one of the local golf and country clubs, when my ship was in dock and she had a half-day off duty. We did not intend to set up housekeeping till the war was over and we could do so in Canada, we hoped. It suited our ideas very well that elaborate weddings were very much out of style in England during the war, so we arranged to be married very quietly indeed, and went to Devonshire for a holiday and to visit her parents. We were both subject to recall at any moment but the war managed to get along without us for the fortnight of our honeymoon leave.

Soon after this interlude I was transferred to another M.L. at a base in the southwest of England and soon after that an opportunity opened up for me to qualify for something for which I hankered, command of a vessel larger than an 80-foot M.L. After letting a number of very well qualified officers of the merchant service (like my brother) go into the army, the "Scuttlebutt" (navy gossip) said that some of the big brass at Whitehall were crying in their champagne over the shortage of navigators.

In any case an Admiralty order came out to the effect that any Lieutenant R.N.V.R. with a minimum of 12-months service afloat who could pass an exam in navigation and seamanship, would qualify for command of an auxiliary patrol vessel. I had my brother's sextant and polished up on the use of it before taking the exam. I passed well enough to obtain a First Class Certificate.

The case of my brother Dudley was typical of that of many merchant service officers and of a certain lack of vision in the conduct of the war. He had a flawless record including his Extra Master's Certificate at the early age of 25. He had applied for enrolment in the Royal Naval Reserve in 1915 but was kept cooling his heels in ante-rooms at the Admiralty so long without a definite answer as to whether he would be accepted or not, he lost patience and went to join the Inns of Court O.T.C., and in due course was gazetted to the 17<sup>th</sup> Kings Royal Rifles.

He was only in France about three months before he was very badly wounded when a 5.9" H.E. shell burst in the sector of trench he was in, giving him about 16 wounds. The surgeons took off his left leg above the knee but he was soon getting about with a wooden one and they made him a staff captain in the war office at Whitehall. But his days of seafaring were over, and he died in the terrible, pandemic influenza in 1918.

My certificate of competency in navigation and seamanship is dated July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1918 and is still one of my most cherished possessions. It says that I was considered competent to command one of His Majesty's auxiliary patrol vessels.

At the time all the armed services were feeling the effects of the terrible pandemic influenza that left the navy even more short of officers than before. So the ink of the Admiral's signature on my certificate was hardly dry when I was sent off at a moment's notice in command of a typical North Sea trawler, about 140 feet long, ostensibly to escort a convoy of colliers from Penzance to Brest, about 130 miles across the mouth of the English Channel, a spot which had been the scene of a lot of submarine activity.

Most of the mines that normally supplied France with coal were in German hands, so the British had to keep France supplied with coal as well as they could. It meant running a convoy of colliers to Brest every 24 hours and the job of escorting these convoys was regarded as one of the toughest and most unpleasant the navy had to do.

The colliers loaded at the Welsh ports on the Bristol Channel and proceeded to Penzance where they gathered inside the boom defence across the bay. The routine was for a convoy consisting of from six to twelve ships more or less, to sail in the small hours of the morning and if all went well reach Brest about 10 or 11 p.m.

The escort consisted of 3 trawlers which had a speed of about 8 knots and were manned by men who normally made their living by fishing in the North Sea or as far afield as Iceland. The captain had the naval rank of warrant skipper and the only commissioned officer was usually a lieutenant of the Royal Naval Reserve, a professional sailor usually with a captain's certificate in the merchant marine; he was O.C. convoy.

When the convoy arrived at Brest the officer could not turn in for a few hours of much needed sleep but must go through formalities and paper work with the French authorities before sailing with the northbound convoy of "returned empty" colliers at 2 or 3 a.m., hence no sleep.

Theoretically he would have two days lay-off after six days of this tough routine, but in practice the lay-off sometimes did not materialize for one reason or another, especially during the influenza epidemic. The job had the reputation of causing men in the prime of life, professional sailors of mature experience, to break down from sheer exhaustion after six months or so. But it was a vitally important job that must be done somehow.

This convoy route was an obvious place for the U-boats to ply their grim trade and while the losses of ships were heavy it seems surprising that they were not heavier.

I naturally felt a certain thrill when I first set foot aboard a ship of the Royal Navy of which I was in command on active service in war, but I admit being somewhat dismayed by the nature of this job I had

stepped into. This feeling was accentuated by certain premonitory symptoms of the onset of a bout of the prevailing influenza, which I had hitherto escaped.

My trawler had a wartime crew of 20 men who were of a rugged type practically born to a life of deep-sea fishing under all conditions of wind and weather. I don't know what they thought of setting out on what was known to be a tough assignment under the command of an officer of the R.N.V.R., not a professional sailor, but they appeared to take it as all in the day's work. We arrived at Penzance soon after dark and I went ashore to report to the S.N.O. who proceeded to quiz me about my qualifications for the job. He seemed concerned to learn that I had never been to Brest and had no knowledge of the channel inside Ushant used by the coal convoys. It really needed local knowledge such as possessed by pilots or captains of coasting vessels, especially as some of the navigation marks were removed in wartime.

It was customary for the trawler with the O.C. convoy on board to lead the convoy through the channels into Brest, because some of the collier captains did not know the way any more than I did. So the S.N.O. decided to send the officer I was supposed to relieve with me to "show me the ropes," making an extra trip for him instead of the "lay-off" to which he was entitled.

The next 48 hours was a night-mare experience for me as I was feeling steadily worse and running a temperature with influenza, while trying to absorb a mass of technical detail about the convoy. Fortunately we were not troubled by submarines on that trip.

When we returned to Penzance I was ordered to report to the doctor who sent me to the hospital, where I was put to bed and slept the clock round and felt better on waking. All very well but a humiliating end to my first command.

I was afraid it might count against me but apparently not as after a brief convalescence I was suddenly sent back to Canada to take command of a flotilla of drifters that had been built there for the Admiralty, and which I learned later were intended to go to Gibraltar.

I still have my copy of the signal from Admiralty to Naval Base, Falmouth, appointing me to *Niobe* additional for command of net drifters. *Niobe* was an obsolete cruiser that functioned as the depot ship for the naval base at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The reference to "Net Drifters" was somewhat obscure to me, as I had only a very vague notion what they did and no idea where I should be sent.

I made the passage to Halifax as a sort of paying guest in the wardroom mess of an ancient passenger liner equipped with 6-inch guns, and one of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron. The ship served as ocean escort to a westbound convoy; the trip took 12 days and was very dull.

On arrival in Halifax I reported to the S.N.O., Rear-Admiral Storey, who proceeded to quiz me as to what I was all about, which was disappointing as I had been hoping he would be able and willing to enlighten me on the subject. He seemed to know as little about net drifters as I did but the interview took a sudden turn for the worse when I chanced to refer to the fact that the ship I had come on had 200 tons of mines for the nets in her hold.

It was some months after the great explosion caused by a cargo ship in the harbour with 3,000 tons of TNT catching fire and blowing up, causing some 1,800 deaths, injuries to 20,000 people and untold damage to the town. So it was not surprising that everyone in Halifax was still very sensitive on the subject of explosives on ships in the harbour.

The Rear Admiral abruptly broke off his talk with me to issue orders for the ship to leave her berth at one of the docks and anchor in the roadstead outside, for which I am sure the people on board would call down curses on my head if they got to know I was responsible, however unwittingly.

It seemed there were no instructions from the Admiralty about me and it took a little time to get sorted out, so that I would know what to do or where to go to find my flotilla of drifters. The only sure thing was that they were not in Halifax at the time.

In time I learned that the drifters (all 12 of them) had been built in Canada for the Admiralty, and I was supposed to take them to Gibraltar for the purpose of setting up a barrier of steel nets festooned with contact mines, across the 12 miles of the Strait, to keep submarines from getting into the Mediterranean.

I had heard of this being done in the Dover Strait which was about 21 miles across, but I had never seen anything of the scheme at first hand. However, the first thing of course was to find the drifters and get them fitted out for the passage to Gibraltar via Bermuda and the Azores.

There seemed to be a definite lack of communication or a credibility gap or something of the kind between what was referred to as Naval Ottawa and the Admiralty in Whitehall. However, by dint of picking up a scrap of information here and another there, I learned that some drifters were in the harbour of Quebec, though no-one seemed to know why they were there or how long they planned to stay, or in fact to whom they belonged.

So it was arranged that I should go to Quebec and rendezvous there with the (then) Lieut. Percy Nelles, R.C.N., who was Flag-Lieut. to Admiral Kingsmill, the Chief of the Naval Staff in Ottawa.

We found half a dozen drifters there and got them routed out and on the way to Gaspé. I should explain that by the time I met Nelles in Quebec my orders had been changed, and I was told to "wash out" Gibraltar for the time being and establish a base in Gaspé Harbour, from which to maintain an anti-submarine patrol in the Gulf of St. Lawrence with my drifters, till navigation on the St. Lawrence route closed down for the winter, which usually happened about December 1<sup>st</sup>.

It appeared that two German U-boats of their most formidable type, known as the Deutschland Class, were operating on the American side of the Atlantic. They had laid mines off Halifax and Sydney, Cape Breton, and torpedoed some ships off the American coast. There was concern lest they operate on the St. Lawrence route in the gulf or the river, where some important shipping with both troops and munitions was to be found.

Incidentally I found that the rest of my drifters were already in Gaspé, and under the command of a French-Canadian warrant skipper in a trawler that belonged to the Canadian navy. It was a somewhat involved situation as the drifters were the property of the Admiralty and the warrant officers and other ratings were all like myself under Admiralty orders and on Royal Navy rates of pay which were substantially lower than Canadian rates.



As a lieutenant I out-ranked the French-Canadian warrant skipper but he obviously did not like being superseded by me or taking orders from me. So I put up at Bakers Hotel and sent a communication to my immediate boss, the (then) Captain Walter Hose, R.C.N., captain of patrols at Sydney, outlining the situation and requesting necessary action to resolve the problem. In a short time another trawler appeared on the scene, the property of the Admiralty, and the French Canadian was recalled with his trawler and I never saw or heard of him again. I don't suppose he liked me though.

So there I was in Gaspé in command of a flotilla of 12 drifters and a trawler, with a total of over 160 warrant officers and other personnel, with rather vague ideas of what I was supposed to do. The ships were all fresh from the builders yards but the drifters especially developed what I thought was an unduly large number of defects, to both the hulls and the engines and boilers.

Facilities for repairs were limited to those of the village blacksmith's shop. I was the only commissioned officer in the unit, having no engineer officer or pay officer or medical officer. The world-wide influenza epidemic was raging ashore with a very high rate of mortality among the civilian population, and I was much worried lest we should get it in the ships; somehow we escaped that fate.

When I arrived in Gaspé I found the drifters already there were obtaining the provisions they needed from the local store of Messrs. Robin, Jones & Whitman, one of the old-established trading firms of the Maritimes. I had had no instructions about this but assumed it was in order with the naval authorities. From time to time I signed invoices for thousands of dollars worth of food in the hope that eventually I would not have to pay myself, which would have been quite impossible at that stage of my career. It seemed so very different to anything I had been used to in England but of course there was no place in Britain to compare with Gaspé, which was much more isolated from the outside world in 1918 than it is now.

The Gaspésians I met were all very friendly and co-operative. I believe I could have bought everything that was for sale in the village by merely signing invoices. Their confidence in being eventually paid by the government was touching, and far greater than mine. I think they were glad to have us there with our little ships and guns, one gun per ship and the largest, a 12-pounder on my trawler, a mere pea-shooter by comparison with the two 5.9's on each of the German submarines that were somewhere around. I estimated that the 5.9's would throw a projectile weighing just about 100 pounds to a range we couldn't begin to touch with our guns, but I saw no point in explaining this to the good folk of Gaspé. We would also be at a disadvantage in the matter of speed, as the U-boats were credited with 25 knots on the surface with their diesel engines, whereas our best gait was about 8 knots, so they could literally run rings round us.

To the best of my knowledge no U-boats penetrated the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the first World War, though they could easily have done so if they had wished. They did in 1942 and torpedoed some ships well up the river.

Under the circumstances it was as well that I had received my training as a works apprentice in a shipbuilding plant. We had to improvise to some extent in dealing with the defects that developed in ships and machinery, but in one way and another we did keep them all functioning and maintained a patrol in the gulf. My trawler was fitted with wireless but not the drifters, so once the latter were out of sight they were out of touch with me.

The warrant officers and men who formed the crews of my ships were all Canadians but not sailors in civil life; many came from the Prairies. They had spent some time overseas with one branch or another of the Royal Navy, but they did not seem to be very happy about their experiences, or the training they were supposed to have received, which seemed to resemble that of the M.L. crews I had encountered before, in being somewhat superficial.

When I found them in Gaspé they all said they had not received any pay for a long time and were practically "broke." So I sent a request to the naval base at Sydney and in due course received a large cheque which I was able to cash at the branch of the Bank of Toronto in Gaspé, and doled out the proceeds on account. I must say I found the men very well behaved and had no trouble at all with delinquency of any kind. A feature of life in Gaspé was the occasional influx of lumberjacks coming in from the woods for a bit of dissipation, which usually took the form of imbibing an overdose of a fluid known locally by various names such as "White Mule" or "Dollar Dead-eye," and then sitting on a big log in the village square and howling like a wolf. Fortunately none of my men experimented with this form of diversion so far as I knew.

On one occasion a vessel of the Canadian navy paid a visit to Gaspé and anchored in the harbour for a few hours, sending some of her crew to stretch their legs ashore. A few of them seemed bent on emulating the lumberjacks in sampling the local firewater, but instead of working off excess high spirits by sitting on a log and howling, they began to get rough and wanted to take the village apart.

By that time the good Gaspésians had practically adopted my outfit as their lawful protectors, and some leading citizens appealed to me to do something about the rambunctious visitors. I was not at all sure of what the extent of my responsibility was if any, especially as the captain of the visiting vessel was senior to me in rank by a half-stripe. He had not himself come ashore or made any contact with me, and it was necessary to act promptly to prevent the situation getting out of hand. So I quickly organized two naval shore patrols which went to work and gathered up the trouble makers, and sent them packing back to their ship in the boats in which they had come ashore. I felt I was sticking my neck out to some extent but we heard no more of the incident, and the Gaspésians were grateful for our efforts.

With the onset of autumn it began to look as if the war would be over before we ever started our projected journey to Gibraltar, a prospect I regarded with mixed feelings. The task of getting all my small ships safely across the Atlantic offered a challenge such as almost any man in my position would have welcomed, despite the difficulties.

One problem was getting enough coal into the ships to take them from Bermuda to the Azores, especially in view of the difficulty of obtaining coal of good quality under wartime conditions, and the fact that many of the stokers had had very little real seagoing experience. I had good reason to know that daily consumption of coal could vary very widely with the knowledge and skill of the men who shovelled it into the furnaces.

It was almost certain that some of the drifters would experience defects of one sort and another, and trying to cope with these in mid-ocean could present insurmountable problems. If we arrived at Gibraltar minus two or three of the drifters, there would be a court of enquiry with me as the star turn and probable scapegoat if one should be required.

With the Armistice on November 11<sup>th</sup> I ceased to worry about these things and looked forward to being demobilized and free to return to my business in Toronto in the very near future.

Not so fast, however. The first thing I noticed after the Armistice was a blank silence that descended over our communications with the outside world. Up to November 11<sup>th</sup> I had received "Signals" by wireless, addressed to various titles such as "C.O. St. Lawrence Patrols," "S.N.O. Gaspé, Quebec" or a more humble, "C.O. TR 38," which was the designation of my ship. Some of the signals were of immediate interest to me but many were for information of a general nature. Some of them originated in Sydney or Halifax or Ottawa, or even Whitehall or Washington.

I could not help feeling that there was some lack of clear understanding as to just who was supposed to be giving me orders, though of course the various fancy titles to which the signals were addressed could not but be flattering to a mere Lieutenant R.N.V.R., just a young fellow trying to get on with his part of the war and keep out of trouble with his own side.

Came the Armistice and no more signals from anywhere, but within three weeks or so another problem to wonder about. Winter sets in early in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and I think it was earlier than usual in 1918. It was obvious that if my ships remained in the inner harbour much longer they would be frozen in till next May or June, a most unpleasing prospect for all of us.

So I sent a signal to naval base, Sydney, asking for instructions and received an answer promptly, "Proceed to Halifax." So all the ships stocked up with provisions, coal and fresh water, we said good-bye to our friends in Gaspé and set out one wintry day in early December with flags flying and sirens sounding.

The outlook for weather was not promising and I decided that the war being over there was no point in taking needless risks. The important thing was to get all my ships with their crews intact safely to Halifax.

I had found by experience that some of the drifter skippers were not too sure of their navigation, but when we were at sea they were all right so long as they could see my trawler, the flagship of the flotilla. It was the season for winter gales and thick snow-squalls that sometimes reduced visibility almost to zero.

So I decided to go by way of the Northumberland Strait and the Gut of Canso. By the time we reached the Gut, I received another signal from Sydney ordering us to go to Sydney instead of Halifax. We emerged into the Atlantic Ocean and turned north in the teeth of a howling gale with thick snow and very low temperatures. I don't know just how cold it was because the mercury vanished into the bulb of the thermometer, but I felt like an Arctic explorer when the alcohol compass froze, especially as I depended on it for accurate navigation. The alcohol did not freeze into a hard block as water will, but into a sort of slush in which the compass card could not revolve freely, making it useless for navigation.

The other compass inside the warm wheelhouse was inaccurate owing to the proximity of a mass of iron and steel in the form of the steam steering engine.

The steering gear chose this awkward moment to go out of business, owing to the spray freezing as it hit the deck, till the ice was so thick it jammed the quadrant on the rudder head. So I had to keep two sailors chopping ice continuously to remedy this trouble. It was necessary to relieve the ice-chopping detail every hour in that bitter cold, and I remember wishing I could have whoever designed the trawler on board so

that I could set him to chopping ice for the experience. I suppose he would have said he didn't design the ship for such conditions, but I remembered seeing exactly similar trawlers coated with ice, returning to Liverpool from a fishing trip to Iceland in the depth of winter.

Somehow we all managed to beat our way into Sydney, with the drifters following the trawler like a flock of sheep. The harbour was chock full of shipping of one sort and another so that it was hard to find space to anchor. As soon as possible I went ashore to report at the base office, and when I opened the door was greeted by a voice calling out, "What the hell are you doing here?"

So I produced the signal ordering me to proceed to Sydney instead of Halifax, and was told that they had sent me still another to go to Halifax after all. This last signal ended as usual with the word "acknowledge" but we never received it and naturally never acknowledged it, so there we all were! It was certainly one of those moments.

I could not help feeling that things in that office were not quite so businesslike as could be desired. Though the war was over it seemed a bit too soon to pack up the customary procedure to that extent.

So we had to fill up again with coal and water and provisions and set out for Halifax. A redeeming feature was the addition of two more trawlers to the flotilla, the warrant skippers being experienced professional sailors who were thoroughly familiar with those waters. One of them suggested going through the Bras D'Or Lakes to the Gut of Canso, which we did with the skipper acting as pilot. I would not have done this myself as some of the navigation marks had been taken up for the winter but our pilot knew the route so well he could dispense with the buoys and other marks.

So without further misadventure we all arrived at the entrance to Halifax harbour and steamed to our allotted berths with the knowledge that for us the war was really over.

I had to stay for a few weeks in the relative luxury of a hotel, while my ships were stripped of stores and equipment, and relegated to mooring buoys in the Nor-West Arm.

I was demobilized myself as of January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1919 and I think I must have been the first one of my group of Canadians in the R.N.V.R. to arrive home.

I never heard what became of my trawlers and drifters but they had been built with the idea that they could be sold off after the war for commercial fishing in the waters around the British Isles, for which they were eminently suitable, being sturdy to stand rough weather and economical to operate.

Reading over the above I realize that I may seem to have temporarily mislaid my rather new wife. For some time before the Armistice the papers carried columns of what seemed at least semi-official advice to the wives and families of Canadians in the armed services, to return to Canada while they could, because available ships would soon be fully occupied repatriating the troops, and accommodation for civilians hard to obtain.

It seemed good advice so my wife applied for passage and was notified she could travel in H.M.S. *Olympic*, the popular White Star liner temporarily in the navy like myself. The fare was the fixed sum of 13 pounds and passengers took what accommodation they were given. The ship was not fully occupied and my wife happened to be the only naval officer's wife on board, and was given a deluxe suite to

herself, with two stewardesses to look after her, truly a bargain in travel accommodation not likely to ever happen again.

The ship happened to arrive in New York just in time to see natives celebrating the Armistice with typical American ebullience, though it was something of a shock to her to see the crowds of people of apparently mature age in the streets, leaping and shouting and waving placards inscribed with slogans such as, "We won the War," "It took the Yanks to do it," and other somewhat exaggerated claims.

She arrived in Gaspé by train about 3 days later and was warmly welcomed by some very good friends I had made there. We had a brief time together before I left with my flotilla for Halifax via Sydney; then she rejoined me in Halifax and when I was demobilized we took a train together for Toronto, feeling thankful that the war was behind us, and the future beckoning.

The year 1919 was a very busy one for both of us. Picking up the threads of my former life as a civilian business man was not such a simple process as one might think it should be, and was made more complicated for me by changes that had taken place as the result of the untimely death of my original partner when I was overseas three years before.

Apart from business Ruth and I had the task of starting from scratch in setting up housekeeping, finding a place to live despite the acute housing shortage, acquiring furniture and so on. It was soon evident that she had a distinct flair for home-making, showing sound judgment and good taste with a keen sense of values, the latter being important because at the time we were "poor but honest" and hoping to get on in the world.

The business needed working capital and I wanted to put as much as I could back into it, taking more shares of stock instead of dividends, for the purpose of correcting what I felt were mistakes that had been made in my absence. It was desirable to keep our living expenses on a modest scale for the time being, and Ruth was a very great help to me in this, while making a home for me much better than any I had had when I was as a bachelor.

Many people besides myself had felt that the general outlook for business in Canada immediately after the war was very uncertain. I think we were all agreeably surprised when the boom carried on with a barely perceptible pause, despite the abrupt cessation of the purely war industries.

The fact was that after three or four years of full employment at relatively high wages, there was plenty of money in circulation and a large volume of demand for goods that were not readily obtainable while the war lasted. And there were many thousands of men like myself from the armed services, setting up housekeeping for the first time to add to the demand for goods of all kinds.

So the boom continued for two years or so which was a great help to me in getting re-established in civilian life, in my business affairs and as a new householder.

By 1921, however, it was evident that the boom was losing some of its bloom. By then it had also become evident to me that the future progress of the business lay in manufacturing in Canada rather than selling and servicing something made in the United States. The American company with which we were associated did not take kindly to this idea at all, though it could have been worked out very well on a basis that was fair to everyone concerned, while vastly improving our prospects for building up a really successful business.

I had another major problem in the partner I had in effect inherited through the death of his older brother, with whom I had first started the business. My original partner was a Canadian by birth and had had the same sort of technical training in Scotland that I had in the south of England. The brother with whom I was now in business had no technical training at all and for that reason was a square peg in a round hole.

I felt he had no natural aptitude for engineering matters and seemed to dislike being involved in such things. His idea was to devote all his efforts to the financial side of the business which at that time needed only a good bookkeeper, not a partner drawing an executive salary.

So I struggled through the early 1920's somehow, feeling I was in the middle between these two problems of my partnership and the American company, and the business did make progress to some extent despite the difficulties.

I was beginning to feel the strain of long-drawn-out frustration and overwork by 1925, and my doctor strongly suspected me of stomach ulcers, that well-known occupational hazard of the typical North American high-pressure business man. The x-rays of my innards showed no evidence of ulcers or anything to warrant surgery, so the doctor let me off with some good advice about diet, which did help me to reduce weight and feel somewhat better.

I was convinced at the time and still am that the real trouble was the combination of trying to do the work of two men, owing to my partner's lack of both qualification and inclination for the technical side of our business, and the extreme frustration of trying to run the business in a way I did not believe it should be run, owing to the intransigent refusal of our American friends to co-operate fully toward the development of manufacturing in Canada.

In this connection it is interesting to note that some years later, when my partner was no longer in the business, and I had retired, the Americans did build a factory and run it as I had tried to persuade them it should be run, and it worked out very well indeed for them.

In the meantime I did manage to wring a reluctant consent from them to let us make a start toward some partial manufacturing, which was just as well. It helped us materially to take advantage of the booming business of the period 1926 to 1930, when we really made some progress financially though we would have done much better if we had been further advanced in manufacturing in Canada.

This period of boom, however, had the effect of postponing a major reorganization that would have solved my partnership problem, and made it in the end more acute than it had been before. He had some means outside of our business and was one of the many thousands of people in the United States and Canada who were speculating in the stock market and were caught "out on a limb" when the roof fell in on Wall Street in October 1929.

In the financial jargon of the times these people were what was known as "long on margin" in the stock market, having stocks on which they had only made a down payment instead of owning them outright. In plain language it was not investing but gambling, and the history of the stock market was replete with examples of the same sort of thing happening, and bringing ruin and devastation to the unfortunate folk who had only been trying to make a lot of money easily.

I knew one stock of which my partner bought 300 shares at \$92 per share quite shortly before the crash began. That stock actually went down to \$2 per share before it started to go up again, and it never did go up to anything remotely resembling the price at which he had bought. He had other stocks that were comparable if not quite so bad, and he was rather completely ruined except for his interest in our business, which was not adequate for his responsibilities and scale of living.

While all this was going on I was struggling to keep our business going as well as possible, and it was a tough battle. Nearly all business concerns were affected though some more than others of course. At the peak of the boom we had employed about 100 people altogether in the office, sales staff and the plant, and including a branch in Montreal.

I wanted to keep the organization together if possible because it is always well to do that in a technically special business, and no-one likes to discharge good employees at a time when they may have difficulty in finding another job. The Depression did not really begin to affect us seriously in 1930 and in the summer of that year I had made a business trip to England, to look into the prospects for doing some business there. I did this at the request of the head of the American company, and the upshot was that we decided to open an office in London, to be run by us from Toronto, with the American company sharing the expense and the profit or loss equally with us.

This venture was just beginning to look as if it might pay off well, when Britain went off the Gold Standard in 1931, which had the effect of making it nearly impossible for Canadian or American concerns to sell anything there, or anywhere in the sterling area; which was a sad blow, and made a bad situation worse for us.

In the meantime my partner was so much affected by the ruin he had brought on himself, that he was getting to be a cause of great anxiety to me, and I imagine his own family. In the spring of 1932 I felt that something would have to be done but it was a tough problem to know what it should be. The final upshot was that the American company bought his interest in our business and that of his late brother's estate, on condition that I agreed to carry on running the business with the American company as the senior partner, having stock control while I owned 40% of the shares.

The arrangement was an enormous relief to me and I began to feel better almost at once, though the low point of the Depression was not reached till about 12 months later. If there is something to be learned from this experience, perhaps it is that while one may have a number of things to worry about, it is not always easy to know just which is the most serious worry that is really pulling one down, unless or until that particular worry is removed, when all the others seem relatively minor.

I could have purchased my partner's shares myself with my hard-earned savings and the head of the American company tried to persuade me to do so. I balked at the idea, however, for what seemed the very sound reason, that it would have put me in the entirely false position of having most of what I owned tied up in the business which I did not really control. In the final analysis the American company could at any time make it impossible for us to carry on the business in its existing form, if they felt like doing so, and I could not reconcile myself to being so completely in their power. I had then been associated with them for nearly 20 years and I did not feel that their ideas matched mine so well that I wanted to be tied to the business for another 20, if they chose to have it so. I wanted to be able to retire when I was ready to do so, not when they thought fit to agree to let me go. I could only retire by selling my shares in the business to them at a fair price; there was no other practicable market for them.

In 1932 they had still not come round to share my ideas about how the Canadian business should be run. That took another 5 or 6 years by which time I was no longer there. I could have sold my freedom to control my own destiny for a mess of pottage but balked at the idea, and can honestly say I have never regretted the decision.



The four years from 1932 to 1936 were devoted to the hardest kind of work in getting the business through the trough of the Depression which occurred in the spring of 1933, and then back to a more normal basis again, to where it was showing a reasonable profit.

We actually declared a small dividend for 1935 and we certainly would not have done that unless it was fully justified by the net profit for the year, and the general financial state of the company, with no debts, and money in the bank. I believe we had recovered from the effects of the big Depression sooner than the majority of business concerns in Canada.

Then a strange thing happened, at least it seemed strange to me at the time though my doctor did not think it strange; he said in fact that in his view it was normal and he would have forecast it as possible or even probable if I had asked him for a prognosis.

Early in 1935 I began to feel very much under par physically, so that my ordinary day's work required a far greater effort to keep going till it was done and I could go home. This puzzled me because by then the peak of the battle with the Depression was over and the issue no longer in doubt for us. I thought I should be able to relax to some extent, enjoy better sleep and better digestion than before, but those things seemed to be actually worse.

In the spring I took a short holiday and went to Bermuda to bask in the sunshine and sea-bathing of which I have always been very fond, and which make an ideal holiday for me. I certainly felt some benefit and was able to carry on with my job for a time. However, in 1936 I was definitely worse and sometimes when I woke up in the morning I felt as if my insides had turned to water and I simply could not face a day's work in the office.

It was a strange and very unpleasant feeling and not easy to describe. I had known a number of men who had experienced nervous breakdowns from business life but had always thought of it as something that might happen to others, not myself. And the most puzzling feature was that for us the Depression was over, business improving steadily and long range prospects excellent.

There was, however, one major drawback from my viewpoint, the fact that we were still not doing as much manufacturing in Canada as we should be doing. The result was that we were working very hard to make money for the American company and for the Canadian customs department, and relatively too little for ourselves.

Perhaps the knowledge that this was the case bothered me even more than I realized at the time. In any case by mid-1936 I reached the stage at which my doctor threw up his hands so to speak. He said he had done all he could for me and that I simply must get away from my business worries for at least two years and possibly three. He was a man of mature age and experience for whom I had great respect; my wife and I regarded him as a careful diagnostician. But carrying out his prescription about getting away for at least two years was more easily said than done, especially about shedding all business worries while I was away.

I felt it was supremely necessary for my peace of mind that I should feel it would not be necessary for me to return unless or until I really wanted to do so.

It was a difficult situation, the main problem being to convince the head of the American company of the need for me to regain my health. In some ways he was a typical high-pressure American business tycoon but he had some traits that I thought were unique, one of these being the extreme difficulty of convincing him of something he did not want to believe, because it did not happen to fit his fixed ideas or plans.

However, he did finally agree to my absence on extended sick-leave. It was my intention to leave Toronto with the main object of living in some place with a milder winter climate, and for us at the time that meant the mildest to be found in Canada, namely Victoria, B.C., which I had first visited when making a business trip to the west coast in 1926, and had decided then that I should like to live there when I retired.

I was fortunate in that my wife liked Canada and had no wish to return to live in England. In my time I had known a number of English girls who came to Canada with their husbands but never liked it or felt really settled as Canadians. Ruth did, however, have some health trouble, some of which was pulmonary - a tendency to catch pleurisy, bronchitis or pneumonia, or even on occasion all three at once. One thing she liked especially was the Canadian habit of keeping houses comfortably warm by day and night the year round. The winter climate of Victoria is not ideal but for us it is the best in Canada.

We would have liked a family of our own but fate decreed otherwise for us. As it happened my brother George died of pneumonia in Kenya and we undertook to bring up and educate his two young sons. So they came to live with us in Toronto and went to school there and in general took to life in Canada like ducks to water. They both gained admission to the University of Toronto school by competitive examination, which pleased us very much. The school was run by the university in connection with the Ontario College of Education, and had an excellent reputation for the training it gave boys academically and otherwise.

In Victoria the boys both went to Oak Bay High School which also had a good reputation then. After one year there the older boy applied for and was successful in being approved for entry to the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, the Canadian counterpart of Sandhurst in Britain.

The cadet college was known as "R.M.C." and was one place to which parents and guardians could send a young fellow without having to worry what he did with his spare time, which was virtually non-existent, a state of affairs that I still think has a good deal of merit, especially when the college is 3,000 miles from home.

Canada had no naval cadet college then but an arrangement whereby 5 or 6 cadets of each class could "opt" for the navy and finish their training with the Royal Navy in Britain after two years at R.M.C. They could spend the long summer vacations with the Canadian navy, and my nephew Dudley did this in 1938 and '39, so that he was just starting his third year as a cadet when war broke out in September 1939.

He was thus automatically in the navy throughout the war and saw service that took him as far afield as Cape Horn, Australia, Hong Kong and points between in the Pacific, then on the North Atlantic convoy route and in the English Channel for the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 the Canadian navy was on a very small scale, the total personnel being about 1,700 of all ranks, divided between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts with the headquarters staff in Ottawa.

I had been away from business life for three years and was feeling in good condition for my age of 51. I was not really keen on going back to business life and the problem of whether to do so or not was settled when I saw a notice in the newspaper to the effect that the Canadian navy needed men with experience in engineering and accountancy.

It seemed like a "Call" and I sent in a brief summary of my experience, and promptly received a telephone message asking me to see the engineer commander in the dockyard at Esquimalt. So I was back in a uniform excavated from the mothballs, and at work in the dockyard before Canada was officially at war with Nazi Germany.

The navy was obviously in for a period of very great expansion as rapidly as it could be done, and the plain truth was that the pay was so small that it could not attract well-qualified men from their civilian jobs at much better pay. Apparently our politicians between the wars were like Good Queen Bess in the sixteenth century, wanting a navy but reluctant to produce the cash.

The navy seemed quite keen to have my services as an engineer lieutenant, telling me I was over-age for active service afloat but wanted for technical work ashore. After my experience in the other war I was obliged to agree that the North Atlantic convoy route was a job for young men. My pay to start with would be \$150 a month with no additional allowances for being married or anything else, preposterously small for anyone with my background of experience. I was a member of the Engineering Institute of Canada and of the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario, so had professional status.

In my case the pay was not important as I had private income enough to live on without it, so I did not boggle about money but said I would take on the job. After six months or so our pay was somewhat increased all round and marriage allowance instituted, though the total was still quite small for professionally qualified men of the type wanted.

The first job to which I was assigned was one for which I felt well qualified by experience, and which was certainly to my liking. It was to supervise the installation of guns in merchant ships for defence against submarines and aircraft. The work was done by the civilian shipyards in Victoria and Vancouver, and the guns were issued from the stocks on hand in the naval dockyard.

I was surprised by the number of British merchant ships that came into our Pacific ports for this purpose. I was well supplied with blueprints and specifications from the Admiralty which I had to study, so that I could make sure the work was done to their standards.

Some of the ships were already "stiffened" for the low-angle gun mounted on the stem for shooting at submarines. Stiffening meant strengthening the structure of the hull of the ship to withstand the weight of the gun and the force of its recoil when fired. In ships not previously stiffened we had to survey that part of the hull where the gun was to be mounted and design the additional steel to give the needed strength.

The Admiralty instructions laid down time limits for the work that left no time to waste, and stressed the importance of avoiding any unnecessary delay to the ships.

Before starting on this job I had been warned by my seniors that it was well to be on the lookout for the civilian contractors or their men doing things that should not be done. I received the impression that relations between the navy and the contractors were not exactly as good as they might be. There was a

tendency among the contractors to look at naval officers as brass-bound popinjays whose main object was to make life difficult for contractors doing work for them.

I can only say as a result of my experience in the several years of my dealings with the contractors, that I had no trouble at all and that I have felt grateful to them ever since for the full co-operation that they gave me in our joint efforts to get on with the war, and the friendly spirit that marked my relations with them.

An important part of the dockyard organization was the stores department, which was staffed by civil servants, and it was a new experience for me to deal with them and observe their methods as they compared with those of the business organizations with which I was familiar.

When a merchant ship came into Victoria or Vancouver to have a gun installed, I had to request the stores department to issue the gun to the ship in question. Then they had to make out certain forms in quintuplicate which I had to sign. The guns were the property of the British Admiralty and were known as being "on Admiralty Account," as distinct from anything that was the property of the Canadian government.

The time allowed by the Admiralty instructions for fitting a 4-inch low-angle gun in a ship that was already "stiffened" was four days, which included fitting up a magazine for the ammunition, telephone communication from the crow's nest to the bridge and from the bridge to the gun platform, accommodation for the gun crew and so on.

There really was no time to waste and I had difficulty in persuading the personnel of the stores department of the need for speed in the formalities of their quintuplicate forms and so on. Of course they had other things to do and possibly regarded me as something of a pest. It seemed to me that it was often more important to them to make sure all the T's were crossed and the I's dotted in their wretched forms, than it was to be sure the ship was not delayed a day past its scheduled sailing date.

I did try not to be too much of a pest and think in the main my relations with them were good; some of the contractors said I was the only naval officer who got such things as guns delivered in time to avoid delay in their part of the job.

Many of the ships I dealt with were in Vancouver and I had to spend much time there, usually making the journey to and from Victoria in the overnight passenger ships operated by the Canadian Pacific Railway, a very comfortable and convenient way of travelling without waste of daylight working time. In Vancouver I could and usually did stay at the newly opened Vancouver Hotel built by the Canadian National Railways, where I could have luxurious accommodation for the "Military Rate" of \$2.50 a day. At the time the hotel seemed to be only about half full but this changed as time and the war went on, and the rate went up somewhat.

I believe it was in the autumn of 1939 that the Germans began to lay their magnetic mines where they were likely to be most effective in the coastal waters of Britain. This was one of the secret weapons that Hitler boasted about when he felt like doing some boasting. It was certainly a nasty one from our point of view.

The British were not prepared for it and had to improvise defensive measures as they have so often been obliged to do. We began to hear about a mysterious new process known as "Degaussing" ships as a counter measure, and I looked up the meaning of the word, from the name of a German scientist, Dr. Karl Gauss, who gave it to a unit for measuring magnetic intensity, equal to one line of magnetic force per square centimeter.

It may have been due to the fact that I happened to have this odd scrap of information ready one day when my boss asked the question, that he began to pass over to me the volumes of data from the Admiralty that were arriving on the subject of degaussing ships. So I had to do a lot of homework studying the details of the research being done in all haste by the scientists in Britain, to find the most practical means of protecting ships against magnetic mines.

Then I found I had a new job in addition to the one I had before and the title of Degaussing Officer. I have always loved ships and trying to protect them from the machinations of our enemies appealed to me very strongly.

Everything to do with degaussing was supposed to be highly classified and not to be talked about even in the officers' mess, though there was a great deal of interest in the subject. Navigators were interested because the gear we began to install in warships and merchant vessels alike, known as "Degaussing Gear" had an effect on the magnetic compasses on which the navigators depended.

One day at lunch in the mess another officer asked me across the table some question about degaussing. It was a simple question with nothing abstruse or secret about it, but after lunch in the reading room I was taken to task by a technical officer senior to me in rank, about breaching secrecy on as it was coming to be known.

So I went over to the magazine table and picked up the current issue of one of the English weekly illustrated journals, the centre pages of which had a full size "spread" of either the *Queen Mary* or the *Queen Elizabeth* arriving in New York harbour, with the D.G. coils around the outside of her hull, and a

more or less detailed description of the whole business. So much for secrecy! The United States was not then in the war.

As time went on the business of "D.G." became more and more complicated and technical, as research was done and new ideas and theories developed by the scientists working on the problem. We soon stopped putting the coils of electric cables outside the hulls and put them in the scuppers, then inside the hulls at about the waterline of the ship. That was 27 years ago and for all I know the whole idea may have been abandoned now, but it kept me on the alert and working hard to keep up with developments during the war.

In 1940 the field of my activities was extended when I was sent to Seattle and later on to most of the ports on the Pacific coast of the United States as far south as San Pedro, in connection with arming ships as well as "D.G." Some of the ships were Dutch or Norwegian and some were ships that had been laid up since the first World War, and were bought by the British in their desperate struggle to replace ships sunk by German submarines or commerce raiders, faster than new ships could be built.

When I was in the United States I wore "civvies" instead of uniform but my Canadian passport had my naval rank and photograph in uniform, and I kept in touch with the British consulates, each of which had a British naval officer attached to the staff under the euphemistic title of Consular Shipping Adviser. In the United States I was said to be "on loan" to the Royal Navy, and my boss was Rear-Admiral F. R. Barry, R.N. who was in New York, his office being in the Cunard Building at 25 Broadway, where the office of the British Ministry of War Transport was, with Sir Ashley Sparks in charge.

Admiral Barry left the west coast of the United States to me and I never met him till later, after the United States had entered the war and the U.S. navy had taken over what I had been doing in their country. I liked him very much.

I was happy with the arrangement because I have always liked to have responsibility and relative freedom from red tape. In my business life I was accustomed to being my own boss, taking full responsibility.

In Canada my efforts to achieve efficiency were somewhat hampered by bureaucratic red tape. When dealing with Canadian ships especially I was supposed to send a signal to Ottawa asking for approval before doing anything to a ship. Sometimes the reply to my signal did not arrive for some days or even three weeks or so, which might be entirely too late. The delay might have been unavoidable but I had a shrewd suspicion that it could be caused by some young spriggins in his nice, new naval uniform, going to too many dances and cocktail parties in the hectic, wartime social life of the nation's capital, instead of giving his duties the close attention they should have. I had a brief glimpse of the state of affairs on one occasion when I was summoned to Ottawa to attend a conference at Naval Service Headquarters.

Prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour many Americans were stoutly opposed to their country becoming directly involved in the war. Their President Roosevelt went to considerable lengths to convince them that it might not be possible for them to maintain this detached attitude indefinitely, especially in view of the aggressive policy of Japan.

My work was hampered to some extent by the fact that the commercial shipyards on the Pacific coast were becoming very fully occupied with work for the U.S. navy, undertaken as part of the policy of the Administration in Washington to increase preparedness for war, should it come.

In connection with degaussing British or Dutch or Norwegian merchant ships I had some contact with some personnel of the United States navy who were of course much interested in the subject and carrying on their own research. I found them very friendly and co-operative though much given to taking the weekends off duty for golf, swimming and other diversions.

I had long been accustomed to hearing and reading American jokes about the typical British business man and his long weekends, but I felt that some Americans had not only adopted the habit but to some extent improved on the best efforts of the English.

I was really working quite hard at the time, trying to be in two or three widely separated places at once, living in hotels and working in the evenings (and weekends) at the design of degaussing gear for ships I had surveyed in the daylight working hours. I bought my first portable typewriter so that I could write up the specifications to give to the contractor in the morning, thus (I hoped) enabling him to start work that much sooner.

Fortunately by this time I had an assistant in Victoria, a young B.Sc. graduate in electrical engineering from the Maritimes. In due course we were able to establish a D.G. office in Vancouver and as time went on the total organization of my department built up to 85 of all ranks, in Vancouver and Victoria, and I was given the impressive title of Superintending Inspector Degaussing West Coast, and as head of the department I was ex-officio on the staff of the Commanding Officer Pacific Coast, known as C.O.P.C. for short, my own abbreviation being S.I.D.G., West Coast.

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1941 I was promoted to Lieut.-Cmdr. (Acting) which was pleasant though I thought actually somewhat tardy. When I was asked if I would accept appointment as Lient. (E) nearly two years before, I did balk mildly on the ground that I felt my age of 51, my status as a fully qualified professional engineer, my previous war service, not to mention the senior executive position I had held in my civilian occupation, all justified appointment as lieutenant-commander.

Later on I had reason to think the answer I was given was probably cooked up on the spur of the moment. It was to the effect that the rules prevented them bringing me into the service with any rank higher than lieutenant, but that they were practically certain I would be promoted in a few months, meaning presumably the following New Year.

If such a rule really existed it was very soon shelved when they found they simply could not get men with the technical qualifications they wanted for \$150 a month. So they brought in several men much younger than me, too young to have served in World War I, and certainly no better qualified technically than myself (if as well), with the rank of Lieut.- Cmdr. (E), so senior to me in the navy list. I was confirmed in the rank on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943, three years and three months late. On one occasion when I discussed the matter with my boss in Esquimalt, he replied, "Well you don't need the money do you," which was so far from my idea of the correct attitude that I felt there was no point in pursuing the subject. Actually I thought there was far too much of that kind of attitude among some of the senior officers toward civilians whose services they certainly needed during the war.

I don't know if the army and air force were similar but I am reminded of a passage I read in a book about the armed services of Britain, written if I remember correctly by Field Marshal Montgomery, "Between the wars they chose badly by any standard, if indeed they understood at all what standards were required."

How does an average politician tell a top-notch admiral or general or air marshal from a mediocre one? Probably the answer is that too often he does not. From observation I suspect that our politicians in Ottawa tended to bring to the top those senior officers who seemed most ready to fail in line with their wishes to run a miniscule navy on a financial shoestring, because that is what was done.

Among the many ships I was responsible for arming or degaussing or both, some stand out in my memory more than others. One was a British ship of a well-known line owned in Glasgow. When I went on board and introduced myself to the captain he told me that he had been shipmates with one of my older brothers as an apprentice or cadet in a square-rigged sailing ship called the *Yola* in 1894, on a voyage to Portland, Oregon, with general cargo, returning to Britain with wheat.

Another ship was unique in being one of the very few German ships captured by us intact without being scuttled or even damaged, despite the strict orders of Hitler that this should not happen. She was the 12,000 ton M/V *Weser* which took refuge in the Mexican port of Manzanillo when war broke out, and was captured in a very smart bit of work by the newly commissioned Canadian light cruiser, H.M.C.S. *Prince Robert*.

Through the British Intelligence Service we heard that the *Weser* was preparing to leave the neutral shelter of Manzanillo and the *Prince Robert* went down there for the express purpose of trying to capture her, and succeeded immediately she left Mexican territorial waters one dark night.

The German ship was brought as a prize of war to Victoria where we armed and degaussed her after which she went to the Atlantic to carry cargoes of munitions to Britain, making several trips before she was sunk by German aeroplanes.

She was one of several ships designed to serve as freighters in peace and to be easily converted to commerce raiders in war. Armed with 5.9" guns and a speed of 19 knots with twin diesel engines, they could carry enough fuel to remain at sea for many months without needing to replenish bunkers, and could give battle to light cruisers armed with 6" guns if necessary, as one of them did to the Australian cruiser, H.M.A.S *Sydney*, when both ships were burned and sunk with no survivors.

The *Weser* was renamed by us the *Vancouver Island*. Her German crew were tough, brash young Nazis, full of "Hoch der Vaterland" and "Heil Hitler" and convinced that they would take over Canada among other countries after the war. They were taken inland to be interned and I never heard what became of them eventually. Some of them may have returned as immigrants after the war!

Another ship of which I have pleasant memories is the Dutch M/V *Klipfontein* which was on her maiden voyage around Africa when the German armies crashed into Holland. When I met her in 1941 she was running from San Francisco and San Pedro across the Pacific to Indonesia, Calcutta and "way points." She was a new ship and had some of the best passenger accommodation I had ever seen for as many as 150 people, as well as cargo.

The captain was an elderly man who was extremely pleasant to me but seemed to worry too much about the effect of the degaussing gear on the magnetic compasses. To try to reassure him I went to some trouble to get what we called "Compass Corrector Gear" designed by scientists of the United States navy and made by the civilian contractors for the *Klipfontein*. My reward came in the form of a cable from Honolulu which read, "Compasses more better as before," which gave me quite a kick.



The ship was equipped with a gyro-compass but these do sometimes go out of order, and if it is beyond the resources of the ship's electrician to correct the defect, the navigator must rely on the old-fashioned magnetic compass.

At this time the Japanese special mission was in Washington carrying on with oriental subtlety the long-drawn-out negotiations with President Roosevelt, ostensibly with the object of settling differences between the two countries without resort to war, but actually killing time till what was regarded as the psychological moment for the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbour.

It seemed as if the Dutch had no illusions about the intentions of the Japanese. Some months before the attack the Dutch ships trading in the Pacific were ordered to have the stiffening for guns installed, also degaussing gear, both of which brought them into the field of my operations. The guns were actually installed in Sourabaya.

My dealings with the personnel of the U.S. navy were pleasant and friendly and in my work I was glad of their cooperation, but I could not help feeling that they underestimated the Japanese, especially when I remembered the occasion when they started their war with Russia in the first decade of the present century, by a surprise attack on Port Arthur without the formality of declaring war.

In view of the record I felt strongly that the whole attitude of the personnel of the American armed services whom I met, was much too relaxed and confident in the great military and industrial might of their country; they were certain that the Japanese would not dare to attack them. So on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, their armed services in Hawaii were not really on the alert but "week-ending as usual."

When the bombs fell on Pearl Harbour my wife and I were concerned as we knew that H.M.C.S. *Prince Robert* was somewhere in that part of the Pacific Ocean and that she was no match for the Japanese navy, being only a former passenger ship of about 6,000 tons and 23 knots, converted into a light cruiser. Our nephew Dudley was a sub-lieutenant on board her.

She was returning to Canada after escorting a troopship to Hong Kong with two battalions of infantry that arrived just in time to surrender to the Japanese after a brief but sanguinary period of fighting against hopeless odds.

A week or so after the blitz at Pearl Harbour the *Prince Robert* arrived in our naval base at Esquimalt and we learned that she had left Honolulu a matter of hours before the attack, so she had a narrow escape. The captain told me he had expected orders sent in care of the U.S. navy and was surprised on arrival to find they were locked up in the vault that could not be opened till the time-lock functioned in the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>. He thought that was an extraordinary state of affairs even allowing for the fact that Canada was not at war with Japan when the arrangement was made, though we had been at war with Germany and Italy for more than two years.

In the years since then I have met a number of Americans who are firmly convinced that their President Roosevelt was a party to the plot to blitz Pearl Harbour in order to force his country into the war. I have never been able to accept this theory though I was never an admirer of Roosevelt. Apart from any question of war or peace I think some of his policies were definitely harmful to Canada as well as to his own country.

I have discussed these matters with American naval officers who were not involved in any way and believe they agreed with me that under the circumstances it was a mistake to have the secret code books kept under a time-lock at night. One I met more recently told me that there was actually an important despatch from Washington waiting to be decoded when the time-lock functioned on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>, but this might be gossip, and I have no idea whether it could have saved them being caught flat-footed if this despatch had been decoded as soon as possible after being received in Pearl Harbour, or in fact whether it had anything to do with the blitz.

My friends on the *Prince Robert* also told me that while on passage from Hong Kong to Pearl Harbour they noticed wireless activity they could not understand or make anything of, which must have been from the Japanese fleet which was also on the way but not in sight, of course. They reported this on arrival at Pearl Harbour but said their report did not seem to attract much interest. I feel sure that the Japanese knew at least as much as I did about the week-ending habits of the U.S. navy personnel, and the timing of the blitz for 7 a.m. on Sunday was perfect.

For me the entry of the United States into the war meant that their navy took over the work I was doing on their side of the Canadian border and I packed up my office in San Francisco and stopped trying to be on both sides of the border at once, which was something of a relief though I had enjoyed the work in the United States and found it most interesting.

At home in Victoria I found the war had moved closer to us and we had to black out our homes and everything else at night, lest the Japanese should have ideas about repeating their success at Pearl Harbour on the coast of continental North America. We were very poorly equipped to cope with them if they came because Canada had been stripped of arms of all kinds, to help re-arm Britain after the fall of France and the disaster at Dunquerque. The Canadian navy was concentrated on the North Atlantic convoy route and the army had two Bofors anti-aircraft guns in use for training on the west coast, and little ammunition.

The shipyards on our west coast built a number of smaller naval vessels such as frigates, corvettes and minesweepers, but these were hustled round to the Atlantic side as soon as they were commissioned. We also built 100 or more of the standard design 10,000 ton cargo ships which likewise vanished to all parts of the seven seas as soon as they were finished. One of these was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine within about 100 miles of Victoria on her maiden voyage. As she was loaded with lumber we were able to float her into our big dry-dock to be repaired.

Soon after the fall of Singapore we had the S/S *Queen Elizabeth* in the dry-dock with the biggest barnacles I ever saw on her hull below the waterline. She had been carrying Australian troops to Singapore and was overdue for dry-docking to clean off the barnacles which were large and numerous enough to cause some reduction in speed. She left Victoria to start the job of carrying American troops to Australia. At this date she could carry 12,000 troops at a time but after some changes in the arrangements for feeding them she could and did take 20,000.

It was amusing to note how many people who regarded themselves as well informed about all matters to do with shipping, had apparently not heard of the existence of our dry-dock at Esquimalt before, big enough to take Cunard Co.'s big Queens with room to spare lengthways if rather a close fit for depth. The first time the *Elizabeth* went in some of the large wooden blocks on which the keel rests, came floating up

to the surface, and when the captain saw this he insisted on backing his ship out again and was with difficulty persuaded to make another attempt the next day, which was fortunately successful.

This big ship had apparently never stayed in one place long enough to have degaussing gear fitted though some bits and pieces of the gear were stowed in various places on board. I looked it over and decided we could do nothing to help matters in the few days she was going to be with us.

As time went on in 1942 rumours began to circulate about the part to be played by the Canadian navy in the invasion of Europe when it should come to pass. In 1943 we began to be very busy with the work of preparing, repairing and altering a number of craft for the various functions to be performed with the object of actually landing an army on the coast of France, whether it be in the English Channel or the Mediterranean.

In December 1943 we were set back rather seriously by an unusual amount of fog, actually 19 days in the one month on which no ships could move in Vancouver harbour, while the rumour mills worked overtime about cables said to be received from the Admiralty fixing deadline dates for ships to reach England, causing the officers appointed to command them to have stomach ulcers worrying about possibly missing the great opportunity of their lives to attain a niche in the hall of fame, by playing an active part in a great historic event. Those I knew were extremely keen on the job they had to do regardless of the possible hazards.

In the event I believe all our ships that were supposed to be on hand in the English Channel were there and played their part. I was sorry not to be there myself but was well represented by three nephews, two as navigating officers on Canadian ships and one who played a prominent part in the design and construction of the "Mulberry" harbours that were planted on the coast of Normandy. He is a civil engineer who was on the civil construction staff of the Admiralty and was at one time assigned to the naval base at Singapore. He was not responsible for the fact that the 12-inch guns could only be fired out to sea as that was settled before he was on the job. In any case heavy cannons of that type are simply not suitable for shooting Japanese infantrymen out of trees, a mode of attack presumably not anticipated by our pre-war planners.

Once the ships for D-Day were off our hands things seemed a bit flat on the west coast, though the shipyards were fully occupied with new construction of naval and merchant vessels. The date for the invasion of Europe was not known but it was obviously too early for the feeling of tension that I supposed we all felt later, civilians and armed services alike, with Dieppe fresh in memory.

By this time (early 1944) I had a good staff in my department, both in Esquimalt and in Vancouver, and my work was largely in administration, supervision and paper work in my office, with less clambering about ships. At one time we had several Russian merchant ships in Vancouver apparently wanting to be degaussed but there was uncertainty about who would pay for the job, and in the end they went off to the United States where Lend Lease was functioning, rather to my relief. When on board them I felt I was being closely watched every minute and there was no feeling of friendliness or co-operation, only suspicion.

In the spring of 1944 I was in the doctor's hands over some trouble with my back, which I had had before and which seemed liable to recur at intervals, especially if I did something that caused strain. The medical officers attached to the naval hospital suggested putting me to bed. When I asked them if they could cure the trouble and how long it would take, they said I might be in hospital for a year and they could relieve the symptoms but not definitely cure the trouble.

This idea did not appeal to me at all. It looked as if the war might be finished by the end of 1944 and I could do nothing to help it in hospital. I felt I could do better taking things quietly at home and attending to my personal affairs which had been somewhat neglected for nearly five years. So I propositioned the doctors to give me a medical board and certify me "Medically Unfit" for further service, which would automatically return me to life as a civilian, which was done. The war did not finish quite so quickly as many of us had thought it might, but I am sure that was not due to my absence from active duty in the latter half of 1944! It was much more likely due to the Battle of the Bulge.

The Canadian government had set up an elaborate and I think very good organization, the object of which was to try to make sure that all members of the armed services on returning to civil life who did not have definite jobs to go to, would be taken care of in one way or another, by vocational training or other means.

It had never occurred to me that the good people in charge of this work in Victoria would be interested in me, but there was a prescribed routine that everyone was supposed to go through on discharge from the service, regardless of rank or whether he wanted a job of any sort or not.

They seemed to fairly pounce on me and I had difficulty in convincing them that I really did not want anything they could do for me. One official went to some trouble to try to explain some of the business facts of life that I felt I really knew more about than he did, though I did not want to hurt his feelings by saying so.

I had in fact practically made up my mind not to go back into the kind of high-pressure business life I had led for 25 years or so, but had not come to really like in that time, to put it mildly. I had been away from it for 8 years including my war service and was 58 years old, and thought of retiring at 60 or as soon after as it was feasible to do so.

Another factor was the matter of health, particularly that of my wife. I had long been convinced that she would be better in a warmer climate than could be found in Canada, and I also had a hankering to try living in the tropics myself, preferably on an island if possible.

We discussed the pros and cons and I wrote letters to sundry people with a view to digging up information about places to which we might possibly go. Choice was limited to a considerable extent by the fact that Canada had currency control, which virtually eliminated the southern United States or any country in which the local currency was in practice linked to the United States dollar though not officially tied thereto, such as Mexico for instance.

We decided to try the Caribbean Islands then known as the British West Indies and for currency purposes included in the sterling area. In mid-1946 the Canadian currency control did not seem to include the sterling area or at any rate not the West Indies.

We decided to go first to Antigua (pronounced Antee-ga) partly because there was a new hotel there, managed by a man we knew who had formerly been in the hotel business in Victoria.

Transportation was a problem because ship services the world over had made very little progress toward returning to anything like a pre-war basis. The Vancouver office of a well known travel agency told us that the Shipping companies did not even bother to answer their letters any more.

So we arranged to fly by way of Seattle, and Chicago to Miami, where we had a reservation with Pan-American Airways to go on to Antigua in one of their DC-3's that island-hopped down the Caribbean en route to South America. It took all day and the plane crews changed at Antigua, the crew we had travelled with from Miami spending the night in our hotel before returning to Miami.

Ruth and I both loved the warm climate of the West Indies from the first moment we arrived there. We did not stay in Antigua more than a few weeks for sundry reasons. It is one of the Caribbean Islands often called "The Sugar Islands" because the staple crop on which the economy depends is the sugar cane, and it does seem to be the crop that naturally and consistently does best in the soil and climate of those islands.

The trouble is that for many years cane sugar has been what is known as a "feast or famine" or a "boom or bust" crop. It can be grown in a large number of tropical or sub-tropical countries including some in which the wages of workers and their standard of living are very low, as in the Sugar Islands, and world supply of sugar often exceeds demand.

Some of the islands are better suited for producing sugar than others, the more fortunate ones having better or deeper soil and more reliable rainfall. We remained in Antigua less than nine weeks and moved on to Barbados where we lived for nine years, before moving on to Mexico.

Antigua has traditionally been a relatively poor island with uncertain rainfall and soil lacking in depth or quality. In 1946 it seemed to us to be somewhat too "underdeveloped" and with very little fresh water available for gardening or other purposes. Ruth has always been a very keen gardener and wanted to pursue her hobby in the tropics.

While staying in the hotel we met a number of men and women in the British colonial service, engaged in trying to see that the various islands had good government and hoping to help them attain economic self-sufficiency, so that they would depend less on being subsidized by the British taxpayer.

These civil servants knew the various islands well and we learned a great deal from them, to help us decide which would suit our needs and ideas best. The answer was definitely Barbados so we packed our bags and betook ourselves to Barbados, the most easterly of the Caribbean Islands, with a very high density of population which is about 90% negro. The island is approximately pear-shaped, about 23 miles long with an area of 166 square miles, and is unique in being the only one of the many islands in that part of the ocean that has always been British since it was first settled by them in 1625, prior to which it was uninhabited. The others all changed hands, some of them frequently, in the various wars between the Spanish, French, Dutch, Portuguese and British in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

We were fortunate in having a social contact in Barbados with a man who had been at school with me and was the headmaster of a boys' college of about 500 students. I had had no contact with him since leaving the school some 42 years before, but the old school tie is a very strong tie, as I used to tell some of my young friends in Canada who were members of one of the Greek letter fraternities with which North American colleges are infested. The old school tie is also basically more democratic.

My former school contemporary and his family were very kind to us socially and our contact with them helped us materially to "find our feet" and feel at home in Barbados, much sooner than would have otherwise been the case.

As a place to live we liked the island from the first and it did not take us long to decide that it was where we wanted to settle down, which started us on hunting for a house to buy or a plot of land on which to build to suit our own ideas.

We toyed with the idea of buying an old plantation house and modernizing it but were thankful later on that we had resisted this particular temptation. Some of the old houses we looked over had artistic and romantic appeal as well as wonderful views, which were, however, offset by antique plumbing and kitchens, leaky roofs and heavy infestation of termites in the woodwork, every scrap of which would have to be replaced. Some newcomers to the island who bought old plantation houses and proceeded to carry out extensive alterations, including cutting through the walls to make new windows or doorways, fell into a booby trap because the original building, perhaps two centuries before, did not include the use of cement in mixing the mortar. Perhaps cement was unobtainable then or too expensive for ordinary use; some said molasses was used instead. The walls seemed to do well enough till someone began to cut through them, when they would collapse and have to be completely rebuilt, so that the final result would cost a great deal more than the luckless buyer had planned to spend.

We finally decided we must build in order to have a home that we really liked because it suited our ideas and the climate. This seems a simple formula but in our experience it has been amazingly difficult to find

a house already built that came fairly close to our ideas of comfortable living, convenience in housekeeping and suitability for the climate, and this applies to all the various places in which we have lived. We have built four "Dream Houses" in different places and in each case they sold quite readily at a good price when we wanted to move away.

Building a house in a strange country is something of an adventure because manners and customs and methods of doing business vary and newcomers have much to learn. One might think the simplest way would be to engage the services of a local architect but we have found that unsatisfactory even in our own country of Canada; perhaps it is our fault.

My wife has very sound ideas on the subject and is quite capable of drawing plans to scale, while I am equally capable of seeing that the structure will withstand hurricanes or whatever is the local hazard, also that the surrounding ground is well drained and so on. Hurricanes are a feature of life in the West Indies and the local history is replete with stories of destroyed buildings, including in Barbados at one time the Cathedral and Government House.

The staple material for walls is the coral rock of which the island is largely composed. It is like a soft rock and is quarried with the help of dynamite and cut into rectangular blocks with saws similar to those used by carpenters and loggers. The coral is hygroscopic and the outside surface must be made waterproof by one means or another, or the rain will quickly leak through the thickest wall and ruin the appearance of the inside surface, making the whole building look and feel very damp, sprouting an ugly black mould.

We bought two acres of land with sugar cane growing on it, though it was not really good cane land as the soil was not deep enough for that demanding crop. It proved adequate, however, for the sort of gardening my wife wanted to do, and she thoroughly enjoyed the experience of gardening in the tropics with a negro lad or two to do the unskilled chores. They were not the world's most wonderful workers but were about worth their relatively small wages from our point of view.

The contractor who undertook to build our house was a white man born in the island. The workers were all negroes and at times the total number of men, women and children on the job must have been about 40, though it was not a large house. We visited the site every day and sometimes took a hand in the proceedings, trying to see that the rooms and doorways and window apertures were rectangular. The native workmen had a genius for getting them definitely non-rectangular and were hard to convince on the subject; they seemed to think our predilection for geometric symmetry was a strange obsession of foreigners. I tried to show them how to check by making sure the diagonals were equal but their reaction was that my idea wouldn't work in Barbados. We learned later that this was a very common reaction to new ideas or suggestions and was by no means confined to the coloured Barbadians; I suppose it is a symptom of insularity.

When the house was finished and we had moved in we found it a very good spot in which to live. Our household staff consisted of a cook and a housemaid and the garden staff at first of one teenage lad and later of two. The idea was that two would do approximately twice the work of one but we had to admit that in this respect Barbados really was different; they did twice as little and spent much time sitting down where they were not visible from the house, chewing sugar cane and talking interminably in the local patois, a curious mixture of seventeenth-century English, bad grammar and missing teeth caused by lack of dental care.

Household help was very plentiful and some of it was good and wages were modest by our standards. Many of the applicants for jobs as housemaid or cook were not trained and some very hard to train, especially the would-be cooks. A written recipe is little use to a cook who cannot read and some lacked any natural aptitude for the culinary art.

Education was not compulsory if only because it had never been practicable to provide schools and teachers to keep up with the rapidly increasing population. Barbados was traditionally noted for its schools, including secondary schools from which students could graduate to universities in England or elsewhere, some with the aid of scholarships. There were also private boarding schools for youngsters from other islands, the curricula of all schools corresponding to those of Britain.

Shortly after we arrived in Barbados in 1946 some drastic political and social changes set in that were destined to revolutionize life on the island for both the white and coloured populations. The Labour party won the election in Britain in 1945 and went to work to effect changes in the Colonies, with the object of bringing them up to date according to socialist ideologies.

Prior to that time Barbados did not have universal suffrage. The vote was limited by an income or property qualification that disfranchised most of the teeming negro population. There was an elected legislative assembly of 25 members only two of which were coloured. When we left the island nine years later only two white men were members. The governor and commissioner of police and the first secretary and attorney-general were still career men in the British Colonial Service, but it was obviously only a matter of time till that changed.

It is a tribute to the way in which the island had been administered by the British that this revolutionary change was accomplished smoothly, with no vestige of violence. This did not alter the fact that with 90% or more of the total population coloured, the whites had become politically negligible, and this condition prevailed in all the islands of the British West Indies, plus the continental enclaves known as British Honduras and British Guiana.

There was much discussion of a federation of all these units and the British government was in favour of the plan, probably I should think in the hope that the prospect of them becoming economically self-supporting would be improved thereby, instead of taking it for granted that they should be supported by the over-burdened British taxpayer, through a substantial subsidy on the cane sugar they produced or in other ways.

Trying to get them all to agree on federation was like trying to get a large family of problem children to sink their differences and mutual jealousies, and work together for the common good. It finally reached the stage of being attempted with some of them "opting out," but federation had a very short life and then collapsed completely.

There was also much talk of expanding tourism which offered promise if only on account of the climate in the months of winter in the northern hemisphere, when the weather is excellent in the Caribbean Islands and especially so in Barbados, which has no malaria or snakes and relative freedom from other pests found on some of the other islands. Not all Barbadians were in favour of more tourists. Members of the old established plantation families recognized that most of the tourists would come from the United



States or Canada, and would bring inflation of the currency with them, especially the Americans, by overpaying the negroes and their generally lavish way of living wherever they may be.

It was deemed urgently necessary, however, to diversify the economy by any means possible, instead of continuing indefinitely to depend on the old unreliable cane sugar, subject as it was to long periods of price depression. Efforts have been made to produce other crops such as cotton or tobacco but without success. To judge by my wife's efforts at horticulture it seemed evident that Barbados was meant by nature to produce the sugar cane efficiently and very little else of commercial value.

With much effort and irrigation and constant battling with pests we managed to produce a few vegetables for our own consumption, but we also bought tinned stuff. We did grow bananas and avocados which we consumed with relish when they were not stolen at night by dark complected predators with bare feet, invisible and inaudible.

The legal term for this is praedial larceny and it was evidently an old problem in the island. The plantation houses coped with it by keeping dogs of a large, fierce breed loose about their premises at night but we did not think it important enough for that remedy. They were known as plantation dogs and were sometimes referred to as Bull Mastiffs and seemed a very effective answer to the problem.

Some householders kept a flock of guinea fowl which roamed the garden in the daytime and roosted in trees at night. They were said to be more sensitive to the presence of nocturnal prowlers than the best watchdog, and made a terrific din if anyone came around.

We liked the climate of Barbados better than that of any of the various places we lived in before or since. In Latitude 13° North it is well within the tropics but the temperature is modified by the easterly trade wind, so that the mean temperature throughout the year is 80°F. and the seawater is the same. Air temperature very seldom varies more than 10° above or below the mean, which makes it the most equable climate of the many in which I have lived.

The sea bathing is very good especially on the west or lee coast, with some excellent sandy beaches. On the east or windward coast the wind is too strong and the sea too rough for safe bathing most of the time.

The island has another advantage in a good supply of fresh water from underground though there are no lakes or rivers. The waterworks are operated by the government and while we were there a large subterranean basin of fresh water was discovered, and measurements were being made to determine the quantity of water that could be drawn from it daily without exhausting the supply. It was several hundred feet above sea level so the water would flow to most of the island by gravity. It was recognized, however, that continued increase in both population and per capita consumption would create a problem in time.

Some of the Caribbean Islands depend on catchment of rainwater from the roofs, as in the Bahamas, Virgin Islands and others, but this system has drawbacks, one of which is keeping the storage cisterns clean and the water free from pollution. I gained the impression that many householders solve the problem by ignoring its existence.

We found no lack of social life that was congenial to us. Most of our friends were British, Canadian or American but we were on visiting terms with a few of the plantation families, some of which had been in Barbados for 200 years or more, and were regarded as "Old Family" by themselves and others. Some of

them did not really approve of their personal paradise being invaded by intruders like ourselves, and did not like the idea of the universal suffrage that came from the socialist government in England, at about the same time we arrived from Canada; but there was nothing much they could do about either.

Owing to the extent and quality of education there is no doubt Barbados was better prepared for self-government than many of the under-developed countries. It was still true, however, that the illiteracy rate was quite high and illegitimacy about 60% of the population as many of the negroes had a definite preference for a tie less binding than that of legal marriage, especially when no social stigma was incurred.

The first election held with universal suffrage resulted in a negro lawyer becoming premier. He had qualified as a lawyer in London and was therefore a well-educated man, but that did not mean that all the members of his cabinet were of the same calibre, in fact that was far from being the case. It did not seem very sensible for a small island with a total population of about 220,000 to have a premier and cabinet with all the paraphernalia and complications of government as a parliamentary democracy and bureaucracy. One thing certain was that taxes would increase considerably.

While this was going on I began to have misgivings about continuing to live in Barbados. It seemed to me that white people being only 10% of the population would be in the position of second-class citizens and the idea lacked appeal. I gathered that some of the "Old Families" would leave if they could, much as they would dislike selling the plantations that had been owned by their ancestors for many generations. It would probably be easy enough to sell the land but that did not solve the problem of where to go in view of the restrictions imposed by the currency control of the sterling area. The idea of going to live in England with the doubtful climate and high taxation was not popular.

As a matter of fact we had a taxation problem in Barbados that we had not anticipated before we went there. We were taxed by Canada as non-resident citizens, a straight 15% with no deductions or exemptions allowed. We were also liable for income tax in Barbados with much smaller exemptions than we had had as Canadians domiciled in Canada. The tax tables were based on smaller incomes than in Canada so we were in a relatively higher "tax bracket" in Barbados.

When we first enquired at the tax office to find out how we stood, we were told that there was then (1946) no agreement between the governments of Barbados and Canada about non-duplicating of taxes, but that it was fully expected there would be one within a year or two. In the meantime as an act of grace they would make some allowance for the fact that we were taxed by Canada.

Actually it worked out between the two taxes that we paid just about 30% of our entire income, which was a heavy "bite" for people of modest means. We could have offset this to some extent by putting more of our hard-earned life savings into annuities which are only partly taxable, as the taxgatherers distinguish between "return of capital" and "interest". The older one is when the annuity is bought the better it works, but we did not want to do this at the time as a matter of policy.

One thing and another added up to make us think of going somewhere else to live in spite of regrets at leaving Barbados. So we decided to explore Mexico after selling our house and furniture and car and saying farewell to the friends we had made in our nine years in Barbados.

We would have preferred to go to Mexico by ship direct from Barbados or Trinidad which is only 200 miles away and more of a centre for shipping. However, it seemed impossible and we finally settled on going by an American cruise ship that normally plied between New York and South America as far as Buenos Ayres.

It was Ruth's first visit to New York since she had arrived there in the *Olympic* to find them celebrating the Armistice on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, 37 years before. But her second visit did not cause her to revise the rather poor opinion of New York she had formed the first time.

No city is very pleasant in a heat wave and I think that applies with exceptional force to New York, perhaps owing to the relatively humid climate, the airlessness caused by so many very high buildings, to say nothing of the polyglot nature of much of the population, which has of course no connection with the state of the weather; it is always the same.

Our visit in 1955 was marred by additional drawbacks, one of which was the result of our ship arriving in the harbour on the morning of July 5<sup>th</sup>, doubtless because she had been slowed down to avoid arriving on the great national holiday, July 4<sup>th</sup>.

The trouble was that 3 or 4 of the large transatlantic liners from Europe did the same thing and happened to arrive just ahead of us, so had a prior claim on the customs and immigration officials while we were kept waiting. By the time we were ashore all the good hotels were chock full and the best we could find was a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> rate one in a rather dreary part of the city, minus air-conditioning.

Our first call was at the office of the American Automobile Association, which we had joined as "Members at Large" before leaving Barbados. The staff were very pleasant and helpful indeed but had some bad news for us.

We had planned to buy a station wagon and load our 800 pounds or so of assorted duffel into it and drive to Mexico, to spend six months exploring the country in order to decide whether we wanted to live there, and if so, where. We did this in the end but getting started was not so simple as one would think it should be.

We found that our Barbados driving licences were not valid in the State of New York nor probably anywhere in the United States, and owing to congestion of applicants it would take at least three weeks for us to obtain New York licences. To make matters worse there was an acute shortage of station wagons and none of the dealers had one in stock that suited us.

Finally one of the girls in the AAA office suggested that we might do better in the State of Connecticut, with reference to both licences and a station wagon. So we loaded our duffel on a train to Stamford and put up at a hotel there, only to find that the situation was not much better in Connecticut than in New York.

One of the car dealers who hoped to sell us a station wagon offered to use his political influence to hasten the licence formalities for me, but not for Ruth. I dislike that sort of thing on principle but waived my objection in the circumstances, took my test and was given a driving licence for Connecticut, which would of course be valid anywhere in the United States or Canada or Mexico, so long as I was a tourist there.

When it came to the point the dealer could not produce a vehicle that met our ideas of what we wanted to buy, and we appealed to the AAA again for help in the dilemma. They telephoned to their office in Memphis, Tennessee and were assured that there would be no delay or difficulty about licences or station wagon there.

So off to the railway station we went again and arrived in Memphis after a pleasant and comfortable train ride of 24 hours.

This time we landed on our feet so to speak and everything went smoothly for us. Within three days we had bought a new station wagon with automatic transmission, tubeless tires and V-8 engine, all of which proved very satisfactory; we also obtained Tennessee driving licences with what seemed a minimum of formality.

When we commented that it seemed curious that our Barbados licences were not recognized in the United States we were told that the only foreign licences that were valid were Mexican and Canadian and that the international licence was not recognized in any of the states of the Union.

Later on when we both obtained Mexican licences this seemed even more odd, as there was no driving test at all, only forms to be filled in with information about one's grandmother, plus of course a fee to be paid. It was not even necessary to declare that one knew how to drive a car!

Officials in the United States did not seem to have heard of Barbados, so I explained it was an island in the West Indies, "Where the rum comes from." This roused a spark of interest which flickered out quickly when I apologized for having no samples left.

We set out in good spirits from Memphis, enjoying the quiet running and quick, smooth flow of power from our first V-8 engine, and looking forward to six months of carefree exploring in Mexico. We had obtained tourist visas good for 6 months from the Mexican government tourist office in New York. The AAA had told us that the ordinary car insurance carried by most motorists in the United States and Canada was not valid in Mexico, and insurance with a Mexican company would be necessary. This we obtained from the AAA office in Laredo, along with maps and booklets all of which proved useful. The Mexican insurance seemed rather expensive but it may have been a special rate for tourists, who are regarded as fair game in many countries. The rate may of course have been based on actual experience of claims for accidents, theft or other hazards.

We planned to drive in a leisurely way so as to see as much as possible of the country, before making the important decision about living in it or not. We made three overnight stops in the 760 miles from the border to Mexico City. We found the hotels and motels on the main highways to be clean and well run with good food in the dining rooms, all at rates that seemed reasonable to us. The Mexican government keeps a watchful eye on everything connected with the tourist business, recognizing that the hundreds of millions of American dollars it takes in yearly are a mainstay of the national economy.

It is possible to travel by the main routes without knowing any Spanish. It is necessary, however, to count the change carefully when paying for gasoline and not simply accept what is offered and pocket it without making sure it is correct.

The main roads are well paved and maintained and the mountain scenery striking. Few of the roads are fenced, however, and there is a distinct hazard of domestic animals suddenly appearing in the road just in front of a car; these include horses, cows, donkeys, goats, dogs, pigs and poultry. It may be even more dangerous at night when the animals are dazzled by headlights and less able to evade an oncoming car.

Arriving at the outskirts of Mexico City it is well to engage the services of a courier to act as chauffeur to one's hotel or wherever one is going. Traffic in the city streets is in a class by itself as to density and what seems to a stranger as dangerously high speed and reckless behaviour. To cope with this condition when one does not know the way or the local rules and customs is not amusing to put it mildly.

Friends in Barbados had given us introductions to two families in Cuernavaca which is 50 miles south of Mexico City on the main road to Acapulco. By paying a small toll charge motorists may use the new boulevard highway through magnificent mountain scenery. Mexico City is about 7,300 feet above sea-level and Cuernavaca about 5,000 feet. The high point of the highway between is 10,000 feet and is known as The Pass. Some people and some car engines feel the effect of the relatively thin air at high altitudes, though this is seldom serious up to about 10,000 or 12,000 feet. The carburetor of our V-8 engine must have been adjusted for high altitude for some reason, and when going over the pass the car seemed to want to go faster than I wanted to drive, and tended to romp up the mountain grades at 80 m.p.h. if left to its own devices, whereas the legal limit is 100 kilometers or just about 70 m.p.h.

In Mexico one hears much about an intestinal ailment that the natives pretend afflicts only tourists, so they call it "Turista," though they have been known to have it themselves. It is the same trouble that Barbadians call "Barbados tummy," and that was nearly fatal to me when I contracted it in Burma many years before. The usual cause is infected food or drink but in Mexico very high altitudes may make it worse. It is wise to carry medication to give immunity and to give relief if one happens to be caught. The pills may be bought at any good drug store and are not expensive. I do not remember being bothered by this trouble in Mexico but Ruth nearly always felt the altitude when going over the 10,000-foot pass, though normally she seemed less susceptible to ailments of the digestive tract than I am.

The friends of friends we looked up in Cuernavaca were very helpful in giving us information that would have taken time and trouble to obtain otherwise. After a brief pause there we went on to Acapulco, about another 200 miles or so. We stayed there for about 6 weeks, long enough to decide we did not want to live there. Later on we found that there is no place on either coast of Mexico that has a climate that is pleasant the year round. From Acapulco we retraced our steps to Mexico City and from there went west to Guadalajara in the State of Jalisco, not far from the Pacific coast and about 5,000 feet above sea-level. It seemed a pleasant enough place and we used it as a base from which to explore the district of Lake Chapala, which has been boomed from time to time as an ideal spot to which Norteamericanos may retire to live in the sun, with plenty of domestic help at very reasonable wages, and other advantages too numerous to mention.

The town and lake of Chapala are about 30 miles from Guadalajara on a good paved road, and at first sight may seem almost as good as the Siren Song of the Boomster makes them sound. It takes a period of actual living there to discover the drawbacks.

Mexico is a land of vanishing lakes. At the time of the Spanish conquest Mexico City resembled Venice which is certainly not the case now. Lake Chapala had done a partial vanishing act shortly before we arrived there, and was in process of returning to its former shoreline when we first set eyes on the locality.

Houses that had been built almost at the waters edge were some distance from it and the peons had cheerfully moved on to what had been the lake bed and planted crops between the houses and the new shoreline. Then the lake began to rise to its former level and we saw the peons working from dawn to dusk to gather the crops in before they were submerged.

We put up in a hotel on the lakeshore in Chapala and were in a room on the second floor. The door had a bad habit of locking itself when we were in the room and refusing to unlock as it should do when we wanted to go out. We had visions of the hotel being on fire at night with us trapped in the room. When we asked the desk clerk what we were supposed to do he said the accepted procedure was to lean out of the window and shout, "Socorro" as loudly as possible. This seemed out of keeping with our normal, English attitude which is to live quietly and avoid attracting attention to ourselves, and as for dramatizing the simple fact of a malfunction in the lock of the door of our hotel room, that simply isn't done!

So we moved on to a newly opened motel in the village of Ajijic, (pronounced A-hee-hic) about four miles away on the lakeshore, where we stayed for about a month while we explored the neighbourhood, the houses available for rent, the amenities of life and density of insect population, especially the aggressive ones such as mosquitoes, centipedes, scorpions and so on, also reptiles like snakes, all of which are found in Mexico in varying numbers in different localities, but about which the boomsters are usually mute.

By the time our tourist visas were getting ready to expire we had decided we should like to live in Mexico and that Cuernavaca seemed most likely to suit our ideas and needs. So then we had to set matters in train for the elaborate routine necessary for us to become "Inmigrantes," corresponding to the American status of resident alien, both requiring extensive documentation and the paying of fees and so on.

The documents were all in Spanish of course and our knowledge of the language was not yet equal to coping with the paper work or interviews with government officials, so we thought it better to engage the services of an English-speaking lawyer to handle the formalities for us.

We asked the Canadian embassy if they would put us in touch with a good lawyer and their first reaction was to pour cold water on any idea of living in Mexico, though without giving any reason. When we refused to be easily discouraged they did put us in touch with a legal firm that seemed to consist of an American with Mexican associates.

The American was very friendly and helpful and the business proceeded smoothly. Among other things it involved paying customs duty on the car we had bought in Memphis six months before, at the rate of 100% of the purchase price. We had expected a blow but not quite such a hard one; it is amazingly difficult to obtain reliable information about such things before they hit one.

The documents we had to produce included our birth certificates, marriage certificate, police certificates from every place in which we had lived since we were 16, to say we had no criminal record, evidence of financial responsibility, and for anyone who had been in the armed services of another country, proof of honourable discharge. We had to take our marriage certificate to the British embassy to have a certificate typed on the back in Spanish, to the effect that it was a valid legal document. This seemed odd in a country where divorce may be obtained in a manner that seems to us to be extremely free and easy.

When the red tape was fully complied with it was necessary for us to make a trip back across the United States border so that we could re-enter Mexico with our new status as inmigrantes, after having surrendered our visas as turistas in the usual way on leaving the country. We spent a few days in San Antonio, Texas, where we looked up some American friends we had made when we were all held up in a hotel near Manzanillo, when a bridge had been washed out by a bad storm that the papers described as a "ciclon," meaning cyclone or hurricane.

After we returned to Cuernavaca we settled down seriously to the business of house-hunting, just as we had in Barbados after deciding we would like to live there some ten years before; the end result was the same too. After looking at a number of houses for sale or rent we decided we would have to build in order to have one we really liked.

We were fortunate in finding a plot of land about half an acre with a good stone wall about six feet high around it, with steel gates and a flourishing crop of noxious weeds inhabited by an equally noxious collection of the local reptiles such as snakes, scorpions, skunks and centipedes. It did, however, have a wonderful view which could not be obscured as it was on the brink of a large "barranca" or ravine, with a clear outlook to the east over a sea of mountains including the two famous volcanoes, Ixtaccihuatl and Popocatepeti, both well over 17,000 feet high.

To see these silhouetted against the multi-hued dawn sky was a memorable sight we never tired of observing from our house after it was built. The Spanish name for Ixtaccihuatl is "La Mujer Dormida" - the Sleeping Woman, much easier to pronounce as well as having a striking resemblance to the outline of the female form recumbent as in bed, even wearing "falsies" to the eye of the experienced beholder. I never heard a Spanish equivalent for the name of the other volcano, which never looked like anything but just a volcano so was not given a romantic pseudonym by the Conquistadores; it was always known as "Popo" for short, very few being able to pronounce the Aztec name with confidence.

The plot of land was relatively expensive at \$8,000 United States but it was on a paved road with water, electricity and telephone available, and very convenient for getting to "El Centro" as Mexicans call "downtown," where the plaza and post office and banks and shops are to be found.

We were also fortunate in finding a white Mexican contractor who spoke English fluently. In collaboration with him we devised a scheme to baffle the wood termites by having practically no wood in the building, which worked out very well.

We had been warned of the danger of having building materials purloined but did not expect it to start quite so soon. Before work on the house had actually begun I noticed an apparent discrepancy in the number of bricks delivered to the site. On checking up it was obvious that a whole truckload of 1,500 bricks was missing, having vanished overnight. I explained to the contractor that I would not mind 100

bricks or so at a time but a truckload seemed to be overdoing a good thing, especially at such an early stage of the operation. He agreed in principle and made no demur about replacing the truckload, though I could not help feeling he thought it was not quite gentlemanly of me to count the bricks.

If larceny took place after this incident it was on a minor scale and not enough to be worth notice. I think it is always well to recognize the customs of the country one is in, so long as one can feel one is not the subject of flagrant discrimination as a foreigner.

The stone masons of Mexico are good, hence (I suppose) the pyramids. The walls, roof and floors were of masonry with no lumber at all, and the masons extended themselves to do a good job. The walls were over a foot thick of solid brick with columns of reinforced concrete at all corners, about a dozen of them. On top of the foundations there was a "cadena" or chain of reinforced concrete tied in with the columns, and on top of the walls another cadena, so that the finished job looked and felt rather like a fortress. The roof was carried on reinforced concrete beams that were cast on the ground and lifted into place with a hand winch. The roof itself was composed of layers of large clay tiles called "petatillos," with mortar between the layers, and waterproofed by layers of tar paper and a top layer of gravel. The floors were of concrete with a surface layer of ceramic tiles, which are made in Mexico and relatively inexpensive. The frames of doors and windows were of steel. There was no lumber in the structure of the house at all, the only wood being in secondary items such as cupboards and shelves and filling in the steel door frames. Thus if the termites did infest the wood it could be ripped out and replaced with a minimum of trouble and expense. The termites are a very great plague in Mexico and a booby trap for the northerner who is not accustomed to them, and thinks of buying or building a house with any important part of the structure made of wood. Real estate salesmen are like their counterparts elsewhere, they don't go out of their way to mention small things; if they have a slogan it might be the old Latin tag Caveat Emptor - termites and all; they are only small in the literally physical sense.

One feature we were glad not to have in the house was central heating, than which one thing worse is not to have it when it is really needed. The southern half of Mexico is within the Tropic Zone but the wide range of altitude means that many places are high enough to be quite cool at times in the winter months. In Cuernavaca at 5,000 feet we did not need more than a good fireplace in the livingroom, for use occasionally in the evenings.

Altogether we were very pleased with the house when we moved in, even more so when we had been there about a year and there was quite a bad earthquake that gave us a good shaking in the middle of the night. Very serious damage was done to buildings in Mexico City about 50 miles to the north, and less serious damage in Acapulco some 200 miles to the south. Cuernavaca had relatively slight damage and our house none at all, not even a small crack anywhere.

In the process of settling in we went through the usual gamut of troubles before we acquired a satisfactory domestic staff. The people who extol the virtues of Mexico as a place to relax and lead a carefree life in the sun, always omit to mention that the golden handshake is part of the law of the land. If it is not embedded in the constitution it might as well be, for practical purposes.

Any employee who is fired after only 30 days is legally entitled to 3 months severance pay, and some of them in domestic service make a career of behaving like angels for 29 days and then try to be fired. By dint of much experience they have developed a technique that is fiendish in its ingenuity and ruthless in



lack of regard for results of their conduct, so the inexperienced "Norteamericano" employer is at a disadvantage in dealing with them.

Some dislike being "taken for a ride" in such a crude fashion, and try to outdo them in what the Germans call "Schrecklichkeit" or frightfulness so that they will quit and forfeit severance. This condition of domestic hot war can continue indefinitely but is not relaxing. We usually made with the golden handshake as gracefully as possible though not pretending to like the idea.

In due course we arrived at what seemed like an ideal solution of the help problem, in the form of a married couple who were old enough to be mature in their behaviour while young enough to be good workers. They lived and did their own housekeeping in the servants quarters which were separate from the house, as customary in Mexico. The woman worked as housemaid and did the rough work in the kitchen, though not experienced in cooking the kind of food to which we were accustomed. The man made himself useful outdoors as gardener, washing the car and acting as gatekeeper, watchman and general factotum. They were very good people and congenial in every way, and seemed especially wonderful after the tribulations we had been through with their predecessors. Our experience with them helped somewhat to restore our faith in human nature, which had taken quite a battering before they came. Domestic workers are like human beings in other walks of life in that it is seldom that both husband and wife are good, but these people were in a class by themselves in that respect. Their whole attitude toward us was like that of faithful retainers left over from the feudal times.

After the house was completed we had to go through the established routine to have it assessed for taxation, which began with making application at a government office in El Centro and paying a fee that was prescribed in the regulations. Like so many things in Mexico there was a catch in this in the form of an extra, unofficial fee of the same amount as the official one, to ensure that the property would not be over-assessed. This is known as "mordido" or "bite" and is part of the way of life that one meets at every turn and is taken for granted by the Mexicans. I paid it by a cheque made out to "Bearer."

This formality having been complied with they sent a surveying team with instruments to make a detailed plan of our property with all buildings on it, the house, servants quarters, carport and the bodega or shed that was my workshop. The final result was a tax bill that was certainly not nominal but did seem reasonable enough to us by our standards. I do not know just what would happen if someone balked at the "bite" but was given to understand that the tax bill would be much higher, possibly double or triple the correct sum. Our contractor told me this and he should know. The tax bill was of course an annual affair and the bite only once, unless for some reason a re-assessment became necessary.

We found our life in Cuernavaca quite pleasant with as much social amenity as we wanted with English-speaking people, British, American and Canadian, many of whom had been in Mexico for many years and were fluent in Spanish. There was comparatively little social mixing with Mexican families except with some couples of mixed nationality, one being a Mexican.

After a time I began to have doubts on the subject of taxation. Before we decided to live in Mexico I had taken the precaution to ask legal advice about income taxes, and was told that we would not be liable for tax on money we brought into the country. As this was the only kind of income we had it seemed fair enough, and we were still being taxed by Canada as non-residents, which came to slightly more than if we were still domiciled in Canada. This would not apply to all non-residents but happened to work like that

for us. It varies with the kind of income one has, but it always seems difficult to get reliable information on the subject until one has made a mistake, when there is no lack of people ready to point out where one went wrong.

As time went by I picked up a scrap of information on the subject here and another there, and then found I could obtain complete English translations of the law about income tax for a small sum, from the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico City; so I did that and started doing my homework. It was quite clear that we were liable for tax on our entire income wherever it came from. While I was about it I studied the law about estate or inheritance taxes too, and the first thing I found was that the Mexican courts would not recognize any will that had not been drawn up in Spanish and recorded with the proper authority, according to the regulations which seemed very clear, definite and detailed.

That was a bit of a shock and I found that our American acquaintances had apparently assumed that their wills drawn up in the United States would be valid in Mexico, but this was an unwarranted assumption, so that if they died in Mexico, they would be treated as intestate with reference to any property they owned in the country. In the case of wealthy people that could be regarded as a pretty kettle of fish for the lawyers of both countries to enjoy, and perhaps little left for the heirs when legal fees and "mordido" had been paid. On the basis of our own experience and that of others with whom we discussed the matter, it seemed probable that mordido would be a feature of any transaction in which public officials had power of decision. I had a feeling myself that "Norteamericanos" were regarded as fair game and were all assumed to be rich and probably malefactors.

The majority of Mexicans don't distinguish between Americans and Canadians unless the difference is pointed out to them in a particular case. Then it becomes apparent that they have no prejudice against Canadians. I once asked a well-educated Mexican the reason for this, to which he replied, "You have never invaded us."

Government officials with whom the turistas come into contact are under orders to be polite to them, and usually are, so long as they do not get into trouble of any sort, such as an accident with their car. Some Americans we met did have a slight accident for which they were not at fault in any way, but the police promptly impounded their car. Their insurance company paid the cost of repairing the car which was \$100 United States but did not pay the cost of retrieving the car from the clutches of the police which came to \$120 United States. It is virtually impossible to ascertain the reason for an impost like this and if it could be done at all, it would take so long that hotel expenses would far exceed the amount at risk, so it is wiser to pay up and try to look pleasant.

It is generally understood that the government services are so poorly paid that it is taken for granted that they must make their pay up to a living wage by seizing any opportunity that comes along. I do not think Mexico is any better or worse than other Latin American countries, and if that is the way they want it to be, after all it is their country. Perhaps the tourists should regard it as an occupational hazard of tourism.

One can understand those who staff our foreign embassies taking a dim view of Canadians who get into difficulties by their own sheer ignorance or naïveté, and expect to be rescued promptly and if necessary by all the resources of our foreign service. However, it is true that at the time our embassy in Mexico City did not have a good reputation among Canadians we met who were living in Mexico. The embassy folk were said to show little interest in Canadians living in Mexico, and from what we observed while sitting

waiting for some attention ourselves we felt we understood what they meant. The treatment accorded to some wandering windbag from Ottawa was so very different and one could not help noticing the sudden switch from the casual and off-hand to the sycophantic.

While we were wondering if it would be wise for us to stay in Mexico the problem was solved for us by Ruth having one of the most serious bouts of pulmonary trouble in her long medical record. After the doctor had sounded her chest his diagnosis was, pleurisy, bronchitis and double pneumonia. We pulled her through with a massive injection of penicillin and a tank of oxygen, and when she was well again the doctor advised a thorough check-up with chest x-rays and examination by a chest specialist. The final result was advice to live at sea-level instead of 5,000 feet above as in Cuernavaca.

In the course of our exploration before settling in Cuernavaca we had concluded that none of the possible places on the sea had a pleasant climate the year round and most had too many insects, tourists or other pests, or too few of the amenities of life to which we like to be accustomed.

My thoughts turned instinctively to Hawaii which I had visited briefly on the way to New Zealand and back in 1936, and after discussing it we decided to try living there at sea-level, "La que el Medico señale," which means "As the doctor ordered."

The termite-proof house we had built in Cuernavaca sold very readily for a good price, all cash in United States dollars and the buyers also bought our furniture and car. By the time one has paid the very high customs duty on a car in Mexico it is uneconomic to take it out of the country again, and most car buyers seem to prefer a car that has been made in the United States or anywhere but in Mexico.

We were sorry to part from the friends we had made in Mexico but needs must when the devil drives and doctors advice must be taken, to say nothing of the very unsatisfactory situation with reference to taxes both income and estate, which we were glad to leave behind. It felt like a potential menace hanging over us that might drop at any moment that the government decided to tighten up a somewhat loose bit of business.

We were also sorry to part with the very good domestic help we had finally acquired after running the gamut of several of the severance-pay bandits I have described. Our faithful Reynaldo and Ignacia did not take a liking to the buyers of our house for which we could not blame them, but we were able to put them in touch with another American couple by whom they were engaged with complete and lasting mutual satisfaction.

We did not know if we would be able to find domestic help in Hawaii. Before the war it was available and good but the extinction of that particular aid to civilized existence seems to be definitely one of the horrors of war, and so it proved to be in Hawaii with the added horror of the booming tourist industry.

To obtain permission to live in Hawaii it was necessary for us to comply with the elaborate routine prescribed for those who wish to become resident aliens in the United States, very similar to that which we had gone through in order to become inmigrantes in Mexico.

Only one additional document was needed, a police certificate to the effect that we had no criminal record in Cuernavaca. As we had all the others it was simple enough to obtain some more photostat copies and make application at the consular office in the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

The process was expedited somewhat by the fact that the buyer of our house was a technical attaché of the embassy who had reached retirement age and planned to remain in Mexico, and was anxious for us to leave so that he and his wife could move in.

They also bought our car and furniture so we left Mexico as we had left Barbados some years before, with our clothes and about 800 pounds of assorted household oddments that we wanted to keep. We sent these on to San Francisco by air freight and followed ourselves as passengers, a very pleasant trip, memorable owing to the lavish scale of the issue of champagne "on the house." Coming in for a landing at Los Angeles we noticed the thick brown "smog" that seemed to blanket the city, and that contrasted oddly with the large headlines of the afternoon papers on sale in the airport, announcing "SMOGLESS DAY."

We spent about 4 days in San Francisco and saw something of old friends before embarking on a Matson liner for Honolulu, also a pleasant trip though long enough in our view for that particular mode of travel.

The famous tourist heaven of Waikiki had changed considerably since my brief glimpse of it some 12 years before, mainly in the proliferation of hotels, apartments and tourist attractions of all kinds, and the density of the bumper-to-bumper traffic and the fumes therefrom. With some difficulty we found a furnished apartment we could lease for a month, while we looked around and decided where to go next. It seemed obvious that the Island of Oahu was too crowded to be attractive to us as a place of domicile, therefore it was just as obvious that we should have a look at the other islands, specifically Maui 100 miles east of Oahu and Kauai the same distance west.

We started with Maui and spent several months there, looking over the houses for sale or rental and available plots of land suitable for building the kind of house we would want. It was surprisingly difficult to find anything at all that met with our ideas, perhaps because we were sophisticated by much previous experience in Canada, Barbados and Mexico. The prospect of any real estate salesman persuading us to buy a house or a lot that did not measure up to our notions of what we wanted, was practically negligible.

It is also true that real estate in Hawaii is in a class by itself in that comparatively little of it is freely for sale as we understand the term. Most of it is tightly held by persons or corporations that do not want to sell, and much is only for sale as leasehold, under a contract that provides for re-negotiation every few years.

In a tropical island it is natural to think of living near a good sandy beach but those are rather rare in Hawaii, and such as exist are likely to be inaccessible or not for sale or pre-empted for expansion of the tourist trade. When I first saw the famous beach of Waikiki it was most attractive and not over-crowded. Now the sand is hardly visible for the thousands of sun-bathers much of the time, and what sand may be seen is littered with cigarette butts (many with lipstick), and reeks of sun-tan oil, revolting evidence of the desecration of the beauties of nature by human litterbugs.

When planning to build a house on a tropical island many people take it for granted that they should be close to the shoreline, for convenience in bathing or other reasons. It does not occur to them to ask about the cost of insurance coverage for house and contents before they build, so they are staggered to find that they are quoted a rate of something like 15% or 20% per annum, which is prohibitive for people of modest means. In fact we were told in Hawaii that the ordinary insurance companies will not take the risk for what is known as "Sea-Wave" at any price, though Lloyd's of London will take it at what they regard as a suitable premium.

Sea-waves or tidal waves may be caused by hurricanes or earthquakes, the latter sometimes occurring thousands of miles away. In the short two years or so that we lived in Hawaii we experienced a hurricane, the centre of which passed right over us in Kauai, a tidal wave from a very bad earthquake thousands of miles away in Chile that caused serious damage in the Island of Hawaii some 300 miles from us, also a volcanic eruption in the big island that caused a considerable amount of damage to property there, but did not affect the other islands.

The Inter-Island Air Lines advertised special trips to view the eruption at close quarters, featuring the slogan, "See the volcano now, pay later," in keeping with the spirit of these debt-ridden times.

The hurricane did some damage to houses in Kauai, removing many roofs completely and damaging others along with the television antennae. When the storm was over it was amusing to note how many of the roofless citizens regarded it as more important to get the TV into operation again than it was to repair the roof.

Having sold our car in Mexico we had a transportation problem which we solved by the purchase of a used Lincoln sedan for the sum of \$500. Cars of the more expensive type may usually be picked up second hand in the United States for only a fraction of the new price. The one we bought was in good condition, only six years old and with comparatively little mileage. The roads in Hawaii are very good but there is not a vast mileage of them. In our case it seemed very uneconomic to buy a new car for that reason, and the Lincoln served our purpose quite well while we were in the islands.

The population of Hawaii is very mixed and there is comparatively little of the pure native blood left. The Hawaiians seem to have no inhibitions about inter-marrying with other races, from the descendants of missionaries from the United States to oriental coolies from China, Japan, Korea and the Philippines. In 1936 I was told that taking the population as a whole it was about 60% Japanese, which is still probably the predominant strain, perhaps more than 60% now.

Prior to 1810 the islands were ruled by chiefs or "kings" who were frequently at war with each other. In 1810 Kamehameha the Great established himself as sole sovereign, and in 1820 missionaries from New England began arriving. Some of their descendants married Hawaiian princesses and acquired title to

large tracts of land that became fabulously valuable. Others became extremely rich in commerce of all kinds.

Coolies from the orient were imported to work on the sugar plantations and at other jobs of hard manual labour, as the native Hawaiian does not take readily to the idea of earning his living by such means, though as a race they have magnificent physical development. A similar situation developed in islands of the South Pacific such as the Fiji group, to which workers were brought in large numbers from India. They have a high rate of natural increase and now constitute a major political problem in opposition to the native Fijians. A similar situation is found in South Africa where the population includes about half a million or more of Indian descent, making a complex race problem still more difficult to solve.

The native Hawaiians seem to have been willing to marry almost anyone who came along, with the result that the race is in danger of becoming extinct, which is a pity because they are naturally fine people both physically and psychologically. Personally I don't blame them for not taking kindly to the idea of becoming coolies doing the hard work of cultivating sugar cane or pineapple by hand, to make rich plantation owners richer. Now the oriental coolies have become unionized along American lines, raising the cost of production so much that the plantations have a struggle to exist, despite the use of much costly labour-saving machinery.

We found we had one problem in both Maui and Kauai in a relative lack of medical facilities for anyone not connected with the plantations, which had their own staffs of qualified doctors on a salary basis to take care of the employees and their families. The doctors could treat private patients in return for suitable fees, but we did not find the system satisfactory, and it was an expensive nuisance to have to make a trip to Oahu for more or less minor medical or dental matters.

The very great inflation of medical costs of all kinds was becoming a serious problem for most people in our age group, and we were over age for membership in such organizations as the Blue Cross. Those did not exist in Barbados or Mexico but one could at least have domestic help there, and good doctors and nurses were available.

While we wondered what to do about this problem the Canadian government made a change in the rules about social security, which meant that if we returned to live in Canada for 12 months we could claim that for which we had been paying in our taxes for many years, but deprived of by an arbitrary rule as non-residents. Added to the fact that we had found Hawaii disappointing in some ways as a place of residence, this helped us to decide to return to Canada for at least a year, with open minds as to what we did or where we went afterward.

So again we sold our house, furniture and car and flew off by jet plane to Florida, via California. We were not in a hurry to return to Canada and thought we would have a good look at Florida and some of the Caribbean Islands we had not previously seen, which we did for several months in 1961.

We used Miami as a base from which to explore Florida, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, the American and British Virgin Islands and Jamaica. We did not feel tempted to live in Florida for sundry reasons, though it has some undoubted attractions. All the islands that were formerly known as the British West Indies are ruled out for us because changes since World War II have had the effect of making white people second class citizens, also they have income taxes that would hit us hard when applied over and above our

Canadian tax as non-residents. In addition the medical facilities are not so good as those to which we are accustomed in Canada. Some have a good supply of fresh water and some do not.

The Bahamas are organized for the tourist trade and most of the tourists are Americans, which means inflation of prices and does much to nullify the absence of income tax. Water for domestic supply is from rainfall trapped in cisterns of doubtful cleanliness. Sometimes there is a drought which can be serious. The Bahamas and Bermuda are undergoing political changes as a result of universal suffrage.

The American Virgin Islands are somewhat over-developed for tourists and the British Virgins are rather under-developed for anything; all the Virgins are short of good fresh water. So we did not find any spot in that part of the world in which we really wanted to settle down for our old age. Probably we are hard to please but the thing we liked best in the whole region was the climate, which we knew very well of course from the nine years we had lived in Barbados.

In mid-1961 we wended our way by jet plane from Miami via Chicago to Seattle, thence by ship to Victoria. I think it was about this time that the Canadian government made another change in the rules about old age security, which made us as non-residents eligible without the need to return to live in Canada for 12 months.

At intervals during our 15 years abroad seeking retirement Utopia for the elderly, we had been bedevilled by one government or another changing the rules, or by rates of currency exchange being altered, though the changes were not always to our disadvantage. When the pound sterling was devalued soon after our house in Barbados was built it gave us a nice windfall, and helped to offset the income tax we had to pay during the rest of the time we remained in the island.

When the Canadian dollar was devalued soon after we returned to Canada it did not bother us, but would have meant a cut in income of about 8% if we returned to live in the United States. The possibility that some such change might occur at any time caused a feeling of uncertainty and financial insecurity.

Soon after our return to Canada another reason to make us feel glad to be back turned up, when it developed that Ruth needed major surgery to cope with intestinal adhesions, the result of a previous major operation in Toronto some 33 years before. She had what seems to be the usual rather harrowing experience of medical examinations including x-rays that were said to show no cause for surgery, till finally it was obvious that something must be done, though it was a difficult decision for a surgeon to make, to operate or not to operate.

In the event it turned out that the operation was more than justified; it was in fact necessary for continued existence despite negative x-rays. That was six years ago and we are still living in Victoria though we would both much prefer a warmer climate so long as it did not entail complications such as duplication of income taxes or lack of modern medical facilities that become more important as we grow older.

In the years 1962 to 1966 inclusive Ruth was in hospital for one thing or another once a year, which has helped to keep us here, and my turn came in 1967. British Columbia has a well-developed system of medicare that certainly takes the brunt of the cost of illness, which would be enough to bankrupt people with average incomes without this protection. The tremendous inflation of medical costs is especially tough on people who reached retirement age and fixed incomes prior to the past decade or so.

We have not stopped travelling altogether or thinking about Utopia. In December 1963 we went to the Fiji Islands but the trip was not very successful. Our mid-winter in the northern hemisphere is mid-summer there, also the rainy season. With the sun right overhead the weather is likely to be too warm for comfort and very humid with many mosquitoes.

Fiji is not in the tourist business to anything like the same extent as Hawaii and is not likely to be in the foreseeable future. Most of the visitors seemed to be from Australia or New Zealand, and most of the hotels are not up to the standard to which North Americans are accustomed.

It is unique in being one "Colony" that does not want to be independent, mainly it seems because the native Fijians realize they need the British government to prevent the immigrant East Indians from getting control by their rather devious business methods, and the East Indians realize they need protection against the warlike propensities of the Fijians, whom they darkly suspect may not have finally and permanently abandoned cannibalism, or might be tempted to revert to it under pressure of circumstances.

Our stay in Fiji was shortened by inability to find a hotel that came up to our ideas of suitable accommodation and that was not full up with guests from Australia or New Zealand, so we decided to return as far as Hawaii and spend the rest of our winter "holiday" there.

Waikiki seemed even more crowded than before if possible and extensive and expensive advertising being done to bring more and more visitors to the islands, so that one wondered just where the practical limit was supposed to be. Much of the time one could hardly see the sand for the nearly nude sun-bathers, and personally I much prefer to see the sand. So our holiday in the winter of 1963-64 was not exactly a success.

Our next venture was to Southern California which worked out well enough so far as it went, but that was not far enough to make us feel it solved the problem. The winter climate there is better than that of Victoria but not good enough to justify the upheaval and expense of an annual migration back and forth, at least in our opinion, and apart from the fact that the good spots are very crowded and devoted to the purpose of extracting the maximum number of dollars from the winter tourists.



At intervals over several years we had talked of two things, paying a visit to my relatives in South Africa and making a voyage by the type of ship known as a cargoliner, which is a fairly large cargo ship with a good turn of speed and accommodation for a limited number of passengers, usually about 12.

Finally when the time arrived and we found that there were no passenger liners plying between Canada or the United States and South Africa, it seemed the obvious thing was to combine the two projects. There were several established lines from which to choose and the problem was to find one that did not have all its accommodation for passengers booked up for many months ahead, or in some cases a year or two.

The travel agency we tried did not seem able to help much and tried to persuade us to go by passenger lines via England, which we definitely did not want to do. Then it dawned on us that as the cargoliners could obviously fill all their space without the help of the travel agents, they were perhaps giving preference to prospective passengers who applied to them directly, thus saving the agents' commission.

So we tried doing that and it worked at least to the extent that we were able to book passage in a Norwegian ship from St. John, New Brunswick to Cape Town for a date that suited our plans. The same line could not bring us back to Canada on a suitable date but we were able to solve that problem by contacting an agent in Natal through whom we booked our return passage in an American ship which did not prove to be nearly as satisfactory as the Norwegian vessel, but of that more later.

We planned to be away from home about five months and in a wide range of climates which involved rather too much baggage for air travel, so we decided to go to St. John by train, which we had not done for so many years it was almost a new experience. We left home on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, so it was a mid-winter journey across Canada with sub-zero temperatures outside but very comfortable in the train.

The trip from Vancouver to Montreal was marred by the presence in the train of a number of ill-mannered youths who were recruits for the armed services on the way to a training depot with no-one in charge of them or responsible for their behaviour. They over-ran the accommodation in the parlour and dining cars and were obtrusively noisy and vulgar and amused themselves in long-winded arguments with the bartender as to whether they were over 21; none of them had any documentary evidence of age and the bar-keep was quite rightly sceptical but the arguments were endless, noisy and boring. The Department of Defence should have put someone in charge of these rough specimens of our Canadian youth when travelling.

As it happened on the train from Montreal we met a bevy of girl recruits for the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service going to H.M.C.S. *Collingwood* at Digby, N.S. for training. They were well behaved and seemed to be enjoying life without being a public nuisance, while in the charge of a Wren Lieutenant and two Petty Officers. Apparently the Ladies' Navy is better managed.

Arriving at St. John, we found our ship would not sail for two or three days so we put up at a hotel and stayed indoors most of the time, listening to natives explain to anyone who would listen that the sub-zero temperature was most unusual. We explained that in Victoria we had only two kinds of weather, very good and unusual.

We were very pleased with the accommodation on board the ship, both our cabin and the public rooms, and within two or three days of sailing the weather began to feel like spring and in another short spell like the sub-tropics. The food and service in the dining saloon were excellent and the members of the ship's company who came in contact with the passengers were most pleasant and spoke English so there was no language problem. The ship was modern and well appointed, with a sea speed of 16 or 17 knots which meant about 400 sea miles per day and 19 days for the 7,500 miles to Cape Town, with fine weather all the way, a most enjoyable passage and to our taste a better mode of travel than by the ordinary passenger liner.

In Cape Town the immigration officers came on board to interview us. When one of them asked how much money we had and I replied X-dollars in travellers' cheques, he did not ask to see the cheques but another one said, "Why don't you buy a farm?" It was nice to know we would be welcome to settle in South Africa if we wished to do so, but I explained that I was a bit over age to embark on a new career in a vocation about which I knew nothing and which would probably be too strenuous for me.

My nephew Hugh Baker and his wife met us and took us and our baggage to the customs where we were not asked to open anything for inspection, and then to a hotel with which we had a reservation. Hotels were something of a problem for us as so many seemed to be permanently full up, and it did not fit our plans to make reservations too far ahead and thus commit ourselves to a rigid schedule.

Speaking generally the hotels were not quite up to the standard to which North Americans like to be accustomed, though the better ones are quite passable. Our first experience was not a happy one though the front facade and the entrance lobby were attractive. It was an old building modernized but the process did not go far enough and the less said about the plumbing the better.

We were ushered to a suite consisting of two small single rooms and bathroom, but we had not been in it very long before we noticed strange sounds which we traced to the drain from the bath tub, and which were connected with the appearance of dirty water flowing into the tub from the drain. When one essayed to have a bath the rubber plug was forced out by the pressure of this effluent which mixed with one's bath-water and caused one to leap out of the tub in a most undignified manner. When we drew the attention of the hotel office staff to this unusual experience in hydro-dynamics they merely murmured something vague about an "air-lock" in the pipes but did not seem to want to move us to another room, so we moved ourselves to another hotel as quickly as we could find one.

My sister Hilda lives about 30 miles from Cape Town and we spent the month of March seeing something of her and her husband and son and daughter-in-law and the surrounding country. Hilda and I are the two youngest of a family of eight and the only survivors and we had not met since we were teen-agers some 58 years before, though we had kept in touch by correspondence. Both her sons had served with the army in North Africa and had the bad luck to be in Tobruk when it was taken by the Germans to the surprise of everyone, perhaps even General Rommel himself.

Later my nephews were p.o.w.'s in Germany at the end of the war and the younger one was killed by the R.A.F. in a strafing raid on a road crowded with retreating German soldiers, fleeing civilians and liberated p.o.w.'s. In the First World War I was never fired at by the enemy but several times by British merchant ships and once by a shore battery and several times by American submarine chasers. Fortunately no-one scored a hit but such incidents seemed much too numerous in both wars.

When it was time for us to move on to Natal we travelled by the motor coach service run by the government and very well organized. The distance from Cape Town to Durban is about 1,200 miles and the coach takes it in easy stages of about 250 miles per day with overnight stops at the best hotels available, which are included in the price of the ticket.

It seemed a pleasant way to travel and see more of the country than from a train or plane. We were impressed by the number and extent of the fine, sandy beaches along the coast, some of them apparently very little used as the country is by no means densely populated.

We left the coach at Pietermaritzburg where we were met by my niece Memory Otto and her son Richard, who drove us to their home called Saxony about 12 miles from the town, where we were to be guests for several weeks, a very pleasant interlude for us. Many of the place names in that part of Natal were associated in my mind with the war between the British and Boers at the turn of the century.

I was at school in London at the time and saw many of the regiments march past en route to a station to entrain for a port of embarkation for South Africa, later reading the newspaper accounts of actions in which they took part. It was a military mystery of the time why the army brass took so long to realize the need for the khaki uniforms and other features of guerrilla warfare, to which they had long been accustomed on the northwest frontier of India. Some of our most famous regiments were very badly cut up by Boer sharpshooters behind rocks before the idea was grasped that it was guerrilla warfare as in Afghanistan.

The part of Natal we were in was good farming country and reminded us of Barbados, Mexico and Hawaii owing to the extensive areas devoted to growing sugar cane which needs a good depth of soil, plenty of water and the warm sunshine of the tropics and sub-tropics.

A highlight of the trip was a visit to two of the game reserves to see the exotic fauna of Africa living naturally in its native haunts. I have never liked seeing wild animals shut in small cages to be stared at by tourists. In the game reserves the situation is reversed because the tourists stay in their cars for the animals to stare at, which seems a better arrangement, and the animals certainly co-operate.

Back again at Saxony from our visit to the reserves it was getting near the scheduled sailing date of the American cargoliner which we were to board at Durban. It was sad parting from Memory and Peter Otto and their family who were so very kind and hospitable to us but all good things must come to an end.

While we were in South Africa the brief fracas between the Arabs and Israelis had resulted in closure of the Suez Canal, causing many ships to go round the Cape of Good Hope and put into port for bunker oil so that Cape Town, Durban and other ports were congested. Our ship was actually two weeks late in sailing and some of the passengers had cancelled their passages so there were only eight altogether including ourselves.

With one exception the others were a very dull lot indeed and for sundry reasons the return passage compared very poorly with the very enjoyable time we had when southbound several months before.

The American ship was a fine, new, fast vessel and our cabin was excellent. The ship's company was I suppose a fair sample from the great American ethnological melting pot. I like to think I am not prejudiced against trade unions but I have never been able to see how ships can be run by them, and I have had a lot to do with both in my time.

We were told that the owners of American ships are allowed to choose the captain and chief engineer who must themselves be members of a union, but all other personnel must be sent to the ship by the union. This means that the men who carry the heavy responsibility for the safe and proper navigation of the ship have no say in choosing the men on whom they must rely to stand watches day and night on the bridge and in the engineroom.

The food served in the dining saloon was much inferior to what we had on the Norwegian ship when southbound. Too many items of the menu reminded one of the typical fare encountered at a hot-dog drive-in kind of eatery, the coffee was very bad (surprising in an American ship), and our table steward seemed unable to bring a cup to the table without slopping much of the contents into the saucer, though the weather was fine and the ship always very steady. To make matters worse he chewed gum vigorously and continuously and altogether was by far the worst ship's steward I have ever met, and I have travelled a lot.

It was a fast trip for a cargo vessel as she averaged 22 knots, equal to over 500 sea miles per day and 14 days from Cape Town to New York. We were supposed to go to Boston but this was changed when we were within a few hours of Boston owing to an actual or projected strike of some sort.

So we were landed in New York early on a Sunday morning in a heat wave in the middle of the summer tourist season, with hotels full up and no train on to Toronto till evening, not a happy ending to our South African journey. One redeeming detail, we did manage to secure the last bedroom in the only through sleeping car for Toronto that evening, and arrived in Toronto at breakfast time on Monday morning to find all the hotels downtown full up. The sudden change in port of arrival of the ship had the effect of upsetting our travel arrangements completely.

Through the office of a well-known travel agency we managed to secure very good accommodation in an apartment hotel "uptown" which was actually much more convenient for our purpose of looking up several families of old friends of 40 years or more - the days when we were all young and trying to get on in the world, battling the big depression and so on.

In Toronto for the inside of a week our friends and a family of cousins allowed us no dull moments and the train trip back to the west coast seemed something of an anticlimax, though it was good to be home again with our own Lares and Penates around us, plus a few new ones as souvenirs of our 25,000 mile journey.

It was only to be expected that since our return many people we have met have asked us about political and social conditions in South Africa, most of them evidently under the impression that it is virtually a police state where people live under tension, with the feeling that outbreaks of violence are just around the corner. We did not find it so.

We were there for only three months but having relatives scattered about the country we probably had a better insight into such matters than the majority of tourists, and we were in the nature of things more interested in matters affecting the outlook for the future. We were able to discuss the problems with white South Africans who were well educated and had liberal views, and while nearly all of these said they do not agree with all the policies of their government they did not go on to say what changes they would like to see.

It is indeed a very complex problem and more so in South Africa than in the United States for instance, if only because there are more different kinds of non-whites involved, including large numbers who have migrated from other parts of Africa and the 600,000 or so who are really indigenous to India, and more recently arrived in South Africa than the people of British, Dutch and French origin who have been established there for several centuries.

Our best opportunity for first-hand observation came when we were staying in Natal where the whites are largely of British descent and the black Africans are Zulus. The latter are traditionally pastoral and polygamous, wives being bought with cows as currency and brought up with the idea that their mission in life is to work in the fields to produce food crops for man and beast and to make beer for their men to drink. Wives may be beaten without loss of social status and I strongly suspect that most Zulu men would not look with favour on efforts to change their way of life to that of the white man. Should we try to force it on them?

A major problem incidental to the practice of polygamy is to maintain an adequate supply of wives. The Zulus were formerly a warlike people and solved the wife shortage problem by raiding the neighbouring peoples when they felt like it, and exterminating the males and overage females and carrying off the younger females and the cattle, a simple but effective solution for them which helped to keep the country as a whole from being over-populated. Just what they will do in the future I have no notion but these problems in far countries cannot be easily solved by armchair critics in the United States and Canada.

I have been astonished to read of the number of people who attend meetings of one sort and another and vote in favour of resolutions aimed at setting the world to rights by stopping the war in Vietnam at once, or having universal suffrage in South Africa next month, when the total first-hand knowledge of the subjects of the resolutions possessed by the people who make them is practically nil.

Perhaps it helps to make them feel important as if taking an active part in world affairs, or they think they acquire merit by such gratuitous meddling with matters of which they are abysmally ignorant; however, the footling resolutions they so solemnly pass probably don't do any serious harm.

Within the past few months it has been interesting to see some references in American journals to the idea that a form of apartheid may be the only practicable solution to the very serious race problem in that country. At this late date it is difficult to see just how the details could be worked out, but it is equally hard to see an end of the strife between the white and black races if they continue to try to live intermingled as they are now. Human nature cannot be changed by making rules or passing laws and efforts to do so are doomed to failure.

## *Retrospect*

I suppose most people who reach my present age of 80 with their faculties in relatively good working order, spend some time thinking over the past, including things they would like to undo or do differently if they had the time over again. When I hear someone say, "I have no regrets" I wonder if he means it literally and if so, how he has been so clever or so fortunate as to make no serious mistakes, unless perhaps his life has been humdrum with little occasion to make important decisions or run risks or to "stick his neck out" as the saying is.

Thinking over decisions I have made such as choosing to be an engineer, emigrating to Canada, starting in business for myself when I had the opportunity and so on, I believe I can say I would do the same thing if I had the time over, though my path has not been smooth or free from troubles or problems.

I have never been motivated by a burning desire to make a lot of money though I have always wanted to be as independent and as much my own boss as possible, and especially to be free from worry about money in my old age, and in this I have been fairly successful in both peace and war as it happens.

In my business career I had some very serious set-backs such as the untimely death of my original partner in 1916 when I was overseas in the navy, and later in the great depression of the early 1930's, but the business survived and is now a very sound and flourishing industrial concern though my active connection with it ceased some years ago.

I do not regret having served in the navy in both World Wars though the experience set me back financially, especially in the 1914-18 affair on Royal Navy rates of pay.

If I have any claim at all to distinction in my profession it is that I pioneered the use of the electric arc welding process in Canadian industry. If I have a regret it could be that I did not leave this for someone else to do, as I might have done had I been able to foresee what a long, uphill, frustrating job it would be, mainly owing I think to the very conservative attitude of many Canadian engineers and industrialists toward new ideas or processes. In my early days in the business there was a very marked tendency to let all such things be developed elsewhere, in the United States, Britain or Europe or anywhere but in Canada, so that for many years I felt like a prophet crying in the wilderness about the merits of the process, with hardly anybody paying serious attention. I was trying to make them a present of a million dollar idea of which they were reluctant to avail themselves.

However, I am grateful that I have lived to see electric welding come into its own and achieve the widespread recognition that it has today, as an industrial process of prime importance.