

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 Asso-

ciation 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 stern 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 crows 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.