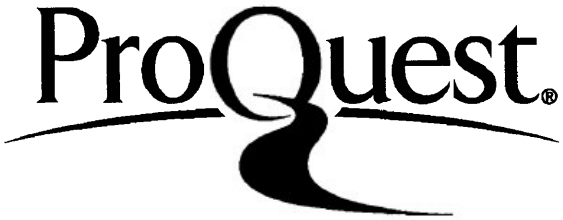
THE SCHOOL CARS OF NORTHERN ONTARIO: THE ORIGIN AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF AN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

by
Mark Chochla (C)

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education at Lakehead University.

Thunder Bay, Ontario.

1987



ISBN 0-315-39580-X

ABSTRACT

The School Cars of Northern Ontario: the origin and accomplishments of an educational innovation

This study examines northern Ontario's railway school car system which began in 1926. It is an account of the educational service provided until 1967 and an assessment of its accomplishments.

The study concentrates on the early work of Alfred Fitzpartrick of the Reading Camp Association and James B. MacDougall, public school inspector and principal of North Bay Normal School. These two northern Ontario school promoters were exponents of the liberal educational and social thinking of their day. They believed education would help weave the social and economic fabric of the north, assimilate the diverse ethnic groups and bring them to an understanding of the values and institutions of Canada.

The network of resident inspectors of "New" Ontario led by Dr. J.B. MacDougall began to understand the special nature of the northern economy and settlement patterns. This cadre of so called "District Men" proposed measures to deliver schooling to the north.

The school car idea proposed by the regional inspectors and promoted by Dr. MacDougall was adopted by Ontario

Premier and Minister of Education, G. Howard Ferguson, in 1923. It became an integral part of the Education Department's broad policy of extending educational opportunities in the province.

The school car played a role in the political socialization of the children and adult students in northern railway communities. Teachers inculcated a common language and common ideals of citizenship and encouraged immigrants to become Canadian citizens.

The school cars transformed immigrants into loyal citizens and provided immigrant and Canadian-born children in the north with the basic skills and discipline needed to succeed in a changing world.

The schools were accepted and embraced by the communities they served. Northerners saw the school as a way to ensure their hopes of independence and success for themselves and for their children.

The school cars were an educational success because the teachers, especially the early ones, were dedicated to the province's "new curriculum." The progress of children and adult learners was rapid because they were committed to the values of schooling. The inspectors, teachers, railways and townspeople were surprised at the early and continued success of the school car experiment.

Changes in the technology of railway transportation reduced the number of railway communities. Competition from motor vehicle transportation further reduced the number of

railway employees and the need for school car service. The extension of highways and roads into northern Ontario led to such a centralization of population in towns and cities that the school cars were no longer required.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the supervisory committee for their helpful comments, suggestions and encouragement of this paper.

The author is grateful to Jim Chalmers, Jack Antoniak, James Martin and others who shared their school car experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The heartland of Canada and 70% of Ontario is dominated by the Canadian Shield, one of the earth's most ancient wildernesses. Born in the furnace of the universe, the Canadian Shield dates back 2 1/2 million years or more. Its molten mass solidified and was formed by the relentless forces that shaped and hammered the earth's surface. It has been wrenched by the crushing movement of the earth's crust, scrapped and gouged by the ice ages and strewn with its own rubble. Although weathered by wind, snow and rain and worn smooth by abrasion, the shield is the geological foundation of the country; it is our historical foundation as well.

The shield is distinctively Canadian and the life on the shield gives Canada its identity. The human activities associated with it are symbols of national spirit and accomplishments: the voyageur, the miner, the lumberjack, the prospector, the railroad builder. These people have explored, exploited and lived here, endured the hardships of isolation, loneliness and some of the world's worst weather. When Jacques Cartier first saw the shield he remarked that it was "the land God gave Cain." 1 Poet E.J. Pratt, in

---

1 W.L. Morton, The Canadian Identity (University of Toronto Press, 1972), p.5.

"Towards the Last Spike" described the shield as a hybrid sleeping reptile conceived by myth:

So motionless, she seemed stone dead - just seemed:

She was too old for death: to old for life.

Historian W.L. Morton believed "The main task of Canadian life has been to make something of this formidable heritage." Literary scholar, Northrop Frye, has called Canada a "Bush Garden". The school rail cars of northern Ontario were one attempt to create a garden in the wilderness of the northern bush, to bring order and culture to the chaos and nature of the land and people.

The travelling public school teachers in the school on wheels that serviced the small railway communities of northern Ontario did not have the panache or romantic qualities of the explorers, traders or railway builders, but what they lacked in physical prowess they made up for in moral purpose and professional dedication. Preceded by the fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company and then the railway men and the industrialist, the school car teacher was part of the third wave in northern Ontario, engaged in the delivery of education and cultural and social benefits to the population.

The small communities of northern Ontario were on the frontier of civilization on the edge of the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. They possessed what Northrop Frye has called a "garrison mentality," surrounded by a physical and

psychological frontier, separated from one another and from the dominant culture of the province.

The north has always offered an alternative to the life lived by the majority in Ontario huddled along the southern border of the province. The railway linked northern Ontario to the metropolitan centres of the region and the province and soon felt their economic and cultural dominance and control. The school rail car was one vehicle of this control. The school rail cars like the Hudson's Bay Company and the CPR and the CNR are part of the corporate development of Canada - organized controlled and sanctioned by government.

This paper will examine the intellectual, economic, political and social origins of the school rail cars in northern Ontario and account for its demise. It will also study the nature of the educational experience provided by the school car and evaluate the educational success of this remarkable school.

II

The North

"'Foreigners' did not discover Cobalt, Porcupine, Kirkland Lake, or the Red Lake Gold fields," wrote the irate H.A. Preston in 1926, so why should 'foreigners' be given "preference to our white race?" [1] Mr. Preston was a pioneering citizen of the Timmins Gold region and his outspoken criticism of the Ontario government's policy in the north is indicative of the frustration and alienation of many northern Ontario residents. They complained about the lack of highways, the high railway freight rates and the rumors of flooding certain northern areas to divert water to the United States.

No issue was discussed more vigorously than the problem of 'foreigners'. Since the turn of the century there was a feeling that non-British and non-Canadian workers, unable to speak English, were being hired by mining companies and railroads in preference to British and Canadian-born

---

1 Ontario Archives (hereafter OA), G. Howard Ferguson Papers, RG3, Box 91, H.A. Preston to Minister of Mines McCrea, 2 April 1926.

'white' workers. 2 What annoyed Preston was not only that these immigrants were being given jobs that belonged to British subjects, but that many of them had served in World War I and returned as veterans to find only unemployment. 3

Preston's remarks that British subjects were discriminated against were not entirely unfounded. As early as 1907 there was a documented case of English immigrants being denied employment on the Grand Trunk Railway because they were English. 4 Ironically, this occurred just when Canada was undergoing economic expansion fuelled by the dramatic extension of the railway system and a growing need for agricultural and industrial labour. During the early years of the century there was an increasing number of British immigrants entering Canada and government officials believed that the quality of British immigrants was improving between 1904 and 1914. 3 However, only 15.6% of British immigrants compared with 51.6% of European immigrants were unskilled labour. It was the unskilled worker who was needed to build the railroads mines and mills

---

2 OA, RG3, Box 91, H.A. Preston to Minister of Mines McCrea, 23 April 1926.

3 OA, RG2, Box 91, H.A. Preston to Minister of Mines McCrea, 2 April 1926.

4 Donald Avery, "Canadian Immigration Policy and the 'Foreign' Navvy, 1896-1914", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, Montreal, 1972, p.138.

5 Ibid., p.133.

that were creating the economic boom.

In the nineteenth century the unskilled labouring jobs were dominated by British workers but these workers had begun to prove difficult to handle. In 1897, a thousand Welsh immigrants had settled in Canada as farmers but depended upon spring and summer railroad work to make a living. These men refused to accept the low wages being offered by the Canadian Pacific to work on the Crow's Nest Pass railway.

Canadian entrepreneurs wanted a solid labour force able to "rough it", whose wage demands were reasonable, who did not want to be unionized and "who would not use the English-Canadian press to focus public attention on their grievances. 6 There was a belief that British workers were physically and psychologically unsuited to the work in mines, lumber and railroad camps in harsh frontier conditions.

By 1907 British labour was considered unsuitable and the huge Oriental labour supply was closed due to anti-Oriental feeling and riots in British Columbia. Canadian industrialists turned to Europe for their supply of cheap labour. Southern Europeans were sometimes regarded as 'inferior stock' with a tendency to criminality and loose morals, while Northern and Central Europeans were considered

---

6 Ibid., p. 138.

racially superior due to their agrarian roots. The Immigration Bureau, which controlled immigration, preferred the agricultural worker.

Nevertheless, after the 1901 C.P.R. maintenance-of-way workers strike, the railroad, in defiance of the Alien Labour Act (1897), began looking elsewhere for its employees. They brought in Italian navvies from the United States and developed a system to regularly bring Italian workers through a Montreal agency.

The Italians tended to return to the U.S. or Italy when the work on the northern Ontario railroads was complete and they usually functioned within a 'padrone' system, which in the early years, reduced the chances of strikes. 8 Northern and central Europeans, particularly Galicians and Scandinavians, were ideal railway labourers; they tended to be agricultural settlers who were available for railway work in the spring and summer and would return to harvest their crops in the fall.

There was considerable criticism from within the Canadian government by the Immigration Bureau about the flouting of the regulations by Canadian industrial entrepreneurs. Pressure was also exerted by public opinion that considered the massive immigration flow a threat to the peace of the Canadian community. Labour organizations were

---

7 Ibid., p.142.

8 Ibid., p. 143.

vigorously opposed the flooding of the labour market. Despite this opposition, the Liberal government of Sir Wilfred Laurier and the Conservative government of Sir Robert Borden acquiesced to the demands of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern Railways for cheap labour.

The mass migration of people to Canada had a profound affect upon the development of northern Ontario where thousands of immigrants found work in the mining lumber and construction camps. These new Canadians became a vital factor in the swift industrialization of northern Ontario. They formed what H.C. Pentland has termed a capitalistic labour market:

> By a capitalistic market is meant one in which the actions of workers and employees are governed and linked by impersonal considerations of immediate pecuniary advantage. In this market the employer is confident that workers will be available whenever he wants them; so he feels free to hire them on a short term basis, and to dismiss them when there is a monetary advantage in doing so ... labour to the employer is a variable cost ... From a broader viewpoint, the capitalistic labour market represents a pooling of labour supplies and labour needs of many employers, so that all may benefit by economizing on labour reserves. 9

Canada needed many unskilled workers for the labour intensive industries that paid low wages and the labour arrangements in Canada, though subject to continual pressure

---

9 H. C. Pentland, "Development of Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (November 1959), p. 450. quoted in Donald Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners': European immigrant workers and Labour Radicalsm in Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 17.

and minor adjustments, did just that and suited the nation's industrialists.

Immigration to this country declined during the post-war recession, but revived on a large-scale with the Railway Agreement of 1925. It gave control over the number and ethnicity of Canadian immigrant recruitment to the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National railways. 10 The railroads served the needs of industry for cheap, expendable industrial labour and for agricultural wage labour. This situation lasted until the Depression of the 1930's when the surplus of unskilled labour in Canada produced increasingly loud demands for the closure of this open European immigration policy.

A permanent proletariat was being created. From the point of view of the entrepreneur this was a good thing: from the point of view of the nationalist there was a social and cultural cost. The frontier industries were given a "free hand" in operating their camps which were increasingly manned by central and southern Europeans. Between 1907 and 1914 their numbers increased from 29% to 48% of the immigrant population. 11 Health and sanitary conditions in the camps were appalling and they were hazardous places to work. The failure of government to solve these problems

---

10 Ibid., p. 9.

11 Donald Avery, "Canadian Immigration Policy and the 'Foreign" Navvy, 1896-1914", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, Montreal, 1977, p.145.

drove many alien workers in the direction of radical labour politics. 12

European immigrants were not completely subjugated by the Canadian industrial system. The primary defense of the immigrant was his ethnicity. 13 Ethnic connections and kinship ties sustained alien workers materially and psychologically; these bonds were a substitute for a union and collective ethnic strength could be transformed in protest movements. 14 Their collective strength could modify the system and occasionally win better conditions. Ukranian and Finnish immigrant communities in northern Ontario created social democratic clubs associated with the Social Democratic Party of Canada, and the cooperative movement. They embraced the union movement actively and during the 1920's, 80% of the members of the Communist party were of Finnish or Ukranian ancestry.

The Communist party provided a haven for foreign workers when no other working class organization or political party was ready to do so. 15 Hundreds of foreign-born workers were deported throughout the 1920's - 7,000 were deported in 1932 alone.

---

12 Ibid., p.147.

13 Donald Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners' (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p.12.

14 Ibid., p.13.

15 Thomas Berger, Fragile Freedoms: Human Rights and Dissent in Canada (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1981), p.135.

Northern Ontario was a harsh land of frontier labour camps with a large disparate, population of aliens with political, social and economic ideas and values that clashed with those of the majority of the people in Ontario. It was a land of great promise and a land that was feared by many Ontario politicians and industrialists as the potential grounds for social upheaval and insurrection.

III

Two Educators on the Shield

Literary critic and scholar, Northrop Frye, noted that a prominent Canadian belief is "The myth of the hero brought up in the forest retreat awaiting the moment when his giant strength will be fully grown and he can emerge into the world."1 During the first part of the twentieth century it was uncertain whether the northern forest would produce a stalwart Canadian hero with democratic values or a Caliban-half monster, half man that would not be accepted by Ontario.

Political leaders had been wrestling with the problem of assimilating the increasing number of French-speaking settlers in Northern Ontario. This situation was being becoming more serious with the influx of thousands of non-British European immigrant labourers.

Alfred Fitzpatrick and James Brown MacDougall were the two most noteworthy promoters of schooling in the Ontario north. The former was connected with adult education and worked independently of governments while the latter worked with children in many official roles with the Ontario

---

1 Northrop Frye, The Bush Garden: essays on the Canadian imagination (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), p. 221.

Department of Education. Both devoted their lives to the region that they loved and the people they wanted to serve. Each had his vision of the North and struggled to establish an educational system of schooling on the Canadian Shield.

Alfred Fitzpatrick made the schooling of the camp labourers his personal crusade. Fitzpatrick was a tall, lean ascetic man with intense blue eyes behind rimless glasses. He seemed an unlikely figure for work on the Ontario frontier but his eccentricity and nervous manner belied his enormous energy, commitment and enthusiasm for his cause. Alfred Fitzpatrick did more than any other single person to bring his vision of enlightenment to the North.

He believed that the greatest social problem in Canada was how to assimilate the European immigrants who spoke alien tongues. 2 In 1915 there were forty-one non-English, non-French, magazines and newspapers published in Canada with a combined circulation of 800,000. 3 Alfred Fitzpatrick was alarmed at what he feared would become a Balkans north of the Great Lakes: a geographical, ethnic and occupational patchwork of peoples. 4 He demanded "a common union of all races in the building up of Canada."

The solution he devised was to have university

---

2 Alfred Fitzpatrick, The University in Overalls: a plea for part-time study (Toronto, 1923), p. 125.

3 Ibid., p. 132.

4 Ibid., p. 130.

instructors work with the immigrant at "the point of contact" with "our civilization". Fitzpatrick proposed a frontier industrial schooling in citizenship which included a knowledge of civics and the complex of Canadian social rights and responsibilities. 5 Immigrants would be taught English, something of the geography of Canada and its history and traditions in order to understand what it is to be a citizen of a responsible and self-governing nation.

Fitzpatrick was not naive; he understood the realities of the Northern economy and was conscious of the exploitation of the region and its people. He pointed out that a quarter of a million men in the North produced one third of Ontario's wealth and got very little in return. 6 In fact, when educational expenditures were examined in 1905, Northern Ontario received $5,030 while the 300,000 people in Toronto got $403,000 for educational purposes. To Fitzpatrick this was robbery in terms of money but more importantly it was robbery of the character of these men.

Fitzpatrick wanted to prevent radicalism in the North, by bringing literacy and an understanding of Canadaian democracy to the workers. "The best means of guiding and controlling social unrest," he wrote, "is the right type of

---

5 Ibid., pp. 129-130.

6 Alfred Fitzpatrick, The Frontier labourer with Sixth Annual Report of the Reading Camp Association 1905-1906 (New Liskeard), p. 6.

instructor." Radical ideas in the construction camps, according to Fitzpatrick were the product of "loose talk from agitators on economic subjects [that] has gone unchecked among masses of workers. Leaders with ability among both English-speaking and foreign workers, unchallenged, have exaggerated and perverted facts basic in economic truth. The result has been that men in the camps have come to expect their viewpoint, lurid and grotesque as it sometimes is." 8 About 1905 a University of Toronto student, Angus Grey, volunteered to work with Alfred Fitzpatrick as an instructor in one of the reading tents. 9 Grey found it so boring in the camp during the day that he removed his suit, donned overalls and joined the men at their work. This established the principle of Frontier College: instructors would teach the men in the evening and work beside them during the day.

This unique response to schooling met some of the needs of the northern environment and the workers. It also made the instructors more effective, particularly in their work in civics and Canadianization. Ethics, values and ideals such as free speech and democracy were best conveyed by a

---

7 Alfred Fitzpatrick, The University in Overalls (Toronto, 1923), p. 139.

8 Ibid., p.138.

9 George L. Cook, "Alfred Fitzpatrick: the foundation of Frontier College"(mimeograph typescript) in OA, MU, 4407, Series A, Dr. Roby Kidd Papers, Correspondence 1961-1981.

sympathetic and intelligent instructor who embodied these abstract concepts and could serve as a role model. He would also have gained the respect of the men because he had laboured with them for the same wage under the same conditions. Lectures and the distribution of literature by an outsider was no replacement for a teacher exhibiting scholarship, sympathy and altruism. Without the teacher-labourer, Fitzpatrick argued, the foreign worker learns of life and ideals in Canada from a tyrannical, petty or racist straw boss. 10

Alfred Fitzpatrick was born in 1862 of a modest Presbyterian family in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. 11 The Anglo-Saxon Protestant, patriotic environment of his family and community taught him "the value of hard work and the regenerative effects of hard work." To become a missionary was Fitzpatrick's goal. He went to the centre of Canadian Presbyterianism, Queen's University, to complete his formal education. The Principal of Queen's, George Munro Grant, was also from Pictou County and he became Alfred's teacher, confidant, friend and supporter. 12

During the years of Fitzpatrick's study at Queen's the

---

10 Alfred Fitzpatrick, The University in Overalls (Toronto, 1923), p. 133.

11 George L. Cook. "Alfred Fitzpartick" OA, MU, 4407, Series A.

12 Alfred Fitzpatrick, The University in Overalls (Toronto, 1923), p. 100.

intellectual world of Canada was in turmoil. One of the central figures in this debate that changed the perspective of religious and social leaders was George M. Grant. When he arrived from Nova Scotia, he was already a "modernist" under the influence of theological liberalism.13 Grant and Professor John Watson of Queen's were among those whom historian, Ramsay Cook, in his study of Canadian social criticism, The Regenerators, says encouraged,

> an emergence of modernist theology which insisted that Christianity was not separate from modern culture but rather should be adapted to it. That theology was founded upon a denial of God's transcendence and on insistence upon his immanence in the world. It followed that a society in which God was immanent was one that could eventually became the Kingdom of God on Earth." 14

By the end of the nineteenth century the traditional Christian "emphasis on man's relationship with God shifted to a focus on man's relationship with man.

The career of Alfred Fitzpatrick clearly illustrates this change in perspective. After graduating, Fitzpatrick, as an ordained Presbyterian Minister, began missionary work among the loggers in California and the Algoma District of Northern Ontario. In 1899, after seven years of religious mission work he concluded that ministering to men's spiritual needs without first attending to their social

---

13 Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators (University of Toronto, 1985), p. 18.

14 Ibid., p. 4.

needs was futile. 15 He left the church for his life's work in the labour camps. Fitzpatrick was acting in accordance with the thinking of his day. He sought to make Christianity relevant: the science of religion, theology, would be transformed by the science of man, sociology.

In 1901, Alfred Fitzpatrick's reforming zeal led to his creating the Reading Camp Association, a series of educational and recreational reading rooms in any available facility - tent, shack, or railway car for interested campmen on the frontier. It was the forerunner of Frontier College.

Christian social reform is the best way to describe the work of the Reading Camp Association: it was a secular organization but it had a strong religious and moral element. Fitzpatrick was concerned with improving the 'character' of men and this could only begin with their perceived need for self-improvement. Reform had to begin from within: however, personal regeneration could lead to social regeneration. Fitzpatrick was a conservative social reformer; the individual not the society was the focus of his efforts. More radical 'social gospel' reformers like A.E. Smith and J.S. Woodsworth concentrated on changing the social environment and placed less emphasis on individual regeneration. The individual, not the society, was the

---

15 George L. Cook, "Alfred Fitzpatrick". OA, MU, Series A.

object of salvation for Frontier College.

It has been suggested that what drove Alfred Fitzpatrick was a sense of guilt that he had all of the advantages of schooling while his retarded brother, Tom, a camp labourer, had so few. 16 Nevertheless, it was a passionate and a deeply held belief and philosophy that sustained him. Education, according to Fitzpatrick, was the means to personal salvation and eventually social reconstruction.

To Fitzpatrick, labour was essential to life and the true purpose of life was to make men or build character not to make money. 17 The true role of labour was to develop the whole man - body, spirit and mind. In this sense labour was an extension of God's work for men grew towards perfection only as their physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties grew to the fullness of their 'God-given potentialities'. Fitzpatrick saw labour dignifying the human condition and it had to be regarded as in the mutual interest of workers, employers and the whole society. Through schooling, modern industrial society could restore the balance and harmony between the physical, intellectual

---

16 Alfred Fitzpatrick. The University in Overalls (Toronto, 1923), dedication. and George L. Cook, "Alfred Fitzpatrick" p. 4.

17 George L. Cook, "Alfred Fitzpatrick", p. 6. OA, MU 4407, Series A.

and spiritual. 18 Industrial schooling was needed to develop the whole man and for the campman "salvation is largely a matter of education." 19 No class analysis was necessary, in Fitzpartrick's view, and the violent toppling of an oppressor was not the answer because oppression was the result of ignorance which was the denial of each man's 'God-given potentialities'. 20

The other force promoting schooling in Northern Ontario was James B. MacDougall, a contemporary of Alfred Fitzpatrick, who had a remarkably similar background. Born in Tillcoultry, Scotland, MacDougall came to Ontario as a child and was educated in a Lanark County rural school. 21 Model School training in Perth launched him on a distinguished career in education that took him through Normal School in Ottawa.

His outstanding academic record won him the Prince of Wales scholarship to Queen's University. Like Alfred Fitzpatrick, James MacDougall was a Presbyterian. During his university years in the 1890's, liberal theology strongly influenced the Presbyterian Church and especially those at

---

18 Alfred Fitzpatrick, The University in Overalls (Toronto, 1923), p.36.

19 George L. Cook, "Alfred Fitzpatrick", p. 18. OA, MU, 4407, Series A.

20 Ibid., p. 17.

21 The Canadian Who's Who, IV, 1948.

Queen's University. 22 Men like George Grant, John Watson and later Adam Shortt were developing a conception of Christianity that focused on the ethical and practical over the theological. J.B. MacDougall was affected by these new ideas that had such relevance to an experienced rural school teacher.

James MacDougall wore a dark three-piece suit and a large pocket watch; he was the very picture of efficiency. He was a slender man with dark eyes and a large moustache which gave him a military countenance. With his dark hair brushed briskly back behind his ears he gave the impression of a man in a hurry - a man conscious of time.

After graduating from Queen's in 1896, MacDougall was drawn to Northern Ontario where public schooling would be the focus of his attention and consume his energies until his retirement in 1942. The task ahead of him was enormous and he felt it was an urgent one.

MacDougall had a romantic view of the North. The ageless land, towering pines and trackless wilderness awed him and the mammoth task of the labourers he considered heroic; men "Whose keen blades carve fortune from forests primeval." 23 While the North was synonymous with gold, mines, lumbering and fortunes to be made, MacDougall wrote, "What a country

---

22 Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators (University of Toronto Press, 1985), p.184.

23 J.B. MacDougall, Building the North (Toronto, 1919), p. 5.

will become depends upon more than material forces...The true strength of a nation lies in the character of her citizens." 24

In his poem "Builders of the North', MacDougall saw the people of Northern Ontario with wonder and optimism:

> Who from flickering camp-fires, look to flaming auroras,
> Mystic lure of the lone trail, gleam of promise to man.
>
> Bow ye not, sons of battle [with nature] to man-made traditions
> Of greatness by plunder, that sap by their sway,
> But yield ye alone, to these God-fashioned visions
> That crown you by night, and that gird you by day.
>
> And build ye a race, toil-bred sons of the Northland,
> As your stately pines straight, as your granite hills strong,
> Thew-knit, supple sinewed, soul and body puissant.
> Britain's vanguard in right, and her bulwark 'gainst wrong.

MacDougall believed that the body and soul of the people and the society of the North will be transformed through their labour. It will be a "God-fashioned vision" and the people will take on the strength of the land and reveal it in their morality and patriotism. Here again is the myth of the forest nurtured hero gathering strength to take his place in the world.

As a liberal, progressive educator, J.B. MacDougall believed in the moral, ethical and patriotic purposes of education and their regenerative effects. Ontario's leading progressive educator, James L. Hughes, also expressed this view of individual and social betterment earlier in the

---

24 Ibid., p.24.

Methodist Magazine and Review:

> Christian principles are for everyday use; they are in fact the fundamental principles of all social evolution. The new theology and new education are in perfect harmony in teaching that the greatest work a man has to do is not the mere saving of his own soul, but the full development of his soul or selfhood in order that he may do his best work for God in accomplishing the highest destiny of mankind as a unity. The ideal is making Christianity a vital force in the social and industrial organization of humanity and an essential element of progressive civilization. 25

In 1919, MacDougall's published doctoral thesis, Building the North, warned about the many native born children of non-English-speaking parents who are beyond the educational system and who are "out of sympathy with British ideals." 26 the state owed its people a proper education and could "neglect this duty only to their hurt and its peril." 27 In the same year Alfred Fitzpatrick declared that the camps were ripe for the "blossoming of 'Bolshevism'." 28

Both Fitzpatrick and MacDougall saw Northern Ontario as a land of great human potential but that the largely invisible problem of foreign illiterates, slave to custom,

---

25 J.L. Hughes, "An experiment in Altruism", Methodist Magazine and Review, 19 January, 1899, p. 23. cited in Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators (University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 195. also see J.B. MacDougall, Building the North (Toronto, 1919), p.130.

26 Ibid., p. 133.

27 Ibid., p. 135

28 George L.Cook, "Alfred Fitzpatrick", OA, MU, 4407, Series A.

ignorance and apathy posed a menace to the society. The problem was invisible because foreigners were not naturalized citizens; they were distributed in small pockets throughout a vast territory unaccessible to most Ontarians. Schooling was thought to be the solution. For MacDougall schooling was "the melting pot of the races" 29 and education was salvation. Education, although primarily a morally, spiritually and intellectually regenerative force for the individual could produce social renewal. To achieve these goals, both educators called for the democratization of schooling by greatly expanding the educational opportunities in Northern Ontario. 30 Education must be obtainable in the farm, in the bush, on the railway and in the mine," wrote Alfred Fitzpatrick, "We must educate the whole family wherever their work is... to the full stature of their God-given potentialities." 31

---

29 J.B. MacDougall, Building the North (Toronto, 1919), p. 133.

30 Ibid., p.130.

31 Alfred Fitzpatrick, The University in Overalls (Toronto, 1973), p.93.

IV

The District Men

Northern Ontario was appropriately renamed "New Ontario", a title that captured the optimistic feeling Ontarians had for their frontier. New Ontario stretched across the Canadian Shield north from the French, Nipissing and Mattawa river line from the upper parts on the Ottawa River west to the Manitoba border. 1 Stephen Leacock felt the optimism inspired by the north and the hope for riches to be discovered there:

> Here was this great silver country spread out north of us, where people thought there was only wilderness. And right at our very doors! You could see as I saw, the night express going north every evening for all one knew, Rockefellar or Carnegie or anyone might be on it! Here was the wealth of Calcutta ... poured out at our feet. 2

The Ontario Education Association exploited the curiosity about northern Ontario to attract teachers to its annual summer trip to the north. Around 1920 a number of these excursions brought teachers from 'Old' Ontario together with teachers from New Ontario for a week. 3 The purpose of the trip was threefold: to allow northern

---

1 J.B. MacDougall. Building the Canadian North (Toronto, 1919), p.19.

2 Stephen Leacock, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960), p. 26.

3 OA, Records of the Department of Education, RG2, F-3-E, Box 16, Charles G. Fraser to L.A. Green, April 1921.

teachers a forum to express their views; to recognize teachers as people of influence in their communities; and to build friendships for professional advantages and encourage closer cooperation in common educational interests.

Beyond this the northern excursion had "patriotic value" and created awareness of northern educational issues and the organizers did not ignore the political nature of the solution to these problems. The 1921 trip included Premier and Mrs. E.C. Drury and two cabinet ministers, the Provincial Treasurer Mr. Smith and the Minister of Education R.H. Grant and his wife as well as a number of journalists.4 The Ontario Education Association was determined to have thorough coverage of the tour in the newspapers; if the journalists did not provide it the teachers on the trip would. Each participant was expected to report on the tour to their local association and to send a copy to the local newspaper. In order to exert pressure for change they were also to inform their local member of provincial parliament about the educational issues discussed. 5

The OEA northern trip was a railway excursion; roads in the region were rudimentary or non existent. The train left Toronto and headed north toward Sudbury through the little towns where teachers would join the group. In Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town, Stephen Leacock caught the

---

4 Ibid., 15 July 1921.

5 Ibid., 3 September 1921.

atmosphere of the journey:

> Don't tell me that the speed is only twenty-five miles an hour. I don't care what it is. I tell you, and you can prove it for yourself if you will, that train of mingled flat cars and coaches that goes tearing into the night, its engine whistle shrieking out its warning into the silent woods and echoing over the dull still lake is the fastest train in the whole world...
>
> And the most genial, and sociable too. See how the passengers all turn and talk to one another now as they get nearer the little town. That dull reserve a that seemed to hold the passengers all turn and talk to one another and now as they get nearer and nearer the little town, that dull reserve that seemed to hold the passengers in the electric suburban has clean vanished and gone. They are talking - listen - of the harvest, and the late election and of how the local member is mentioned for the cabinet and all the old familiar topics of that sort. Already the conductor has changed his glazed hat for an ordinary round Christie and you can hear the passengers calling him and the brakeman "Bill" and "Sam" as if they were all one family. 6

The teachers made a large loop through northern Ontario during the week. The northern public school inspectors help organize the activities of the conference members, often arranged their accommodation and tours of the local regions and their industries. From Sudbury the train proceeded to Sault Ste. Marie up to Cochrane, Iroquios Falls, Timmins, Cobalt district, through the clay belt to North Bay and back to Toronto.

These excursions helped define the educational problems in the north in the minds of teachers and politicians and brought them into public awareness. All became aware that the solution to the problems of northern schooling was

---

6 Stephen Leacock, Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart. 1960), p.152.

largely political.

Some progress had already been made. James Whitney's Conservative government (1905-1918), as part of its program to stimulate economic and social development of northern Ontario established a normal school in North Bay in 1906. 7 With its low enrolment and location in New Ontario, North Bay Normal School was not economically viable for many years. Nevertheless, under the principalship of James B. MacDougall (1911) it trained and upgraded the certificates of increasing numbers of teachers who were employed in Ontario's north. By the early 1920's there was a dramatic increase in the first and second class certificates and a decline in third class permit-holders. 8

J.B. MacDougall was instrumental in establishing the Northern Academy in Montieth which was a government boarding school serving high school level students. Yet despite these accomplishments, for many northern children education was inadequate.

Educational change in New Ontario was initiated by the regional public school inspectors known as the "District Men". Within the education hierarchy the school inspector was "the man in the middle"; he was at the top of the local school administration and was empowered to visit local

---

7 Robert M. Stamp, The Schools Ontario (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p.77.

8 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 23, J.B. MacDougall, Report on Education in Northern Ontario, 1922, 24 January 1923.

schools, investigate activities of teachers, principals and trustees. 9 He was the low man in the central educational administration: he was accountable to the Chief Inspector, Deputy Minister, superintendent and Minister of Education. The inspectors functioned as an important political link between the schools in the region and the Department of Education and other departments of the government. Their reports, statistics and information on the living conditions of the people in the region were used to help frame policy at the provincial government level. 10

In 1904 two new District Men were appointed. James B. MacDougall was the inspector for the District of Nipissing and his area included five districts then part of Algoma and the unsurveyed territory along the Canadian Pacific rail line. Leslie A. Green became the inspector of the Algoma District. These appointments were made just when the CPR was being completed, the Lakehead was developing as a transhipment centre, Sault Ste. Marie was becoming a steel manufacturer and an industrial centre and Sudbury was an expanding mining centre. Construction of the Algoma Central Railway and the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway was

---

9 John R. Abbot, "Educational Policy Formation and Implementation on the Primary Resource Frontier: The Case of the District of Algoma, 1903 - 1922", (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1983), p. 6.

10 P. Corrigan and B. Curtis, "Education, Inspection and State Formation: a preliminary statement", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, Montreal, 1985, p.166.

beginning. 11 MacDougall and Green were the first resident inspectors in the north and they were appointed at the insistence of northern members of the provincial legislature who now had political power because of the buoyant economy and the general belief that the north had a great future.

J.B. MacDougall had lived and worked in North Bay: L.A. Green lived and worked in Sault Ste. Marie. Both men had been high school principals and prominent citizens in their respective communities. Both were well-educated, articulate, energetic, thoroughly modern progressive educators. Green and MacDougall became friends, correspondents and confidants. Leslie Green's two daughters attended North Bay Normal School and were taken under the Macdougall's wing. 12 Their personal and professional friendship and unity of views on educational matters set a pattern that northern inspectors would follow for at least a decade.

MacDougall became an eloquent spokesman for the north and proved to be and ambitious man with a shrewd political instinct. These qualities and sound accomplishments as a teacher, principal and inspector won him the post of supervisor of the northern inspectors in 1919. With the growth of the northern districts, James MacDougall's responsibilities expanded and as Assistant Chief Inspector

---

11 Ibid., p.3.

12 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 16, L.A. Green to The Deputy Minister of Education, 24 May 1918.

working out of North Bay and then Toronto, he was responsible for the administration and coordination of northern schools and dealing with the complex of regional problems.

The mandate of the District Men was to facilitate the establishment and extension of educational opportunities in New Ontario, a task made exceedingly difficult because schools in the north had to fit into and social and economic framework set by 'Old' Ontario. John R. Abbot has pointed out that Old Ontario was settled between 1780 and 1850 "by people whose prosperity depended directly or indirectly upon the cultivation of the soil. 'New'Ontario was the product of a second wave of settlement attracted to the primary resource frontier after 1845." 13 Here agriculture was regarded as quite a marginal commercial activity and the social importance of New Ontario also tended to be seen as marginal. The model for the delivery of education in Ontario was based on the relatively stable and permanent population of southern and south-western Ontario. The number of people needed to demand a change in the delivery of education 'was established by experience in Ontario's rural and small urban tradition.' 14

In the wilderness of the shield, agriculture was insignificant but gathering was important and often

---

13 Ibid., p.23.

14 Ibid., p.21.

critical. (Mining, fishing and logging are all resource-based gathering activities.) Traditional gatherers 'coalesced' in small nomadic groups whose movements were determined by the cycles of the seasons and the availability of resources. Modern gatherers like traditional gatherers worked where the proper trees grew, worked in the appropriate season, at the dictates of the market economy. Miners functioned in a similar way although to a lesser degree. These modern transient groups tended to settle where natural or man-made transportation routes made it possible.

The provincial administrators living and working in Toronto did not understand the economic and social distinction between New Ontario and Old Ontario nor for that matter did many northerners. It is not surprising then that settlers along a railway, employees at a portable saw mill or inhabitants of a small fishing village were no less committed to education and the idea of the school section than the farmer in Wentworth county; yet, a school was often just out of the reach of the settlements in New Ontario.

The decision to establish a school had to be a local one; it was not a Department of Education responsibility. The Public School Act of 1909 stated: "A school section shall not be formed or altered except on the petition of five heads of families resident within the territory

affected." 15 This legislation seemed to be fair and democratic and demanded citizen participation in education.

By 1909, many settlements along the Algoma Central Railway had several families but not enough to warrant the creation of a school section. Mr. J. Higgins of Wilde was no doubt disappointed when his request for a school in his community was rejected because it lacked sufficient population to warrant one. Nevertheless, he accepted the decision as did inspector Leslie Green and neither questioned the wisdom of the Department of Education's ruling. All parties assumed that northern settlements would eventually increase in size and trigger the delivery of educational facilities according to the framework established by Old Ontario's experience.

Even where numbers did justify school construction problems arose. The railways were often less than cooperative. In the Algoma Central Railway community of Searchmount the railway refused to build a school. 16 Local school officials were dependent on the railway for their jobs but they had been elected to provide for the education of their children and other children in Searchmount. They turned to Inspector Green to act as a mediator and a higher

---

15 Edward VI, Chapter 89 (13 April 1909), 32 (3) quoted in John R. Abbot, "Educational Policy Formation " (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1983), p.25-26.

16 OA, RG2, F-3-E. Box 23, J.B. Cunningham M.P.P. to L.A. Green, 22 February 1922.

authority. He discovered that the tight-fisted railway was legally as well as morally wrong in refusing to provide a school; the railway was obligated to construct a public hall as well as a school in a community of over 500 people.

Through the offices of Assistant Chief Inspector, J.B. MacDougall, the District Men had created a strong network of support and information sharing. Like Searchmount, the communities of Franz and Goudreau in Inspector Hamilton's area experienced the same problem with the railway. 17 James MacDougall coordinated the cooperative efforts of the inspectors on this issue to get the best results from the Algoma Central Railway in the agreements to build schools in their communities.

As late as 1926 the railway was still posing financial problems for local school authorities. At Plummer the railway was three years behind in paying its taxes. The secretary of the public school board wrote to Leslie A. Green's successor, Inspector D. T. Walkom, in complete frustration; the board had a school to operate but lacked the funds to do it. 18 The intransigence of the railway left the inspector no alternative but to advise the school board to report the case to the sheriff as the Public School

---

17 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 23 , J.B. MacDougall to L.A. Green, 15 March 1922.

18 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 25, George Bryans to D.T. Walkom, 30 January 1926.

Act allowed. 19 D.T. Walkom and the Department of Education worked on the case for months in futility. In order to get the back taxes the case had to be heard in division court.

One of the great weaknesses of maintaining and promoting education on the frontier was that the inspectors lacked any real power. The prestige of the inspector and his political and diplomatic skill along with his moral authority allowed him to solve most disputes but when challenged by a large corporation the inspector had no legal authority to act on behalf of the local school board. Inspector Walkom wrote: "There is no other action that trustees in unorganized territory can take," except court action. 20

Whenever there was a problem in a community between the employer and employees over education it divided the community and could lead to company threats and employee fears about their jobs. In the township of Prince, a company town had employed enough married men with families and children to require the establishment of a school. 21 The company, formed "largely of foreign capital," was unwilling to be assessed for school tax purposes and the workers feared dismissal if they pressured the company. The company would replaced agitators with single men who would have no

---

19 Ibid., D.T. Walkom to George Bryans, 3 February 1925.

20 Ibid., D.T. Walkom to D. Nicholl, 28 November 1922.

21 Ibid., D.T. Walkom To J.B. MacDougall, 13 October 1923.

interest in having a school section established.

In this case the company won. The threat of firings forced the employees to finance their school with a levy on all employees. In his letter to Assistant Chief Inspector, J. B. Mac Dougall, D.T. Walkom called the arrangement unsatisfactory and advised him that a better method of financing the school had to be found. MacDougall called for a radical change in the method of funding isolated schools but he recognized that the government would be cautious in making any changes. The current arrangement was clearly a threat to the extension of educational opportunities in the north which was the goal of the District Men.

Under the leadership of Dr. MacDougall, the inspectors in the northern districts gradually became proactive in establishing schools where they were needed. "I know you will recognize that the child is the dominant factor and his interest is paramount," wrote J.B. MacDougall to inspector Walkom, "To search out the child who is uncared for and unprovided with an opportunity for education and to supply himself for life should be our first aim. To help provide the favorable conditions of education for all." 22 In 1923, Mr. Walkom identified a settlement that was in dire need of a school. It was a small community located on a peninsula on the eastern end of Lake Superior, about 15

---

22 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 23, J.B. MacDougall to D.T. Walkom, 24 February 1925.

miles from Sault Ste. Marie in the township of Prince.

On a chilly Tuesday Sault Ste. Marie morning, 6 November 1923, MacDougall and Walkom got into Walkom's Chevrolet Baby Grand automobile that he had fitted with heavy duty inner tubes and oversized cord tires to withstand the roads of the region. 23 The purpose of the trip was to conduct a joint survey of Gros Cap to find a "practical method of establishing school facilities." 24 At Gros Cap they found a poor isolated community of hunters, trappers and fisherman. The families, most of whom were of mixed Native and European origin, had sixteen school age children between them but parental illiteracy and indifference to the values of schooling made them incapable of carrying out the business of a school section in the "efficient manner" necessary to establish a school.

D.T.Walkom's first attempts to organize a school section failed for reasons all to familiar to the District Men: students lacked proper clothing, the road conditions were too bad, responsible drivers were not available and alternative schools were too far away. Another approach he tried was to organize the schools in the township of Prince under a Township Board of Education. This would allow able

---

23 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 25, J. W. Billes (Toronto Canadian Tire Manager) to D.T. Walkom, 12 March 1923.

24 Ibid., J.B. MacDougall, Report for the Deputy Minister of Education in J.B. MacDougall to D.T. Walkom, 9 November 1923.

trustees to administer schooling for all of the children in the township and ensure proper financing for poorer sections of the township such as Gros Cap. Approval for such a reorganization had to come from the Council of Prince and after seven months of delay the "People were unwilling to give it the necessary support." 25 Frustrated by this impasse, Dr. MacDougall felt that the delays were sacrificing the children and Mr. Walkom agreed stating : "It is a serious thing to allow these children to grow up in ignorance in the midst of a civilized community." 26 Walkom and the Assistant Chief Inspector corresponded regularly on the Gros Cap case: Walkom sent telegrams as far afield as Fort Frances to inform MacDougall of developments in the case.

In June 1924 inspector Walkom made his most creative attempt to secure a school for Gros Cap. He appealed to the Department of Indian Affairs to take responsibility for the education of the children at Gros Cap. 27 The inspector explained the situation and argued that the Department of Indian Affairs had set a precedent for such an action at Batchewana Bay, just north of Gros Cap on Lake Superior, when it provided a school for Metis children there. The

---

25 Ibid., D.T. Walkon to A.D. McNabb, 11 June 1924

26 Ibid., J.B. MacDougall to D.T. Walkom 10 November 1923.

27 Ibid., D.T. Walkom to A.D. McNabb, 10 November 1923.

Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, A. F Mackenzie, vigorously denied that the Batchewana case was a precedent for Gros Cap. He pointed out that there were far fewer children at Gros Cap in a smaller geographical area and that none of them belonged to an Indian Band. 28 Despite these protestations, Walkom and MacDougall worked together effectively at the local level with the area Indian Agent and the Prince Township trustees toward a solution.

On 15 October 1924, a year after the problem had been identified, J.B. MacDougall informed the Deputy Minister of Education that school accommodation would be available at Gros Cap. 29 The inspectors convinced three members of the Prince Township Council to act as trustees for Gros Cap. Walkom located a suitable house on a nearby Indian reserve and the local Indian Agent agreed to have Indian Affairs assist in purchasing the school. In order to make this unique scheme of establishing a school work, MacDougall convinced the Department of Education to acknowledge the new trustees and approve a grant of $200 to $400 to allow Mr. Walkom to transform the house into a school.

The Gros Cap case illustrates the active role of the district inspectors. They were expected to identify areas

---

28 Ibid., A.F. Mackenzie to D.T. Walkom, 9 September 1924.

29 Ibid., J.B. MacDougall, Memorandum for The Deputy Minister of Education Re. School Accommodation at Gros Cap, 15 October 1924.

where the educational needs of children were not being met and to satisfy them. Each case presented a different mix of political, legal and social problems and it was up to the inspector to use his moral suasion, experience and creativity to provide schooling.

In 1922 Dr. MacDougall stated that the main task in the north has been to promote facilities. The job of the inspector was to be "creative and constructive, not merely directive and supervisory." 30 After the lengthy illness and death of Leslie Green in 1922, he was succeeded by D.T. Walkom who was an energetic and effective teacher with proven ability as a cooperative district inspector in the Cochrane region. Walkom possessed the qualities MacDougall looked for in an inspector - decisiveness, initiative and action. 31 These qualities were very important in an inspector for they forming the educational system and they believed that they were indirectly forming the social and economic fabric of the north . According to MacDougall the inspector's "work is the base of the whole social fabric." Each inspector was conscious of the historic significance of the work and that it was a team effort Dr. MacDougall would not let them forget it. "Here [in the north] history

---

30 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 23, J.B. Macdougall, Report on Education in Northern Ontario, 1922, 24 January, 1923 also J.B. MacDougall to Dr. Waugh, Memorandum to The Honorable Minister of Education, 1924.

31 J.B. MacDougall, Building the North (Toronto, 1919), p.107.

is being made," he wrote, "there [in the south] it is being rehearsed. Here the ground is new, the trails are being blazed, and the system shaped to suit the peculiar nature and needs of this frontier land." Whenever appropriate, MacDougall would compliment an inspector on his "splendid work" in "Building the North" and he commended his colleagues for enduring the hardships of travel, poor living conditions and endless problems but he also reminded them of "the steady progress [that] is largely the fruit of your self-denying efforts." 32 In later years, James MacDougall would look back on these pioneering years "with happiest memories of the intimate associations" with his fellow inspectors. The District Men had a feeling of sharing in an important professional mission but this professional friendship was also often very personal. Mr. Walkom considered L.A. Green "a loyal and true friend" 33 and Lakehead inspector, W.A. Wilson had a close personal family friendship with Walkom's family. 34 In the correspondence of the inspectors it is common to find a feeling of camaraderie that lasted until an inspector's death. At the funeral of a district inspector his fellow inspectors were

---

32 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 31, J.B. MacDougall to D.T. Walkom, 28 February 1928.

33 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 25, D.T. Walkom, Convention Address, n.d.

34 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 31, W.A. Wilson to D.T. Walkom, 5 September 1930.

always represented and a floral tribute as a testament to the brotherhood of the District Men was presented to express the high esteem in which he was held by his colleagues and friends. 35

By the 1920's with the leadership of J.B.MacDougall and the development of the cadre of progressive inspectors, the educational needs of northern Ontario were being understood. Earlier the solution to the ills of education in the north was seen as a financial one. Both Principal MacDougall and Alfred Fitzpartick believed that school consolidation would ensure educational facilities and opportunities. L.A. Green held the same opinion. He suggested that part of the grant made to the province by the Dominion Department of Agriculture be diverted to the consolidation of schools in northern Ontario. 36 Green argued that such a diversion of funds was fair to the north which "supplied a goodly portion of the provincial revenues for the first generation" and compensation should be received in return. A year later, Mr.

---

35 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 23, J.B. MacDougall to D.T. Walkom, 31 May 1924. and J.B. MacDougall to D.T. Walkom, 27 August 1923.

36 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 16, L.A. Green to Deputy Minister of Education, 3 December 1918. quoted in John R. Abbot, "Education Policy Formation", unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Toronto, 1983.

Trustees and parents had a sentimental attachment to the rural one room school and they feared higher costs and were concerned about transporting their children long distances. As early as 1920, Minister of Education R.H.Grant and his department realized that school consolidation was not the answer to the problems of rural schools.

Green suggested that education funds should be redistributed: "the older and stronger sections in Lower Ontario might well afford to give up some of their grant in order that struggling section (sic) in the north might have a chance to pull up even with them... Decrease the grants to the strong and increase them to the weak."

Murdock McPhee, chairman of the Ophir School Board and a friend of Leslie Green's, realized in 1906 that the wealth created by non-renewable resources and slowly renewable resources of the north controlled by non-residents or the Ontario government did not remain in the north to develop the economic or the social infrastructure. 37 McPhee began to question whether northern Ontario would be better off without being controlled by Old Ontario. Essentially this was a separatist idea that may have had some value but it required strong political support based on a strong sense of northern community which did not exist then and still does not exist. 38

It took a period of time for the northern inspectors to gain experience with the problems of the region, to understand the nature of the economic and social environment that was evolving before the pattern could be comprehended. The District men gradually became less subject to the

---

37 Ibid., p.297.

38 G.R. Weller, "Hinterland Politics: The Case of North Western Ontario," Canadian Journal of Political Science 10 (1977): p.747.

educational pattern of Old Ontario and they slowly became less traditional in their thinking about solutions to schooling in the north.

In 1922 the work experience of the northern inspectors coalesced in J.B. MacDougall's report to the Minister of Education entitled, Report on Education in Northern Ontario. MacDougall boldly and clearly stated that despite some progress, "There is still the pressing problem of providing educational facilities for the sequestered groups of children who are in sparsely settled areas along the railroad right-of-way, in the timber and pulpwood camps, and in various isolated spots chosen by the hunter the trapper and the fisherman." 39 Dr. MacDougall had come to understand and was able to describe the conditions in New Ontario that created the problem:

> The farmers, because of our system, or rather lack of system, settle promiscuously, often in secluded spots where a promising pocket of land offers a hope. The small mill owner plants his portable mill and group of workers at some vantage point on a lake or stream accessible to timber and transportation. The Railway road gang settle with their families every six miles or so and way station operators at other intervals over our 4,000 miles of rail. The tie timber and pulp jobber with his married cook or boss flits into the fastness of the woods in October and out again in April. And lastly the fisherman, hunter, trapper and other seasonal workmen locate where nature invites, and lends a chance for even a precarious livelihood. There are hundreds of children thus unhappily placed. This is a real problem... a continuous and fertile source of illiteracy.

---

39 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 23, J.B. MacDougall, Report on Education in Northern Ontario, 1922, 24 January 1924.

The report went on to explain that the traditional methods to facilitate schooling had failed and that a new approach was needed. J. B. MacDougall broached the idea of "the travelling school or itinerant teacher" and suggested transportation by rail, launch or horse-drawn vehicle where appropriate.

An Ontario education historian, Robert M. Stamp, has credited MacDougall with originating the idea of the school rail car, 40 as did dozens of journalists who wrote about this unique school over its forty years of service. Although Dr. MacDougall was the first to publicly present the idea in 1922, it had been around for some time.

Algoma District inspector, L.A. Green, was frustrated for much of his career with not being able to establish schools in railway communities because they had sub-minimal populations. By 1919 he realized these settlements would never warrant a school. Green had an idea that he informally discussed with railway officials, section men and camp men and they were all enthusiastic about it. "My plan," wrote Leslie Green, "is to have a travelling school master on the road who would be paid by the government, would spend half a day at each point every week and teach children for that

---

40 Robert M. Stamp, "Schools on Wheels: the railway car schools of Northern Ontario," Canada: an historical magazine. Spring 1974, p.35.

length of time." 41 In a letter to Deputy Minister of Education, A.H.U. Colquhoun, inspector Green outlined his mobile school scheme: students would be left homework to do under the supervision of parents until the weekly return of the teacher; the teacher would make 10 to 12 stops; the teacher would be boarded at work camps and the railroad would provide his transportation. This itinerant teacher would be fully qualified and earn the handsome salary of $1,200 a year and be responsible to the local inspector. Green's plan was inspired by the work of Alfred Fitzpatrick's Reading Camp Association; the inspector wanted the travelling teacher to instruct the men in the camps during the evenings. Such a teacher would have to "be a good citizen and teach these strangers our laws and ideals and would be of much value in this respect if we could get the right man."

The concept of movable education was current after World War I within the network of ideas and information developing among the District Men. Although Leslie Green had detailed such a scheme, J.B. MacDougall had been impressed by Reading Camp Association's creative response to the needs of the people and the environment of the north when it used an old railway as a school for men working at the end of steel. 42

---

41 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 16, L.A. Green to The Deputy Minister of Education, 24 June 1919.

42 J. B. MacDougall, Building the North (Toronto, 1919), p.143.

Inspector Green's idea was not seriously considered by the Minister of Education, R.H. Grant. He was concerned about the problem of rural education and was developing a policy but he was not prepared to adopt such an unconventional proposal. 43

The United Farmers' government (1919-1923) of E.C. Drury was committed to rural school reform, at least at the political level. Their stated policy was 'To provide equal educational opportunities for all children... by greatly extending and improving educational facilities in rural districts.' 44 Yet, except for the encouragement of consolidated schools and continuation schools, little reform was accomplished and their enthusiasm for change was short-lived. Nevertheless, the northern inspectors were becoming better organized and were exerting substantial pressure on policy-makers in the Department of Education.

On 3 April 1923 the northern inspectors began a two day conference to discuss their mutual concerns which ranged from the formation of new school sections to assessing the

---

43 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 16, A.H. U. Colquhoun to L.A.Green, 26 June 1919.

44 J.C. Hopkins, The Canadian Annual Review, 1919 (Toronto:Canadian Annual Review Limited), p.512. quoted in Robert M. Stamp The Schools of Ontario (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 128.

socio-economic nature of northern communities. 45 At the conference, the District Men rejected the suggestion of the itinerant teacher as impractical "owing to the scattered nature of settlement "and the distances in the north which made it prohibitive but the inspectors did recommend "an extended investigation" into an educational system "applied along a line or railway to serve isolated groups or in jobbers camps."

The inspectors of New Ontario were now speaking with one voice and with a new assurance; they needed a more receptive ear from the government officials and politicians of Old Ontario.

---

45 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 23, J.B. MacDougall, Memorandum for Dr. Waugh Re. Conference of Northern Inspectors, Toronto, 3 April 1923.

Putting the Wheels in Motion

Premier G. Howard Ferguson retained the education portfolio after his Conservative Party election victory in 1923. He declared "that education exceeds in importance even the basic industry of agriculture. And if the Premier of a Province should have a say in any department it is the department which leads the others in importance." 1 The importance of the education portfolio has been attributed to his need to oversee and solve the divisive bilingual schools issue in Ontario. 2 However, for a politician like Howard Ferguson, there was a more practical reason for keeping education. "To Ferguson politics was in large measure applied psychology, a matter of understanding the drift of opinion, and knowing when and how to intervene to guide it in a particular direction." 3 The education portfolio provided him with the ability to better monitor public opinion. He explained: 'There is an army of people in the province who occupy a position more or less unique- teachers supervisors and inspectors are closely in touch

---

1 Toronto Globe, 19 February 1926.

2 Robert M. Stamp. The Schools of Ontario (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 128.

3 Peter Oliver, Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory (University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 155.

with community life'. 4 The premier found it politically advantageous to be in touch with these people. Ferguson also found it politically advantageous to become a promoter of the major policy initiatives of the 1920's - extending educational opportunity.

"I am intensely interested in the development of further educational opportunities out in the country," he told the convention of the Ontario Education Association in 1924. "We have to take more education to the doors of the people, greater educational advantages." 5 In his address to Ontario educators two years latter he said. "I am more concerned about educational conditions in the rural parts of this Province than I am about any other phase of education."6 "My view of education has always been that it should be made available to every child of this Province on terms of equality as near as possible. In other words, that where we cannot bring the children to the education centre, we should not spare effort or money to get the opportunity to the child." 7

Howard Ferguson seized J.B. MacDougall's dramatic

---

4 OA, G.S. Henry Papers, G. Howard Ferguson to G.S. Henry, 8 May 1931. quoted in Robert M. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 128.

5 G. Howard Ferguson, "Address", Proceedings of the Ontario Educational Association (Toronto, 1924), p. 21.

6 G. Howard Ferguson, "Address", Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association (Toronto, 1926), p. 16.

7 Ibid., p. 11. and Toronto Globe, 19 February 1926.

proposal - the school rail car - and absorbed it into the Department of Education's comprehensive policy of extending educational opportunities. The new premier was receptive to MacDougall's scheme because Ferguson had a life-long personal interest in the north. He grew up in Kemptville a small town south of Ottawa and had worked in the bush hauling railway ties as punishment for schoolboy pranks that disrupted the teacher and inspector of his local school. 8 His enthusiasm for the north increased in 1914 when he became the Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines in the cabinet of William Hearst. After his tour of the north the following year he developed a genuine concern for this vast area of the province. 9

During the 1920's equality of educational opportunity was considered both a right and a necessity for the success of a democratic industrial society. 10 The Ferguson government advocated correspondence courses, night schools, auxiliary classes, agricultural education, and allowing the first two years of university education in certain collegiate institutes. These innovations achieved varying

---

8 Peter Oliver, G. Howard Ferguson Ontario Tory (University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 9.

9 Robert M. Stamp. "Schools on Wheels: the railway car schools of Northern Ontario", Canada: an historical Magazine. Spring 1974, p. 36.

10 J. Donald Wilson et al, Canadian Education: a history (Scarborough: Prentice - Hall Canada, 1970), p. 365.

degrees of success. Out of this array of democratic educational reforms none received the immediate, enthusiastic public response that the school rail car did.

The school rail car was popular because it was egalitarian: it extended educational opportunity. Moreover, the idea was a romantic one because it involved trains, the symbol of progress and the north which symbolized hope. No longer would children like the illiterate fourteen year old boy Leslie Green met near Sudbury be forced to "eke out an existence without an education" because he lived and worked in transient settlements and lumber camps. 11 The mobile school was used for a political purpose beyond bringing schooling to the north - it would also Canadianize people and help combat communism.

The issues of Canadianizing the foreigner and combating illiteracy were inextricably intertwined. According to the director of census research, Mr. McLean, illiteracy was the product of social class, the wrong values and attitudes and inferior social behaviour. "Mere inability to read and write in itself is not a circumstance of major significance," he argued,

> Rather it is the fact that social behaviour of illiterates as a class is in many respects inferior to that of the literate element of the population and is in some respects anti-social. The forcing of illiterates to learn to read and write would not in itself remedy the situation. Illiteracy is merely one result of a

---

11 OA, RG2, F-3-E, Box 16, L.A.Green to The Deputy Minister of Education, 24 June 1919.

> combination of circumstances and attitudes which find expression on numerous fields of social activity. The problem is one of socially elevating the illiterates as a class and involves the changing of the circumstances and attitudes which have given rise to many undesirable class traits which perpetuate themselves within the body politic." 12

The census director found that illiteracy was high where no school was provided or where parents failed to send their children. 13 Non-attendance was almost entirely a social phenomenon, he concluded, it was a function of economic status and home environment. 14 Mr. McLean expressed what was a widely held view, that social characteristics associated with illiteracy were the products of nativity and race. Illiteracy was self-perpetuating and became significant when it became linked with "social characteristics radically at variance with the best interests of the nation."

In Canada illiteracy had declined from 13.8% in 1891 to 4.5% in 1921 to 3.4% by 1931 reflecting both the deaths of illiterate older people and the achievements of the school system. 15 Despite the actual decline in the illiteracy rate, the public perception was quite the opposite and there

---

12 "Illiteracy and School Attendance," Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, Volume xiii, Monographs (Ottawa, 1942), p. 638.

13 Ibid., p.686.

14 Ibid., p.687.

15 W.Burton Hurd, "Racial origins and Nativity of the Canadian People," Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, Volume xiii, p. 552.

was considerable public concern about the growing influence among the non-English speaking immigrants. The Russian Revolution and the 'Red Scare', fanned by the flames of the Winnipeg General Strike, which was viewed by many as an insurrection, served only to heighten the fear of communism. Added to this was the belief that Finnish and Ukrainian organizations were fronts for a communist movement in northern centres like North Bay, Timmins, Sudbury, Port Arthur and Fort William.

Alfred Fizpartick and J. B. MacDougall had warned that the foreigner must be transformed through schooling into a loyal Canadian citizen or there would be adverse social and political consequences. The Ferguson government was prepared to act: "to lay down in its schools principles and methods that will bring about cohesion, unity of spirit and purpose amongst all our peoples." 16

Previous administrations had attempted to achieve this goal, most notably, the Minister of Education Reverend Henry J. Cody, (1918-1919) in the Conservative government of William Hearst. Harry Cody and Howard Ferguson shared a room while attending the University of Toronto. 17 They also shared the view that molding the character and citizenship

---

16 G. Howard Ferguson, "Speech to Ward 8 Conservative Association," St. John's Parish Hall, Toronto, 2 February 1928. quoted in Robert M. Stamp, "School on Wheels," Canada: an historical magazine. Spring 1974, p. 36.

17 Peter Oliver, G. Howard Ferguson Ontario Tory (University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 12.

of children would determine the future of the Province and that the society should be built on traditional Anglo-Saxon, middle class values and political conservatism. Education Minister Cody lost no time strengthening patriotic teaching in Ontario schools. British and Canadian history was emphasized to promote an understanding of civics and there was a renewed emphasis on Canada's Imperial relations and the importance of the Empire. 18 Empire Day, celebrated in the schools on the day before Queen Victoria's May 24 birthday, was popular and "Cody was astute enough to harness Empire Day enthusiasm with the twin causes of immigrant assimilation and the checking of subversive political ideas. 19 He declared that any threat to Canada could be overcome "if political, educational and religious efforts were united in the common cause 'of unification, of assimilation, of Canadianization, of Christianization'." On 24 May 1921, The Globe reported that Dr. Cody was pleased with the Robert Simpson Company's annual presentation of Union Jacks to Toronto Schools with large numbers of immigrant children. A company spokesman explained that 'The idea behind the gift is to inculcate in the minds of the rising generation a definite feeling of loyalty and respect for both flag and Empire.' These policies had some impact on

---

18 Robert M. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario. (Toronto; McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 105

19 Ibid., p. 106.

the students in larger urban centres but children in the remote north were isolated from them. Indeed, they remained unaffected by Henry Cody's greatest accomplishment - the 1919 compulsory attendance requirements - because they had no school to attend.

It was hoped that the railway school car would be the shaft of light that would penetrate the northern wilderness settlements that were cloaked by ignorance. The truth and light of Ontario education was to enlighten the foreign children and their parents and nurture them in the ways of Canadian citizenship. The symbol of Canadianization was the Union Jack, and it was prominently displayed in the classroom and flown with pride from the flagpole of every school car.

The first school rail car service was inaugurated in 1926. It fulfilled what Howard Ferguson believed was the first duty of government, "to encourage the development of a sound, healthy, intelligent public upon all questions of material and moral welfare in the community." 20

He thought the "premier's office provided the best pulpit in the land and that the power that went with the position was as much moral as physical." The establishment of the school cars came after three years of testing public opinion

---

20 Peter Oliver, G. Howard Ferguson Ontario Tory (University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 155.

and reveals Ferguson's feeling that the best laws or policy were merely 'the crystallization of public sentiment and thought.'

Premier Ferguson, in 1926, was convinced that most voters thought 'we have been legislated to death... what we need is education'; the school car was put into operation with no special legislation. Ferguson's emphasis in the operation of the Department of Education was on administration not legislation. He had confidence in the bureaucrat and highly trained professionals "to recognize and meet the needs of the province better than elected members." 21 The northern inspectors did not let him down and the premier was receptive to the challenge of the inventive railway school scheme.

If it was politically astute of Howard Ferguson to depend upon his education officials to suggest and implement policy innovations it was also politically astute of him to take full credit for them. In a ringing address to a home-town audience in Kemptville, Ontario, he told his constituents: "I conceived and put into operation this year" the school rail car. 22

Putting the wheels of the school cars into motion was done within nine months but it was the subject of intense

---

21 Ibid., p.157.

22 G. Howard Ferguson, Address by the Honourable G. Howard Ferguson delivered at Kemptville, Ontario, October 22, 1926. Toronto, p.8.

negotiations between the Department of Education and the Canadian National Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway. The case for the school cars was made by J. B. MacDougall and the Deputy Minister of Education, A.H.U. Colquhoun, who by this time had twenty years of experience at his job and had acquired sophisticated political acumen.

Premier Ferguson had been interested in the school car proposal by Dr. MacDougall and he was the man authorized to approach the railroads. MacDougall's first contact was made at the office of Mr. W.R. Devenish, the General Superintendent of the Canadian National Railway in North Bay on 19 January 1926. 23 They had a long, friendly conversation about the possibility of establishing a school car on the CNR. MacDougall outlined the need for such a system of delivering education in the Laurentian region which was populated by small groups "dependent on portable mills, pockets of farmland and, more frequently, railway service." 24 A `right of way' gang of four to six railway employees was located every six to eight miles along the track. This basic group is supplemented by bushmen, jobbers, millmen, trappers, small farmers and others. MacDougall's survey indicated that there were at least six hundred school

---

23 Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), Canadian National Railway Records, 2100-X3, Part 1, 1926-1934, W.R. Devenish to A.E. Warren, 19 January 1926.

24 OA, RG3, J.B. MacDougall, Memorandum for the Minister of Education Re. Railway School Cars, 1926, 6 May 1927.

age children who were not going to school. 25 The school car, he told William Devenish, would accommodate eight or nine students in the classroom, provide facilities for the teacher and would be moved from railway spur to railway spur to teach groups of students, not individual students. They went on to discuss the possibility of using an old coach or caboose for a school car; Macdougall estimated the cost of renovating a car at about $900.

The enthusiasm of the Assistant Chief Inspector must have been infectious because Devenish was sympathetic to the scheme. Indeed, he was so taken with the idea and of having the school test car begin in his area that he arranged with MacDougall to tour the Ruel subdivision (between Folyet and Capreol) to asses the "practicality of the scheme."

In a letter to his superior, General Manager, A. E. Warren, Mr. Devenish supported the Department of Education's project despite the cost and responsibility involved for the railway. Mr. Warren also thought the proposal "a good one" but was quick to point out that the proposition could become burdensome if there was a demand for such school facilities by many other locations. 26 As MacDougall's proposition made its way up the managerial hierarchy of the CNR and further away from northern Ontario there was less excitement about

---

25 PAC, 2100-X3, Part 1, W.R. Devenish to A.E. Warren, 19 January 1926.

26 PAC, 2100-X3, Part A.E. Warren to S.J. Hungerford, 3 February 1926.

it and more fear about its cost and the legal implications for the company. In Montreal, Vice President S.J. Hungerford, was sympathetic but very apprehensive: sympathetic because CN employees would benefit from the school car and apprehensive because he thought it was unwise to have to transport employees' children to attend school. 27 Moreover, the proposal had too many hidden complications. The corporation's legal counsel, "Mr. Ruel agrees," wrote Mr. Hungerford, "that the legal difficulties in protecting our position would be almost insurmountable, to say nothing of the operating features involved." He expected that the idea would be abandoned and informed General Manager Warren that when Mr. Devenish and Dr. MacDougall go "over the ground" to judge the practicability of the scheme "I have no doubt that he will conclude that this is something we could not undertake."

The Department of Education had also approached the Canadian Pacific Railway about the school rail car through assistant Manager George Hodge. The CPR was also "not enthusiastic about the proposition" but they did not want to turn down the Government of Ontario "too sharply in this matter" either. 28 The CPR and the CNR, the country's national railways, during the prosperous years of the 1920's

---

27 PAC, 2100-X3, Part 1, S.J. Hungerford to A.E. Warren, 11 February 1926.

28 PAC, 2100-X3, Part A.E.Warren to S.J. Hungerford, 7 May 1926,

were in heated competition in all areas of their operations which included steamship lines, resorts and hotels, telegraph systems, express companies and passenger services. Edward Beatty, Canadian Pacific's new president responded to the challenge of Henry Thornton, Canadian National's President, who had become an active propagandist for his railway. Neither railway could afford the ill-will of the premier of Ontario or the adverse publicity that might be created if one railway rejected the school car project while the other accepted it and had the benefit of it as a public relations tool.

The Canadian National's reservations about the Education Department's proposition were based on two major questions: will the railway be released from responsibility if students or teachers are injured on the track or in the school car, and who will pay for the transportation of the teacher? Deputy Minister of Education Colquhoun responded quickly to these concerns and assured Superintendent Devenish that the teachers will carry an adequate Accident Policy arranged by the Department of Education and that the railway would be released from liability. 29 As to the issue of liability related to the possible injury by accident to the children, Colquhoun suggested that agreements for release from liability could be made with the parents and that the

---

29 PAC, 2100-X3, Part 1, A.H.U. Colquhoun to W. R. Devenish, 8 March 1926.

Department would prepare an agreement for the railway and the company could get the signatures. 30 Furthermore, the railway would not have to transport the teacher free, his fare would be paid by the government.

It proved to be more expensive for the Department of Education to implement the school car scheme than it had hoped. The Department's cost for each trial car was expected to be 50% of the cost of the equipment and was not to exceed $1000. 31 The companies would provide the railway coaches for renovation. Neither railway objected to providing the car, there was always and old coach ready to be taken out of service anyway, but the CPR wanted the government to bear all the expenses of equipping an experimental car. 32 The Canadian National demanded this concession as well. The railways, despite their usually competitive relationship, decided to cooperate and negotiate together with the Department of Education to better manage the situation. The final agreement between the CPR, CNR and the Department of Education specified that each railroad would convert a coach to a school car and be responsible for moving it but that the Ontario government would assume the cost of supplying all of the equipment and pay for the rennovation of the

---

30 Ibid., 16 March 1926.

31 Ibid., 8 March 1926.

32 Ibid., S.J. Hungerford to A.E. Warren, 12 April 1926.

school cars. 33 Canadian National's experimental school car, refitted at its Leaside shops, was valued at $4,000. 34 The railways billed the Ontario government for the servicing of the cars with water fuel and major repairs; however, routine maintenance of the cars was paid for by the railway companies.

When MacDougall and Devenish surveyed the track for the trial run of the CN school car they discovered that it was necessary to build five new spur lines or back tracks on which to station the school car. 35 The cost of the spurs was $1,000 each and the department thought the railway would pay for them. Because the Canadian National was cooperating with the Canadian Pacific, they learned that the CP trial area did not require additional spurs 36 and the CNR successfully negotiated to have the government pay for the new sidings. 37

The Ontario government also assumed the cost of setting up temporary "privies" at the points where the schools were parked. Although there was a toilet on the car it was used

---

33 Ibid., S.J. Hungerford to A.E. Warren, 23 June 1926.

34 Ibid., A.E. Warren to S.J.Hungerford, 23 June 1926.

35 Ibid., A.H.Colquhoun to W.R.Devenish, 10 March 1926.

36 Ibid., S.J.Hungerford to A.E.Warren, 12 April 1926.

37 Ibid., Memorandum of Agreement to be Drafted between the Ontario Government and the Canadian National Railway covering the Operation of the School Car on the Ruel Subdivision, 25 May 1926, North Bay.

only when the car was moving; teachers and pupils used the outdoor facilities when the car was stationary. All supplies, heating fuel, oil for lamps, drinking water and cost of ordinary maintenance was also the responsibility of the government. Furthermore, the government was liable for accidents and agreed to reimburse the railway for any fire damage.

Once the tentative agreement had been reached in early May the public relations and advertising rivalry between the two national railways was quickly resumed. CNR Vice President, S.J. Hungerford, recognized that there would be "Kudos" to the railway with the first operating school car and because the CPR did not need additional railway spurs they would probably make the first test run. 38 He agonized about the situation: "I do not think we should scoop the CPR on this, on the other had, I do not think we should let them scoop" us. Although Hungerford considered the possibility of a joint statement with the Canadian Pacific to the press, he decided to seize the publicity advantage and on 8 May 1926 the Gazette wrote a laudatory article on the Canadian National Railway's school car and did not mention the CPR. This was the first of a long series of newspaper and magazine articles written on the school rail cars over the next forty years that both railways considered good publicity because it showed them as concerned corporate

---

38 Ibid., S.J. Hungerford to A.E. Warren, 4 May 1926.

citizens.

Positive press for the railways was becoming increasingly important in the late 1920's as they came under mounting criticism for their role in immigration. The Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways worked with ethnic colonization committees to recruit immigrants to Canada by ship and rail. They did this under the authority of the federal government's Railway Agreement. Companies doing business with the CPR were expected to give new immigrants the first chance at jobs. 39 This situation angered many Canadian citizens who did not like the labour dislocation and potential for strike-breaking that resulted from the railroad's occasional dumping of immigrants in an area. There was also a widespread belief that immigration contributed to the increasing problem of unemployment.

Public pressure against the Railways' Agreement was strong enough to force the federal government to set up a select committee to investigate the situation. In its 1928 report, the committee noted that the considerable evidence and criticism of the Railways' Agreement made the committee very reluctant to give the railways the authority to recruit immigrants. 40 Nevertheless, the Railways' Agreement was

---

39 Donald Avery, "Canadian Immigration Policy and the `Foreign' Navvy 1896-1914", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, Montreal, 1972, p. 103.

40 Select Committee on Agriculture and Colonization: Minutes and Proceeding and Evidence and Report, 1928, Appendix No.8 (Ottawa, 1928), p.x and xi.

extended, with some restrictions for another two years.

The CNR, CPR and the Canadian Bankers Association launched a campaign to overcome the opposition of farmers organizations to the aggressive immigration policy. 41 The National Association of Canada charged that thousands of Canadian workers were forced to go to the U.S. to find work because the railways had filled the country with riff-raff.42

Historian A.R.M. Lower argued that cheap men were driving out dear men and Canadian immigration was becoming a training ground for American citizens. In 1928 the Trades and Labour Congress and the United Farmers of Alberta expressed concern about excessive immigration. And, nativist groups like the Native Sons of Canada and the Ku Klux Klan called for the end of immigration because it would economically and morally ruin the nation.

Premier Howard Ferguson, too, was critical of the railway immigration policy that had so little regard for the provinces. 43 This criticism may have helped railway executives to accept the Ontario government's school car proposal. After all, the school car proved that the railroads were sensitive to the social and cultural issues associated with immigration and showed that the railways had

---

41 Donald Avery, "Canadian Immigration Policy and 'Foreign' Navvy, 1896-1914", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, Montreal, 1972, p. 105.

42 Ibid., p. 107-108.

43 Ibid., p. 110.

accepted responsibility for their immigrant employees and were still trying to assist them.

CNR President, Sir Henry Thornton, was well aware of the percieved immigrant problem and was pessimistic about Canadianizing the first generation of immigrants: "I do not believe it is possible to make a good Canadian out of the first foreigner who comes here. If he arrives here at the age of thirty... his psychology is pretty well fixed, and while he would make a useful citizen, he is not going to be a Canadian and I don't see how we will ever make a Canadian out or him." 44 However, he did like the thrust of the school cars in the north. "My notion is to play for the second generation," he said, " They forget their native language; they probably do not ever speak it; they become absorbed in our population, and I think it is a waste of time to spend too much effort on catching the old man and old woman. But get the children and you will keep them automatically."

From the CNR president to the superintendents there was an appreciation of the fact that the school car would be of great value to the country, and indirectly to the railway, if the children received schooling and assimilated Canadian

---

44 Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization: Minutes and Proceedings and Evidence and Report, 1928, Appendix No.8 (Ottawa, 1928), p. 328.

ideals. 45 By so doing they were rejecting many of their ethnic values, and the communist ideals that many feared were all too prevalent in New Ontario.

The premier and the railroads claimed victory over the exaggerated strength of their communist enemies in the north. "Communism Beaten and Loyalty Taught by the School Car," read the front page headline in the Globe and Mail. 46 The accompanying cartoon had a helmeted young woman in the flowing gown of a classical goddess throttling a huge wolf baring its hideous fangs; the symbol of Canada and democracy was strangling the wolf that had the word communism emblazoned across its powerful but heartless chest. (see page 128 for the catoon) "The only reading they [foreigners] do is the literature from Red Russian," Ferguson told his province, but the school car changed all that. 47

In 1931, Ferguson's successor as premier and Minister of Education, George S. Henry, reported that "all's quiet on the Northern Front, and "Red" propaganda (sic) virtually non-existent throughout the homes and communities served by the school cars." 48 The three school cars working outside Port Arthur and Fort William and the two outside Sudbury

---

45 PAC, 2100-X3, Part 1, W.R. Devenish to A.E. Warren, 19 January 1926.

46 Toronto Globe, 21 February 1931.

47 G. Howard Ferguson, "Travelling Schools in Ontario," clipping from the CPR Archives file dated 1929.

48 Toronto Globe, 21 February 1931.

have counteracted the "bombardment" of propaganda that affected people within range of their large Finnish settlements. A Queen's Park official confidently stated: "it is doubtful if the best 'Red' propagandist produced today could get two people to listen to him throughout the entire area served by the school car."

VI

The Experiment

In late August 1926 the school cars were the centre of attention at Toronto's Canadian National Exhibition. The school cars created a great deal of interest and were very popular exhibits. Thousands of curious people passed through the cars and expressed their approval of the well-equipped school room and the efficient living quarters. 1

Many children visited the school car. As they entered the car they left behind the noise and crowds of the Exhibition, the smells of cotton candy and the animals, for the cool and quiet of the school car. Many children slid into the shiny new desks of the school on wheels and some envied the students who would be taught in such interesting surroundings: others tried to imagine what it would be like to live in the remote settlements of the north. 2 Among these children was James (Bud) Martin who at the time had no idea that thirty years later he would be an inspector of a school car in northwestern Ontario.

The exhibition of the school cars, just before the beginning of their first school year, provided the railways with excellent publicity which emphasized the cooperation

---

1 "Red Schoolhouse on Wheels", Canadian National Railway Magazine (November, 1926) p. 8-9.

2 Canadian Pacific Railway Archive (xeroxed typescript, 1931), no page numbers.

between the railways and the Government of Ontario. During the C.N.E., Premier Howard Ferguson, J.B. MacDougall and an entourage of Department of Education officials made a formal inspection of the school cars. 3 Dr. MacDougall gave a lengthy press conference explaining the significance of the railway school car in solving some of the educational and social problems of the north.

So successful was the C.N.E. display of the school cars that the CNR exhibited their school again at the 1928 Exhibition to "show the wonderful cooperation with the Ontario government" and attract thousands of visitors. 4 After the 1926 exhibition, the school cars were taken north: the CPR car was opened to the public in North Bay and the CNR car was on public display at Sudbury. 5

The Department of Education hired two school car teachers from a long list of applicants. 6 Walter McNally was hired to teach on the CPR school car: Fred Sloman was his counterpart on the CNR car. Both men met the department's criteria for a school car teacher: they were fully qualified teachers with teaching experience in rural

---

3 "The Red Schoolhouse on Wheels", Canadian National Railway Magazine (November, 1926) p. 8-9.

4 PAC, CNR, 2100-X3, Part 1, C.T. Young to Gerald Ruel, 28 July 1928.

5 Ibid. and The Star Weekly 18 September 1926.

6 Canadian Pacific Railway Archives (xeroxed typescript, 1931), no page numbers.

schools; they had taught a broad range of students from kindergarten to fourth form; and they possessed the personal qualities of resourcefulness and flexibility in dealing with students and people in the communities in which they taught.

Walter McNally boarded the CPR school car in Toronto after its exhibition at the CNE and became acquainted with his new school and home. His car was similar to every railway school car that served northern Ontario. At one end of the car was a bright attractive school room lined on each side by windows. There were desks for twelve students and at the front of the room was the teacher's desk, blackboards, charts, maps a globe and a large Union Jack. 7 A three hundred volume lending library of reference books, animal and adventure stories, books by Canadian authors and classic novels were housed in a glass bookcase that dominated one corner of the room. A variety of text books, work books, art supplies, kindergarten equipment and a first aid kit were stored on shelves that were built along every inch of available wall space. The school room was ventilated by the windows which opened and was heated during the severe winters by a wood stove (Quebec heater) at the back opposite the water cooler that provided drinking water for thirsty students.

---

7 Clewley, G. and Kelly, N. Report on Car Schools of Northern Ontario (unpublished experience 1975 project). and PAC, 2100-X3, Part I, CNR School Car Blueprint.

At the front of the 20'X 10' classroom was a door that led to the teacher's living quarters. This mobile apartment measured 30' X 10' and was the last word in efficiency and modern facilities. Off the narrow hallway which ran the length of the apartment was a tiny bathroom and a compact bedroom that included a brass bed, desk, dresser and a window. Next to the bedroom was a comfortable living room with a cedar chest which doubled as a seat and two small chairs and an arm chair which were make homey by a bright carpet and window curtains. 8 Near the rear of the school car was a large efficient kitchen boasting a stainless steel sink with running water, a modern gas range, counters and ample cupboard space. The attached pantry housed extra supply lockers, an ice box and a coal bin for the Baker heater which was the car's primary source of heat.

Walter McNally was impressed with the kitchen for he had just completed a domestic science course at North Bay Normal School and would now have an opportunity to use his new cooking skills. 9 The other thing that impressed him was the solid comfort of the school car's ride; he said it ran as smoothly as a de luxe Pullman.

The Canadian Pacific Railway school car operated between the divisional points of Chapleau and Cartier, a distance of one hundred thirty-six miles. Mr. Rossiter, the Assistant

---

8 Detroit News, 5 April 1932.

9 The Star Weekly, 18 September 1926.

Superintendent of Railways, at Chapleau went with McNally to the first stop, the hamlet of Wye, the help out with any logistical difficulties. 10 Their reception in Wye as in Ramsay, Sultan, Devon and Ridout was warm and gratifying. Schooling, a basic institution of the outside world, was brought to the main street, which was the railway tracks, of each northern community.

Parents and children were delighted with the school car and Mr. McNally was met by a "jubilant reception". People expressed their happiness and approval of the school car and its teacher with gifts of the country: "new potatoes, wild duck, pure cream, butter, carrots, homemade bread and a nice young rooster ready for the pot."

The first circuit of the school car introduced parents and students to the wonders of the school. The word soon spread to families living a distance from the railway and the number of students increased on subsequent visits of the school car. Mr. McNally also took the time to help parents arrange to have children who lived in more remote locations board with families who lived close to the railway spur or back track where the school car stopped.

The children were enthusiastic learners: they arrived at eight in the morning and worked hard. They "coaxed me to have school on Saturday," wrote Mr. McNally, "and on Sunday

---

10 OA, RG3, Extracts from teachers reports: CPR School Car, Mr. McNally.

we went for a hike and exchanged stories about seeing animals - moose and bear." McNally played his Victorola and amazed the students who thought the singers must have be extremely small to fit in that little box.

Walter McNally found only one Canadian-born parent on his route and he was convinced that adult education would be a large feature of his work. He found the work very satisfying: "When a big trapper raps on your door and asks you to help him out, it makes you feel that you have something worth while." The parents were sincere in their gratitude, the children appreciative and he enjoyed teaching in the school car. After a day of teaching McNally had such peace of mind that he wrote: "I wouldn't trade positions with President Beatty of the C.P.R.".

Five years later, Walter McNally was still teaching in the same area as he would until his untimely death in a Kingston hospital on 2 September 1944. One of his stops was Ramsay, a typical northern settlement of six families, one hundred and fifteen miles north of Sault Ste. Marie. It was a collection of weather beaten houses on the side of a hill and a painted station. 11 In 1931 nothing had changed. The hillside, browned by the November cold, was crowned by a church painted yellow and topped by a gilt cross. To the north stood a water tower and in another section, in

---

11 The Star Weekly (CPR Archive xerox typescript, n.d.) p.2.

clearing of one hundred acres was the whitewashed house of a Rumanian farmer. A heavy blanket of snow lay over the settlement and stretched unbroken to the first ridge of the trees that were growing purple in the fading light of the first afternoon.

That evening the settlers would stamp the snow off their feet outside the school car before entering the warmth of the school room. The local people still eagerly looked forward to the arrival of the school car - especially now with the advent of winter. The school car was a social centre - a gathering spot for the community where one could get advice from Mr. McNally, talk over a cup of coffee and listen to the Victorola.

On his first visit to Ramsay in 1926, Walter McNally did not have enough students to fill the school room: in 1931 he had over forty students. 12 In 1926 most of the people could not read English: in 1931, thanks to the night school classes, many adults were borrowing and reading books from the school library. And the hospitality of the teacher was still being rewarded with gifts of pies and cakes.

Fred Sloman was hired fifteen minutes after Walter McNally. Sloman's life was transformed by his experience on the school car and he admitted: "I like this life of teaching in the bush like an alcoholic likes strong drink."

---

12 Ibid., p.3.

13 But Fed Sloman's story begins during World War I. He had been hospitalized and became friendly with the youth in the bed next to him who had lost an arm and a leg. 14 Sloman acted as a teacher telling his new friend stories of Ancient Rome, about the man who set up a cross at Montreal and about the boys who sailed down the Mississippi River. The boy was held spellbound by Sloman's stories and listened with undivided attention. The fact that the boy had no education and could not read or write his own name came as a revelation to Fred Sloman: "I was young, too, but it struck me as strange that Canada did not find it unusual that this youth should lose an arm and a leg in her service, although she had never provided him with a teacher. That helped me make up my mind. I was to have become a doctor; instead I decided to teach."

The returning soldier got a good job teaching Latin to one of the brightest classes he had ever seen. Mr. Sloman was convinced that these students would become doctors, lawyers and politicians with of without his efforts so he quit his job to come north to the bush.

With his wife, Cela, and their five children, Fred Sloman set out from Capreol for the five mile trip to Nandair, their first stop on the one hundred thirty-two mile

---

13 Sloman, Fred. "I teach on the run...," Weekend Magazine. Vol. 4, No. 15. 1954, p. 2.

14 Ibid., p.1.

route between Capreol and Folyet. The family probably spent a restless night in their new home before the first day of school. Early the next morning nine children from two railway families arrived to begin their education. 15 The students ranged in age from six to fifteen and were all French Canadian and spoke English poorly. Fred Sloman, was always ready to accept a challenge and worked with his pupils on basic English and arithmetic skills for the next six days.

Dr. MacDougall was anxious about the school car program and did not wait more than a few days to visit Mr. Sloman's first class at Nandair. The inspector brought the students candy, sang songs with them and even brought a radio with him. 16 After six days of instruction, progress was clearly evident; the students wrote their first letters in English to Dr. MacDougall thanking him for his gifts and his visit.

The next stop was Anstice where "children, mothers and fathers almost hugged and kissed our school. The hardest part was to give them but four days." 17 At another stop only four children arrived for school. Sloman discovered that children were slow to arrive because there was an impression in the community that the school was for the

---

15 OA, RG3, Education Travelling Schools 1926.

16 Ibid., Children's Letters, 26 September 1926.

17 Ibid., Extracts from Teacher's Reports.

children of section men only. His letter to the section foremen informing them of arrival times was not communicated to non-railway employees in the settlement.

At Mileage 12 1/2, Fred Sloman noticed six or ten children playing around a shack. He thought they were the children of a transient jobber and he went back five miles to talk to them and convinced all of the children to attend school the next time around. Only two students came to school at Bethnal: seven children had recently moved toward Hornepayne and two others moved four miles back into the bush.

The school car was occasionally the object of suspicion. This was the case at Stackpool where although the community was notified about the arrival of the school car, only five children came out. And these five approached the school car only out of curiosity and had to be enticed into the classroom. On the last evening at Stackpool the Slomans were visited by more children from the area who came "as if they had made up their minds in a body to attend and accept." "There is a noticeable feeling of suspicion at this stop," wrote Fred Sloman. "Very little actual work was accomplished except that the parents were brought to the point of hoping for our return." Each child brought a Roman Catholic catechism and placed it on the his desk everyday. The parents did not want their children to attend any school but a separate school but in five days Fred Sloman had

worked against this community feeling and won over the children and their parents.

The Slomans had some difficulties with their school car on this first trip. They were bumped so hard one night by a freight train that four or five dishes broke and a week later the car was derailed at a switch. Although there was no interior damage they spent half a day in the Capreol car shops.

On the whole, the CNR school car's first outing was a success: word of the school was spreading along the line; reluctant parents and children had accepted the school car and Fred Sloman was committed to teaching in the north. He was surprised at the appetite for knowledge of some students who would not stop until the end of the day. Their progress was remarkable in just a few days. So impressive was the attitude and work of three Native boys that Mr. Sloman stated: "These boys are the stuff that make pioneering engineers or Premiers instead of nomadic trappers."

By the end of the first year of operation the school car experiment was declared by all of those involved to be an unparalleled success. The railways were pleased with the experiment and both the Department of Education and the CPR acknowledged that the success of the school depended upon the teacher. 18 The enthusiasm of Walter McNally and Fred

---

18 Ibid., Travelling Schools 1929. and Ontario, Sessional Papers, 1927, No.11, "Report of the Minister of Education", p. xii.

Sloman was more than matched by the achievement of the children which Dr. MacDougall declared "almost incredible". Furthermore, in his first annual report on the railway school cars, Assistant Chief Inspector Macdougall, emphasized the character-building and citizenship functions of the schools: "The foreign born, both parents and children, trained in an atmosphere inimical to Canadian ideals and citizenship are quickly developing into loyal and law-abiding Canadians." 19 The school car agreement between the railways and the Ontario Department of Education was renewed for another year as it would be for the next forty years.

---

19 Ibid. and see PAC, CNR, 2100-X3 Part I, L.W. Whitmont to S.J. Hungerford, 20 April 1931. for the CNR President's view that the school cars were educationally and politically valuable.

VII

Teaching on the School Car

The establishment of school cars in the north was a slow and complex development. But once they were in operation their success or failure ultimately depended upon that magic of interaction between the student and teacher that results in learning and an educational experience.

The school was really a mobile one room school: the teacher was expected to instruct students from kindergarten level to grade twelve. Although the Department of Education did not favour the multi-graded school, it was recognized that it was a necessity in rural Ontario and was the only model considered suitable for sparsely inhabited northern Ontario. The Department of Education was careful to employ dedicated and resourceful teachers who were usually effective educators with experience in rural one room schools. Moreover, the school car teachers adhered to the educational philosophy held by the Department of Education and promoted by the conferences of the Ontario Education Association in the 1920's. 1

The ideas of Fredrich Froebel had the most impact on

---

1 Dr. R.P. Bowles. "The Teaching Spirit," Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association (Toronto, 1926), pp.151-157. and D.A. Norris. "Teaching - a Profession," Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association (Toronto, 1926), pp.65-78.

education in Ontario at the time. Froebel was the founder of the kindergarten movement and he insisted that education be child-centered and that teaching focus on activity and development of the child rather than on subject content: he wanted children to grow and develop as things do in nature. Dr. J.B. MacDougall was deeply influenced by Froebel. In 1918, Dr. MacDougall wrote: "Froebel placed the real child in the midst of the school world and bade it recognize his nature and his needs," and MacDougall lamented the fact that the idea had not been put into practice. 2 The importance of the skilled Frobellian teacher was acknowledged by Dr. MacDougall. "The school is merely a medium through which the child is led to participate in the natural life about him in a helpful and intelligent way," he wrote, "and the teacher [is] the instrument through which the vital contact is assured."

During the 1920's, child-centered education, one of the liberal influences at work in education, reduced the importance of testing and examinations in Ontario schools. 3 Premier G. Howard Ferguson reflected the thinking of the Department of Education when he committed himself to making the curriculum more relevant to the needs of particular districts of the province and "to relieve the pressure that

---

2 J.B. MacDougall. Building the North (Toronto, 1919), p.243.

3 Peter Oliver. G. Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory (University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.234.

comes from an overcrowded curriculum" 4 that gave students a "smattering of knowledge." The amount of homework would be reduced, not eliminated, but given "a body blow" to allow `the influence and personality of the teacher to find their true place in the training of the child.' 5 The needs of the child were to be given priority over the cramming of knowledge.

Another powerful influence on educational philosophy was the ideas of Johann Fredrich Herbart which became increasingly important when the noted psychologist, Dr. Samuel B. Sinclair, became the inspector of auxiliary classes in 1920. Herbart believed that education should develop the student's ability to make appropriate moral choices. He declared: `The formation of character was the highest aim of all education' and that `the child is not a receptacle to he filled with unassimilated knowledge.'

World War I also strengthened the influence of Johann Fredrich Herbart; the 1918 Education Report is full of his ideas. Howard Ferguson and his old friend, Deputy Minister of Education, Harry Cody, were of the British imperialist school and the experience of the war confirmed in their minds the British-Ontario approach to culture and education. The 1918 Report asserted: `The German educationalists

---

4 G. Howard Ferguson. "Address,"Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association (Toronto, 1924), p.21.

5 Peter Oliver. G. Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory (University of Toronto, 1977), p.234.

thought of civilization in terms of intellect, the British in terms of character. Which ideal is the safer and worthier, history has already pronounced."

Ferguson's Biographer, Peter Oliver, believes that the Premier, in his curriculum reforms and emphasis on character development was "an obvious and probably unconscious Herbartian". In a 1926 speech to a crowd of supporters, Ferguson announced the travelling schools for the north as part of his Herbartian educational policy. "My belief," declared the Premier, "is that personality and moral force are the greatest factors in developing manhood, and these should be the primary purpose in an educational policy." 6 Dr. MacDougall said the men selected to be school car teachers "must be adaptable above all things and bring to his work a boundless sympathy." 7 The personal qualities of consideration, tolerance, patience and a generous and humane spirit were particularly important for the school teacher: he had to represent, to many children and parents, the best of Ontario's culture; win the respect not only of the children but the communities in which he worked and would depend on for support and friendship.

---

6 G. Howard Ferguson. Address by the Hon. G. Howard Ferguson delivered at Kemptville, Ontario, Oct. 22, 1926 (Toronto). also see OA, RG3, Ferguson Papers, G.H. Ferguson to The Deputy Minister of Education, January 1929.

7 Bessie Jones. "The School Car," CPR Archives, School Car File (xeroxed typescript of a periodical article), 27 October 1928), no page numbers.

Perhaps Fred Sloman was the teacher who best represented the educational ideas of his time. In his lessons he moved from the known to the unknown; he began with what was relevant to his students and moved from their small northern world to the larger world beyond. Many "forest props" lined the walls of Sloman's classroom and formed a small museum of the north; at the back of the classroom was another small museum of objects which brought the outside world to the wilderness. 8 Both Mr. McNally and Mr. Sloman were not content to teach pupils about cities and modern transportation and banks in the abstract, they brought some students to Toronto to and experience what they had learned in the classroom. 9

The classroom on CNR school car number one was a stimulating environment. There was a "maze of frames with revolving pictures," batteries, and an old microscope, some ball bearings, an aquarium teeming with fish, building blocks, a large alphabet lined the upper black board, there were photographs of Canadian landscapes and trains, jars and canisters of science specimens were available as were boxes of plants, weigh scales, a telegraph key, old clocks 10

---

8 The Star Weekly, 26 August 1950.

9 OA, RG3, Education Travelling School Cars, D.S. Patterson to G.H. Ferguson, 23 April 1929 and The Star Weekly, 18 September 1926.

10 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (hereafter OISE), uncatalogued School Car Photographs, CN Photo X33587.

and a typewriter. 11 Mr. Sloman admitted that "the school room was not tidy but, we have to display a bit of lace that somebody made, an axe handle carved with designs, and the photograph of someone's home town in Europe".

Fred Sloman used an ingenious circular board with many letters of the alphabet which ran in a slot around the board. Young pupils made words, phrases and sentences by selecting the appropriate letters and moving them into position in four long slots in the centre of the board. 12 Spelling lessons were related to the northern environment: "I" was represented by the picture of an Indian, "P" by a pig, "N" by a net.

Reading was the most important single skill that a student had to master since his or her future educational and success depended upon the ability to read. Andrew Clement, the school car teacher on CNR car number three, found that reading was the most difficult thing to teach youngsters. 13 However, if one child in the family learned to read it helped the others because he could instruct the others and the enthusiasm for reading could spread

---

11 Ibid. and Taped interview with Jack Antoniak, 28 April 1986. A.D. Clememt's school car also had a typewriter that was used by students.

12 OISE, School Car Photos, CN X-33578.

13 Untitled fragment of an article from the CBC Drama Department.

throughout the family. It was impossible for a teacher to adopt a single method of teaching reading on the school car because in each class there were students of various ages with different levels of reading skill that they had acquired by some previous limited school experience or from a literate parent. Fred Sloman tried, as much as possible, to carry on "with any scheme of teaching that an interested parent has tried to follow. In most cases it is a rigid, unnatural alphabetic method of primary reading. It seems I can thus encourage the parent to greater effort and at the same time give the child phonics and sentence reading what we call our `play lessons'." 14

Mr. McNally, on CPR car number one, also experienced students with language difficulties. They were solved by the teacher's resourcefulness in turning every lesson, whether it was reading or arithmetic, into a language lesson. 15 For example, when an Italian boy of six could not understand an arithmetic question, Mr. McNally referred to his well-used Italian grammar book. When the meaning was clear to the boy in Italian, the lesson proceeded in English. The method worked and the inspector said student progress even surpassed the hopes of the Department of

---

14 OA, RG3, "Summary Report on C.N.R. School Car October 14, 1926.

15 CPR Archives, School Car File. (xeroxed typescript, 1931), p.6.

Education.

Education on the school car concentrated on the 3 R's and the curriculum used was the same as that used in the rest of the province's classrooms. However, a good teacher tailored the curriculum to the needs of the students. The school car teachers were some of the best in the province and they would instruct students on how to order from an Eaton's Catalogue, fill out income tax forms and other useful and interesting curriculum related topics. 16 When Cameron Bell's students were intrigued by a camera and puzzled and delighted by the reverse image in the ground glass lens, he seized the educational opportunity. Bell explained the principles of the camera and led to a health lesson by showing the parallel function of the human eye using blackboard illustrations. He emphasized that the photographer always handled the camera with great care because damage would result in the costly purchase of replacement parts. In the human eye, the teacher pointed out there was no such thing as replacement parts. Mr. Bell's flexibility allowed him to effectively teach a relevant and meaningful lesson. 17

Lessons were based on text books that met the demands the courses of the study. "We teach the same thing that

---

16 Taped interview with Mr. James (Bud) Martin, 21 April 1986.

17 "School Days are Happy Days in Mobile Classroom", Spanner, January, 1948, p. 23.

other people teach except that we work a bit harder and a bit longer each day" explained Sloman, because of the itinerant nature of the school. At the end of a week of instruction on the school car, each pupil was provided with enough homework for the month until the return of the school car when the homework would be corrected and reviewed and new material introduced by the instructor.

The harried school car teacher who was teaching a number of grade levels, marking and teaching adults in the evening and moving to a new community each week had one other valuable teaching tool - correspondence course lessons. In Ontario, correspondence course education began in 1926, the same year the school cars were inaugurated, and they provided excellent supplementary lessons and learning materials. One of Andrew Clement's students, Jack Antoniak, received many books and learning resources from correspondence courses mailed to the school car teacher. 18

One way to bring the outside culture and add another dimension to the educational experience of isolated children was with the sound. The Victorola and the radio were brought the music of the world to Folyet and Kawene news of World War II to the pupils in Graham and Bolkow and radio drama to students in Umfreville. Radio is an intense medium and was used to involve students. Perhaps the most creative use of radio on the school car was made by the students on

---

18 Taped interview with Jack Antoniak, 28 April 1986.

CNR car number four that travelled between Sioux Lookout and Ontario-Manitoba border. In 1936 the school received a special daily radio broadcast from D.R.P. Coates of radio station "CKY" Winnipeg who gave the children a thought for the day and a large audience of listeners the story of the school car's activities. 19

Learning on the school car system depended to a large degree on the discipline of the student to attend class to receive instruction and more importantly to complete their homework before the return of the car. Walter McNally noted that the very "idea of the school car is romantic and that the majority of the children are fired with ambition and the children of foreign parents were anxious to learn and therefore learned quickly." 20 This enthusiasm for learning remained constant throughout the car's years of operation and the attendance of students on the school car was never a problem; attendance was always almost one hundred percent.

School car pupils were motivated by their teachers and developed a high degree of self-discipline. There was an incentive for students to complete their homework in two or three days since the remaining time could be used to enjoy outdoor activities, like trapping, snowshoeing, canoeing and

---

19 PAC, 2100-X3, Part 2, W.S. Thompson to S.T. Hungerford, 9 October 1936.

20 Bessie Jones. "The School Car," CPR Archives, School Car File (xeroxed typescript), 27 October 1928, no page numbers.

swimming, that were the envy of every other student who was forced to attend school every day of the school year. It was good for a student to be on his own for much of the time according to Fred Sloman who held a romantic attitude to education. He viewed education as the result of interaction with people and nature and as experience recollected in tranquillity. "If the teacher is too handy he [the student] is apt to end up knowing what the teacher knows, and obviously that would end up in stagnation," wrote Sloman. "Progress comes from education absorbed from rocks and skies and meditations and conversations at the dinner table. Schools just show a handy way to hold a pencil." 21

Parents of school car children were generally very supportive of the teacher and they ensured that their child's homework was completed. The record of the school cars reveal that parents were committed to the values of schooling. Indeed school car education was held in such high regard that upon entering the car men removed their hats and even the railway conductors took off their caps just as they would have if they had entered a church. 22 In Jim Chalmer's twelve years as a school car teacher on CNR car number four, there was only one occasion when homework

---

21 Fred Sloman. "I Teach on the Run...", Weekend Magazine. Vol.4, No.15, 1954, p.4.

22 Taped interview with Jim Chalmers, 3 April 1986.

was not completed and he had to send the student home. 23 During the 1930's there was a widespread concern for children that became a national preoccupation. The most famous children of The 1930's were the Dionne quintuplets who were born in northern Ontario and became the symbol of concern for education, health, nutrition and the child rearing. Novelist, Hugh Maclennan observed that the depression "bred a generation determined to give its children the good things it had lacked and spare them the harsh discipline it had known." 24

During the first two decades of service an important aspect of aspect of the school car was adult evening classes. Many people learned to speak English, to read and to write. Walter McNally described one adult class on a miserable night in 1944:

> "Sixteen trackmen, representing nine different countries in Europe, were delayed from six p.m. until after dark in a downpour of rain and we gave them shelter. An Indian woman came to ask me to cable $10.00 to her son in Sicily, who was running a Canadian army tank in order that Ontario may continue as Ontario. To make matters more vivid to her I outlined a map of Italy on the blackboard, leaving out all confusing marks and names. Sixteen trackmen smoking vile pipes, and an obese Indian woman all squeezed into juvenile school seats, together with five children looked and listened for two hours while I held up bits of pictures

---

23 Ibid.

24 Pierre Berton. The Dionne Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 171.

from newspapers, magazines and school books." 25

By the 1950's adult night school classes were not conducted very often. The school car teacher would help individuals with their taxes or help write letters or provide tutoring but there was less need for night school classes. By then an entire generation of northern Ontario railway workers had grown up with the school car and thousands of children had been schooled with the help of the school on wheels.

The influence of the school car went well beyond the institution itself. When the car arrived in an northern hamlet it was an event; the car became the focal point for the social life of the community. The windows of the car burned with the warm inviting light of its oil lamps which illuminated the tiny communities. Coffee and baking was sometimes available in the school car at evening gatherings and a friendly game of poker could also be found there. On CNR car number one, bingo provided popular entertainment for players aged four to seventy. 26 A game cost a player one penny and it was free if you didn't have one. Fred Sloman ran the game for so many years that he cursed its monotony but he continued to run the games because it dispelled loneliness and filled a social need.

---

25 Ontario, Sessional Papers, 1944. No.11, "Report of the Minister of Education 1944", p.7.

26 Fred Sloman, "I Teach on the Run...", Weekend Magazine, Vol.4, No.15, 1954, p.4.

As early as 1929, Fred Sloman wanted to provide the people of his communities with entertaining and educational evening programs. His attempt at lectures failed because there were too many crying babies in the audience. 27 Somehow Sloman got an old hand cranked sixteen millimetre film projector and a film from the Ontario Motion Picture Bureau. He showed his first film in the school car at Tionga on Thanksgiving 1929. The audience loved it; even those who could not speak English enjoyed it. The first showing was so successful that Mr. Sloman advertised the film nights as the "Greatest Show on Earth" and put notices on the mile posts along the railway tracks.

Sloman convinced the Motion Picture Bureau to splice together scrap film no longer fit to rent and give it to him. These films had two purposes: to show to northern children and adults their country; and to use with audiences when he promoted the work of the school car during the summer. Sloman showed his films and told anecdotes about the school car to "summer folk" in Muskoka, Sudbury, Capreol and womens' groups in Toronto. 28

School car teachers were expected to visit the homes of their pupils occasionally to become acquainted with the parents and the communities in which they taught. Fred

---

27 OA, RG3, F. Sloman to Mr. Patton, 17 November 1929.

28 Ibid., F. Sloman to H.G. Ferguson, 9 August 1929.

Sloman was moved by some of the tragic situations he encountered in those early years and he dedicated himself to helping individuals. He convinced the Lions Club of Toronto to give him three hundred dollars to do a kind of social work in the north. 29 With the wise expenditure of very small amounts of money Mr. Sloman could put a family back on its feet, provide shelter for a lonely woman and purchase small Christmas gifts for children. "Often we can make a wreck into a man by taking over his seven, twenty or forty dollars [in debts] and letting him pay it back in time", wrote Sloman. "It can only be done after their complete confidence has been won. It is just a matter of standing a moment to shelter off the storm while the poor devil gets his breath to fight again." This missionary attitude and concern for people earned Fred Sloman the title "Livingston of the North."

The Department of Education and the railways were convinced by 1929 that the school car experiment was a success. The teachers too were enthusiastic about the experiment but it was not until 1939 that they could look back and judge the impact they had on the people of the north. The railways commented that their employees' written and verbal communication skills had improved and even the merchants in town told Walter McNally that they now received well-written orders where in the past they could barely read

---

29 Ibid., D.S. Patterson to H. Ferguson, 23 April 1929.

them. 30 The communities now operated well in English and the people read English newspapers and listened to radio broadcasts in English. It was not uncommon for students educated on the school car to proceed to high school, Normal School or the trades. 31 And the students were showing more pride in their work, their health and cleanliness improved and their general deportment was in marked contrast to the crudeness of their early years. 32 Moreover, there was a steady improvement in the social and economic conditions in the communities, with few exceptions, even in the remote northwest during the Depression.

---

30 CPR Archives, "Canadian Railway School Cars in Ontario" (xeroxed typescript), November 1939, p. 3.

31 Ontario, Sessional Papers, 1938, Vol. 70, No.11 "Report of the Minister of Education 1937, p. 11.

32 CPR Archives, "Report on School Cars" (xeroxed typescript), October 1936.

VIII

On the Back Track: Letters and Reminiscences.

On 10 September 1928, the school car teacher aboard CPR car number two was slowly making his way across northern Ontario at the end of a "way freight" train. [1] His destination was Fort William where he would begin teaching between the Lakehead and Kenora.

The teacher's name was William Wright and he was the product of northern Ontario's education system. Although he was born in London, England, William Wright came to Canada with his family when he was a small boy. The family cleared land and farmed in the Matheson area and Bill received little formal education before 1921. He could not have continued his education in 1923 if it were not for the Northern Academy at Montieth. Dr. MacDougall was largely responsible for the establishment of the Northern Academy which was a co-educational, residential school for northern children who had no other means of getting an education. Wright also attended North Bay Normal School and after graduating, taught in a rural, one room school in Muskoka. It must have been gratifying for J.B. MacDougall to be able to hire a teacher who had been educated in these northern schools for the purpose of further extending educational opportunities in the

---

1 William Wright Letters (xeroxed typescript), William Wright to Family, 10 September 1928.

north.

Bill Wright met Dr. MacDougall at the North Bay railway station as Bill was on his way to Fort William and MacDougall was heading to Winnipeg. They stopped to talk and Mr. Wright showed the Assistant Chief Inspector his newly renovated school car. Wright observed that the school car was like a toy to MacDougall - a toy of which he was very proud.

After four successful years of teaching on the school car at various sidings or back tracks in north western Ontario, William Wright met Helen Atkinson who was teaching in his home town in the Matheson area. 2 Helen grew up in St. Catherines with the dream of teaching in the north and "fantasies of living in a log cabin." They were married in 1933 but it was a school car in Fort William not a log cabin they called home.

The wives of many school car teachers were also teachers - Helen Wright, Betty Chalmers, Florence Bell, Cela Sloman, Mrs. Angus Mackay. They provided the understanding and psychological support their husbands needed and they helped with the teaching. 3 Indeed, when Angus MacKay enlisted in the armed forces 1942 his wife became the teacher on Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway and Mrs. Bell took

---

2 Ibid., Preface, p.ii.

3 Taped interview with Jim Chalmers, 3 April 1986. and William Wright Letters, William Wright to Family, 23 February 1939.

over the CPR school car number one after the sudden death of her husband, Cameron Bell, in 1948. 4

Regular family life took place on most of the school cars behind the classroom in the teacher's quarters. Helen and Bill Wright raised a family of four children in a bed sitting room, a small kitchen, a tiny bathroom and a closet. Beds were pulled out at night, and a baby basket was tied to the cedar chest when the school car was moved. 5 Cela and Fred Sloman brought up five children on the school car; Florence and Cameron Bell, two. The families also included pets, usually a dog, but the Bells also had a wisecracking budgerigar named Bud. 6 These families became part of each community the school car served and the children made strong friendships with their classmates and shared in community activities.

The teacher and his family were frequent quests at the homes of parents and they were introduced to some of the northern culture such as a game of croquenole in the evening or a Finnish steam bath.

The daily activities of Mr. Wright in the winter consisted of stoking the Baker heater in the morning and

---

4 North Bay Nugget (xeroxed article from the CBC), n.d.

5 William Wright Letters, Preface, p.ii.

6 "School Days are Happy Days in Mobile Classroom", Spanner, January 1948, p. 23.

starting a small fire in the classroom stove, filling the wood box and shovelling the snow from the entrances to the car and perhaps hauling some water. Regular classes were held during the day and twice during the week he taught two hour adult classes and sometimes Helen would teach classes during other evenings. 7 In between the chores, teaching duties and the endless marking of assignments, Bill found time to work on his B.A. through correspondence courses from Queen's University. He admitted that his studies were "very spasmodic" and by the time he was ready to begin studying he was ready for bed.

Jim Chalmers was the teacher on CNR car number four that ran between Fort William and Fort Frances during the years between 1946 and 1958. Teaching jobs were scarce when he graduated from Stratford Normal School in 1928. 8 It wasn't until the end of the year that Mr. Chalmers was offered a teaching job in rural Marks Township outside Fort William near Kakabeka Falls, Ontario. He took it.

By 1946, Jim Chalmers had considerable experience in rural schools in the area; he taught at Harstone and South Gillies as well. The school car had interested him for some time and after a conversation with teachers on CNR car number four while visiting friends at Kawene, Mr. Chalmers applied

---

7 William Wright Letters, William wright to Family 23 February 1939.

8 Taped interview with Jim Chalmers, 3 April 1986.

for a school car position. He began teaching on CNR school car number four in 1946.

There were certain advantages in teaching on the school car: the pay was far better than that of a regular teacher; their accommodations was free; and the teacher was more professionally independent. Nevertheless, there were some disadvantages as well. Life on the school car was run by schedules. There was the schedule was set by the curriculum and the regulations of the school day as well as the schedules of the railway that picked up the school car to move it to its next back track. Despite the timetables imposed upon the life of the teacher and his family, life was rarely dull.

Jim Chalmers, his wife Betty and their young daughter, Mary Kathryn, left Fort William to begin each circuit of the school car. The Canadian National Railway's east local train took them west to the town of Atikokan where they always spent the night before the school car was attached to the west local which would take them to their first destination further west. On a cold autumn night after the school car was detached from the east local train, the school car was hit with such force that Jim was thrown to the kitchen floor. Tea kettles, flat irons and kitchen articles tumbled onto the floor after him; tea, flour and sugar containers were flung from the cupboards sending their contents across the floor. In the adjoining room the baby's crib had been bounced across

the room by the impact. Although no one on board was injured, Mr. Chalmers was losing his temper as he scrambled outside to see what had happened. It was late in the evening and very cold yet the entire rail yard was illuminated. The baggage car, still attached to the school car, was an inferno. Flames licked the sides of the old baggage car and were leaping ten feet in the air. As if that weren't bad enough, the blazing baggage car was dangerously close to the coal storage shed. The school car was again attached to a locomotive in order to pull the flaming baggage car clear of the coal shed but this only caused the school car to be showered with sparks and ashes and soon the flames were shooting by the windows of the school car. Before the school car too was engulfed in flames, the pin was pulled to separate the two cars.

The locomotive of the east local had smashed into the baggage car. It was suspected that a lamp was left burning in the baggage car. The Chalmers were fortunate in having survived the fire and they were also fortunate in not having to testify at the hearing into the accident. A school car teacher had to get along with everyone and avoid this kind of dispute where blame had to be determined for it had the potential of splitting the railroad communities of the area. If the teacher was rejected by a portion of the people in a settlement his job would be more difficult.

Fire was a constant worry for those who lived on the

school car. The cars were renovated railway coaches some of which dated back to the 1890's. Each school car was heated by the steam locomotive which circulated hot water through a set of two pipes on each side of the coach while the car was being transported. When the school car was stationary the classroom was heated by an auxiliary wood stove but the Baker heater was the main heat source. It burned coal (coke) briquets which kept the water circulating through the bottom of the heater and supplied heat to the car through the pipes.

The school car teachers lived with the constant worry that the Baker heater would go out and the pipes would freeze. 9 If that happened, as it did to the car on the Port Arthur to Sioux Lookout line, an expensive repair job was necessary.

The year that Bill Fleming, the teacher on CNR car number two (Port Arthur to Sioux Lookout) took a leave of absence, the Department of Education in Toronto hired a well-qualified teacher, who had just arrived in Canada from Manchester England, to replace him. 10 The new teacher arrived in Fort William and Bob Steele, of the regional office of the Department of Education, took him to a local Safeway store to purchase his supplies for the month. Mr. Steele was surprised when he found out that the teacher had

---

9 Ibid. and The Star Weekly, 26 August 1950.

10 Taped interview with Jim Chalmers, 3 April 1986. and Taped interview with Mr.James (Bud) Martin, 21 April 1986.

purchased two gunny sacks of corn. The Manchester teacher didn't have a clue about the north or the looking after himself in the countryside. Fellow teacher, Jim Chalmers, met him at Kakabeka and "gave him a few pointers" about the school car. Mr. Chalmers was struck by the inexperience of the man who didn't know the difference between a wood stove and a coke stove; nevertheless, Chalmers wished him "good luck".

One bitterly cold winter night, while CNR car number two was at the village of Umfreville, it caught on fire. 11 The fire was between the ceiling and the roof. The teacher stood on a chair and tried to extinguish the blaze by throwing cups full of water through the cracks in the ceiling. 12 By this time the stove pipe was red hot from the stove to the ceiling and the fire got away on him. He dropped the pail and ran for help in his night shirt. When he returned the car was gone. Nothing was left but the wheels. 13 Later, when Jim Chalmers saw the Manchester teacher again all he would say was, "And you wished me good luck." 14

Like their colleague Fred Sloman, William Wright and Jim

---

11 Taped interview with Mr. James (Bud) Martin, 21 April 1986.

12 Taped interview with Jim Chalmers,3 April 1986.

13 Taped interview with Mr. James (Bud) Martin, 21 April 1986.

14 Taped interview with Jim Chalmers, 3 April 1926.

Chalmers became addicted to the north. Both Sloman and Wright missed the advantages of life in a large city. 15 Bill Wright thought about the value of city life for his children and Fred Sloman missed the theatre, shows, libraries, and daily newspapers but the north drew them and its appeal was too great to resist.

The north was not the place depicted in the dozens of magazines and newspaper articles written about the school cars and the northern wilderness of the province. These newspaper pieces portrayed the people as quaint, innocent, underprivileged yet resourceful people suffering in an inhospitable land. A number of stories, based on fact, about clever and determined school car students were repeated and published so often that they entered the realm of myth. One such story a involved the Native boy who paddled many miles to attend school and another is the story of the brothers, David and Arthur Clement, who travelled forty miles in the depths of winter to attend CNR school car number one at Ramsay. 16 Beside the school car, the boys set up a tent which they thatched with pine boughs and heated with a small wood stove; they lived in the tent while they attended

---

15 Fred Sloman, "I teach on the Run...", Weekend Magazine. Vol.4, No.15. 1954, p. 1. and William Wright Letters, William Wright to Family, 26 April 1945.

16 OA, RG3, Education Railway School Cars, p. 4.

classes. 17

The American author of children's books, Helen Acker, heard the story about the Clement brothers during her stay with Jim Chalmers and his family on CNR school car number four. She was so taken with the story that she wrote a fictionalized account of the tale, combined with her experiences on the Chalmers school car in her book, The School Train. However, to make the story fit the stereotypes of northern Ontario she made the boy's father an illiterate French Canadian trapper living north of Lake Superior.

Even in the early 1930's the people of the north were not naive, or unhappy. In the small settlement of Mack, served by Bill Fleming's CNR school car number three, about one hundred thirty miles north of Fort William on the way to Sioux Lookout, the families were isolated. Some lived in one room tar paper shacks, others lived in spacious homes; but all "seemed up on current events and what went on in the world. 18 All subscribed to newspapers and magazines." Students on Mr. Clement's CNR school car number four during the early 1940's insisted that life for a child in northern Ontario was certainly not dreary. Children were active in the usual outdoor pursuits of tobogganing snowshoeing and

---

17 The Star Weekly, 26 August 1950. The boys are described as being 6 and 8 years old and they arrived on the Chapleau White River line school car by dog sled.

18 Mrs. Olive Chepesuik to Mark Chochla, 29 September 1986.

cross-country skiing, snaring animals for pocket money and fishing. 19 It was a pleasant and relatively care free life. Trips to the city of Fort William were not thought of as a release from the monotonous confines of the bush. In fact, as a child, Jack Antoniak was never tempted to stay in town: Fort William held little appeal compared to his home in the railway community of Keego.

The appeal of the north for the school teacher was the challenge and romance of the job and the feeling of mission or at least the feeling of service to the people there. Moreover, there was overwhelming evidence that their efforts made a difference to their pupils and to the well-being of the communities.

One often overlooked advantage of teaching on the school car was the degree of independence it offered the teacher. There was no principal, vice principal or administrative structure of superintendents, trustees or directors nearby. However, the teacher was not completely on his own: an inspector from the region visited the car three or four times a year. He sent his reports to the Director of School Cars in Toronto. 20 Among the superintendents in Toronto there was a genuine interest in the school cars, because it was a unique venture and because it was a priority with the

---

19 Taped interview with Jack Antoniak, 28 April 1986 and conversations with Denis Chenier and Margaret Graham.

20 Taped interview with James (Bud) Martin, 21 April 1986.

Department. The inspectors looked forward to their task of inspecting school cars for a number of reasons. It took them away from the office for a few days and it was a joy to see motivated students work diligently with an experienced teacher. Because the school car was a pet project of the Department, the inspector could get funds to improve the school car operation.

The teachers had a say in the operation of the school cars in discussions with the inspector and at the annual conference of school car teachers. Each year at Easter the school car teachers had an all expenses paid trip to Toronto for the week of the Ontario Educational Association meeting. The teachers met with the Director of School Cars at the Parliament Building to discuss issues and problems. They were entertained by the Director and the ladies of the auxiliary of the school cars and attended a musical concert at Massey Hall. 20

The purposes of this annual conference were to motivate the school car teacher as well as to deal with the educational and administrative issues of the cars' operation. Inspector James Martin also viewed his role in this way: he was there to encourage the teacher, not to be critical, but to help him in whatever way he could.

Before breakfast on June morning in 1946, William Wright

---

20 William Wright Letters, William Wright to Family, 16 June 1945.

responded to a knock on the door of his car. 21 When he opened the door he saw a stranger carrying a fishing rod. The man Wright thought was a fisherman turned out to be the new inspector. 22 It was an honest mistake because the man did not carry a briefcase and was happy to go fishing in a nearby lake until class began a nine o'clock. Wright and the inspector spent a pleasant day together and the inspector authorized the complete weeding of the school car library and the purchase of new, more attractive reading material.

Fishing was one of the advantages of living on the school car. Lakes, accessible to only a few, produced fine catches and the inspectors took advantage of the opportunities. When inspector Martin visited Jim Chalmers' car they would often spend late Friday afternoon catching their limit of pickerel from a railway bridge.

The pleasures of the north make the nerve-wracking incidents and occasional hardships of life on the school car worth tolerating. The car was often located in places of unequalled beauty: close to a meadow frequented by deer; beside a cool blue lake; or a picturesque river in a boreal forest. "I get no end of pleasure out of it ", wrote Bill Wright. "The clean smell of pine ... the slap of water on the shore, the rustle of the birches over the roof, the view over the lake and the cry of the loons are a good tonic and

---

21 William Wright Letters, 16 June 1946.

22 Ibid., 16 June 1946.

something that provides an escape from my job of teaching. I think I'll always like the bush and the northern waters." 23

Bill and Helen Wright built a cabin on lake Wangoon near Esher, just west of Chapleau. Constructed of peeled pine and spruce logs and lined with dressed pine, it fulfilled Helen's dream of living in a log cabin. They called the cabin Loonscry and it looked west over a sand beach. Loonscry provided the Wright family with pleasurable summers of fishing, swimming and berry picking and hunting in the fall.

---

23 William Wright Letters, William Wright to Family, 8 January 1947.

IX

The End of an Era

Until well into the post World War II period, Canadians clung to the nineteenth century assumption that the railway would provide the fundamental transportation system for the nation. 1 This was a "perceptual lag" because the railroads' dominance over other forms of transportation was breaking down by 1939. 2 The expanding network of roads and highways and the increasing numbers of private automobiles and trucks allowed greater freedom for transporting freight and people. 3 Moreover, air transportation in the south was, by 1939, already an alternative to railways.

In 1961 the Macpherson Commission report on transportation in Canada said that transportation was being "fundamentally changed by a `massive and largely undirected expenditure on roads', an expenditure, it noted, which was taking place without reference to `rational transportation planning'." 4 In order to compete with alternative forms of

---

1 K.J. Rea, The Prosperous Years: the economic history of Ontario 1939-1975 (University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 58.

2 Ibid., p. 56.

3 Ibid., p. 63. The total number of motor vehicles in Ontario in 1939 was 682,891, and in 1965, 2,516,680.

4 Ibid., p. 59.

transportation, the railways were converting to diesel technology to replace the old steam locomotive. Oil was cheaper than coal. By 1950 Canadian National and Canadian Pacific had purchased their last steam engines and Ontario Northland (formerly T&NO) was converted to diesel by 1956. 5 It was the end of the soot belching monsters. The two national railways converted hundreds of steam locomotives to oil and began purchasing diesel engines. The price of a diesel was twice that of a steam locomotive but the diesel was much more efficient and did twice the work. Furthermore, the diesel engines were easy to maintain, required less maintenance, were safer, handled better and were more comfortable to operate.

These new trains ran longer distances without repairs and there was no need for water stops. This, along with improved techniques for maintaining tracks, reduced the need for section men, and with the longer sections and increased mileage between divisional points, many railway communities began to disappear. 6 Just as the technology of railways opened the north to exploitation and population at the turn of the century, the new technology of the railways encouraged the centralization of the northern population.

The steady extension of roads and highways also

---

5 The Star Weekly, 29 July 1950, p. 2.

6 Taped interviews with Jack Antoniak, 28 April 1986 and James Martin, 21 April 1986.

contributed to the centralization of people in larger communities. Once a good road was available people chose to live in towns and commute to their jobs. There was a direct relationship between the extension of road transportation and the decline of the school rail cars. As the highways made their way west across Ontario the school cars ceased operation one by one. The last school car in operation was CNR number four that served the communities between Fort William and Fort Frances. Until the highway between Atikokan and Fort Frances was completed 28 June 1965, the railroad was the only transportation route across this section of Ontario. Anyone wishing to travel to the western parts of Canada had to use the roads of northern Minnesota. Repeating the pattern of other school cars, CNR number four ceased operation in 1967, shortly after the completion of the highway.

By the late 1950's the school rail cars was no longer a top priority with the Department of Education; it was becoming concerned with expanding the urban school systems to provide for the baby boom generation. The waning interest of the Department and the changes in the operation of the railways were sometimes acutely felt by the school car teacher. Philip Fraser, the teacher on CNR school car number three, working between Sioux Lookout and the Manitoba border, is a case in point. He was frustrated because he had an old school car and the CNR maintenance crews at Redditt

had been eliminated. 7 Fraser's car experienced frequent and increasingly serious breakdowns. He believed that the age and deteriorating condition of the car made it unsafe for his wife and family. Philip Fraser felt it necessary to take his concerns to the President of Canadian National in Montreal. Fraser's main concern was the Baker heating system which was now totally inefficient and consumed four tons of briquets and eleven bags of charcoal between 1 January and 22 February 1957. The Department of Education did not seem concerned about the problem; but for Fraser, it was an issue of safety and he was so concerned about the possibility of fire that he could not sleep at night and was, therefore, not rested for teaching. 8 Inspection of the car by the CN mechanical department at Fort Rouge, Manitoba confirmed Fraser's fears. They found that the car's body was sagging, the floor had heaved and the superstructure was twisted. 9 The sixty-six year old car was of wood construction and the railroad recommended that it be taken out of service.

The Department of Education resented the fact that Mr. Fraser took his complaint to the CNR, but the Department did authorize one thousand dollars in repairs on the school

---

7 PAC, 2100-X3, Part 2, 26 February 1957.

8 Ibid., P. Fraser to J.R. MacMillan, 27 July 1957.

9 Ibid., Vice President to R. Dodds, 15 April 1957.

car. 10 It was probably with some reluctance that the government committed itself to replacing the old school car because the cost was substantial. The price of the car renovation was $26,109, and an additional $4,000 for electric lights and an oil fired heater plus a ten percent fee in accordance with the 1926 agreement between the railways and the government. 11

In 1958 the Department of Education stopped mentioning the school cars in its Annual Report; by then, there were only three cars operating and it was becoming obvious that they would not last another decade.

By the time the school cars ceased operation their origins had been obscured by time. The establishment of school cars was the result of a complex of social, intellectual and political factors. The northern school promoters, Alfred Fitzpatrick and J.B. MacDougall, were imbued with the liberal social reform thinking of their day and ideas of theological liberalism and the belief in social regeneration. Northern Ontario's resources were being exploited and the region populated by growing numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants with values and customs that were not shared by the majority of the province's people. For MacDougall and Fitzpartrick, education was the moral force which could help establish the economic and social

---

10 Ibid., G.A. Pearson to J.R. MacMillan, July 1957.

11 Ibid., J.R. MacMillan to D. Gordon, 29 October 1957.

fabric of the region, assimilate the diverse ethnic groups, provide them with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic, representative society. They were convinced that through education it was possible to create a garden in the bush and provide the means of personal salvation and social regeneration.

In the years just before 1920, the extension of schooling in northern Ontario proceeded slowly. A network of northern inspectors or "District Men", led by Dr. MacDougall, began to understand the special nature of northern Ontario's resource economy and the region's settlement patterns. They questioned the educational policies imposed on the north that were developed by the experiences in Southern Ontario and began to suggest alternative policies to meet the needs of the north. One solution to delivering schooling to the sparsely settled region was the mobile school; an idea suggested as early as 1916. The idea was not seriously revived and promoted by MacDougall or the District Men until after public concern about immigration policy, the ethnic population in the north and the 'Red Scare' after 1919.

After 1923, fear of left-wing political activity in the north among the disaffected elements of the population, and acceptance of the policy of extending educational opportunities in the north by education minister and Premier G. Howard Ferguson made the school cars a possibility. The

concept of railway school cars promoted by Dr. MacDougall became part of the Department's policy objective of extending education into rural areas. The school cars also became an exponent of the "new education" that was concerned with active, child-centered learning and less concerned with facts and subjects.

Premier Ferguson's commitment to the school car proposal was due to the general public acceptance of self-improvement through the educational system and social reform ideas such as those suggested by Dr. MacDougall. By the 1920's, these ideas had become part of the culture.

Much of the school car's appeal for politicians was its role in the political socialization of the children and adults of the north. Lessons in the school room inculcated two of the essentials of assimilation: a common language and common ideals of citizenship. The students - children and adults received instruction in speaking and writing English and were taught to appreciate Canada and it British-based western democratic institutions. The rights and duties of Canadian citizenship were discussed and adults were encouraged to become Canadian citizens.

At one level the school car transformed immigrants into loyal Canadians. At another level the schooling provided both the immigrant and Canadian-born child with basic skills, knowledge and the work habits and discipline necessary to succeed in a modern industrial society. The day

to day work of the teacher and students concentrated on the latter purpose.

The school car was welcomed in the communities it served because it was seen as an opportunity by most northerners. They perceived schooling as a way to ensure their hopes of independence and success and realize their dreams of success for their children.

The school cars were an educational success. Much of the credit goes to the group of excellent teachers whose vitality, resourcefulness and personal qualities allowed them to make a positive contribution to the lives of so many people in northern communities. People like Fred Sloman, Walter McNally, Andrew Clement and Jim Chalmers affected the lives of thousands of students; their knowledge, personalities, patience and example lives in the memories of their former pupils. Northerners welcomed the school car with a warmth and hospitality that surprised the inspectors and the teachers. The value of an education for both adults and children was recognized by the railway unions and they requested the extension of the school car service. 12 The railways benefited by having more literate employees with greatly improved communication skills and the businessmen in town noted the progress of the adult night school students. Another measure of the effectiveness of the school car

---

12 Ibid., E.P. Mallory to N.B. Walton, 31 May 1939.

education is the number of students who left the school car after passing their high school entrance examinations and successfully complete their high school education in an urban secondary school. The education on the school car was not inferior to the education received in a city classroom and it may have been superior. Former school car students have become successful in every walk of life. They became tradesmen, teachers, nurses, architects, business people, lawyers, doctors and policemen.

A testament to the school car's effectiveness was the number of other special uses to which rail cars were put after the school car had proved itself. Quebec and Alberta established school rail cars and requests for information on the operation of school cars came from as far away of India.[13] Rail cars were outfitted as dental cars and Red Cross cars to bring medical services to the north and the CPR developed a safety car to make the families of employees aware of safety issues. [14] The same railway converted ten rail coaches into hospital cars to transport wounded soldiers to their homes across Canada during World War II.

The school car which was launched with such fanfare in 1926 was retired from service without notice of comment. Many of the railway hamlets and villages that were served so

---

13 The Star Weekly, 26 August 1950.

14 CPR Archives, E119 MOG 240-(46), 1946.

well by the school car had been abandoned. The motor vehicle had replaced the train as the preferred means of transportation and the silent passing of the school rail cars marked the end of an era in the social and educational history of northern Ontario.

School Car Stops

CPR #1	September 1926	Wye Flourite Drefal Roberts Ramsay Ridout back to Cartier	June 1926	Wye Ramsay Sultan Devon Esher
CPR #2	1931	Argon Bonheur Dyment Sheba Cardstadt Niblock English River Bigsby Tache Macmillan		

The school car system was elastic. Stops were added of dropped with population shifts. For example:

CPR #1 1926

School Station	First Enrolment	Additions	Present #
Wye	2	1 (2.5 miles away) 2 moved 2 more expected	5
Ramsay		2 from Roberts 2 from Ridout	11
Sultan	6	Mill closed	0
Devon	13	Mill closed	11
Esher	6	3 moved 5 more expected	8

Source: OA, RG3, Report on School Cars 1926.

School Car Teachers

School Car	Teacher	Rail Communities Served
CPR #1	Walter McNally 1926-1944	Cartier to Chapleau
	Cameron Bell 1944-1948	
	Florence Bell 1948	
	Mr. Colcock 1949	
	Mr. Corps 1950-1952	
CPR #2	William Wright 1928-1937	Fort William to Kenora
	William Wright 1938-1958	Chapleau to White River
CNR #1	Fred Sloman 1926-1965	Capreol to Folyet
CNR #2	William Fleming 1928-about 1944	Port Arthur to Sioux Lookout
CNR #3	Andrew D. Clement 1934-1958	Sioux Lookout to Manitoba Border
	Henry Antoniak	
	Philip Fraser 1946-1965	
CNR #4	Andrew D. Clement 1940's	Fort William to Fort Frances

Henry Antoniak
1941

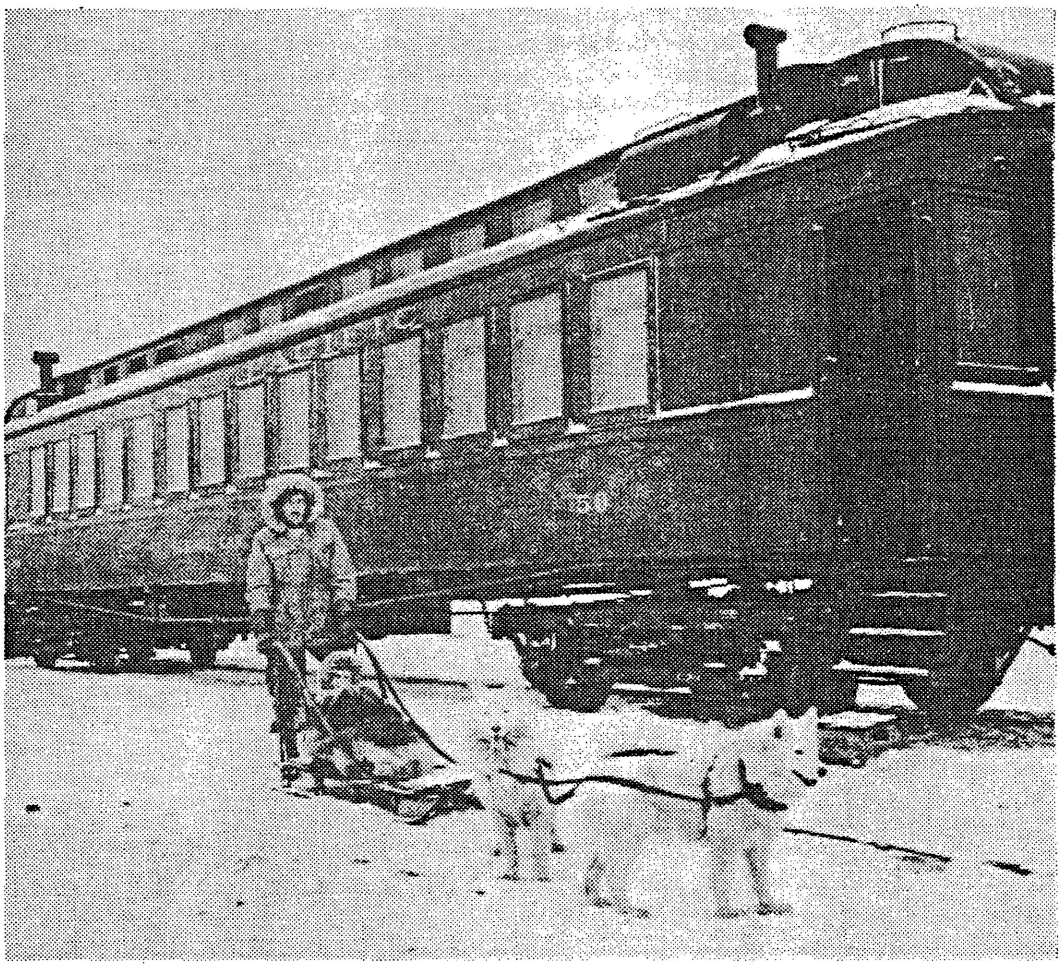
Jim Chalmers
1941- 1958

Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway (Ontario Northland)	Angus Mackay 1939-1941 Helen Mackay 1942-	North Bay to Cobalt

School Car Operation

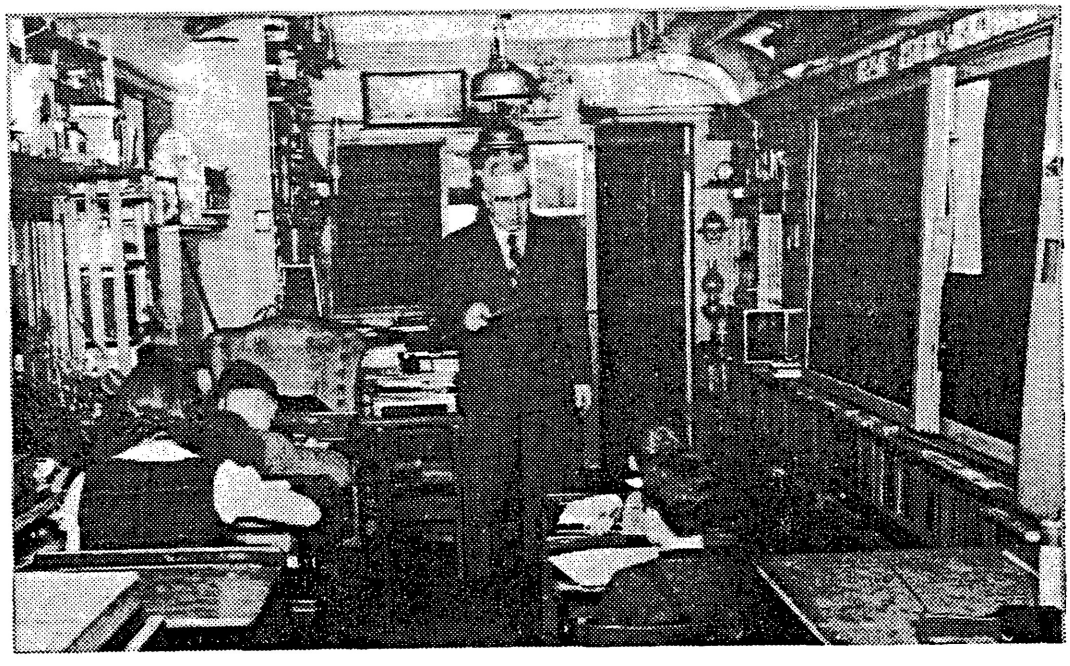
year	total # of pupils (children)	Number of cars operating CPR	CNR	T&NO
1926		1	1	
1928		2	2	
1931		2	2	1
1934		2	3	1
1940		2	4	1
1945	226	4	4	1
1946	250			
1949		2	3	1
1953	159	2	3	1
1955	143	2	3	1
1956	96	1	3	1
1958	60	3 cars operating		
1959	43			
1960	52			
1961	39			
1962	32			
1963	40			
1964	42			

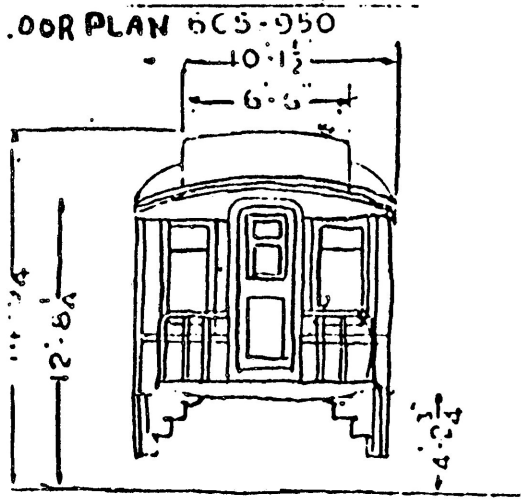
Source Annual Reports of the Minister of Education.



Above: A child arriving by dog sled to attend the Canadian Pacific school car at Chapleau. (PA-142371)

Below: Mr. Sloman instructing students in his school car on the Canadian National Railway. (CNR)



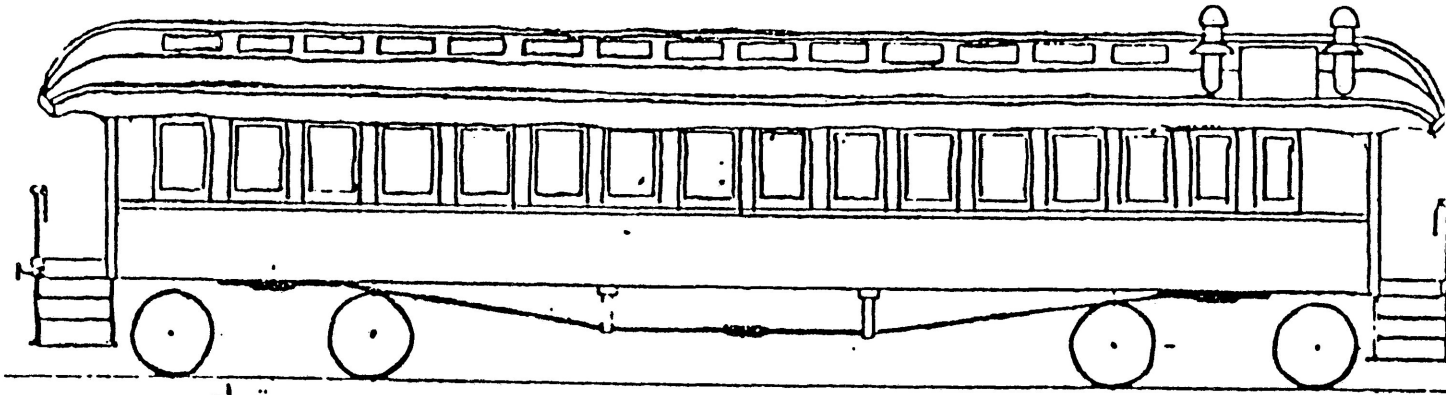


9'-9"
OVER SHEATHING

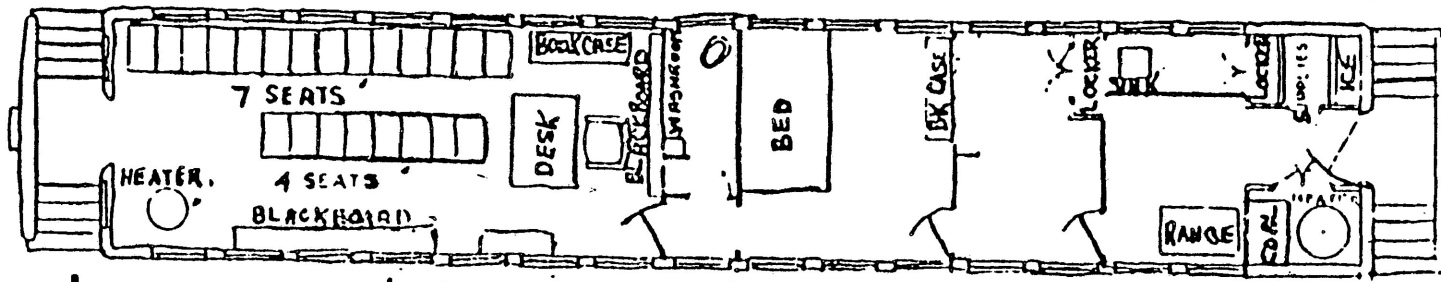
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
MECHANICAL DEPARTMENT
MONTREAL

50'-0" SCHOOL	
CAR CLASS-M-1	
NO. OF CARS	CAR H
1	15071.

DISMANTLED IN 1941 OF CANADIAN NATL



8'-0"
6'-4"
37'-4"
50'-0"
56'-7"
8'-0
6'-4



5'
21'-10½"
SCHOOL ROOM
2'-10½"
TOILET
8'-7"
BEDROOM
5'-10½"
BEDROOM
5'-7"
KITCHEN
4'-4½"
5"

The Globe.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1931.

MISNAMED

Canada---"And you call that snarl `free speech'!"
drawn by J.A.W. Craig

TABLE A
Components of Population Growth
Canada 1861-1941
(Thousands of Persons)

Decade	*Population Start of Decade*	*Births*	*Deaths*	*Natural Increase*	*Immigration*	*Emigration**	*Net Migration*
1861-1971	3,230	1,369	718	651	183	375	−192
1871-1981	3,689	1,477	754	723	353	440	− 87
1881-1991	4,325	1,538	824	714	903	1,109	−206
1891-1901	4,833	1,546	828	718	326	506	−180
1901-1911	5,371	1,931	811	1,120	1,759	1,043	716
1911-1921	7,207	2,338	988**	1,350	1,612	1,381	231
1921-1931	8,788	2,415	1,055	1,360	1,203	974	229
1931-1941	10,377	2,294	1,072	1,222	150	242	− 92

*A residual, calculated by adding natural increase and immigration to the population count at the start of the decade and subtracting the population count at the end of the decade.
**Includes deaths resulting from the two world wars, numbering 120,000 and 36,000 respectively.
SOURCE: "Immigration and Population Statistics": *Canadian Immigration and Population Study* (Ottawa, 1974), p. 8.

TABLE B
Occupational Background of Immigrant Males
Arriving in Canada, 1907-1935

A. 1907-8 to 1913-14: 58% Total Immigration for Entire Period. (59% of all immigrants were male workers.)

	Farmers	*General Labourers*	*Mechanics*	*Clerks*	*Miners*	*Others*	*Total*
Ocean Ports	250,614 (55%)	289,103 (70%)	126,240 (67%)	59,648 (77%)	18,087 (60%)	32,969 (66%)	776,661 (64%)
Via U.S.	205,530 (45%)	129,962 (30%)	61,075 (33%)	17,899 (23%)	12,057 (40%)	16,749 (34%)	443,272 (36%)
TOTAL	456,144	419,065	187,315	77,547	30,144	49,718	1,219,933
% of Total Immigration for Periods	37.4	34.4	15.4	6.4	2.4	4	100

B. 1914-15 to 1918-19: 10% of Total Immigration for Entire Period. (53% of total immigrants were male workers.)

	Farmers	*General Labourers*	*Mechanics*	*Clerks*	*Miners*	*Others*	*Total*
Ocean Ports	13,684 (18%)	26,156 (45%)	6,525 (15%)	3,155 (31%)	907 (28%)	8,328 (40%)	58,755 (28%)
Via U.S.	63,120 (82%)	31,782 (55%)	37,817 (85%)	7,078 (69%)	2,383 (72%)	12,760 (60%)	154,940 (72%)
TOTAL	76,804	57,938	44,342	10,233	3,290	21,088	213,695
% of Total Immigration for Period	35.9	27.1	20.8	4.8	1.5	9.9	100

Source: Avery, Donald 'Dangerous Foreigners': European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

C. 1919-20 to 1924-25: 11.5% of Total Immigration for Entire Period. (47% of total immigrants were male workers.)

	Farmers	*General Labourers*	*Mechanics*	*Clerks*	*Miners*	*Others*	*Total*
Ocean Ports	71,300 (62%)	22,093 (65%)	26,188 (60%)	9,896 (63%)	4,394 (78%)	15,512 (61%)	150,383 (63%)
Via U.S.	43,310 (38%)	11,756 (35%)	17,398 (40%)	5,829 (37%)	1,263 (22%)	10,102 (39%)	89,658 (37%)
TOTAL	114,610	33,849	43,586	15,725	5,657	25,614	240,041
% of Total Immigration for Period	47.8	14.2	18.3	6.6	2.4	10.7	100

D. 1925-26 to 1929-30: 18% of Total Immigration for Entire Period. (52% of total immigrants were male workers.)

	Farmers	*General Labourers*	*Mechanics*	*Clerks*	*Miners*	*Others*	*Total*
Ocean Ports	248,961	22,241	22,000	11,298	3,006	7,640	315,146
Via U.S.	25,445	8,926	13,412	7,963	803	6,907	63,456
TOTAL	274,406	31,167	35,412	19,261	3,809	14,547	378,602
% of Total Immigration for Period	72	8	9.5	5	1	4	100

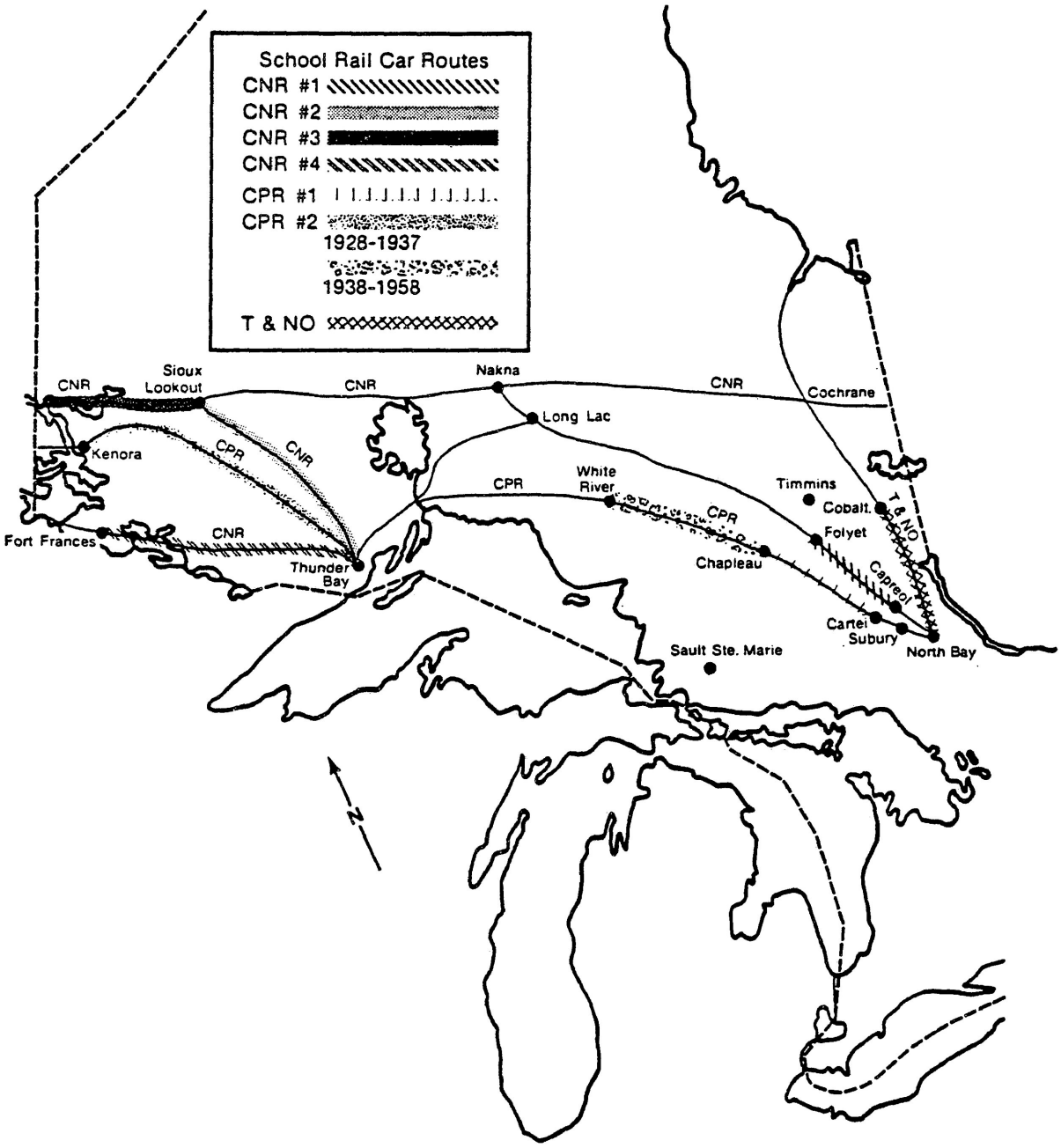
E. 1930-31 to 1934-35: 2.5% of Total Immigration for Entire Period. (33% of total immigrants were male workers.)

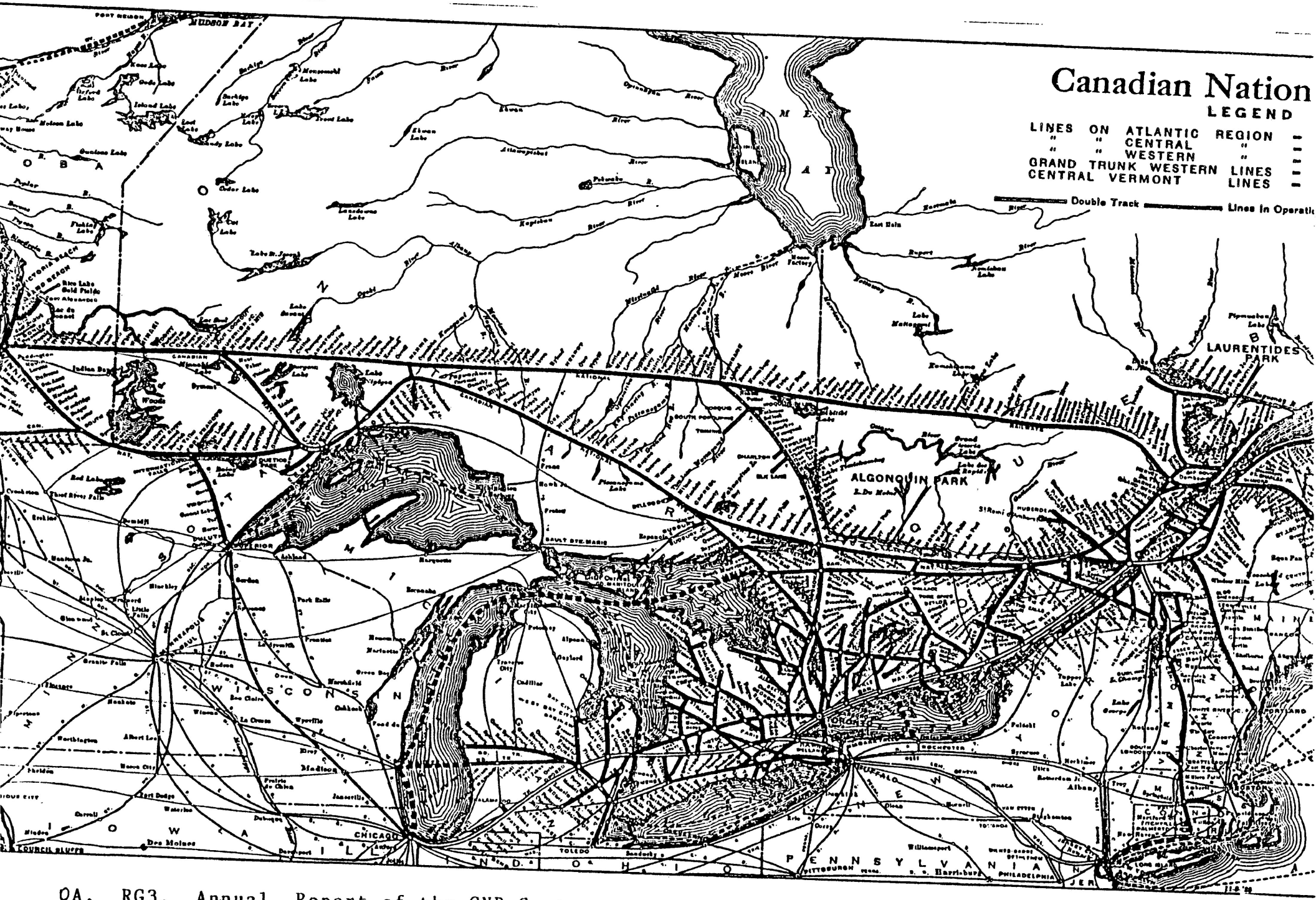
	Farmers	*General Labourers*	*Mechanics*	*Clerks*	*Miners*	*Others*	*Total*
Ocean Ports	18,340	3,444	4,009	2,438	200	2,027	30,458 (58%)
Via U.S.	6,760	1,541	4,135	4,941	198	4,464	22,039 (42%)
TOTAL	25,100	4,985	8,144	7,379	398	6,491	52,597
% of Total Immigration for Period	48	9	15.6	14	.8	12.6	100

F.

TOTAL NO. OF	*Farmers*	*General Labourers*	*Mechanics*	*Clerks*	*Miners*	*Others*	*Total*
Ocean Ports	602,899	363,037	184,962	86,435	26,594	66,476	1,331,403
Via U.S.	344,165	183,967	133,837	43,710	16,704	50,982	773,365
TOTAL	947,064	547,004	318,799	130,145	43,298	117,458	2,104,768
% of Total Immigration for Period	45	26	15.1	6.2	2.1	5.6	100

SOURCE: *Report of the Department of Immigration and Colonization for the Fiscal Year Ending March 30, 1936* (Ottawa, 1932), pp. 76-77.


School Rail Car Routes
CNR #1
CNR #2
CNR #3
CNR #4
CPR #1
CPR #2
1928-1937
1938-1958
T & NO
CNR
Sioux Lookout
CNR
Nakna
CNR
Cochrane
Long Lac
Kenora
CPR
CNR
CPR
White River
Timmins
Cobalt
T & NO
Fort Frances
CNR
Thunder Bay
CPR
Chapleau
Foleyet
Capreol
Cartier
Subury
North Bay
Sault Ste. Marie
N



OA, RG3, Annual Report of the CNR System for the Year ended 31, 1925.

Bibliography

Archives

Canadian Pacific Railway Archives, School Car Files, xeroxed copies.

Ontario Archives, RG3, Box 91, G. Howard Ferguson Papers.

RG2, F-3-E, Boxes 16, 23,25, 30-32, Elementary School Inspector Records and General Correspondence.

MU, 1334, George S. Henry Papers.

MU, 4407, 4399, 4430, Series A, Dr. Roby Kidd Papers, Correspondence, 1961-1981.

Public Archives of Canada, 2100-X3, Parts 1 and 2, Canadian National Railway Records, Ontario Department of Education - School Cars for isolated points in Northern Ontario.

MG 28, I 124, Vol. 175, Frontier College Principal's Files, 1906-1919.

MG 28, I 124, Vol. 186, Frontier College Scrapbook 1900-1908.

Interviews

Taped interview with Jack Atoniak, 28 April 1986. *

Taped interview with Jim Chalmers, 3 April 1986. *

Taped interview with James (Bud) Martin, 21 April 1986. *

Photographs

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, School Car Photographs.

Life magazine school car photographs in the possession of Jim Chalmers.

Other

Annual Reports of the Ontario Minister on Education, 1925-1958.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, School Car research material, xeroxed copies. *

Hurd, W. Burton. "Racial Origins and Nativity of the Canadian People", Seventh Census of Canada, Canada 1931, Vol. XIII pp. 537-828.

Ontario Sessional Papers, 1926-1948, "Report of the Minister of Education."

Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization: Minutes and Proceedings and Evidence and Report, 1928, Appendix No. 8. Ottawa, 1928.

Seventh Census of Canada 1931, Vol. XIII, Monograph (Ottawa 1942).

William Wright Letters, 1928-1964, xeroxed typescript. *

Secondary Sources

Books and Pamphlets

Acker, Helen. The School Train. New York: Abelard - Schuman, 1953.

Allen, Richard. The Social Passion. University of Toronto Press. 1973.

Avery, Donald. 'Dangerous Foreigners': European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

Berger, Thomas. Fragile Freedoms: Human Rights and Dissent in Canada. Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1981.

Berton, Pierre, The Dionne Years. McClelland and Stewart, 1977.

Bradwin, Edmond. The Bunkhouse Man. Reprint. University of Toronto Press, 1972.

The Canadian Who's Who, IV, 1948.

Chodos, Robert. The CPR: a Century of Corporate Welfare. Toronto: James Lewis and Samuel, 1973.

Cook, Ramsay. The Regenerators. University of Toronto Press,

1985.

Ferguson, G. Howard. Address by the Hon. G. Howard Ferguson delivered at Kemptville, Ontario, October 22, 1926. Toronto.

--------. Plans and Projects for a Greater Ontario: Record and Programme of the Ferguson Government. Toronto, 1929.

--------. Record of the Ferguson Government No. IV The Session of 1930. Toronto.

--------. Record of the Ferguson Government. Toronto, 1928.

Fitzpatrick, Alfred. The Frontier Labourer with Sixth Annual Report of the Reading Camp Association 1905-1906. New Liskeard.

-------- . The University in Overalls: A Plea for Part-Time Study. Toronto, 1923.

Fournier, Leslie T. Railway Nationalization in Canada. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1935.

Frye, Northrop. The Bush Garden: essays on the Canadian imagination. Toronto: Anansi, 1971.

Granatstein, J.L., ed. Forum: Canadian Life and Letters 1920-1970. Univesity of Toronto Press, 1972.

Jones, D.G. Butterfly on Rock. University of Toronto Press, 1970.

Leacock, Stephen. Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960.

MacDougall, J.B. Building the North. Toronto, 1919.

McKenty, Neil. Mitch Hepburn. McClelland and Stewart, 1976.

Morton, Desmond. Working People. Ottawa: Deneau, 1981.

Morton, W.L. The Canadian Identity. University of Toronto Press, 1972.

Oliver, Peter. G. Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory. university of Toronto Press. 1977.

Rea, K.J. The Prosperous Years: The Economic History of Ontario 1939-1975. University of Toronto Press, 1985.

Reimer, Derek ed. Voices: a guide to oral history. Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1985.

Schuessler, Karl and Mary. School on Wheels: reaching and teaching the isolated children of the north. Erin: Boston Mills Press, 1986.

Stewart, Sandy. From Coast to Coast: a personal history of radio in Canada. Montreal: CBC enterprises, 1985.

Stamp, Robert M. The Schools of Ontario. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982.

Stewart, Roderick. Bethune. Toronto: New Press, 1973.

Sutherland, Neil. Children in English-Speaking Canadian Society: framing the twentieth century consensus. University of Toronto Press, 1976.

Wilson, J.D. and others. Canadian Education: a history. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1970.

Thompson, J.H. and Seager, A. Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985.

Unpublished Material

Abbott, John Roblin. Educational Policy Formation and Implementation on the Primary Resource Frontier: The Case of the District of Algoma, 1903-1922. unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto 1983.

Clewley, G. and Kelly, N. Report on the Car Schools of Northern Ontario. unpublished Experience 1975 project.

Pinsent, Gordon. And Miles to Go. Episode One: "The Calling". CBC television drama production script, 1984. *

Articles

Avery, Donald. "Canadian Immigration Policy and the 'Foreign' Navvy 1896-1914", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, Montreal, 1972, pp. 135-156.

Bowles, Dr. R.P. "The Teaching Spirit", Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association 1926, pp. 151-152.

"A Canadian Travelling School", School and Society, 8 September 1928.

Colbourne, W.F. "Rolling Schools", Corridor, xeroxed copy, n.d.

Corrigan, P. and Curtis, B. "Education, Inspection and State Formation; a preliminary statement". Canadian Historical Association Historical papers, Montreal, 1985, pp. 156-171.

Ferguson, G. Howard. "Address", Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association 1924.

--------. "Address", Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association 1926, pp. 11-20.

Jones, Bessie. "The School Car", xeroxed typescript from CPR Archives.27 October 1928. *

MacDougall, J.B. "The School on Wheels", Canadian Congress Journal, XIV, April 1935, pp. 23-24.

Montagnes, James. 'The Wilderness School on Wheels", School and Society, 12 January 1935.

Newsweek, 18 November 1940.

Norris, D.A. "Teaching - A Profession", Proceedings of the Ontario Education Association 1926, pp. 65-78.

Palamarchuk, M. "The Little Red School Car", CN Rail Movin, November-December 1980, pp. 14-15.

"The Red School house on Wheels", Canadian National Railway Magazine, November 1926, pp. 8-9.

The School. Vol. VII No.I, September 1919.

School and Society, 3 June 1928, p.292.

--------, 3 June 1939, p. 698.

--------, 23 November 1940, p. 512.

"School Days are happy Days in Mobile Classroom", Spanner, January 1948. pp. 18-24.

"A School Room on Wheels", The Review of Reviews, July 1929.

"The 'School on Wheels': a novel educational experiment in New Ontario", Canada, 5 January 1929. n.d.

Sigsworth, J. "School on Wheels", The Canadian Boy, 27 January 1952.

Stamp, Robert M. "Schools on Wheels: the railway car schools of Northern Ontario", Canada: an historical magazine, Spring

1974, pp. 34-42.

The Star Weekly, 18 September 1926.

--------, 26 August 1950.

Sloman, Fred. "I teach on the Run...". Weekend Magazine, Vol. 4, No. 15, 1955, pp. 1-5.

Weller, G.R. "Hinterland Politics: The Case of North Western Ontario", Canadian Journal of Political Science, 10 (1977), pp. 727-754.

Newspapers

Detroit News, 5 November 1932.

Fort William Daily Times Journal, 9 April 1929.
--------, 12 September 1929.
--------, 24 March 1930.

Toronto Globe and Mail, 21 February 1931.

North Bay Nugget, 7 August 1982.

Ontario Archives, Newspaper Hansard. on microfilm.

* to be placed in the collection of the Thunder Bay Historical Society Museum Archive.