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THE CITIZEN, OTTAWA, CANADA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 1924.

"OLD TIME STUFF"

Reminiscences of the Ottawa of Earlier Days. Personages, Scenes and Incidents Recalled for Evening Citizen Readers

There are few pioneer stories more gripping than that of Charles Shirreff, who in 1820 settled at what is now Fitzroy Harbor, and who was the first settler who had penetrated that far west of here. The Shirreff story is on a par with that of Philemon Wright for pioneer daring and enterprise. Before proceeding further it should be told that the life of Charles Shirreff is also closely bound up with that of Bytown, as in the earliest days of the settlement he moved here, and held for many years the then most important government post of collector of revenue for woods and forests for the whole vast country to the north and west, including the Temiskaming and Muskoka districts.

Charles Shirreff is also credited with being the father of the Georgian Bay Canal scheme. Whether or not he first conceived the idea, the fact is that he spent much money and put forth a great amount of effort towards realizing the dream. He made several trips to England and actually floated a company to carry out the work. On the directorate and among the stock subscribers were many dukes and earls and wealthy commoners of all classes. But unfortunately things did not go well on this side, as there was a hitch in the plan by which the provincial government was to give large grants of land along the route to the company, and finally the scheme fell through.

Came With Money.

Charles Shirreff, like Philemon Wright, was a man of financial substance. When he came to this country in 1817 from Lathwick, a suburb of Edinburgh, he brought with him over fifty thousand pounds ($250,000). In Scotland he had been a shipbuilder and merchant.

Mr. Shirreff did not come direct to this locality. When he came to Canada in 1817 he went first to Cobourg, having crossed New York state. He stayed at Cobourg till 1819. While living there he made frequent journeys to York (Toronto) and Montreal, where he met the great men of the day, who welcomed him with open arms. The country then had a very large "welcome" sign hung out for settlers with capital and experience.

Offer of Land.

In York he met Lord Dalhousie, who was instrumental in having an offer made to him of a grant of 5,000 acres to start a settlement up the Ottawa River.

Mr. Shirreff accepted the offer, and despatched his youngest son, Alexander, to start the settlement. At this point it should be said that when he immigrated, Mr. Shirreff brought with him three sons and one daughter. All of the three sons had been educated in Scotland and before they sailed had been civil engineer and surveyor. Their qualifications were put to good use.

Mapped Great Area.

We find that one son, Alexander Shirreff grand-uncle of Dr. W. T. Shirreff, of Ottawa) explored and mapped out for the first time great tracts of country as far west as what are now North Bay and Sudbury.

But to get on with the story of the settlement. In the fall of 1819 we find Alexander Shirreff, a youth of 18, plunging into the forest north of here accompanied only by three woodsmen (such was the pioneer spirit). After seeing much of the country Alexander selected on behalf of his father the land on the Ontario side of what is now the Chats Falls. The little party first built a log house facing the falls and then setting down to clear up the land. The following year (1820) the family moved on the scene.

Had Big Ideas.

It was the intention of Charles Shirreff to make his settlement the York of the north. The new colony (he called it Fitzroy Harbor after Lord Fitzroy, a Scotch nobleman) was to be the central home for all the country to the north. At that time the nearest settlement between the Shirreffs and civilization was The Point, the original name for the Philemon Wright settlement at Hull.

Man of Enterprise.

The Shirreffs at once set about making a real place out of the new settlement. Mr. Shirreff spent money freely. He built a large saw mill which had two gang saws and two other saws, built a grist mill which had four "run of stones," erected an octagonal mill, put up a church, built a schoolhouse, potash and brick works, a hotel, and also a wharf. Of course this was not all done at once; these operations covered a period of years.

A Case of "If."

For a time Fitzroy Harbor was a place of no small importance. There is little reason to doubt that had Col. By not selected this site as the outlet of the Rideau Canal, Fitzroy Harbor might have become the place of importance which Charles Shirreff hoped to make it. The Harbor had wonderful water power and the soil of the country round about was of the best. But of course Mr. Shirreff had no way of knowing that the canal would be built, or that a great city would grow up at this point (Ottawa) to shatter his plans, or he might have planned differently.

Land Apportioned.

By the year 1822 the government surveyors had got as far west as Fitzroy and had laid the country out into townships, and in the same year Mr. Shirreff received the patents on his land, as follows:

Charles Shirreff, 1,000 acres.

John Shirreff (a brother), 1,000 acres.

Charles, who had moved to the Harbor from New York, 1,000 acres.

Alex. Shirreff (son of Charles), 1,000 acres.

Charles, Jr. (son), 500 acres.

Mary (daughter), 500 acres.

Robert (son and the grandfather of Dr. Shirreff of Ottawa), 1,000 acres.

To Bytown.

In 1826 Charles Shirreff was appointed by the provincial government collector of its woods and forests revenue and a few years later (after the arrival of Col. By) he moved to the new settlement of Bytown, leaving his sons and his brother to carry on the work at Fitzroy Harbor. The job which Mr. Shirreff accepted must have been a job to keep a man busy if the list of duties set forth on his written offer means anything. Perhaps a few of the things he was expected to do (and it must be remembered that his territory extended practically to the Georgian Bay and all the way to the Gatineau) were:

A Busy Job.

He was to collect all moneys payable as tolls from the lumbermen and private parties.

To enquire into and report to the surveyor-general on the improvements required on the Ottawa River in order that the timber might be properly floated down.

To measure (for toll purposes) all timber coming down the river.

To mark out areas where timber was to be cut.

To keep a record of the number of assistants the collector was allowed. The only information in that line, Robert (grandfather of Dr. Shirreff), was in the office with him. Another son, Alexander, on the start of the Rideau Canal survey was appointed an engineer on the work and stayed with it till 1824, when he heard the call of the wild and settled at what is now Ottawa and the Georgian Bay.

Birch-Bark Maps.

As already told, Alexander mapped out nearly all this vast country. The original maps were in existence till 1915, when they were burned in the great bush fire which swept over the Fitzroy Harbor country that year. Copies of them, however, had been made and are now in the government Archives on Sussex street.

Twelve Corgis.

In 1834 Robert went to England to further some of his father's colonization schemes and remained there till 1837. During this period he married (at the age of 42). To explain why he (Robert) to England it should be told that Charles, the pioneer, was a man of much less energy and enterprise, that he found in addition to his official duties to organize several colonization companies and his efforts in that regard did much to populate the country between Fitzroy and Pembroke.

Georgian Bay Canal.

And now we come to the story of the origin of the Georgian Bay Canal scheme. As far back as 1834 the pioneer Shirreff, having heard from his son, Alexander, about the country between Fitzroy Harbor and the Georgian Bay, conceived the idea of making a new route to the Great Lakes. Just about that time the Welland Canal Northern Inland, a private company. Why not build a route to the Georgian Bay by a private company? Mr. Shirreff acted promptly. He first saw ministers of the government about land grants, and having received strong encouragement, sailed for England.

Designed Colonization.

He received every welcome in England that on his return to Canada he resigned his position as collector of land dues and gave up all his energies towards floating the canal company. After the union of the provinces (a few things looked still rosier for the proposed grant of Clergy and Mr. Shirreff again sailed for England. This time the company was completed, and the company ever floated in England started with backers of prospects, the directorate were behind earth and many highly placed one of lesser degree.

Two Hard Blows.

For some reason the new government later reneged on the land grants, and eventually the whole scheme fell through. The failure of the canal project, together with the loss of the land grants, proved that the growth of Bytown was going to nullify the commercial prospects of Fitzroy Harbor, proved hard blows to the pioneer, who had returned to Fitzroy Harbor. In 1837 Mr. Shirreff became Bytown Gazette for his son, Robert, who died for a number of years. Mr. Shirreff, Sr., passed away at Fitzroy Harbor in 1847. Robert died in 1871.

Bytown as Capital.

Besides being the first to advocate the Georgian Bay Canal, Mr. Shirreff was one of the first to advocate the choice of Bytown for the site of the capital. He was advocated this as far back as 1840.

Also Lost Money.

Alas, the glory of Fitzroy Harbor and other enterprises have gone into decay and nothing is left that remains the place with the pioneers' name. Alexander died in Ottawa, retired and the presence of Dr. Shirreff, thereon.

The Chronology.

Here is the chronology of the Shirreff family:

Charles Shirreff, the pioneer, died 1847.

Alexander and Charles (sons) died bachelors.

Robert (son) married and has the following children:

William Alexander, of Fitzroy Harbor.

James S., of Brockville (died last spring).

Mrs. Marshall, of Nebraska.

William Alex. Shirreff (father of Shirreff, of Ottawa) married Sarah Marshall, of Shirreff's Bay. The children are:

Dr. W. T. Shirreff, Ottawa.

Robert, of Brockville.

John, on the ranch.

Mrs. A. F. Robertson, Toronto.

Mrs. Baird, Grand Forks, B.C.

Mrs. Hartley, of Stayboat, Man.

James S. Shirreff (and five sons and two daughters).

George (dead).

Dr. Percival Shirreff, Montclair, N.J.

Bertram, of New York.

Roy (Pilmoor), of Brockville.

Sidney and Frank, of Brockville (not married).

Dr. W. T. Shirreff settled in Ottawa in 1881. He built a large house (unique at the Protestant city not up to what it was in practice. For a number of years he has been medical superintendent of the Isolation Hospital. For a time he was a member of the board of health. In his early days in Ottawa Dr. Shirreff was a great football player. He was a member of the team on the champion Hull-Ottawa.

RIVER EXCURSIONS AT EARLY DATE.

It may be news to many that so far back as 1858 there were river excursions on the Ottawa (and, by this book), the following is taken from the issue of July 31, 1858.

"Today will be the last of an excursion that was to be held on the Lake on July 31, 1858. See advertisement and get the last present day advertisement in what it said:

DELIGHTFUL PLEASURE EXCURSION TRAIN

To the Chaudière by the splendid new steamer Anna Sophia, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 27th, 28th and 29th of July, 1858.

Off a pleasure excursion up the Ottawa to the far-famed and beautiful scenery of the Chats. Returning the same evening. The trip will be accompanied by the

Celebrated Bytown Band

and with their splendid bands will enliven the occasion.

Fare for the trip, including supper at the Chaudière, $2. Regular fare is 75c.

Tickets for sale at the stores of Messrs. O'Connor, Hope, Hetty, Pecht, VanKleek, and Jennings and McCarthy.

Applications must be made for tickets previous to Thursday evening.

The stages will start from Brunshamp's stage office, Sussex street, at 4 o'clock precisely.

Refreshments may be had on board at a reasonable charge.

That was just 64 years ago.

SIDELIGHT ON EARLY TAX COLLECTIONS.

The following item from the Union newspaper of 1858 is interesting it appears as though the early equivalents made their collection of taxes actually responsible for any raises were collected by them. They and year to have them in securities not only to account for the moneys they collected, but to be personally responsible for any moneys which they should have collected but did not, through their own fault, collect. Read this:

"MANIFEST INJUSTICE.

"In 1857 Messrs. John McCarthy and F. Abbott became surety for Mr. James Fraser, as collector of city rates for Victoria Ward. The whole system prevailing in the management of the city's affairs permitted Mr. Fraser to leave some balance (£20 or £40) uncollected. He was not obliged in any way till this year (1858) when, having had the misfortune to be dead (in addition by fire, the merciful corporation stood the security and compelled them to pay the deficiency. The whole transaction should have rested upon the corporation—the cause for this rather unfortunate. His securities simply bound themselves to the world perform his duty for the year ahead, and to account for the money to municipal law. The law was not carried out, and there can be no doubt that morally there was no fault on the part of the sureties.

PUBLIC BATHS HERE BACK IN 1865.

The fact that the city baths will shortly be opened draws attention to the fact that back as far as 1865 there were public baths in Ottawa. The Union newspaper in July of that year published editorially:

"It will be seen by an advertisement that Mr. H. Hessler has new bath rooms now in complete order at his establishment Sussex street, opposite Frederick's confectionery. The proprietor of public baths was much wanted in this city. We would recommend all who are not in the habit of bathing to make trial, and we are satisfied they will carefully that whenever begins the health-promoting practice will have cause to be refreshing, invigorating influences and will come to find that it is something he cannot well afford to dispense with.

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OTTAWA IRISH ROSE TO THE CALL.

Late in 1861 there was talk of a possible war between the United States over the Trent affair. On December 2 of that year a largely attended meeting of Ottawa citizens was held in St. Patrick's Hall with a view to raising an Irish regiment for service in the Defence of Canada in the event of war breaking out. The Hon. T. D'Arcy McGee, M.P.P., was called to the chair. He spoke at length on the need of events and expressed the opinion that a few Canadian regiments would appearance of backing down, and as the British people were the Queen's subjects Britain and Mason should be given, no, but was also hoped to bring out. It therefore behooved Canadians to arouse and rally to the defence of St. Patrick's Society should be the first to help the country in this its hour of danger. The Citizen of Dec. 4, 1861, Thos. G. H. Perry and Ed. Smith, the latter being an ex-officer of the service, the following resolution was put and carried:

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"Resolved, that in view of the critical state of the relations between the United States and Great Britain, we hereby tender our services to raise a battalion of volunteers for the defence of Canada and for such military service as may be required in support of the honor and dignity of the crown and the integrity of the British Empire, and we request R. W. Scott, Esq., M.P.P., to take command of the same and to bring the necessary applications before the Governor-General for the organization of the said battalion.

Seventy-five members of the society signed up for service before leaving the hall. Fortunately the trouble blew over.

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In the year 1862 the Freemasons gave a grand ball in Ottawa. The members appeared in full regalia. It was a very fine affair, as the tickets cost five dollars. The issue of the Citizen of Feb. 3, 1862, remarked of this affair:

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"The large ballroom of the hotel and the suite of the Ascendant thereon were thrown open to dancing. These rooms were most tastefully decorated with masonic emblems and military trophies. Filled with the youth and beauty of Ottawa, the scene presented was magnificent in the extreme without any of the tinsel and show so often to be found in our ball rooms. Dancing was kept up till an early hour. Over two hundred persons were present.

We are also told that there was present a gentleman from Montreal, who said the refreshments and supper were above comparison, and pronounced the cuisine of Wendelbo Blocher L. R. Taylor (of the Union), chairman; Worshipful Brethren P. F. Bronson, Hendrick, John Chitty, W. R. Gallery, David Scott, A. Lavoie, Joseph Bigelow, H. Merrill, W. R. Thistle, F. Schoen, Hendrick, Hopkins, and G. B. Pelham (secretary).

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In August, 1864, Ottawa and Arnprior were connected up by the wires of the Montreal Telegraph Company. According to The Citizen of above date (1864) the wires were being rapidly carried northward and it was thought that by Christmas, 1864 there would be communication with Pembroke.

GIBRALTAR SONG.

Miss Mary Hughes, Sussex, 143 Waverley street, sends the Old Time Stuff the following: "The Song Will Never Take Gibraltar," referred to by Alex McNeely in his early Ottawa story. This song, it is said, was composed and sung by an officer of the Imperial army who was located here in the sixties. The O.T.S. presents herewith the tune and the words of the song. The words were not anything extraordinary, but the music had a martial swing which brought audiences to their feet. The wild refrain of "This song was sung till about the end of the seventies, when it went into the discard, the lions having grown tired of being called on upon to reclaim Gibraltar. The song was brought into being in the stirring the truculent attitude of the Spaniards to British over the Gibraltar question.

GIBRALTAR.

Where the billows roll free and the ocean meet,
Stands a rock of British ground,
There the wild waves dash at the mountain's base,
With a giant fortress crowned.

Then shout for the Queen and the Union Jack,
Shout with children hault it down?
The strongest fort is justly due
To those who can hold it to
So the challenge may come, and the
Dons may go,
And the Dons may fight both high and low,
But they never shall have Gibraltar.

NO. NO. NO.
They never shall have Gibraltar.

PUBLIC PARKS WERE EARLY SOUGHT.

It will probably interest many to know that the parkway idea is not a new thing as far as Ottawa is concerned. It appears that as far back as 1863 the people of this city were active in the matter of parks and that they worked hard to get them. The Citizen of that year we read of a public meeting that was held at the city hall for the purpose of taking steps to secure public playgrounds.

It seems that in that year the government advertised its intention of using part of the ordnance land on Barrack Hill (14 acres) for the purpose of establishing a parade ground for the military (Ottawa Carrier Square) and that they would sell the balance on the south side of Rideau street in city lots. The public meeting appointed a committee to wait on the government to ask it to either give or sell a quantity of the ordnance land to the city for park purposes.

About this time the newspapers were full of letters on the necessity of growing cities making early provision for breathing spaces for the growing population. One letter from the pen of Sheriff W. P. Powell, of Ottawa, dwelling on the need of "a place to which the rising generation of Ottawa may resort for healthy recreation." He also mentioned that the Ottawa Citizen of Dec. 4, 1863, H. Perry and Ed. Smith, the latter being an ex-officer of the service, the following resolution was put and carried:

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A PRIVATE SECRETARY

By J. L. PAYNE

(Article Eight)

The True Story of the Political Downfall of Hon. H. R. Emerson—Resigned to Save Ladies' Names—The Penalty of Suspicion—Was Not Guilty—Friendship With Sir Wilfrid Laurier—Two Americans Cheered Chapleau.

Hon. Henry R. Emmerson was my last chief, and in some respects he took first place in my esteem and affections. He succeeded Hon. A. G. Blair as the head of the Department of Railways and Canals. That was at the end of 1903, and I was his private secretary until the middle of 1906. He was a New Brunswicker, and had his home in Dorchester, in Westmorland county. It was said of him that his political management of the city's affairs permitted Mr. Fraser to leave some balance (£20 or £40) uncollected. He was not obliged in any way till this year (1858) when, having had the misfortune to be dead (in addition by fire, the merciful corporation stood the security and compelled them to pay the deficiency. The whole transaction should have rested upon the corporation—the cause for this rather unfortunate. His securities simply bound themselves to the world perform his duty for the year ahead, and to account for the money to municipal law. The law was not carried out, and there can be no doubt that morally there was no fault on the part of the sureties.

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In August, 1864, Ottawa and Arnprior were connected up by the wires of the Montreal Telegraph Company. According to The Citizen of above date (1864) the wires were being rapidly carried northward and it was thought that by Christmas, 1864 there would be communication with Pembroke.

GIBRALTAR SONG.

Miss Mary Hughes, Sussex, 143 Waverley street, sends the Old Time Stuff the following: "The Song Will Never Take Gibraltar," referred to by Alex McNeely in his early Ottawa story. This song, it is said, was composed and sung by an officer of the Imperial army who was located here in the sixties. The O.T.S. presents herewith the tune and the words of the song. The words were not anything extraordinary, but the music had a martial swing which brought audiences to their feet. The wild refrain of "This song was sung till about the end of the seventies, when it went into the discard, the lions having grown tired of being called on upon to reclaim Gibraltar. The song was brought into being in the stirring the truculent attitude of the Spaniards to British over the Gibraltar question.

GIBRALTAR.

Where the billows roll free and the ocean meet,
Stands a rock of British ground,
There the wild waves dash at the mountain's base,
With a giant fortress crowned.

Then shout for the Queen and the Union Jack,
Shout with children hault it down?
The strongest fort is justly due
To those who can hold it to
So the challenge may come, and the
Dons may go,
And the Dons may fight both high and low,
But they never shall have Gibraltar.

NO. NO. NO.
They never shall have Gibraltar.

PUBLIC PARKS WERE EARLY SOUGHT.

It will probably interest many to know that the parkway idea is not a new thing as far as Ottawa is concerned. It appears that as far back as 1863 the people of this city were active in the matter of parks and that they worked hard to get them. The Citizen of that year we read of a public meeting that was held at the city hall for the purpose of taking steps to secure public playgrounds.

It seems that in that year the government advertised its intention of using part of the ordnance land on Barrack Hill (14 acres) for the purpose of establishing a parade ground for the military (Ottawa Carrier Square) and that they would sell the balance on the south side of Rideau street in city lots. The public meeting appointed a committee to wait on the government to ask it to either give or sell a quantity of the ordnance land to the city for park purposes.

About this time the newspapers were full of letters on the necessity of growing cities making early provision for breathing spaces for the growing population. One letter from the pen of Sheriff W. P. Powell, of Ottawa, dwelling on the need of "a place to which the rising generation of Ottawa may resort for healthy recreation." He also mentioned that the Ottawa Citizen of Dec. 4, 1863,

ELECTRICITY TOO CHEAP FOR METERS IS DREAM OF 'SUPER-POWER' LEADERS

CHICAGO, Jan. 25.—Light your home, cook your meals, wash and iron your clothes, run a sewing machine and clean your house.

All by electricity, for less than a nickel a day.

Get electrically the equivalent of 12 hired men per year, for 60 cents a day!

Such electricity so cheap that it will not pay to install meters and keep accounts!

Coupling a moderate play of imagination with the figures given by Carl D. Thompson presents this as the outcome of the "super-power project."

Thompson is secretary of the Public Ownership League of America. One of its goals is nationization of all electric power plants in the United States and Canada into one public owner system.

"Is it practical?"

Thompson continues: "It is demonstrated reality, already. The rates at the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, Canada, are great. More than a million customers of this system use current at an average rate of 2 1-2 cents per kilowatt hour. In American cities we average three times that rate.

"Sir Adam Beck, chairman of the Ontario system, fought until he became a reality. He is active now as president of the Public Ownership League, in making a unit of power production in the two countries.

"Super-power means simply more and cheaper electricity supplied from a unified system which generates by both hydro-power and steam plants.

"Nearly 50,000,000 horsepower new running away down our stream beds would be harnessed into the system. Coal, instead of being hauled in bulk, would be dynamited at the mine mouth and send our its energy by wire.

"A federal super-power commission should be appointed to study the problem, and report the practicability of the project."

Here are figures and facts connected with the plan to weld the power resources of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Canada into one colossal super-power project under public ownership. Sir Adam Beck (right) Carl D. Thompson, secretary of the Public Ownership League of America. Above is a chart showing the proposed system of power development.

The first step to realize the dream, says Thompson, it would not end with building great plants but lay out main trunk lines for distribution of current. The 2218 municipally owned electric plants, some of them in every American state, would be the starting points for the main lines of the system.

For hydro-electric production, attention would center upon the Columbia River and Niagara Falls River systems and Niagara Falls and the St. Lawrence River. Muscle shoals would be brought under public control, completed and placed in service.

Next would be the Boulder Canyon dam on the Colorado River, for which a bill already has been introduced in Congress. That dam would be 600 feet high, cost $45,000,000 (with 750 continuous horsepower and irrigate 1,000,000 acres.

"ALL TELL THE WORLD."

"Tell the world!" "Tell the world!" "Tell the world!" "