

OUR PIONEER SURVEY PERSONS

BY ANDREW GIBSON

IT IS difficult for us to imagine what Canada was like before modern transportation. By booking a flight today, we can be in Vancouver in little more than two weeks, as long as we cross our hearts and promise not to come back right away. Leaving Heathrow at midnight, we can get to Mirabel by dawn and be in Montreal by sunset. And we have such transportation choices. We can go by rail, or we can drive. So persons who can't tolerate the opulence of VIA Rail food, or who are reluctant to go to Gimli, Manitoba can take advantage of our fine network of roads, so well-maintained that they are under constant repair all summer. Leaving the Ottawa Valley at noon, we can be whisked to downtown Toronto by five o'clock, if flying, or by 4.30 if driving.

This would seem incredible to our ancestors, who probably would be unable to comprehend why anybody would want to go to Toronto. When they travelled, they usually had to take along one or more horses, either their own or the ones kept lathered up and shaved at livery stables. In the summer they used carriages known as calabashes in Quebec and in the winter sleighs with wooden runners known as *coureurs de bois*. It was usually quite slow and the front view monotonous.

But this leisurely way of travelling came to an end in 1885 when a ribbon of steel was spiked down from Halifax to Vancouver, effectively preventing Canada from falling apart.

True, there were problems. Mistakes were made. In the difficult terrain of western Ontario grades of 20% were allowed, on the mistaken assumption that the third class passengers would get out and push. When they refused, the line had to be rebuilt. And on the prairies it was found that simply using long spikes to nail the rails to the ground was impractical. But all of these difficulties were surmounted and one November morning Donald Smith, a CPR director, hammered home the last spike at Craigellachie. There was a legend that it was a golden spike, but when it is remembered that there were four CPR directors there that day and there was no melee, the absurdity of the story is evident.

We keep hearing about the men who built the CPR, but not a word about the women. Why is this? Can it be that this great undertaking had no ladies in it at all? My theory is that they were there all right but because the society of the time was so rigid about male-female tasks, they were dressed as men.

There is a precedent for this. One of the most famous British army surgeons was a woman, an expert in tropical diseases known as *Beri-Beri Barry*. She posed as a man for her whole life and was quite quarrelsome, even fighting duels. Florence Nightingale thought her the most unpleasant man she had ever met. Is it possible that a similar thing happened in Canada? That one of the men in that famous picture of the last spike being driven was actually a woman? And if so, which one?

Some of them can be ruled out. The biggest ones are almost certainly men and so are the bald ones, although it is true that a really determined lady could shave her head in order to appear masculine. But the probability is that the person we are looking for is smaller than the average man and, like Captain Barry, has an explosive personality. We must not be fooled by whiskers and moustaches, because some ladies are able to grow quite impressive ones, as the success of the Ladies Schick and Gillette suggests. When I was a small boy several of the teachers whose strong right arms warped my plastic personality could have doubled as grenadiers. One of them, whose hobby was straightening horseshoes, had a bigger five o'clock shadow problem than former president Nixon. Anyway, a lady without this capacity could use false whiskers.

My researches convince me that only one person, Major A. B. Rogers, the surveyor after whom Rogers Pass in British Columbia is named, could be a woman. He was the right size and he had magnificent whiskers which stood out about a foot from his face. He was quite vain about them, as women have every right to be about their crowning glory. He was very short tempered and quarrelled with everybody except his young nephew, of whom he was as fond as a mother would be. But the most convincing clue is his language. Now it is well known that when a woman really tries, she can outcuss any man. Women are just naturally more inventive in that respect and the Major was famed for the quality of his invective. He had delicate features and large luminous eyes which flashed when he was angry, which was most of the time. In an obvious effort to conceal his femininity, he chewed tobacco incessantly and was an excellent cuspidor marksman. He was very mean about food - I am not suggesting, of course, that this is a feminine trait, but he starved his men in a way that is usually associated with some boarding house landladies.

There may have been other women who contributed to this great venture. When the workers complained that the beer was warm, thousands of coolies were hired from the Siamese Ho Ho brothers, both of whom were rakes. Many of these could have been women. But there is just a possibility that a woman can take her place with those illustrious men whose names live on in mountain passes and cities - men like the great Irishman Mulroney, after whom Moose Jaw was named.

It is a stirring thought, isn't it?

tions of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

The decision was as follows:

1. That the surveyor be reprimanded and that the reprimand be recorded on the role.
2. That the surveyor be suspended for a period of six months from the time of service to him of this decision.
3. That this suspension be postponed for a period of six months from the time of service in order for the surveyor to do the following:
 - (a) Pay to the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors the sum of \$4,500.00 within ninety days of the date of service to cover the costs of the hearing.
 - (b) Successfully write and pass the examination known as the Professional Examination, which will include the

subject of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, said pass being a minimum of 65%, the cost of the examination to be borne by the surveyor.

4. That upon the compliance with all the terms of this decision noted above, within the six months, the suspension of the surveyor will be remitted.
5. That in the event of a failure to comply with any or all of the above conditions by the surveyor within the six months period, the six months suspension will commence on the 181st day from the service of this decision and compliance will be determined by the Discipline Committee.

Council's decision included the fact that the case would be published with the facts without reference to the accused or the locale in which the actions occurred.