

*Howe Martyn*

### **Toronto Hard Times**

In the summer of 1932, when I finished at Oxford, my father and mother and my girl came as tourists to England. Not having found a job, I stayed on as their guide and driver on a motor trip through Somerset and our ancestral Devon, into Wales and on to Malvern for the Shaw Festival. My parents paid for a twelve horsepower Morris touring-car I rented in Oxford. It would stall on any hill. I had to back down, let the passengers get out and walk, and try to rush the machine to the top. A mechanic explained that petrol was fed to the engine in that model by gravity and that all I had to do at a hill was turn around and go up backwards, thus keeping the fuel flowing down from the tank in the rear to the engine.

We had got to Cambridge by the evening of 3 August 1932. The next day was my twenty-sixth birthday. I went out before breakfast for the *Times*, and came back to share with Marjorie and my mother and father the excitement of seeing the Oxford examination results printed and my name, spelled right too, in the "Firsts."

Money gone, we sailed for Canada soon after, on the *Empress of France*. Coming up the St. Lawrence we heard from the shore the distinctive long wail from a CPR locomotive, sounding almost as mournful to me as it had when I was sailing out, alone, two years earlier. Canada was as depressed in September 1932 as it has ever been.

One good thing I found on arriving back in Toronto was that Frank Perkin, my former Victoria College roommate, was working, doing a job of great benefit to farmers that he enjoyed, on the secure government payroll, in the pioneering Ontario Marketing Board. He told our mutual friend and his boss W. B. Somerset of the fix I was in. By October I had been called in by secretary Alma Code and approved,

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interviewed by her boss C. T. Pearce, Somerset's successor as president of the McKim advertising agency, and hired as a copywriter—whatever that might be—at one hundred dollars a month.

Another good thing though also a disappointment was that Marjorie was safely back at the Ontario Ladies College in Whitby with board and room and income. There was no possibility of us getting married and her coming to live with me as we had hoped and planned, when I had nothing for us to live on. She had not burned the bridge and Dr. and Mrs. Carscallen who ran the place for the United Church seemed happy to have her back. They made OLC a safe haven in that black year, reinforced by the presence of my father's sister Thyra Martyn, R.N., looking after the health of all the women students and faculty.

During September I holed up in as miserable a garret as any in all literary biography, in an old house on Grosvenor Street between Bay and Yonge in Toronto. I tried desperately to write something that someone would pay for. Before Oxford I had been published in the *Canadian Forum* and the *Canadian Mercury*, and my literary awards, which included the Willingdon medal and prize, had got my picture on the front page of the *Mail & Empire* on University of Toronto graduation day. Now my Oxford "First," said by Principal "Choppie" Grant of Upper Canada College to be only the second to a Canadian, after his, rated four lines of type on an inside page. My Willingdon prize essay appeared in the *Queen's Quarterly*. Nobody but the author seemed to notice. The only opening that appeared in intellectual circles came from Spencer Clark who was just starting his Guild of All Arts on an estate he had bought on the Scarborough Bluffs overlooking Lake Ontario. His original intention was to lead a cooperative of artists and craftsmen. He became an extremely successful real estate developer. I could join him, not as a writer in residence but as the teacher of a school he proposed for the children of the rich widow he had married and any other children that might come with the artists and artisans who might join the Guild. The pay would be so small that it offered no possibility of my marriage then or for an indefinite future.

Ron Fredenburgh, friend from Boys' Parliament and Victoria College who had welcomed me to England when I first arrived, had also come home. He flashed meteorically by getting an assignment from the *Toronto Star* to tour the United States on expense account and write human interest stories on how the Great Depression was affecting people there. He got a by-line but was probably too thoughtful to become another Gordon Sinclair. Morley Callaghan was also home. Though I had met him only briefly once, I knew that he was finding his outlets closing.

Jimmy Thain, a pillar of the Old Boys of Dufferin Public School which was the limit of his formal education, was office manager and gang boss in the Toronto office of McKim's. He advised me in one of his rare attempts at humour that I should tell family and friends I was playing piano in a warehouse rather than admit to being an advertising man. He wasn't paying me that much. The copy head was, however, a failed Addison or Steele, Sid Howard, who found Canada would pay for his homely essays only when they were sponsored by Picobac tobacco. He was sad and kindly and generous towards me, his hyper-educated apprentice, teaching me such advertising fundamentals as how to represent the "Agony" which makes people buy patent medicines.

Why I got my job in advertising, as Alma Code revealed to me when we became friends, was not literary prizes or university degrees but the fact that I was a young man with a beard, something not seen in America since Gillette had invented the safety razor. I would be stopped by street photographers on Yonge Street offering pictures for free. It was a neat Van Dyke. I had tried it in Paris in 1931, shaved it off on returning to Oxford, regrown it in the summer of 1932. I was delighted, feeling vindicated, when all the rebellious American students sprouted beards thirty years later. I shaved it off before my marriage in 1933 fearing someone might identify my previous bohemianism, but perhaps like Sampson sacrificing some strength. Somewhere there is a photograph of beautiful blonde young Marjorie, musical genius Reginald Godden, and a young man with a beard, walking along Yonge Street.

An income, if only a hundred dollars a month, permitted me to take an apartment. This was on Sherbourne Street just above Carlton, a longish walk saving carfare, from McKim's offices in the new Canada Permanent building at Bay and Adelaide Streets. It was there that during Marjorie's occasional weekend escapes from the Whitby nunnery we kept alive the flame of student days at Victoria College and in Paris, Provence, the Black Forest and the Lake District.

It was sort of an achievement to manage a ceremonial marriage in June 1933. There were not many among my generation, most of whom had to wait longer. It was a good party. Majorie had to use her own savings because she had left home rather than submit to the complete authority of her step-mother demanded by her father, but he came to the wedding, in morning coat, and took her up the aisle. She had found an economical dressmaker for her trailing white satin gown and veil and going-away clothes. She was photographed in the drawing-room of the Vic women's residence Wymilwood where she dressed, and made a ravishingly beautiful picture. The service took place in the

chapel of Victoria College, conducted by my uncle the Reverend Roy Rickard in his warm and tender and smiling manner. We were to get a rare feeling of stability and continuity amidst many changes when Roy Rickard baptized in due time both our daughters and performed the marriage ceremony of the younger. The reception after our wedding was in Wymilwood and we had an unexpectedly relaxed and entertaining time among the many relatives and college friends and Marjorie's OLC colleagues who came. We got away from Marjorie's three brothers whose boisterous sense of humour was foiled by a double switch of cars through the Burwash Hall gate organized by my "best man" Frank Perkin, only to find when I had occasion to pull out my handkerchief while we were in the midst of a crowded restaurant in Orillia that Frank himself had stuffed the pocket with confetti—the traitor. We went for a honeymoon in my two weeks vacation from McKims to an isolated and run-down summer cottage beside Lake Couchiching, being almost out of money again. The window and door screens were broken and there was a pestilence of mosquitoes.

Marjorie's father, reconciled perhaps by the wedding, offered us a cottage adjoining his house on Northumberland Street in Toronto. This had a bedroom, a small modernized kitchen and a gem of a sitting room with leaded windows, a fireplace and built-in bookcases. I made a linoleum-cut of the view of hearth, bookshelves and windows for a book-plate. The rent was considerably low. The hardest expense to meet was for coal to feed the basement furnace in a cold winter. There was, however, a new thermostat-regulated blower permitting use of cheap pea-size coal. Marjorie brought in some money by teaching French part-time at an Anglican nuns' school for girls in Toronto, until she became too far pregnant.

Our first baby was brought home to that cottage, from the Women's College Hospital then in the old building in which it began, only a few blocks away on Rusholme Road. She slept in an antique oak crib that came from her mother's house, in our room, and she scared me out of bed the first night and ready to take her back to the hospital when she sneezed. When she began learning to walk and another baby was coming, it became necessary to leave that charming cottage, in the first of many moves that have complicated our life. I did not own a house until we moved to England in 1948. Our more settled friends paid off their mortgages while we were still paying rent.

The second dwelling during our marriage was the upper half of a large house right on busy Queen Street in Toronto not far from the Sunnyside amusement park on the shore of Lake Ontario. It had a large fenced play space for the first baby on the roof of an extension of the ground floor. I took Marjorie from there on a bitter January

morning in our second-hand Nash coupe that miraculously started, to the new Women's College Hospital near Queen's Park, and brought her home there again with another baby girl. The obstetrician who won our devotion by the strong kindness and friendship she gave us both in the stress of starting our family was Dr. Marion Hilliard.

Our further moves in Toronto were to a house on Yonge Boulevard, at the time a long trip from my work downtown to the very edge of the city but with ample outdoor play space for our little girls (rent \$35 per month); then to a house on Briar Hill Road, a block from an excellent public school; and finally, we thought, to a house Majorie's father built on the edge of his orchard on the ample lakeshore property in the suburb of Mimico where he had his own summer house. Each was an improvement but that this was relative may be appreciated from the fact that none had the new automatic heating by oil. I might have to relight the coal furnace before going to work on a winter morning, and my wife often had to shovel in more coal during the day.

The eight years I worked at the McKim advertising agency were salt-mine drudgery. The old Scrooge who owned it with Imperial Tobacco as silent partner never raised my pay to even three thousand dollars a year. I got a soup-and-sandwich lunch in the basement at Muirhead's cafeteria for twenty-six cents. We had cars, first a second-hand Wippet roadster then a second-hand Nash coupe, both always getting flat tires. There could not be the consolation at the time that I was acquiring an intimacy with the practical workings of business and particularly relations with customers and prospects for which other employers would pay and promote me and for which students and editors would respect me. C. T. Pearce had come into advertising from being a branch-bank manager, with the attitudes and knowledge of a bookkeeper. He detested the expression, "the advertising game." His business must be serious to keep him from feeling disreputable among his conservative banker associates. He must also extract as much cash from it as possible to put into bank deposits and bond purchases.

McKim's was the first in the field in Canada but lost the lead to competitors under Pearce because he did not know or want to know that show-business can contribute immensely to the effectiveness of advertising. His secretary Alma Code understood advertising better than he did as shown when she got him to hire a young man with a beard to garnish the creative department. But art and writing remained commodities at McKim's. Jimmy Thain ran the office like a factory. We worked from nine to five-thirty and also nine to one on Saturdays, and had two weeks vacation. I had a cubicle of an office, pictures taboo. It was a relief, perhaps intended, to get out and try to make friends with clients and prospects.

Pearce's aversion to show-business kept his agency standing on only one leg, the press, when others were running with the new medium of radio. This contributed to the infiltration of the important segment of business constituted by advertising by the Americans. Companies wanting radio, even McKim clients, were driven to the first American agency branch in Toronto, J. Walter Thompson. Ironically it was in the same building as we were, the Canada Permanent. I was such a greenhorn still in advertising and so utterly at the mercy of Pearce and Thain to buy Pabulum for my sweet baby girls that I failed completely to recognize their weakness.

My education had given me a bias towards print. I still prefer to see my name on an article or a book than to make a speech or participate in a radio or TV programme. Thus another lost opportunity. A vice-president in the Thompson office already was a woman, with far more power and opportunity for expression than our Alma Code, kept in her place as a secretary. This was Rhoda Howe. She had attended the Ontario Ladies College and had heard of Marjorie and me. She invited me to a Thompson office cocktail party, an affair of the sort that could have led to an opportunity to get into radio under the aegis of J. Walter Thompson. With ineffable stupidity I declined and went straight home to Yonge Boulevard. A chance to catch up on that mistake came many years later when with Austin Weir, Walter Powell and their young assistant Stewart Griffiths I arranged some of the first sponsored programmes on the new national television network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. That was in 1954. I had transferred from a job that would have kept me in England probably for the rest of my life to one that brought me home to Canada, partly with the idea of getting to know what I thought a potent new medium but which was not then available to advertisers in Britain.

Pearce moved me out of the McKim copy department which he regarded as an expensive nuisance to see if I could make money for him as an account executive. I was given a few clients who did not spend enough to be profitable but which lengthened the agency client list, and ordered to beat the pavements looking for new business. Pearce systematically short-changed his clients by diverting income from their commissions from giving them service into the search for other, new clients. American agencies were already concentrating their efforts on building up the business of existing clients, putting solicitations into the hands of a few experts and directing them to companies found by thorough analysis to have the potential to make profits from advertising for themselves and thus for their agency.

McKim was the first of three indigenous companies for which I worked. The others were Canadian Foods, a combination of Child's



and Honeydew restaurants and Women's Bakery which had given E. P. Taylor's Argus group paper profits, and Clark Foods the beans firm, then still run against intensifying American competition by brave Lorne Clark, the grandson of the immigrant British butcher founder. I learned at some cost that they all lacked knowledge of budgeting even their cash and much less their sales and costs, that even the agency had no skill or confidence in increasing volume and profit margins by advertising, and that their main means for meeting international competition was exploiting their employees including managers. It became fashionable to criticize foreign subsidiaries, especially after 1961 when I began helping make them visible to the public as the "multinationals" by my university courses, articles and books. They overgrew themselves in aggregate with malign social and political effects. The critics are, however, mostly academics and politicians who never worked in either an international or an indigenous business. Working men and women including career managers, in socialist Britain or in chauvinistic Spanish-American countries and even France, know from experience that pay, conditions and promotion are better under the otherwise resented foreigners than under their own *patrones*.

The solicitation calls I made on companies in Toronto and central and southwestern Ontario gave me some acquaintance with the operations of at least a hundred companies. I had to know whether they made shoes or socks before I asked for their advertising business. Most of them were trying to survive, not to expand, throughout my time, the Depression holding Canada, then largely dependent on exports of commodities, in a freezing grasp throughout the 1930s. I was a failure at getting new business. My only sales that attracted even notice, much less profits, were to the Ontario CCF (socialist) Party for election advertising and to Piggott Construction of Hamilton. The latter was for a motion picture, an early forerunner of television, on a pioneering modular dwelling-house Piggotts had conceived. I got into Piggotts through my involvement with Film Societies. My connection with the CCF was personal, particularly my old friend Ted Jolliffe who had become its Ontario leader. It reached Pearce's deep-suppressed sense of humour that professionalism in advertising enabled his agency to serve in the same election both the socialists and the Tories whose patronage advertising he received whenever one of the election campaigns he produced for them happened to be followed by their accession to office.

The hand-me-down clients I received were considerate, patient, and thorough in teaching me the intricacies of their businesses. These were all different, not the abstractions of economists but concatenations of

living people, involved with still other people their customers and suppliers. Even hypertonic Rodney Street, living frantically as conventions manager of the Royal York hotel with advertising of supper dances as a sideline, gave me his confidence eventually. He helped me to a brief escape from stereotyped Pearce newspaper ads by letting me produce the show for the highest-spending convention he had ever attracted, the American Investment Bankers Association. With the help of Major Christie, then a Toronto investment dealer, I got the pipe-major of the Forty-eighth (Seaforth) Highlanders to parade the head table in the regalia familiar in Dewar's whiskey ads and with bagpipes at full blast, at the culminating banquet. The Americans were convinced they were really in a foreign country rather than a suburb of Buffalo.

Bill James of the Dominion Bank opened secrets of finance beyond what Roy Harrod, my tutor at Oxford, had taught. One was that directors of a bank are often the customers who owe the bank the most. Another was that a manager's job was to get borrowers who would pay the interest that paid depositors' interest plus a profit for the bank, and that this meant he must take risks beyond the rule-book. The bank would apply the rules only when he made a loan defaulted by bad luck or bad judgment, which were the same thing to his bosses. Another was that the printed annual financial statements we proof-read meticulously to achieve absolute accuracy were a facade which included much "window-dressing." He took me to the next-door office of his foreign-exchange colleague to hear him recalling U.S. dollar loans in New York for twenty-four hours to pad the reserves at the year-end. My word on finance included writing a paper for the Toronto Stock Exchange. In the 1930s the Canadian banks adhered closely to a single interest rate for all borrowers, without the concessions and assistance of lower rates to dependable, short-term customers such as stock-brokers given in the sophisticated money-markets of London, Paris and New York. This was merely an educational exercise, though perhaps for some brokers and some bankers as well as me, and it was much later that the Canadian banks accepted more flexible policies.

Several of my stock-broker clients were also promoters of new issues in those unregulated days. Toronto was a centre for gathering money to develop mines, mostly gold. I prepared prospectuses and newspaper advertisements. I also got to see where much of the real selling was done, in "boiler rooms" with batteries of telephones on which salesmen gave high-pressure pitches to gullible prospects. I was not one of these. I did my job for a mine called Steep Rock, to be dug on an island in Lake Superior. It was to be an iron mine. When the promoter who had become friendly offered to let me have some of the stock not at the



issue price of fifty cents but at the wholesale price of forty cents, I declined. I knew from school geography that there was no iron in Ontario. Besides, I did not have forty cents to spare. That particular mining company became enormously successful.

A man newly arrived from England asked us to run ads inviting orders by mail for his product made from South American maté-plant leaves and advertised as making a tea that would cure rheumatism. C. T. Pearce assigned the account to me, with orders to get payment in advance. That precaution warranted itself on a day when I arrived at the client's office and found it padlocked by the police on the complaint of the health authorities that the ads were false. The client had left the country. I lost another client when the ad manager visiting from the United States was taken to a social dinner. I was glad my wife had not been able to join us. He demanded that I get a girl to go to bed with him. I did not know any girls that did that for money, and I could not imagine how anybody would, with that fat New York slob.

A dour Scot, Eric Thompson, ran the advertising for summer passengers on the ships of the Canadian Pacific on the Great Lakes. He was brusque and distant until the morning when, after walking around his building a couple of times, I got courage to confess to him a terrible mistake. I had neglected to issue the start order after getting his approval for the announcement campaign, and the papers were circulating without the first of his ads. I got to him before he had noticed the omission. He gave me so much credit for getting to him fast and first with bad news that he subsequently gave me many favours including arranging accommodation and Customs clearance on Atlantic crossings when he became CP steamship agent in Montreal, and a college-summer job for my elder daughter at the Banff Springs hotel.

John Huston captured my respect by lending me books and telling me of his friendship with the Irish poet AE, George Russell. It was not necessary to be a boorish Thain to be successful in business. Huston was an immigrant from Ireland who had been to a good school and had a speaking voice like Laurence Olivier's. He had succeeded in Canada as an organizer, manager and owner of a sales agency, meeting the need for local contact between manufacturers mostly still in Britain, France, Germany or the United States and exporting to Canada, and retailers scattered all over our extensive geography. His was a risky business in the 1930s because he had to buy by letter-of-credit, paying before he could get goods released to him at the port, but there was great uncertainty about collecting on his sales. Retailers needed credit. The money-supply had shrunk during the Depression. Many retailers were small independents with no capital but their own time. The worst were the professional pharmacists who did not demean

themselves with cash or inventory control. There were frequent bankruptcies, often from ordering too much of the wrong thing and from giving credit to people out of work. Huston also had to withstand heavy competition in getting the products he represented into stores from what he called the monopolistic practices of a rival who tempted retailers to exhaust their resources in over-buying, with the steep discounts for large orders through which he became known as "Carload" Ritchie.

Huston taught me that my advertising was wasted if a converted prospect could not find the product in a convenient shop. This helped me to surmount the prevalent rivalry between salesmen and advertising people—thesis and antithesis—to arrive at a synthesis in the concept of marketing. An outcome was that I was able later to design for myself a position that made me one of the first directors of marketing in any company in America and therefore in the world. John Huston's most serious concern for the long-term was that he was in a business which could be destroyed by success. The better he did with the products of an exporter to Canada, the more likely a local subsidiary for complete control of selling and profits, and a kiss good-bye to Huston. I could see this in process in the account that took me to him, Squibb medicines. U.S. headquarters posted a pleasant young American Squibb executive, Brian Long, in Huston's office in Toronto. He helped me to learn the devious technology of persuading professionals, in this case physicians, to specify products by trade name or the Squibb house pillars of probity rather than generically. Huston confided to me as a fellow-Canadian and a bit of a philosopher-economist that the American was there to get to know all the secrets of selling in Canada in preparation for a wholly-owned and controlled Squibb "Canadian" operation. This was precisely the battle-plan on which the American invasion of Canada was conducted.

Insights were given unintentionally by another client, Werner Haag, an agent sent to Canada under cover of tourist promotion for the German State Railways. He had money to advertise in journals which he thought influential on Canadian public opinion and foreign policy. He had been one of Hitler's earliest recruits in the Nazi party. His story which I got bit by bit was that before the Kaiser's war he had been bought a commission in the Uhlans, the elite of German cavalry, by his rich iron-master grandfather. He was accepted by the aristocrats of the officers' mess because he was a brilliant rider for the regiment at horse-shows such as Aachen, and also had a great fund of dirty stories. He had fought all through the first World War. On demobilization he found all his family fortune obliterated by the German inflation leaving him with nothing but his revolver. The only alternative to suicide

he saw was to join the Nazi party. This led to his training by Goebbels to become an expert in propaganda. His greatest public coup in Canada was getting Prime Minister R. B. Bennett's sister, who was seriously ill, to visit a German health spa. There she was met by German government photographers who sent their pictures to Canadian newspapers. Haag handled this personally without telling anyone in Canada, and went to Germany to supervise the operation. In Haag at work I got my first view of the sinister possibilities of international manipulation of information media.

The life I had so enjoyed at the University of Toronto and in Oxford (after the first term) before going into business had not dried up completely. The only connection within McKim's was Carlton McNaught who had made himself a real pro in copywriting when he became deaf, and whom Pearce grudgingly hired to try to stem the loss of business from poor service. McNaught was ahead of me in literary and political interests as well as years but along the same paths. He contributed to the *Canadian Forum* as I was doing. He wrote a history of advertising in Canada as good as Pearce would permit, and I had the pleasure of reviewing it in one of my articles on "The Canadian Literary Scene" in the *New York Sunday Times*.

Friendships from college survived and additional ones outside of business were made. When I came into association with really big men in international business, I found that these friends, who they recognized as opinion-makers, were those whom they were most interested to meet.

There was a momentous conference in April 1933 for which Mrs. Somerset provided the lovely spring setting of her country house near Burlington, Ontario, and to which she got me invited. This launched the League for Social Reconstruction, intended to give Canada an equivalent of the Fabian Society which fostered many of the ideas adopted by the British Labour Party. Attending were: Irene M. Biss (later Mrs. Graham Spry), H. M. and Beatrice Cassidy, G. G. Coote, Eugene Forsey, E. J. Garland, King Gordon, Eric Havelock, Henry A. Holman, N. G. MacGregor, Edgar and Lorene McInnis, J. F. Parkinson, Elmore Philpott, A. F. Wynne Plumptre, Escot and Ruth Reid, Frank R. Scott, J. S. Woodsworth, Graham Spry, Kenneth W. Taylor, and Frank H. Underhill. There was too much diversity already among these people for any cohesion to be established. They rode off to prominence in all directions—the universities, CCF seats in Parliament, senior positions in the Ministries of Finance and External Affairs, and historical and political writing. Eugene Forsey reached a seat in the Canadian Senate. The only potential not present was any influence with the Conservative party.

Anomalously, I was invited to the first conference at which the Tories tried to enlist or at least communicate with young intellectuals. This was held at Pickering College in Newmarket, Ontario. Active in organizing and conducting it were Sam Hughes, and Lou Golden whom I had supported when he was editor of the *Varsity* Toronto student newspaper and who invited me. In Britain it had been the Liberals who worshipped Adam Smith and *laissez-faire*. The British Conservatives were more flexible towards state intervention to correct the excesses of a market economy. A glimmer of what planning led by the government could do for the very sick economy of the thirties, including private business, was seen by a couple of Canadian Conservatives, H. H. Stevens and Bill Herridge. It was the conservative Gaullists who supported Jean Monnet's Five Year Plans which restored France and brought new heights of prosperity after the second World War. The bankers who could veto any Canadian Conservative initiative deprived their party of this opportunity. It was left largely neglected, and available to the pragmatic Canadian Liberals. They practised planning under C.D. Howe the Minister of Trade and Commerce during the second World War and revived it again in the "New Society" advocated by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau during the Depression of 1975-76.

A group with which Marjorie and I became associated came together in the winter of 1935-36 with the narrower but more successful purpose of forming in Toronto the first Film Society in Canada, on the London and Oxford model. Besides having been a founding member of the Oxford society, I had published "The New Art Film" in the *Canadian Forum* of September, 1931, possibly the earliest article on the subject to appear in Canada, and had a longer study accepted by the *Dalhousie Review*—"The Pictures," printed in the issue of October 1936. The Toronto people interested originally included Charles and Louise Comfort, Price and Charlotte Erichsen-Brown, Louis and Constance Mackay, and Dick and Evelyn Van Valkenberg. We chose Charles, then rising to his great work on Canadian landscape and in murals from journeyman labours doing illustrations for advertising, as our president. As usual I was made dog's body or book-keeper, called treasurer. Price Erichsen-Brown got us a legal charter and he and I persuaded the Ontario Film Censor, O. J. Silverthorne, that as a private club of highly respectable citizens we could see films that had not been submitted to him. We had trouble finding and interesting distributors. The art film was being made but art film cinemas were far in the future. Commercial movie houses in Canada were under an iron monopoly by a Hollywood cartel and even commercial films from dear mother-country Britain were excluded. I found out about another

monopoly, that held by union projectionists on all showings of 35 mm. film. I also found out that some of them were bunglers who broke precious film. Then there were the regulations about fireproof booths for 35mm. film which was inflammable. The only places where we could show were the Eaton Auditorium and a theatre-lecture hall in the Royal Ontario Museum. I had to collect Membership fees in advance—no paying at the door. But we showed Toronto its first Soviet Russian films, and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The Student of Prague*, and the hilarious film of the liberation of a Flemish town from Spanish invaders by the not unhappy sexual labours of its women, *La Kermesse Heroïque*.

There was some forgotten reason why a delegation of our executive had to go to Ottawa. Marjorie took us in her brand-new automobile, a six-cylinder Nash sedan. She had won it in a contest. I had seen advertisements in American magazines for a contest promoting Kelvinator refrigerators, made by the same company as Nash cars. Simpsons in Toronto were the chief distributors of Kelvinator in Canada. Having had to do with advertising contests at McKim's, I figured that one of the cars could be awarded to a Canadian, and to a woman, with a Simpson charge-account. Marjorie's entry won. And it was tax-free then. Anyone, anytime, anywhere will appreciate the relief to our budget from auto time-payments, and just when our family had outgrown our old coupe.

The drive though beautiful Ontario country to Ottawa was comparable with the boat-ride down the Rhine we had taken while I was a student, and we had the company of the Comforts and the Erichsen-Browns. In Ottawa we found Don Buchanan, building on an interest started on my ticket to the Oxford Film Society he used to borrow, forming schemes which became a national film library and also eventually the National Film Board, one of the world's most creative producers of documentaries. I confess thinking him visionary. We went back to our colonialist preoccupation with getting to see foreign films.

Price and Charlotte Erichsen-Brown, our new Film Society friends, as individualistic for Canada as the Sitwells in Britain, owned a then very remote island in Georgian Bay. They had found and claimed it on an escape trip from the parental establishment at Go-Home Bay, made in a Newfoundland dory. It was at the mouth of Shawnaga Bay, half-way between Parry Sound and Pointe-au-Baril which had become summer resorts because they were stops on the Canadian Pacific railway to the west. In a characteristic outpouring of generosity Price and Charlotte offered Marjorie and me the use of the tent-floor they had built on their island, their silk tent to fit, the swimming and



fishing on their shores, and their canoe, for a summer vacation, if we could find the dock at Dillon's and the island four miles up the channel. All that we did, after hardships of not knowing where we were that afflict all venturers. This visit confirmed perhaps the strongest geographical attachment of our lives, which seems to have embraced also our children, to the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron in Ontario.

Our many honeymoons in Georgian Bay had begun the previous year when we made a canoe trip from Honey Harbour to Severn Falls, through Six-Mile Lake, down the Musquash River to Marjorie's brother's cottage at Cognashene, and back to Honey Harbour. We caught all the fish we could eat by trolling a line, we got caught in sudden summer thunder-storms, we swam without needing bathing-suits because that was still a totally uninhabited wilderness. To find an island for our own the next summer in a northern extension of the same crystalline water, pink rocks, jack-pine and juniper, promised and provided a base from which we would always be able to dive into the water or push out a canoe.

We had been on the water only half a mile in the canoe paddling back from the Erichsen-Brown's camp to family, civilization, and work, after blissful days and nights alone together in the wilderness, when Majorie said, "There's a sandy beach on the island ahead, ideal for young children." I said, "Sand beaches are impossible on the craggy, wave-scoured rocks of Georgian Bay," or more likely, "Don't be silly." I turned the canoe and we beached on sand. We found also high-enough rocks for an eventual cabin, safe docking spaces for boats in fierce Georgian Bay storms, great old white-pine trees, visiting pileated woodpeckers and bohemian waxwings, and rhapsodic happiness. I bought the 1.92 acre island from the Department of Lands and Forests for \$112 and a promise to build a cabin costing at least \$500, which could include our labour. Our first regular visits were based at a fishermen's hotel on larger nearby Adanac Island, owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Haggert. We continued to go there for dinners of black bass or pickerel and Mrs. Haggert's pies made from blueberries gathered on Adanac, after we had a tent on our own island.

Slightly more than one hundred dollars came in from my writing during my best year in the dreary McKim 1930s. I was always typing, like a variant of the Grub Street scribe in Samuel Johnson's time. The *Canadian Forum* helped me gain some notice by printing soon after my return from Oxford an article exposing the reliance of Communists on the very kind of religious faith they sought to displace. The Marxian interpretation of history has no logical basis, and belief was an act of faith the same as resurrection. I was violently and personally attacked by the Canadian Communists. This analysis aroused no



enthusiasm among the defenders of other religions against the Communists, however, particularly the Roman Catholics. Moreover, the *Canadian Forum* was too poor to pay.

The most encouraging editors were William B. Creighton of the United Church weekly the *New Outlook*, B. K. Sandwell of *Saturday Night*, and Dr. Herbert L. Stewart of the world-respected *Dalhousie* (University) *Review*. Altogether I must have had more articles published in the *Dalhousie Review* over a longer period than any other contributor except the longtime editor Dr. Stewart himself. Creighton and Sandwell gave Canada journalism worthy of comparison with Britain's *New Statesman* and *Spectator* and the American *Nation* and *New Republic*. We had also had a paper called *Canadian Comment* edited by Ray Perigoe in which pieces I did were printed. The *Canadian Geographical Journal*, kept going in Depression years by the Dallin brothers as editor and advertising solicitor, ran my piece on touring in Ontario, and *Canadian Business* carried my pioneering study of tourism as an economic asset (1936). The build-up of published work got me an interview in New York with John Chamberlain about a job as a staff writer for *Fortune* magazine. It was on a Saturday. I took the night train both ways. We met not in the *Fortune* office but in a cafeteria in the Chrysler Building. Chamberlain was vague. That was my first trip to New York and the only one until the Depression was ended in Canada by the Second World War.

Lorne Pierce, a Methodist minister become editor of the church-owned Ryerson Press when loss of hearing permitted his strong qualifications in literature to become predominant, took over at his personal expense the *Canadian Bookman* magazine in 1938. I became the editor and manager in my spare time, for free. We got out issues, composed mainly of book reviews, for eighteen months. I scrounged the books and the reviewers including Louis and Constance Mackay, Larry and Margaret Mackenzie, and Harold and Mary Quayle Innis. Lorne Pierce gave up the struggle when the second World War began, and I also. I had, however, used that editorship as the basis for a suggestion to Donald Adams, the editor of the New York *Sunday Times Book Review*, that I could enable him to include Canada in the periodic letters on the "Literary Scene" that he published from Britain, France and elsewhere abroad. He accepted and began publication of my reports on "The Canadian Literary Scene." It was something new for Canadian writing to stand on its own at this influential level rather than to be grouped with British or colonial. My greatest satisfaction was getting attention from *Times* readers for *Trente Arpents* by "Ringuet" (pseud.) on its original publication in French. Professor-poet Ned Pratt told me that he had nominated Dorothy Livesay for a

Guggenheim Fellowship for poetry in 1940 and me for prose but I was passed over.

The second World War called a halt to that nascent career as an exponent and critic of Canadian literature in the *New York Times* as well as in the *Canadian Bookman*. A great many of my friends were directly in the war but that early family of mine and my bad eyes caused me to be condescendingly dismissed from an RCAF recruiting office. Did I have anything to say for publication when left out of the main effort of the 1940s? We all knew in Canada from the fall of Paris and the blitz on London that we were in line for the next attack if the Nazis overran Britain. Civilian air raid precautions were organized and I became a warden of the Briar Hill neighbourhood where I was living, buying a stirrup-pump and practising first-aid. As to the American market just opened for me by appearance in the *New York Times*, it seemed unlikely to accept what I would need to write. Ottawa gave no opening for any skills I might have. I put my typewriter in storage for the duration. It was a great relief to find an opportunity to throw myself into a new job. This was with the Canadian member of a British industrial group, thus giving indirect but important economic support to Britain, the more so that the two chief competitors for the purchases of Canadians in its field were American companies, taking their profits to the bystander U.S.