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Report of the Annual Meeting

Report of the Standing Committee on Historic Landmarks

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THE CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC LANDMARKS

The Standing Committee on Historic Landmarks gratefully records the outstanding event of the past season, the fruit of repeated appeals since 1915. On August 30, 1922, at Windermere, B.C., the splendid achievements of David Thompson, as explorer and surveyor, were at last recognized. At the place where in 1807 he wintered and built Fort Kootenay, the first trading post on the waters of the Columbia, a representative group of Canadians and Americans gathered to do honour to the memory of one of the greatest of western pathfinders. The commemorative ceremonies took place in and about a memorial fort, erected through the generosity of two great Canadian corporations, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.

Another historic event took place in September of the previous year, when in the old Roman Catholic cemetery of St. Andrews West, near Cornwall, Ontario, a monument was erected over the grave of Simon Fraser, bearing the following inscription:—

“In memory of Simon Fraser, explorer, born 1776, died, 1862.

While in the employ of the North West Company he conducted important exploration and pioneer work, principally in the area now known as British Columbia, which he helped to secure for the British. He led the first exploring expedition to descend the great river which bears his name, reaching the Gulf of Georgia on July 2nd, 1808. This monument was erected in 1921, by the Hudson's Bay Company.”

An even earlier Canadian explorer, Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye, has also had some belated recognition in his native country within the last few years. A stone with an appropriate inscription marks the spot where he was born, in the town of Three Rivers on the St. Lawrence. The province of Manitoba, which he was first to explore and where he built several trading posts between 1730 and 1740, placed a memorial statue of La Vérendrye in front of the new Parliament Buildings at Winnipeg in 1920; and in September, 1922, the province of Quebec erected a statue to the same great explorer in front of the Parliament Buildings at Quebec. These statues, it is perhaps unnecessary to say, do not pretend to represent the actual appearance of La Vérendrye, as no portrait of the explorer is known to exist.

The attention of the committee has been drawn to some historic landmarks in Winnipeg and vicinity, including the site of Fort Douglas, built in 1813 by the Earl of Selkirk, founder of the Red River Settlement. This fort stood about a mile below the confluence of

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the Red and Assiniboine rivers, on the south side of Point Douglas. The site is now within the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg, at the foot of George street.

Another site that has waited long to be marked in some way is that of Fort La Bosse, an old North West Company post near Virden, Manitoba. It is reported that the site has been disfigured by digging a gravel pit in the midst of it, but there is still room for a tablet.

An appeal was received to mark the grave of Peguis, in St. Peter's churchyard at Dynevor. Peguis was a Saulteux chief, whose word was law for sixty years among the red men of the Great Lone Land. Peguis rendered in the west even more signal service to the whites than did Brant and Tecumseh in the Canadian east.

The committee wish to draw attention to the fact that the Selkirk Memorial and surroundings at Seven Oaks are showing signs of neglect. The people of Winnipeg owe it to themselves to see that these landmarks are properly cared for.

ADDENDA IN CONNECTION WITH THE DAVID THOMPSON LANDMARKS

Cf. *Royal Society of Canada*, Third Series, Vol. V (1909-1910), pp. xviii, xix.

The Committee formed last year to consider the matter of a memorial to David Thompson, the astronomer, Messrs. J. B. Tyrrell, Dr. Wilfred Campbell and James White, were allowed until next year to present their report.

Also Vol. VI, February 27, 1912. The David Thompson Statue: Letter to R. L. Borden, Premier of Canada:—

"SIR,—This Committee consists of J. B. Tyrrell, F.R.G.S., etc., Wilfred Campbell, LL.D., F.R.S.C., James White, F.R.G.S., and Sir Edmund Walker, appointed by the Royal Society to endeavour to erect a monument or statue to David Thompson, who was not only one of the greatest geographers that the British race has produced, but also the foremost pioneer in the opening up of Western Canada in the civilized world. A poor orphan from a Charity School in London, he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company at 14 years of age, at 19 at Cumberland House, on the Saskatchewan river (1789). For 23 years he surveyed the main rivers, lakes and mountains from Lake Huron westward to the Pacific Ocean and from mouth of the Columbia river northward to Lake Athabasca. For this no remuneration except his pay as an ordinary fur-trader. In the fall of 1812 he settled near Montreal and made a great map of North Western America which has furnished the basis of every map since. In 1816 he was appointed by the British Government as astronomer to survey the Boundary Line between the United States and Canada; he was ten years on this work, known at Washington and London as

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'the Thompson Maps.' His Journals of 43 MSS volumes are in the vaults of the Crown Lands Department at Toronto (preserved by late Andrew Russell, Assistant Commissioner). \$10,000 amount required, \$5,000 asked from the Dominion Government. To be erected either in Ottawa the Capital City of the Dominion, or in Winnipeg or some of the cities of the West in the country where Thompson spent the most active and vigorous part of his life."

See also *The Historical Landmarks Association of Canada, Annual Report, 1917*, pp. 45-6; 1919, p. 36; 1920, p. 15.

Mrs. J. B. SIMPSON,
Ottawa.