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Appropriating the Past: Pageants, Politics, and the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation

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Résumé de l'article

Cet article explore les liens entre la commémoration publique et la formation d'une identité sociale et politique dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres, en étudiant le cas des spectacles historiques à grand déploiement qui ont marqué le 60e anniversaire de la Confédération, en 1927. L'élite nationaliste d'Ottawa a tenté d'exploiter ces célébrations pour renforcer la nation, en diffusant des images choisies du passé qui étaient conformes aux thèmes approuvés du progrès matériel, de l'harmonie sociale et de l'unité politique. À l'échelon local, les spectacles servaient à définir et à célébrer les liens de la collectivité avec le passé, le présent et l'avenir, la contribution des différents groupes sociaux au développement de cette collectivité, et son rôle dans la nation. En organisant des célébrations et d'autres événements par le truchement de leur réseau d'association de bénévoles, et en y participant, les femmes de la classe moyenne ont renforcé leur rôle public en tant que gardiennes de la mémoire collective et de la tradition historique. Ironiquement, pour certains groupes importants - notamment les nationalistes canadiens-français, les impérialistes canadiens-britanniques, les immigrants européens et les peuples autochtones - les fêtes commémoratives destinées à renforcer une identité différentes, en détournant ainsi les représentations historiques évoquées par les organisations fédéraux.

Appropriating the Past: Pageants, Politics, and the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation

ROBERT CUPIDO

Mackenzie King had no doubts about the significance of the occasion. "To see it was like Heaven itself coming near to earth, as if we were entering on a higher and loftier experience than ever before . . . as if God were bringing to a crowning fruition grandfather's work of nation-building in Canada. It was like the triumph of nationhood, this sixtieth anniversary of Confederation, the beginning of a new epoch in our history . . . . We have at last a country of our own which is a nation."[1] On 1 July 1927, enormous holiday crowds poured into the streets, squares, and public parks of cities and towns throughout the Dominion to take part in a remarkably varied programme of civic processions, memorial ceremonies, military tattoos, outdoor concerts, historical pageants, community picnics, athletic competitions, and thanksgiving services; while even many remote frontier settlements managed to organise a baseball tournament or "patriotic demonstration" to mark the day.[2] The massive and apparently spontaneous popular response to the nation-wide celebrations in honour of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation surpassed the most optimistic expectations of its official promoters. The people of Canada, exulted the chairman of the national organising committee, "joined wholeheartedly and unanimously on 1 July, in the celebration of the country's birth and delighted on that day to proclaim themselves Canadians."[3]

The celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation in 1927 represented the most ambitious attempt by the Dominion government, in the first 60 years of its existence, to foster social and political unity, inculcate notions of

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1 King goes on to lament, with characteristic self-loathing: "I alone was unworthy" William Lyon Mackenzie King, *The Mackenzie King Diaries 1893-1931*. Transcript (Toronto, 1973), 3 July 1927.

2 Canada. Executive Committee of the National Committee for the Celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, *Report of Executive Committee National Diamond Jubilee of Confederation* (Ottawa, 1928), 9-10, 13-59.

3 *Report of Executive Committee*, 10.

civic loyalty and obligation, and stimulate the growth of "national feeling" through the use of public commemorative ritual. Nationalist elites, however, could not base their calls for a new "all-Canadian" nationality on emotive appeals to blood, language, or other "primordial" bonds. They had to rely instead on the cultivation, by ideological and other means, of a sense of allegiance to a recently created nation state of doubtful and limited sovereignty, which in the 1920s had not yet fully emerged from its colonial status. The challenge lay in making abstract notions of common citizenship and nationality meaningful and attractive to groups – Ontario Orangemen, clerical nationalists in Quebec, the immigrant communities of the Prairie West – whose claims to personal significance and social status were based on cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz's notion of the "gross actualities" of race, language, locality, and religion. Not surprisingly, some of these groups chose to resist the subordination of their "specific and familiar identifications" within a modern, rational civil order. Such a process threatened their sense of identity either by diluting it within a "culturally undifferentiated mass"; or, more likely and far worse, through forced assimilation to a rival ethnic, racial, or linguistic community – a prospect that fed the fears and resentments of both the Loyal Orange Association and Action canadien-français.[4]

Bill 65, passed by the House of Commons on 17 February 1927, incorporated a committee of "representative Canadians," mainly prominent politicians, businessmen, and senior bureaucrats with ties to the two main federal parties, to coordinate the Jubilee celebrations. Its mandate was "to carry out the necessary arrangements for an effective celebration of the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Dominion of Canada," and to dispose of an initial parliamentary grant of $250,000. It also proclaimed 2 July, which fell on a Saturday, a public holiday, and designated Sunday, 3 July as a National Day of Thanksgiving. The actual preparations for the Jubilee, however, were carried out by a much smaller Executive Committee of senior civil servants, academics, and business figures based in Ottawa, chaired by George Graham, a Liberal senator and longtime associate of Mackenzie King, who was a leading figure in the Canadian Club movement; and a number of technical subcommittees which were able to recruit, on a voluntary basis, dozens of experts from industry, the universities, and the professions, many of whom were also active in Liberal and service club circles.[5]

The Jubilee was conceived as a kind of bilingual love feast, which would help to dissolve the remaining sources of mutual ill will between French and English Canada, deflect and mollify regional discontents, incorporate a bur-

4 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), 258-60.

5 See Canada. House of Commons, *Debates*, 15 February 1927, 349-51; 17 February 1927, 409-13; see also *Report of Executive Committee*.

geoning immigrant population into the mainstream of national life, and exorcise the bogeys of labour and agrarian radicalism.

The committee appointed by Mackenzie King's Liberal government to coordinate the celebrations used selective representations of the past – in souvenir books and programmes, newspaper articles, monuments, historical pageantry, and other forms of commemoration – to encourage the growth of a "national feeling" that would transcend old sectional differences and ensure the uninterrupted material progress of the Dominion.

But in Canada, as elsewhere, the reach of nationalist elites often exceeded their grasp. The pan-Canadian nationalists in Ottawa were unable to control the public use of historical imagery at the local level or ensure it would be interpreted in officially approved ways. Through an examination of the historical representations that played such a large role in the 1927 Diamond Jubilee celebrations, this article explores the ambiguities and paradoxes of Canadian nationalism between the wars. Specifically, I argue that a commemorative festival intended to stimulate a unified national consciousness, *also* provided an opportunity for asserting competing sources of group loyalty and identity within Canadian society which, ironically, became more entrenched and politically charged in the face of official attempts to downplay them.

In the 1920s, pride in Canada's impressive material progress and political coming of age was accompanied by a great deal of hand wringing over the perceived lack of any corresponding advance in the development of a genuine national consciousness. Through a series of legislative enactments, international treaties, and imperial conferences, Canada had, by 1927, achieved the status of a virtually autonomous state; a status underwritten by her wartime exploits and accelerated economic development. Mere formal autonomy, however, was hardly synonymous with complete nationhood, which neither statutes nor stock markets could confer. Nationalists lamented the stubborn persistence of narrow, parochial allegiances and perspectives, the ascendancy of acquisitive over spiritual values, and the survival of religious bigotry and racial antipathies. "Canadians," fumed Graham Spry in March 1927, "are too strongly influenced by the parish pump. We have great difficulty in elevating our politics above local issues, local needs."[6] W. Stewart Wallace claimed to detect within the last generation the stirrings of an authentic Canadian national feeling; but he described it as "still young and . . . still growing," with "its eyes set on the mountain-tops of promise rather than the valley of achievement."[7]

Canada, complained a leading literary nationalist, remained a patchwork "of small communities separated by immense distances, working out their des-

6 Graham Spry, *Passion and Conviction: the Letters of Graham Spry*. Rose Potvin, ed. (Regina, 1992), 46-50.

7 W. Stewart Wallace, *The Growth of Canadian National Feeling* (Toronto, 1927), 2, 41, 78.

tinies as best they can . . . burdened with undigested groups of foreign peoples clinging tenaciously to their speech and customs." She lacked the most basic symbolic attributes of a separate national existence, having "no distinctive flag, no generally accepted national song, no epic saga."[8] Not even, Pierce might have added, a proper national holiday. Nationalists in the 1920s pointed out that Dominion Day was observed "with comparatively little patriotic demonstration" or acknowledgement of its significance as "a prideful factor in nation-building."[9]

Before 1927, Dominion Day was haphazardly and indifferently observed. It was eclipsed in much of English Canada by Victoria Day, which since the middle of the nineteenth century had helped to constitute and legitimise a British North American identity based on the traditional props of Monarchy and Empire. In Quebec, the increasingly elaborate ceremonies and spectacles connected with the Feast of St. John the Baptist, declared a provincial statutory holiday and officially designated *le fête national* in 1925, affirmed the cultural autonomy and uniqueness of French-Canadian society against the eroding influences of modernity and secularism. Throughout most of the Maritime provinces, local natal days, commemorating founders and pioneers and the historical continuity of individual communities, took precedence over 1 July, which tended to be ignored altogether or marked by symbolic protests, such as flying flags at half mast as a token of public mourning, the ostentatious refusal to suspend normal business activity, and the wearing of black armbands.[10]

Dominion Day was unable to evoke a common national consciousness powerful enough to transcend the local, sectional, and supranational loyalties generated by competing festivals. Far from serving as an occasion for patriotic ceremonial and public rejoicing, it had customarily been given over in most parts of the country to popular leisure and recreation. Marking the unofficial

8 Lorne Pierce, *New History for Old* (Sackville, 1931), 14-15.

9 *The First Canadian Historical Congress and the Willingdon Foundation: A Short Discussion About the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation and Certain Commemorative Proposals Arising Therefrom* (Oshawa, [1927]), 3.

10 The report of the Duncan Commission, King's belated and ultimately inadequate response to the Maritime Rights Movement, was submitted in September 1926, with several of its key provisions implemented during the Jubilee year. Its timely concessions on freight rates, Dominion subsidies, transportation policy, and other long-standing grievances created a temporary mood of optimism in the region, inducing many communities to put aside their resentments and celebrate the Diamond Jubilee as the harbinger of a renewed Confederation and better economic times to come. Among the impoverished inshore fishing villages of Nova Scotia, however, Dominion Day remained an occasion for bitter collective protest; as in Canso where, on 1 July 1927, an extraordinary mass "indignation" meeting was held in the town square to ask what Confederation had done for Atlantic coast fishermen. The widely publicised demonstration was one of the key episodes in the founding of the Antigonish Cooperative Movement. David Frank, "Class and Region, Resistance and Accommodation," in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*. E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds. (Toronto, 1993), 241, 258-61; M.M. Coady, *Masters of their Own Destiny* (New York, 1939), 10-11.

opening of the summer holiday season, the First of July was traditionally observed with neighbourhood and community picnics, organized by ratepayers' associations, trade unions, fraternal societies, churches, employers, and so on.[11] In the larger centres, those with the means to do so escaped by private automobile or special excursion trains into the countryside, to nearby resorts or provincial parks; while for those who remained in the city there were amateur baseball games, boating regattas and other sporting events, outdoor band concerts and amusement parks like Sunnyside and Scarborough Beach on the Toronto waterfront. Community singing, folk dancing, and baby shows became popular additions to Dominion Day programmes in the 1920s. The didactic, patriotic note, apart from the occasional dedication ceremony at a local war memorial or historic site, was rarely sounded.

Some nationalists blamed the unromantic, pacific nature of Confederation, which "was achieved without any fierce struggle."[12] Democratic regimes founded upon debate, consensus, and negotiation did not generate promising material for commemorative purposes. The events leading up to Confederation lacked a clear sense of national purpose, offered little scope for heroic actions and gestures that lent themselves to memorialisation, and included unedifying episodes of intrigue, manipulation, and betrayal. In 1927, the ambivalent, provisional nature of the Confederation pact and the bitter sectional conflicts of the succeeding decades posed a difficult challenge for nationalists hoping to elevate Dominion Day into a Canadian version of The Fourth of July – a great national festival devoted to patriotic rituals rather than a publicly sanctioned occasion for private leisure and recreation.

It was widely assumed in nationalist circles that a "vigorous, virile patriotism" could only be founded on a common stock of memories and traditions; in other words, on a shared history. Published meditations on the role of history in the formation of national identity proliferated during the run-up to the Jubilee. According to Professor Norman Rogers of Queen's University, "the purpose of the study of history was nothing less than the cultivation of patriotism as the foundation of national unity and a motivation for active citizenship." The essential factor in the creation of national consciousness was "the possession of an inheritance of common traditions, achievements and ideals, transmitted through one generation to the next through history." For Rogers, a country's history was nothing less than "the crucible of the character of its people"; and the "struggles and victories of other days" a "perennial source of inspiration to meet the challenge of immediate needs."[13]

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11. For an evocative fictional account of a Dominion Day community picnic in Manitoba in the 1880s, see Nellie McClung, *A Clearing in the West* (Toronto, 1935), 104-12.
12. *The First Canadian Historical Congress*, 2.
13. Norman Rogers, "Our History in Our Schools," *The Busy East* (June 1927): 21-23.

History, declared a particularly sententious newspaper editorial on the purposes of the Diamond Jubilee, was "no quaint finished epitaph chiselled in a dead dialect . . . but the whole experience of the past brought into vital contact with the present, so that it becomes for us a moral object lesson and a directing principle teaching us how to adapt ourselves to the immediate problems of our own age." Above all, knowledge of our history inspires us with a sense of "common kinship . . . in the mighty heritage which has been bequeathed by the virtues and heroic labours of those who have gone before." It is a source of "patriotic fellowship and ideal citizenship . . . the full fruition of the national spirit," capable of stirring a people to "high endeavours" through the memory of "noble deeds done in the past."[14]

Here then lay an explanation for the failure of Canadians to develop a distinctive collective identity and achieve the elusive goal of national unity, for it was generally admitted that they were woefully ignorant of their own history, knowing "less about the splendour of their own story than any other people of similar culture."[15] The Gradgrinds in charge of the Canadian educational system were failing in the task of "instilling their students with pride in their native land" and a "higher national ideal."[16] If children were not taught to respect and admire those qualities of moral and intellectual greatness possessed by "the highest characters which have appeared among their fellow countrymen . . . they would inevitably succumb to the worship of pugilists and film stars."[17] The Anglican Bishop of Ontario, addressing a special Jubilee Synod, perceived "a great need for an informed historical sense," while the *Montreal Gazette* arraigned the average citizen for having such a "dim and faint notion of Canada's wondrous past."[18]

The Diamond Jubilee of Confederation presented an opportunity to refigure Dominion Day as a genuinely national patriotic festival aimed at reviving and nurturing a unified historical consciousness. The IODE looked forward to the Jubilee as an occasion for celebrating "not with thoughtless revelry and fireworks . . . but with careful consideration of the history of Canada."[19] The year of the Diamond Jubilee witnessed a growing agitation, spearheaded by groups like the IODE and the Association of Canadian Clubs, "to place the colour, romance and fascination of Canada's story in the front rank of the school curriculum."[20] By awakening the historical imagination of children, the Jubilee would, it was hoped, stimulate "wholehearted devotion to the service of their country."[21]

14 *Montreal Gazette*, 21 May 1927, p.8.
15 *The First Canadian Historical Congress*, 2.
16 Rogers, "Our History in Our Schools," 21.
17 Ibid., 23.
18 *Montreal Gazette*, 18 May 1927, p.4; 21 May 1927, p.8.
19 *Echoes*, March 1927, p.6.
20 *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 September 1927, p.10.
21 *Echoes*, March 1927, p.37.

This remarkably durable notion of the past as a school of civic virtue and patriotism became one of the most familiar tropes of Jubilee discourse. In 1927, history was taken seriously as an indispensable tool for nation-building, both by the state and important groups in civil society. These views on the salutary effects of history and the primarily didactic purpose of the Diamond Jubilee were fully endorsed by federal organisers. In early April, two subcommittees were formed to deal with the historical and publicity aspects of the celebration. Drawing on the services of prominent scholars, journalists, and advertising executives, such as Hector Charlesworth, George Herbert Wrong, and M. O. Hammond, they were responsible for producing historical background materials in both official languages and a variety of formats, including film, for distribution to newspapers and magazines, radio stations, schools, churches, libraries, service clubs, and local Jubilee organisers. A. G. Doughty, the Dominion Archivist and chairman of the Historical Committee, attached particular importance to making the history of Canada "significant and real" for schoolchildren.[22]

But what were the most effective means for arousing a popular interest in "Canada's fascinating story" and communicating its lessons to both native born Canadians and recently arrived immigrants? How could young people be induced to develop an "historically founded patriotism" in a "jazz-mad age?"[23]

In the 1920s, a favourite expedient for releasing "the latent interest of the public in departed things," endorsed by both national and local promoters of the Diamond Jubilee, was the historical pageant. Lorne Pierce referred to the "well-known usefulness of historical pageants in teaching history," especially in the lower grades, where they "enable boys and girls to gain most in character, understanding and enjoyment."[24] By "dressing the past in veritable clothes" and creating "living pictures" of past events, pageants made history seem "more significant and real."[25]

The modern historical pageant, properly conceived and executed, consisted of "dramatic or epic narrative episodes chosen from the events of history and prepared for representation either in dialogue and action or by pantomime, the whole usually arranged in chronological order."[26] The genre was revived and redefined around the turn of the century by Louis Napoleon Parker who, beginning with the Sherbourne pageant of 1905, staged a series of spectacles commemorating the medieval origins of various English communities. It was soon

22 *Report of Executive Committee*, 66-68.

23 *The First Canadian Historical Congress*, 14.

24 Pierce, *New History for Old*, 67.

25 *The First Canadian Historical Congress*, 14; Echoes, March 1927, p.28.

26 Mary Porter Beegle, *Community Drama and Pageantry* (New Haven, 1916), 13.

exported to the United States where, shedding its original, overtly anti-modern guise, the pageant form was championed by the Progressive movement as a weapon in its struggle against trusts and monopolies and the dehumanising effects of industrial civilisation. Reformers viewed pageantry as a vital moral and creative force in everyday life, capable of regenerating a sense of community and encouraging participatory democracy through the "educated involvement of ordinary citizens" in cultural life. Somewhat naively celebrated as an "art of the people, by the people and for the people," it rapidly became institutionalised through the creation of a number of university programmes providing training in this new form of community theatre, and the establishment of the American Pageant Association in 1913.[27]

Canada did not lag far behind. "Le Canada, plus particulièrement le Québec, n'échappent pas à la fièvre des pageants qui, peu à peu, gagne les régions les plus éloignées."[28] The earliest and certainly the most spectacular Canadian manifestation of modern secular pageantry occurred in 1908, only three years after Parker's inaugural effort. An extraordinarily lavish pageant devoted to the history of New France from Cartier to the Conquest was staged on the Plains of Abraham over six successive nights, with a cast of over three thousand elaborately costumed local inhabitants. It formed the centrepiece of the celebrations marking the tercentenary of the founding of Quebec by Champlain and set the aesthetic standard for all subsequent efforts to employ pageantry for nation-building ends.[29]

The creators of Canadian pageants borrowed performative elements from both the American and British models, including the use of choral singing, orchestral music, pantomime, poetry, *tableaux vivants*, and symbolic dances. They were usually designed to be mounted outdoors in a prominent public space and depended, in the case of more ambitious efforts, on wide community involvement in both production and performance, with local volunteer committees responsible for publicity, costumes, fundraising, stage design, set and float construction, and historical research. Processional pageants, which consisted of floats representing important scenes in tableau form – much like a medieval "wagon-staged" passion play – and contingents of costumed marchers, allowed for a higher degree of community participation and were especially popular in

27 For a comprehensive history of the American pageant movement, see David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry* (Chapel Hill, 1993).

28 Rémi Tourangeau et Marcel Fortin, "Le Phénomène des Pageants au Québec," *Histoire du Théâtre au Canada* 7 (Fall 1986): 220.

29 See the fascinating article by H.V. Nelles, "Historical Pageantry and the 'Fusion of the Races' at the Tercentenary of Quebec, 1908," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 29 (November 1996): 391-415. Nelles shows how the event generated conflict between French-Canadian nationalists and British imperialists, who both tried to appropriate the occasion for their own political ends.

Canada during the Jubilee year.[30] The historical pageant may have shed its self-consciously democratic trimmings when it was transplanted to Canada from the United States. In 1927, however, the promoters and organisers of Diamond Jubilee pageants firmly believed, like their American counterparts, in the positive moral, educational, and political value of their creations.

In April, the National Executive accordingly issued a booklet of *General Suggestions for the Guidance of Committees in Charge of Local Celebrations* which, among other directives, strongly advocated the use of processions and parades as a means of bringing together the entire community in "a great outdoor gathering." Historical pageants were considered the best means of "stimulating interest and enthusiasm among all sections of the community . . . and directing the hearts and minds of the people to Canada – what she has done in the past and what we hope to make of her in the future."[31]

These worthy intentions, however, begged some important questions. Exactly which episodes from Canada's complex and contentious past were most likely to achieve these results? And how were they to be represented? How could history be exploited for nation-building purposes in a newly sovereign state handicapped by "differences of race and creed" and a "variety and multiplicity of local needs," containing "two or more subordinate nationalisms," each with its own jealously guarded collective memories and mythologies?[32] W. Stewart Wallace alluded to this difficulty in his influential tract, *The Growth of Canadian National Feeling*, originally published in 1920 and expanded and reissued in honour of the Diamond Jubilee. In the absence of a "common language, common religion and common historical traditions," Canadian nationalism, unlike its Old World paradigm, was forced to draw much of its inspiration from the future rather than the past. The most important factor in the continued existence and growth of an "all-Canadian national feeling," he argued, was the cultivation of common hopes and possibilities, founded on the "sheet-anchor" of the Confederation compromise and the acquisition of the "Great West."[33]

Federal propagandists held a similar view of the genealogy of Canadian nationality. Largely ignoring the early centuries of discovery and settlement, the Historical and Publicity committees chose to focus on the events and per-

30 Proponents of pageantry generally did not favour the processional type, which tended to degenerate into a mere parade of civic organisations if participants could not be induced to wear historical costumes; or, even worse, might be tainted by commercialism – "the local milk wagon covered with red, white and blue bunting." Beegle, *Community Drama*, 40-41.

31 Canada. Executive Committee of the National Committee for the Celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, *General Suggestions for the Guidance of Committees in Charge of Local Celebrations* (Ottawa, [1927]), 5-6.

32 Wallace, *The Growth of Canadian National Feeling*, 78, 82.

33 Ibid., 41-42, 80.

sonalities of the Confederation period and the subsequent expansion and progress of the Dominion. They churned out articles, monographs, booklets, addresses, radio programs, press releases, and illustrated prints on such subjects as the *British North America Act*, the lives of the Fathers of Confederation, the growth of modern industry, developments in education, technological invention, the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the 1926 Imperial Conference, Vimy Ridge (but surprisingly little on any other aspect of the War), the new Parliament Buildings, the writing of *O Canada*, and so on.[34] They described the profound structural changes of the last half century – rapid industrialisation, explosive urban growth, mass immigration – in the most positive, complacent terms, with no suggestion of their unsettling effects on those who experienced them or of the social problems they brought in their train. They presented a relentlessly, almost ludicrously Whig account of Canada's "peaceful and orderly" political, economic, and social development since 1867, which was preparing the ground for the emergence of a new national consciousness.[35] And it was this post-Confederation version of the past, summarised by the slogan "sixty years of progress," that pan-Canadian nationalists especially wished to commemorate during the Jubilee year through historical pageantry and other forms of ritualisation.

Towards this end, a Pageant Subcommittee was created in early April, headed by A. G. Doughty, which collected and arranged appropriate historical materials and developed guidelines for local organisers "to stimulate them to undertake this graphic and concrete method of portraying great events in our past."[36] Doughty's committee issued a booklet, showing how floats and tableaux appropriate to the occasion might be easily prepared by communities with limited means. The detailed illustrations, prepared by J. B. Legace, a prominent Montreal artist and sculptor also noted for the design of elaborate *chars allégoriques* for that city's annual St.-Jean Baptiste Day parades, were supplemented by a brief sketch of Canadian history, written by Doughty, highlighting significant episodes suitable for inclusion in Jubilee pageants.[37]

34 *Report of Executive Committee*, 67-68; *Confederation and After: Sixty Years of Progress: A Series of Biographical Sketches and Historical Articles* (Ottawa, 1928).

35 The most notable example of this Panglossian point of view is the potted history compiled for the Historical Committee by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Sixty Years of Canadian Progress 1867-1927* (Ottawa, 1927), of which 180,000 copies (!) were published and distributed during the first half of 1927.

36 *Report of Executive Committee*, 8.

37 Canada. Executive Committee of the National Committee for the Celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, *Suggestions for Historical Pageants, Floats and Tableaux . . . for the Guidance of Local Committees . . . General Sketch of Canadian History with Special Reference to the Confederation Period . . .* (Ottawa, 1927).

The pageantry handbook published by the National Committee provided a template for local commemorations, consisting of selective, officially approved images of Canada's past, present, and future. They included an allegorical representation of the Spirit of Progress, portrayed by a young woman in pseudo-Grecian costume, surrounded by emblems of modern industrial and agricultural production. A series of tableaux depicted Canada's natural resources – her vast forests, "inexhaustible" fishery, and limitless grainfields – while more recent technological developments were represented by another vaguely classical female figure draped with hydro wires and sitting under a lamp post, symbolising the wonders of electricity.[38] Modernisation was celebrated, but in sanitised symbolic terms. Doughty and his colleagues ignored, for example, the contributions of the labour movement to the development of Canada, despite the token presence of Tom Moore, the politically reliable President of the TLC, on the National Executive Committee. All forms of organised labour, even the respectable craft unionism represented by Moore, implied the persistence of class division and conflict, which public officials were reluctant to acknowledge in the context of a national celebration affirming social harmony and political unity. Legace's predictable *pièce de résistance* was an elaborate allegorical tableau of Confederation, eschewing realistic portrayals of the Fathers in favour of nubile young women in fluttering draperies and maple garlands representing Canada and the nine provinces.[39]

Even the modernising technocrats and entrepreneurs on the National Executive Committee recognised that the history of the preceding six decades was not entirely adequate to their purpose. They therefore inserted several familiar figures from the pre-Confederation past, who could readily be incorporated into a selective official narrative of progress towards nationhood. Cartier, Champlain, La Verendrye, Mackenzie and other icons of 'the heroic age' were memorialised as the founders and forerunners of modern Canada.

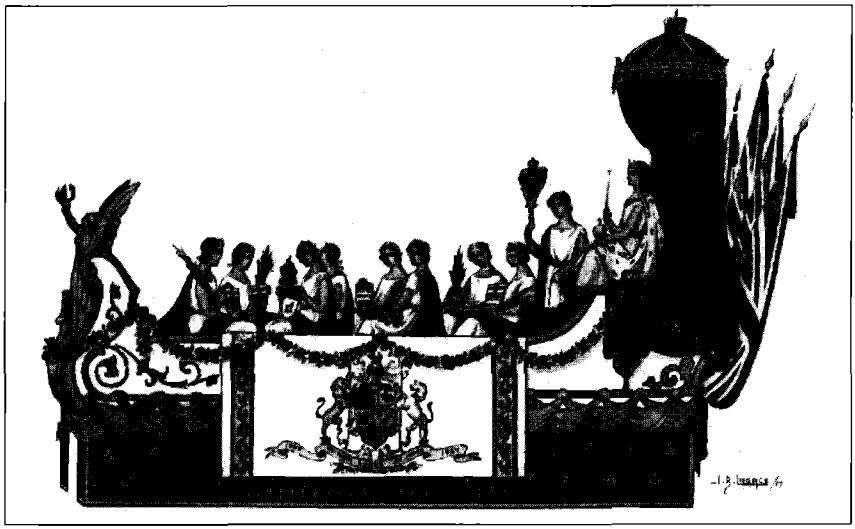
The mammoth historical pageant mounted in Ottawa on 1 July faithfully reproduced the National Committee's historical paradigm – not surprisingly, since it was largely designed and organised by federal civil servants, with Legace himself supervising the construction of the floats. The finished product consisted of thirty-one tableaux mounted on flatbed trucks, accompanied by several thousand costumed marchers. It visually summarised the ideology of official nationalism during the Jubilee year, with its overarching themes of material progress and political development.

A number of allegorical floats celebrated such milestones of modernisation as the telephone, credited with joining together scattered settlements into a single interdependent community; the evolution of electric lighting, "carrying us

38 *Suggestions for Historical Pageants*, 37.

39 *Suggestions for Historical Pageants*, 40.

Confederation



The birth of this nation of the north ... Confederation has brought with it strength, cohesion, growth, ambition, national consciousness. We look backward to sixty years of foundation-building and forward to the superstructure of worth and beauty that shall rise therefrom.

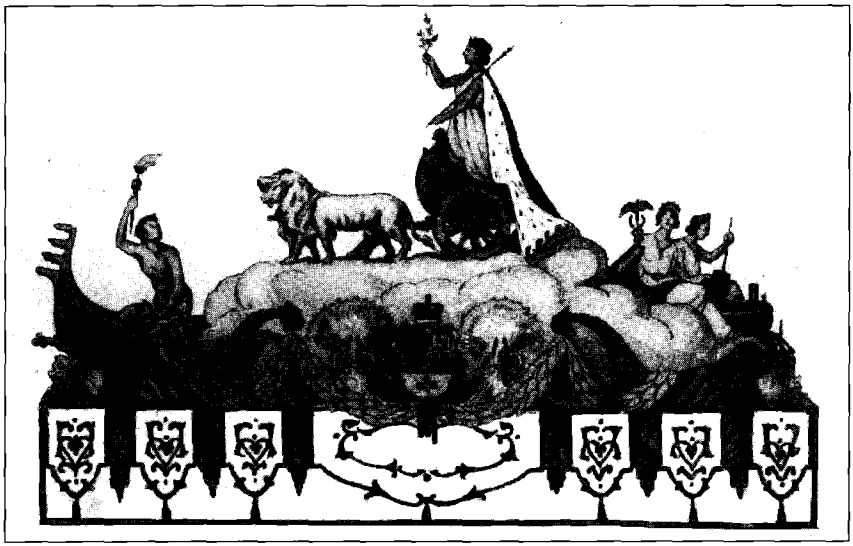
in imagination from the remote farm to the heart of the busy city"; and the "Spirit of Progress," animating both modern industry and agriculture.[40]

Another significant feature of the Ottawa pageant was the inclusion of images demonstrating the benign and expanding role of the state in Canadian life. The Department of the Interior sponsored a float displaying its historic role in providing land for settlers, exploring and surveying new districts, and – a recent extension of its mandate – administering national parks. The Office of the Postmaster-General contributed a scene entitled "Postal Progress," illustrating the development of mail service from its origins in New France in the early eighteenth century. Other floats re-enacted the laying of the cornerstone of the original Parliament Buildings by the Prince of Wales in 1860; and the presentation of the *British North America Act* by Queen Victoria to delegates of the original four provinces in 1867.[41] The politically sensitive and yet unavoidable subject of the Great War was discreetly handled by a generic float innocuously titled "Canada's Defenders," featuring soldiers and sailors in "the characteristic uniforms of different periods, from New France to the present time." The

40 National Archives of Canada (NA), RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Commemoration Ceremonies in Ottawa, Vol. 445, unnumbered file, Diamond Jubilee Pageant Ottawa, Vol. 459, File, Various Jubilee Projects and Celebrations.

41 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Diamond Jubilee Pageant Ottawa, Vol. 459, File, Various Jubilee Projects and Celebrations.

Progress



Canada looks forward to an era of peace and prosperity.

founders and builders of the early colonial period were linked to the present by a float depicting modern Arctic discovery and the extension of Canadian sovereignty to the Far North, showing Captain Bernier of the RCMP formally taking possession of the Arctic Islands in 1909.[42]

In 1927, much of the country was swept by pageant fever. The pageant handbook published by the National Executive proved to be unexpectedly popular, with the Manitoba Jubilee Committee urgently requesting two thousand additional copies in early June to meet the demand from community organisers and schools. Graham noted with satisfaction that "moving pageants" were staged in all the large cities, claiming "this was the first time in our history that work of this kind on such a scale was conceived and carried out entirely by the people of Canada themselves."[43] Yet perhaps the most striking aspect of this popular interest in historical pageantry and commemoration was the extent to which local pageants, despite the wide circulation of official Jubilee propaganda, deviated from the ideals and themes sanctioned by the National Committee.

Participants and spectators in different parts of the country often brought their own beliefs and values about the right ordering of social and political life to local Jubilee celebrations, appropriating and recasting the conception of the nation enshrined in official commemoration for their own purposes. Many of

42 Ibid.

43 *Report of Executive Committee*, 10.

them rejected definitions of the nation based on an unhyphenated Canadianism, which by itself was too arid and abstract to provide a basis for a secure sense of identity, especially in a period of rapid and unsettling change.

Something resembling a popular national consciousness had undoubtly begun to flower in the 1920s, which helps to account for the widespread interest and enthusiasm generated by the Diamond Jubilee. But it was mediated, and obscured, by attachments grounded in less totalising collectivities – region, locality, ethnicity, language, gender, and class, among others. A distinctive Canadian nationality could only acquire substance and meaning by incorporating, not superseding, these partial identifications, formed from older and more intimate associations than the nation state. The *Canadian Forum* noted the fragmented, "curiously sectional character" of the nationalism that was being incubated "in social clubs, at the meetings of farmer organisations, in artistic and literary circles and labour conventions"; with "the nationalism of the Prairie Provinces being opposed at many points to the nationalism of the industrial East."[44] During the Jubilee year, these jostling, competing sources of corporate identity were staked out and reinforced through historical representations that did not always fit the official, pan-Canadian template of the past.

Federal Jubilee organisers stressed the importance of focussing local celebrations on national themes, calculated to "inspire confidence in, love for and devotion to the country as a whole." It was hoped that the Jubilee would "quicken the "National Soul"; and encourage the development of a "robust, self-reliant National Spirit without which no country can ever attain real greatness."[45]

Many provincial and local committees, however, did not share the pan-Canadian perspective of official commemoration. The Saskatchewan Provincial Committee, for example, proposed to "trace the development of the West from the early days by way of pageants," which were to include "early settlers in the costume of the day, Mounties, cowboys, Indians, pioneers, ox carts, covered wagons . . . and various nationalities . . . in costume depicting the part they played in the development of the province." "Pageants," insisted one committee member, "should be specifically of a western character and typical of those things that had assisted in the building up of the country."[46] In Manitoba the Provincial Jubilee Committee prepared its own booklet of "floats and pageantry

44 *Canadian Forum*, (April 1927): 195.

45 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 445, File 3, Minutes of Meeting of National Executive Committee, 22 March 1927.

46 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 448, File 20, Minutes of Meeting of Saskatchewan Provincial Committee, 21 April 1927.

47 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 447, File 9, Woods to Cowan, 30 May 1927.

peculiar to Manitoba since Confederation."[47] In western Canada the Jubilee was transformed in many localities into a regional festival commemorating the achievements of early pioneers and the subsequent dynamic growth of the prairie provinces.

The enormous processional pageant that wound through the downtown streets of Winnipeg on 1 July included 175 floats, divided into thematic sections – Historical, Industrial, Civic, and so on – that were intended to "embrace all features of city life." The patriotism of the organisers and participants was avowedly local, concerned with commemorating important events "from the early days of Manitoba" to the present. It highlighted the arrival of French explorers and fur traders in the eighteenth century, the founding of the Red River Settlement, the coming of the railroad, the achievement of provincial status, and incorporation into the Dominion – with no allusion, however, either to Riel or to the Metis. It then traced the "progress of civic enterprise and services" and the "advancement of trade and industry" in Winnipeg and the surrounding area.[48]

Neither Cartier nor Champlain, the two supreme historical icons of both pan-Canadian and Quebec nationalists, figured in the Winnipeg pageant. Apart from representations of La Verendrye and the French fur traders and missionaries who reached the Prairies in the middle of the eighteenth century, there were no references to the history of New France or, indeed, to any events or personalities, apart from the Fathers of Confederation, associated with Central and Eastern Canada.

The intense localism of the Winnipeg "pageant parade" was hardly surprising, given the decision to recycle many of the floats created for the city's highly successful fiftieth birthday celebrations of 1924. Three years later, Winnipeg's Diamond Jubilee Committee was content to offer a re-run, on a somewhat grander scale, of the earlier civic anniversary.[49] Their inability to invest the Jubilee of Confederation with a distinct national significance, and unreflective willingness to resurrect themes and motifs more appropriate to a strictly local commemoration reveal the extent to which they misunderstood the directives of federal organisers. Despite the nationalist credentials of committee members like J.W. Dafoe, publisher of the *Free Press*, the Winnipeg celebration remained above all an expression of Western Canadian pride and chauvinism, rooted in the desire to advertise the unlimited economic potential of the region despite the unmistakable signs of stagnation and decline.

48 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 448, File 20, Thomas Boyd circular letter, May 1927.

49 The Picture Collection of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba contains extensive files of images relating to both commemorations. A comparison of the photographs of the 1924 Golden Jubilee parade – for example, those catalogued as Events 24/1-29 and Foote 368, 370-74 – with the pictures of the 1927 pageant in the Peter Macadam Collection, nos. 226-249, reveals a startling degree of overlap between the two celebrations.

The localism of Quebec's response to the Diamond Jubilee observances was a product of indifference and, in some cases, of outright opposition to the official meanings of the event. The excitement and enthusiasm with which much of English Canada anticipated the Diamond Jubilee was notably lacking in Quebec, thanks in part to nationalist groups like L'Action canadien-français which directed its members "de bouder les fêtes puisque dans huit provinces sur neuf, les minorités françaises n'obtiennent qu'une chiche tolérance."[50] Taschereau, the Liberal premier, did not appoint a provincial committee until the first week of June, despite constant prodding by the National Executive, which feared that Quebec would not make a "creditable showing."[51] A generic programme of civic ceremonial, including special masses, military parades, and the decoration of monuments, was hastily cobbled together for Quebec City, but many smaller communities in the province appeared to ignore the Jubilee altogether in favour of the annual St. Jean Baptiste Day celebration.[52]

Eugène L'Heureux, the publisher and editor of *Le Progrès du Saguenay*, an influential regional newspaper based in Chicoutimi, excused the apathy of his compatriots as a justified reaction to the "complete ignorance, wounding contempt and at times blatant hostility" of English Canada for everything French Canadian. Among other injuries and grievances, he cited Ontario's refusal to repeal its notorious Regulation XVII, which denied its Francophone citizens the right to be taught their maternal language in school; the inability of English-Canadians to acknowledge Confederation as a pact made between two equal parties, "leaving each element the right to develop according to its religion, language and culture"; and the tendency of the English majority to treat French-Canadians as "immigrants in their own country." In order for the Jubilee to succeed in Quebec, his people "would have to forget a great deal."[53]

In Montreal, however, fears that time was too short to organize a "fitting" celebration were allayed by the simple expedient of combining the Diamond Jubilee and the *fête national* into a single, hybrid, patriotic festival. Montreal's Jubilee celebrations were organised by a hastily assembled citizens' committee of civic leaders, in close collaboration with the St. Jean Baptiste Society. By conflating the two antithetical patriotic holidays of 24 June and 1 July, however, the Montreal Committee unintentionally exposed the peculiar ambiguities of national identity for French Canadians. It was far from clear, for example,

50 Robert Rumilly, *Henri Bourassa* (Montreal, 1953), 699.

51 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 445, File 2, Minutes of Meeting of National Executive Committee, 28 April 1927.

52 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 448, File 2, Benoit to Désy, 8 June 1927.

53 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 454, File "Committee Lists, etc.," L'Heureux to Graham, 17 May 1927.

which *patrie* the crowds of Francophone Montrealers were celebrating when they took to the streets and parks of the city during the ten days of "demonstrations variés et grandioses," which began with "un grand déffile historique" on June 24 and ended with a "jour d'action de grâces" on 3 July.[54]

The St. Jean Baptiste Society, for example, insisted that the traditional procession, which included the massed contingents of all local sections and an image of *le petit Saint Jean*, had to take place on 24 June, Quebec's national day, instead of 1 July. However, they obligingly included a note in their programme, announcing that this year "à Montréal la célébration de la Saint Jean Baptiste era partie au programme des fêtes du soixantenaire de la Confederation." And organisers chose a theme, "Four Centuries of History 1497 to 1927," that might equally well have applied to both occasions. Apart from allegorical representations of Confederation, Economic Life, the Blessings of Electric Power, and Prosperity, virtually all the floats related, however, to the history of Quebec or Montreal. Nearly half of the 40 floats dealt with the exploration and settlement of New France, including the landing of Cartier, Champlain at Quebec, the founding of Montreal, the iron forges at St. Maurice, scenes of everyday life on the seigneury, etc. The section of the parade relating to the history of Quebec following the Conquest prudently confined itself to uncontentious events like the opening of the first elected assembly in Lower Canada in 1792, and the building of the Lachine Canal, but not the revolt of the *patriotes* in 1837; and the usual celebratory evocations of *habitant* culture, like making maple sugar in "le bon vieux temps," "le jeu de dames au village," etc. There were also a surprising number of floats marking local milestones of material and technological progress: the development Montreal's street railway system, the establishment of the first steam-driven spinning mill, the coming of the automobile, a modern telephone exchange. On the other hand, there were very few images relating to broad national themes; and no references to historical events in other provinces.[55]

The Montreal pageant, and subsequent St. Jean Baptiste Day processions, confute the stereotyped notion of a society obsessed exclusively with ancestor worship, an obscurantist religious faith, and a mythologised preindustrial past. The nationalist elites of the interwar period were concerned to celebrate, in addition to the vanished glories of the *ancien regime* and the survival of *habitant* folkways, the pragmatic benefits of modernisation. But it was the progress and modernisation of French Canadian society that was communicated to the more than 150,000 spectators who lined Sherbrooke Street on the afternoon of 24 June in honour of the hybrid *fête* of 1927.

54 *Le Devoir*, 23 June 1927, p.1.

55 *Le Devoir*, 23 June 1927, p.1; *Montreal Gazette*, 21 May 1927, p.4.

In 1927, many Canadians, unlike the members of the National Committee, were decidedly ambivalent about the idea of "progress." They expressed anxiety about the costs of modernity, even as they celebrated and enjoyed its benefits. In 1927, middle-class Anglophone organisations like the National Council of Women, the Native Sons of Canada, and the IODE urged their members to honour the achievements of the Fathers of Confederation and express their loyalty and patriotism by playing a leading role in celebrating the 60th birthday of the Dominion. At the same time, however, they issued dire warnings about "the immigration menace" and the "tremendous world-wide race problem"; the growing threat of the "feeble-minded" and "sub-normal"; the pernicious effects of imported American magazines, radio programmes, "Negro" music, movies, and other forms of popular culture; the destructive impact of materialism and greater sexual permissiveness on family life and the moral development of the nation's youth; the sinister and growing influence of communist propaganda, especially upon disaffected foreigners and impressionable schoolchildren.[56] It is not surprising that the history many of them chose to commemorate in 1927 offered an escape from the pressures and strains of modern life to a simpler, preindustrial world of heroism, moral purity, and fortitude. In many Jubilee pageants, especially those organised by British-Canadian patriotic societies like the IODE, Confederation was not the starting point of a narrative that charted the triumphant progress of the new Dominion since 1867, but was treated as a kind of epilogue to a series of scenes commemorating and glorifying Canada's colonial past.

Representations of the "heroic age" of Canadian history also served as a sublimation of imperialist sentiments which, if openly expressed in the context of a national festival, might have seemed tactless, perhaps even unpatriotic. Many English Canadians were, of course, bitterly opposed to Mackenzie King's recent nationalist initiatives. His rebuff to Great Britain during the Chanak Crisis, his assertion of Canada's autonomy at the 1926 Imperial Conference, the opening of a Canadian legation in Washington, the abortive attempts to introduce a new national flag were cited as damning evidence of a Liberal "separationist" agenda, calculated to lead to complete independence and the break-up of the Empire.

The reluctance of many conservative Anglophones to embrace wholeheartedly the pan-Canadian nationalism of the 1920s expressed itself during the Jubilee year in references to the permanence of the British Empire; an insistence on retaining *God Save the King* as the national anthem, against the grow-

56 For example, the October1927 issue of *Echoes*, the official organ of the IODE, contains, besides reports on the contributions of local chapters to Diamond Jubilee celebrations in their area, a hysterical report on the threat posed by foreign, or non-British, immigrants, which contains the sobering revelation that "only one out of seven inhabitants of the British Empire is white!" *Echoes*, December 1926, pp.31-33; *Echoes*, October 1927, pp.15, 31-33. See also, the *Yearbook* of the National Council of Women of Canada for 1928.

ing popularity and acceptance of *O Canada* – a "religious hymn that glorified the papal spirit," according to the *Orange Sentinel*; and in an interpretation of Confederation as an epochal event in imperial, as opposed to national history.[57] Confederation, explained the National President of the IODE, was actually an inspired scheme for strengthening and perfecting *imperial* unity, for "cementing the tie that bound Canada *together as an integral part of the Empire*."[58] The *Official Souvenir Program* of Toronto's Jubilee celebrations contained a revealing confession of faith by the Mayor, Thomas Foster, a staunch Conservative and Orangeman: "We love our City, we honour our King and we are proud of our membership in the British Empire."[59] The absence of "Nation" from this trinity is significant.

British-Canadian ambivalence about the nation during the Jubilee year was epitomised by G. Howard Ferguson, the Conservative premier of Ontario, who insisted on the primacy of the imperial theme at a banquet organised by the Toronto Council of Women to honour the surviving daughters of the Fathers of Confederation. He delivered a "vigorous" (and, given the venue, rather provocative) imperialist speech, declaring that "a united Empire must be a united Canada's only worthwhile goal." In a thinly veiled rebuke to Mackenzie King and other Liberal "autonomists," he suggested that "instead of exhibiting our own petty vanity about the position we are occupying, we should be thinking only of improving our British position." He deplored the current tendency to "indulge in the puerilities of the National Complex"; and the attempts being made to turn the Jubilee into "a solely self-regarding celebration."[60]

The attitude of many Toronto residents towards the new currents of pan-Canadian nationalism was represented by their long-standing Conservative Member of Parliament, Thomas L. Church, during the frequently acrimonious debate over Bill 65. He insisted there was no desire for a Jubilee celebration among his constituents, who he claimed were far more preoccupied with the economic problems facing the country; indeed, he went so far as to suggest that the Jubilee was a partisan plot, hatched by "a lot of Canadian Clubs" and a cynical Liberal government primarily interested in celebrating its recent electoral victory. According to Church, "the only occasion on which you can get a decent parade in Toronto is July 12," when fifteen thousand people would happily turn out to proclaim their British Protestant heritage. But every other pretext for staging a patriotic celebration, including Dominion Day, "was invariably a failure."[61] Church epitomised the anxious, pessimistic aspect of British-Canadian

57 *The Orange Sentinel*, 27 August 1927, p.1.

58 *Echoes*, December 1926, p.6.

59 City of Toronto Archives (CTA), Pamphlet Collection, *Official Diamond Jubilee Souvenir Program City of Toronto*, Box 27, File 9, 11.

60 *Toronto Star*, 30 June 1927, p.1.

61 Canada. Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates 1926-27*, 27 February 1927, 415.

conservatism during the interwar years, which was deeply sceptical of Liberal assurances that the country was entering a new era of prosperity. Dismissing official claims of full employment and rising wage rates, it insisted that the unprecedented boom extolled by government ministers and their corporate allies was an illusion, a confidence trick that benefited a corrupt, privileged minority. Only "American millionaires who have been allowed to plunder and exploit our natural resources" would have any interest in celebrating Confederation which, in any case, "was hardly a shining success."[62]

These anxieties, regrets, and imperialist rearguard actions contributed, in certain sections of society, to a prevailing mood of "nostalgic modernism," described by the American historian, Michael Kammen, as both a "commitment to and a suspicion of modernity."[63] Church's confident prediction that Toronto would spurn the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation was not actually borne out by events. The Toronto celebrations did, however, demonstrate the uneasy symbiotic relationship between imperialist nostalgia and capitalist modernity that helped to shape British-Canadian responses to the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation.

In Toronto, the highlight of the Dominion Day observances was a mammoth "moving historical pageant," over four miles long, consisting of 35 lavishly decorated floats and 8,000 marchers, which was viewed by over 120,000 people.[64] It was, in the words of one reporter, "undoubtedly the finest thing of the kind that Toronto has ever seen." This rapturous response was echoed by all sections of the local press, including the normally sceptical intellectuals at the *Canadian Forum*. "There was never witnessed another parade in Canada," declared its drama critic Fred Jacob, "which could boast the same artistic oneness, the same uniformity of ideas, colour and feeling . . . . All the tableaux on the floats were worked out along similar lines . . . possessing sufficient continuity to produce a crescendo of emotion."[65]

Jacob failed to notice, however, the absence of references to the most cherished official themes of the Jubilee: the achievements of the Fathers of Confederation, Canada's economic and technological development since 1867, her wartime achievements and sacrifices; in other words, the central, "epoch-making events" that according to federal organisers and propagandists the Jubilee was intended to commemorate. The Toronto pageant emphasised instead the achievements of local founders and pioneers, as well as events and figures from a romanticised, pre-Confederation past. The highly theatrical floats and tableaux began with "Indians roaming the forests in unchallenged

62 Ibid., 414.

63 Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York, 1991), 301, 343.

64 *Toronto Star*, 2 July 1927; Fred Jacob, "The Stage," *Canadian Forum* (September 1927) : 385-86; Report of Executive Committee, 41-2.

65 *Canadian Forum*, (September 1927): 385-86.

freedom," Norsemen "daring the unknown of Nova Scotia's shores," and Cabot setting out from Bristol; went on to represent the usual assortment of iconic figures from the French period, such as Cartier, Champlain, Madeleine de Vercheres, Dollard at the Long Sault, Wolfe at Quebec; followed by scenes of provincial and local interest, including the establishment of Fort Rouille, the coming of the Loyalists, the founding of York by Simcoe, Laura Secord (without her cow) eavesdropping on the American officers, Egerton Ryerson addressing a Methodist camp meeting, and rustic portrayals of pioneer life. But there were no representations of the Fathers of Confederation or the events of 1867. The only allusion to the Great War was a poignant float entitled "The Veterans" – a late addition to the parade, included at the insistence of local Legion branches[66] – with survivors of the Fenian Raids, the Northwest Rebellion, South Africa, and the CEF grouped between two cenotaphs, symbols of sacrifice and mourning rather than victory. And the only reference to industrialisation consisted of a cryptic allegorical float contributed by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association depicting "the birth of the machine."[67]

In 1927, the past that seemed most worthy of commemoration in Canada's most modern metropolis was mythical and pre-industrial, populated by daring explorers, intrepid *coureurs de bois*, noble savages, valiant redcoats, and sturdy settlers. The more recent achievements of a rapidly modernising society, which threatened to submerge older values and identities, were largely ignored. Toronto's ambitious Jubilee pageant, despite the prevailing mood of public euphoria on 1 July, reveals an underlying sense of uneasiness about the mixed fruits of the past "sixty years of Canadian progress."

Yet it did not represent a straightforward example of a reflexive anti-modernism. Many of the same people who enthusiastically applauded the Toronto pageant in the afternoon and danced Irish jigs and Scottish reels in local parks in the evening were also saving for a down payment on a new Model A Ford, investing in the stock market, and looking forward to the release of the latest Chaplin film. And later in the summer, they flocked in unprecedented numbers to the Canadian National Exhibition, that "throbbing, pulsating epitome of twentieth century progress."[68] The "romance of Canadian history," like the rites of royalty and empire, provided reassurance and compensation, putting the more disturbing aspects of contemporary life into perspective. It did not signify a reaction *against* modernisation, so much as its necessary by-product, providing a temporary refuge from current anxieties and the comforting and flattering illusion of continuity with an exemplary heroic past. Like the classical god-

66 CTA, RG 200, Box 1, Book 2, Special Committee Re Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, Minutes of Meetings, 27 May 1927.

67 *Toronto Star*, 2 July 1927, pp.1-4; *Report of Executive Committee*, 41-42.

68 *Toronto Star Weekly*, 13 August 1927, p.11.

desses symbolising modern industry in the Ottawa pageant and the living exhibits of "Red Indians" and *habitant* craftsmen at the CNE,[69] it served, among other purposes, to make the new acceptable by associating it with the old.[70]

Many local programmes did not so much exclude references to modernity as veil them in fancy dress. The contributions of women to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations offer a case in point. Before the First World War, women had played a mainly decorative role in civic celebrations, their participation typically limited to personifying the spirit of the community or morally uplifting abstractions like Temperance, Virtue, Peace, and Plenty. Despite the advances made by women in the intervening years – in politics, the workplace, higher education – they remained confined to this largely passive symbolic role in the forms of commemoration devised by the National Committee. There was only a handful of passing references to women in the hundreds of historical articles distributed to newspapers and magazines. Legace and his colleagues on the Pageants Subcommittee could only visualise women as allegorical representations of national identity, as in the case of "Miss Canada" or, more incongruously, of natural resources like hydro-electric power. They might be included in generic scenes of domestic or agricultural labour. But there were no images of women as pioneers, suffrage campaigners, temperance leaders, teachers, nurses, or social workers, assuming an independent role outside the home. The idea of progress extolled by official nationalism, conceived mainly in terms of economic, technological and constitutional development, did not encompass the social and political emancipation of women.

Through their extensive networks of voluntary associations, however, middle-class women were able to fashion a distinctive public role in the early twentieth century, in such fields as heritage conservation, local history and genealogy, and as guardians of collective memory and historical tradition. In 1927, the active involvement in civic commemoration of the IODE, the National Council of Women, and a host of other patriotic, historical, genealogical, and service organisations helped to invest the Diamond Jubilee with a range of gendered meanings that were largely absent in official interpretations of the event.

69 *Toronto Star Weekly*, 13 August 1927, p.3.

70 Ferguson's ardent imperialism, for example, did not prevent him from embracing the economic and technological by-products of modernity, and calling, in his 1927 Empire Day address, for the "best scientific brains in the community ... to apply themselves to the development of industry and agriculture" – a programme that would have held little appeal for an earlier generation of imperialists. NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 455, File, Booklets, *Program for Empire Day*, 55, 57.

Women from a variety of occupational backgrounds – teachers, poets, novelists, journalists, editors, librarians – wrote a number of historical and religious pageant scripts during the Jubilee year, which were performed in hundreds of schools and churches throughout the country. Many of these productions, directed specifically at children, emphasised a number of themes, such as the threat of war and militarism, the need for international co-operation through the League of Nations, and the evils of alcoholic consumption, which in 1927 lay well beyond the purview of official nationalism.[71]

Clubwomen were appointed to key positions on local Jubilee committees and in many centres, such as Welland, Peterborough, Owen Sound, Westminster, and Renfrew, were wholly responsible for mounting historical pageants and processions.[72] It is no coincidence that tributes to women as nation-builders figured prominently in many of these commemorations. In Medicine Hat, the Dominion Day parade was led by a float representing the "Mothers of Confederation to remind Canadians of the part played by women in building up the Dominion."[73] Historical pageants in Toronto, Victoria, and other centres featured representations of Canadian heroines – Madeleine de Vercheres, Madame La Tour, Evangeline, Jeanne Mance, Laura Secord – who were endowed with an iconic status previously reserved for male explorers, soldiers, politicians, and "captains of industry."

Civic Jubilee celebrations, however, offered little scope for representing women and their contributions to nation-building. In Toronto, the Council of Women convened a special Diamond Jubilee committee in February to co-ordinate the participation of their members and affiliated organisations, proposing "to demonstrate the history of female work in some way." The Toronto pageant, however, with its focus on the pre-Confederation period, precluded any reference to the work of modern emancipated women. Nationalist and feminist organisations like the Local Council and the Women's Canadian Club, which were determined to participate in the pageant, were limited to portraying a handful of mythologised figures from the colonial era.

Such constraints did not trouble the IODE, which demonstrated little interest in the Confederation period and its sequel, preferring, for commemorative purposes, to rely on more colourful episodes and personalities from the "heroic

71 Published pageants include True Davidson, *Canada in Song and Story* (Toronto, 1927); Nellie Medd, *The Crowning of Canada: a Jubilee Confederation Pageant* (Exeter, Ont., [1927]); Minnie Harvey Williams, *The Romance of Canada: an Historical Pageant Suitable for Churches, Patriotic Societies, Community and Club Entertainments* (Toronto, 1927); Mrs. H.J. Keith, *Canada Her Friends and Future: a Pageant Celebrating Canada's Jubilee 1927* (Winnipeg, 1927). The majority of these works were not separately published in book form, but appeared in magazines and Jubilee programmes, or were privately circulated.

72 National Council of Women of Canada, *Yearbook 1928* (Toronto, 1928), 115-37.

73 National Council of Women, *Yearbook 1928*, 120.

age" of Canadian history.[74] Their obliquely imperialist orientation towards the Diamond Jubilee found expression in the extraordinary historical pageant produced by the combined Toronto chapters of the IODE, in which virtually all the parts, from Cartier and Champlain to John A. Macdonald, were played by six hundred bearded, cross-dressing Daughters of the Empire. Written by Amy Sternburg, a young member of the Order active in local theatre circles, it was staged at Massey Hall on three successive nights in the last week of June, selling out for every performance and garnering surprisingly respectful notices from the city's leading drama critics. The social connections and financial resources of IODE members enabled them to secure the services of the Hart House Players and Orchestra, and a professional theatre director and choreographer.[75]

All but two of the pageant's seven main segments related to the period before 1800 and included such stock scenes as Jacques Cartier, surrounded by "wondering Indians," claiming Canada for the French king, Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, the arrival of the Loyalists, and the opening of the first Upper Canadian Parliament. These dramatic segments were interspersed with static tableaux of the Order of Good Cheer, the doomed Henry Hudson and his son adrift on a rowboat, Madeleine de Vercheres rallying the defenders of the besieged fort, Jesuits preaching to the Huron, Mackenzie at the Pacific, the founding of York, Laura Secord and Captain FitzGibbon and, finally, the Fathers of Confederation as portrayed in Harris's famous painting of the delegates to the Quebec Conference. The *grande finale* consisted of a ballet symbolically representing the characteristics of the nine provinces "as individual units and parts of the whole"; ending with a matronly Britannia leading a bashful, maidenly Miss Canada onto the stage, where they were joined by the other cast members and assorted Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, military cadets, and Mounties for a stirring chorus of *God Save the King*.[76]

74 An anti-modern romanticism also pervaded the Jubilee pageant staged on the evening of July 1 in Fletcher's Field in front of 100,000 people by the affiliated women's societies of Montreal. Over 1,200 performers, "garbed in the picturesque and gorgeous habiliments of the period and in colourful and familiar native dress" depicted the exploits and adventures of Cartier and Champlain, "the two heroic figures who stand out in bold relief from the pages of early Canadian history," in a "glittering, gorgeous" spectacle that was interspersed with Indian war dances and pow-wows, and minuets and ballets from the courts of Francis I and Henry IV. It ended with the obligatory "symbolic tableau" of the Fathers of Confederation and the nine provinces at the foot of the Cartier monument. But the main intent of the misleadingly named "Confederation" pageant, which had originally been staged at the Princess Theatre in the last week of May in honour of Empire Day, was to transport onlookers back to a time "when Canada was still the Red Man's undisputed territory." *Montreal Gazette*, 21 May 1927, p.10; 2 July 1927, p.10; *Echoes*, June 1927, p.47.

75 *Saturday Night* (11 June 1927): 44.

76 *Saturday Night* (11 June 1927): 44; *Toronto Star*, 24 June 1927, p.8.

In Ontario, organised women were by 1927 deeply involved in the civic life of their communities. The staunchly loyal and imperialist Daughters of the Empire no less than the self-consciously progressive members of Canadian Clubs and Local Councils eagerly participated in the commemorative rituals of the Diamond Jubilee. But apart from highlighting the isolated and exceptional exploits of a few exemplary heroines like Laura Secord and Madeleine de Vercheres, Canadian women were still devoting most of their talents to commemorating the nation-building achievements of men.

The National Committee insisted, in its exhortations to provincial committees, that "the foreign-born settlers in Canada," particularly those in the West, should be included in Jubilee festivities, in order to "direct their thoughts to Canada and to their duties, responsibilities and privileges as prospective Canadian citizens."[77] The ultimate purpose was not to acknowledge and welcome the cultural diversity that recent immigrants had introduced into Canadian society, although local organisers might wish to include "foreign-speaking" people in their native costumes to lend a "touch of colour" to Jubilee events. The principal lesson to be conveyed by their participation was the desirability and inevitability of assimilation, of the absorption of particular ethnic identities into a common Canadian nationality, however vaguely defined. A handful of visionaries, like J. Murray Gibbon, Publicity Director of the CPR, may have looked forward to the transformation of Canada into a distinctive cultural mosaic, in which ethnic groups would preserve many of their unique characteristics and contribute to the emergence of a new hybrid national identity. Most pan-Canadian nationalists, however, opted for a Canadian version of the American "melting pot," which required immigrants to "cast off their European skin, never to resume it."[78] In order to drive the lesson home, the National Committee recommended that Jubilee pageants include a float containing a group of adult "New Canadians" wearing traditional national dress, with "their children before them clothed as modern young Canadians";[79] an image which implied, among other things, the possibility of a smooth, painless entry, without struggle, competition, or discrimination, into mainstream society.

For Winnipeg's diverse immigrant communities, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations contributed to an on-going process of "communal self-discovery." The enormous Dominion Day pageant reflected the contributions of a wide variety of local groups and institutions. However, its most conspicuous feature, attracting a great deal of press comment, was the large number of entries spon-

77 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 448, File 20, Cowan to Kerr, 23 May 1927; Kerr to Cowan, 19 May 1927.

78 Lawrence Levine, *The Unpredictable Past* (New York, 1993), 193.

79 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 443, File 20, Cowan to Kerr, 23 May 1927.

sored by and representing the ethnic population of Winnipeg, which up to this time had been largely confined, geographically and culturally, to the margins of civic life. The two hundred members of the Winnipeg Diamond Jubilee Committee, composed of the usual, socially exclusive assortment of Anglophone city officials, local business leaders, clergymen, Rotarians, and clubwomen, without a single representative of the city's largely East European immigrant population, were initially uncertain about the best means of including "New Canadians" in the municipal celebrations. A delegation of officers from various local ethnic associations approached the committee with a proposal, which was readily accepted, to contribute a number of floats to the Dominion Day pageant and organise an evening program of entertainment at Assiniboine Park.[80]

These ethnic contingents, much more prominent than in the Toronto parade, constituted a kind of counter celebration that supplemented official messages of progress and common nationality with the commemoration of traditional, mainly East European peasant cultures and identities. Twenty different nationalities were represented in the "patriotic section" of the parade, which included women and children in peasant costumes singing folk songs in their native languages; and floats depicting the contributions of immigrants to the early settlement of Manitoba, as well as "stirring scenes and events in the histories of their respective countries."[81]

The self-conscious multiculturalism of Winnipeg's civic pageant was followed, however, by an elaborate ritual performance, staged later in the evening in Assiniboine Park, symbolically reaffirming the desirability of "Canadianisation." It consisted of a huge *tableau vivant* of "Canada standing in the midst of the races she has gathered to be her people." Boys and girls "gay in the colours of many lands" stood grouped around a benign and protective matriarchal figure, dressed in white fur and crowned with scarlet maple leaves, played by Mrs. G.K. Gainsford, a granddaughter of John A. Macdonald, and sang *O Canada*, *The Maple Leaf Forever*, and *God Save the King*.[82] It provided the reassuring spectacle of immigrants gratefully accepting their adopted country's superior cultural inheritance, heralding the fusion of their separate ethnic identities into the transcendent unity of the nation. In 1927, however, this rather mystical assimilationist vision remained in the realm of wishful thinking. And it seemed unlikely to be realised, at least in the foreseeable future, in the absence of a unified national culture to which New Canadians might assimilate,

80 NA, RG 6 D3, Records of the Secretary of State, Diamond Jubilee of Confederation Corp., Vol. 447, File 19, Dafoe to Scammell, 21 May 1927; *Manitoba Free Press*, 7 May 1927, clipping in RG 6 D3, Vol. 447, File 9.

81 *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 July 1927, p.10; *Report of Executive Committee*, 24-26.

82 *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 July 1927, p.2.

even assuming they were willing to do so; and the apparent resolve of many immigrant groups, increasingly organised into powerful provincial and federal associations, to resist absorption into the social mainstream.

Winnipeg's Jubilee celebrations may have offered simplified, idealised representations of ethnicity, purged of any trace of hardship and discrimination, and characterised mainly by quaint, traditional folkways. Yet these representations, while calculated to reassure and appeal to the dominant society, also reflected the way in which most ethnic communities preferred to portray themselves in the public sphere. The Ukrainians, who formed the largest, most conspicuous ethnic grouping in Manitoba – the "loudest, most vigorous and best organised," according to one historian – symbolised, for many contemporary observers, the policy of mass immigration initiated by Clifford Sifton in the early years of the century.[83] On the one hand, most of its members, with the important exception of the radical Left, were committed to their adopted country, despite being stigmatised as undesirable aliens and subjected to systematic discrimination. They eagerly and successfully participated in Canadian economic life, to the dismay of many of their native-born neighbours, and demonstrated loyalty to the state at every opportunity. Political and economic integration, however, was hardly synonymous with assimilation. Ukrainians of every political tendency were determined to preserve their transplanted national culture. During the interwar years, the prairie provinces witnessed a remarkable proliferation of Ukrainian dance companies, theatre troupes, mandolin orchestras, community organisations, sport clubs, folklore societies, patriotic holidays, cultural festivals, newspapers, publishing houses; and, most significantly, privately run heritage schools to ensure that the second generation of Ukrainian Canadians retained their ancestral language.[84]

The unchaperoned participation of Ukrainians and other unassimilated immigrant communities in Winnipeg's Diamond Jubilee programme signalled their implicit rejection of the "Canadianisation" policy aggressively pursued by all levels of the state. In stressing their contributions to the settlement and development of their adopted country, they were pressing their claim to be recognised as nation-builders, alongside the British Loyalist and French *habitant*.

Native people also expressed a strong desire to participate in the celebrations and festivities of the Jubilee year. Band councils sent a steady stream of letters

83 Barry Ferguson, "British-Canadian Intellectuals, Ukrainian Immigrants and Canadian National Identity," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity*. Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk, eds. (Toronto, 1991), 308.

84 Barry Ferguson, "British Canadian Intellectuals," 314-15; Ol'ha Woycenko, "Community Organisations," in *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada*. Manoply R. Lupal, ed. (Toronto, 1982), 173-94; Orest Subtelny, *Ukrainians in North America: An Illustrated History* (Toronto, 1991), 118-77.

and petitions to local Indian agents and the federal government, requesting permission and funds to celebrate the Jubilee on their reserves.[85] The Department of Indian Affairs initially refused to provide money for such "unproductive" purposes.[86] After some debate, however, and over the objections of Indian Department officials, the National Committee decided to permit natives on federal reserves, rather than incur the expense of mounting their own celebrations, to join in the festivities of neighbouring towns and settlements. The impulse of official nationalism to seek legitimation by mobilising the consent of all groups within Canadian society thus took precedence over the anxieties of Indian Department officials. It was "highly desirable," announced the Committee, "that as many First Canadians as possible take a prominent part in the observance of the Jubilee."[87]

This willingness to join the rest of the country in observing the Jubilee is not easily explained. Far from conferring any benefits, Confederation had subjected native people to a policy of "increasing interference, attempted political control and coercive efforts to transform [them] culturally and economically."[88] The year of the Jubilee itself saw the passing of the infamous revision to the *Indian Act*, making it illegal to raise or grant funds for the pursuit of native land claims. It is not clear, in other words, what native people had to celebrate in 1927. They may, perhaps, have entertained the reasonable hope that their demonstrations of patriotism and willingness to contribute to the task of nation-building might lead to the recognition of disputed rights, the repeal of noxious regulations, and the settlement of outstanding claims. If so, such hopes would prove illusory. Other motives, however, connected to the survival of their traditional way of life, might also have led them to welcome the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation.

For native people, the price of admission to the new, pan-Canadian "imagined community" heralded by the Diamond Jubilee was the abandonment of their traditional aboriginal culture, viewed by progressive nationalists as an inevitably doomed survival of a romantic, vanished past, an obstacle to the development of those habits of discipline and self-reliance required by a modern, dynamic capitalist society. It might, with the aid of professional ethnologists, safely be revived for special ceremonial occasions like the Jubilee, as a kind of living historical artifact, prized for its educational value in "whetting the

85 NA, RG 10, Records of the Department of Indian Affairs, Vol. 6816, File 486-5-7, Pt. 1, Edwards to Scott, 19 May 1927; Lomas to Scott, 18 May 1927; Acoose to Scott, undated; Powless to Scott, 23 May 1927.

86 NA, RG 10, Records of the Department of Indian Affairs, Vol. 6816, File 486-5-7, Pt. 1, Mackenzie to Lomas, 30 May 1927.

87 *Montreal Gazette*, 5 May 1927, p.4.

88 J.R. Miller, *Canada and the Aboriginal People 1867-1927* (Ottawa, 1997), 23.

appetite of the rising generation for the study of history," but otherwise had no place in contemporary society.

In a number of communities, local Indian agents and missionary teachers tried to ensure that native participation in Jubilee programmes conformed to this official assimilationist agenda. In Cardston, Alberta, the Dominion Day programme included a processional pageant composed of natives from the nearby Blood Reserve, which contrasted their former "primitive," nomadic way of life with their emerging modern identity as industrious yeoman farmers. Its segments included "Indian Braves in Full Regalia"; "Indians in Traditional Costume, Mounted and With Travois"; followed by "the modern Indian in wagons, buggies and automobiles." The "Pageant of the Indian Past, Present and Future," performed by pupils of St. Paul's Residential School, conveyed a similar message of enforced acculturation, enacting the "casting away of the things which typified their old barbarous life" and the abandonment of "a weird and uncertain conception of divinity for the Church and organised Christian benevolence of their white brothers."[89]

In Kenora, the local Indian agent allowed natives under his jurisdiction to contribute to the municipal celebrations "on condition that in addition to having Indians in costume, the Committee should also contrive the presence of Indians in modern clothing to show advancement."[90]

An ambitious historical pageant performed in St. Boniface on 2 July reenacted the arrival of "the gallant soldier and adventurer" La Verendrye in 1734. Described as "the most elaborate pageant of any town or city in western Canada," it was written and directed by Father Deschambault, a local priest and schoolteacher. It depicted the landing of La Verendrye, accompanied by priests and nuns, and his meeting with "the friendly Indians," portrayed by "forty redskins with their squaws and papooses brought in from Shoal Lake especially for the occasion," who, after an extended parley, staged an "authentic pow-wow to the beat of the tom-tom" to assure their good fellowship.[91] The La Verendrye pageant ended somewhat improbably with the native chief offering to "divide the vast expanse of land with the white men if only the great black robes might be brought into their midst and baptise them into the faith." Father Deschambault's script required the native performers to justify their own dispossession and forced conversion.[92]

89 *Souvenir and Official Program Diamond Jubilee of Confederation 1867-1927 June 30 to July 3, 1927, Cardston, Alberta, Canada* (Cardston, 1927), 3, 14-15.

90 NA, RG 10, Records of the Department of Indian Affairs, Vol. 6816, File 486-5-7, Pt. 1, Edwards to Scott, 19 May 1927.

91 *Manitoba Free Press*, 2 July 1927, p.6.

92 *Manitoba Free Press*, 4 July 1927, p.4.

These condescending racist narratives may have been intended to denigrate and diminish traditional aboriginal culture. Ironically, however, they also provided native people with opportunities, which were assiduously exploited, for resurrecting and displaying vital elements of that culture.

Many communities eagerly seized the opportunity provided by the National Committee of including some native "colour" in their Diamond Jubilee programmes.[93] To the annoyance of especially zealous Indian agents, trying to enforce government bans on traditional dances, they were seldom interested in imposing any conditions or restrictions on native participation. Native people represented an unfailingly popular source of spectacle that attracted visitors, preferably free-spending American tourists, and guaranteed the success of their celebrations, from both an "artistic" and commercial point of view. A number of local committees exploited their proximity to native reserves by inviting band members to perform pow-wows and ceremonial dances, compete in lacrosse matches and participate in historical pageants.[94]

Because so many pageants chose to concentrate on the "heroic age" of Canadian history, native people were greatly in demand in the Jubilee year; but strictly as supporting players, of course, since their actual lives and experiences were almost never represented, apart from exceptional warrior chiefs like Brant and Tecumseh, who were associated with famous Europeans. For those Canadians who felt out of tune with the spirit of the age, natives served as indispensable emblems of a lost past "nostalgically perceived and romantically constructed." Although they were forced to follow scripts they had no part in creating and which wholly occluded any reference to the oppressions, betrayals, and injustices they had endured since the first arrival of Europeans, natives were nevertheless willing to appropriate the Jubilee as an officially sanctioned occasion to revive and transmit customs, costumes, ceremonies, and ancestral memories that had been proscribed by government officials. These performances, wrenched out of their original cultural context and staged for the amusement of uncomprehending white audiences, did not perhaps represent meaningful "enactments, materialisations and realizations" of their religious and spiritual beliefs;[95] and may even have helped to perpetuate crude racial stereotypes. But they at least helped native people to frustrate the modernising agenda of the state and guarantee some measure of survival to threatened aspects of their traditional culture and identity.

93 E.g., NA, RG 10, Records of the Department of Indian Affairs, Vol. 6816, File 486-5-7, Pt. 1, Graham to Stewart, 21 May 1927; Moore to Scott, 27 April 1927.

94 E.g., NA, RG 10, Records of the Department of Indian Affairs, Vol. 6816, File 486-5-7, Pt. 1, *Diamond Jubilee Celebration ... Parry Sound, Friday July 1, 1927 ... Come and See How the Natives Appeared One Hundred Years Ago!!!* [broadside poster].

95 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 114.

The sheer magnitude of the popular response to the Diamond Jubilee accounted for the elation of Mackenzie King and other representatives of official nationalism, and led both organisers and participants to equate the minimal consent implied by mere attendance at public rituals and celebrations with a social and political consensus that was not always present. The tensions of the 1920s, a "difficult and conflicted period of transition" to modernity and nationhood, were reflected in the heterodox responses to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that were visible beneath the surface manifestations of unity and consensus.

Broadly speaking, the hundreds of historical pageants that were staged to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation embodied two very different interpretations of Canadian nationhood. The commemorative strategies of western patriots, unrepentant imperialists, aggrieved Francophones, marginalised immigrants, and oppressed aboriginals prefigured the nation as simply the sum of its increasingly diverse parts; a pluralist accretion of group traditions, memories, myths, customs, and beliefs transmitted from one generation to the next, defined by such keywords as inheritance and *patrimonie*. The liberal nationalists and progressive civil servants who dominated the National Committee, on the other hand, looked to the future for the full realisation of a common sense of Canadian citizenship and nationality, which had begun to emerge only after the catalyst supplied by Confederation; the stages of its development signposted by significant contemporary events like the Great War, membership in the League of Nations, and the 1926 Imperial Conference. Important ritual occasions like the Jubilee revealed the interdependence of these two contrasting visions of the nation, as embattled subcultures reacted to the state-sponsored promotion of a modern nationalist ideology by more forcefully asserting their claims to an anterior communal identity.

According to cultural anthropologists, political rituals can, within limits imposed by relations of dominance and subordination, empower those who may at first appear to be controlled by them. The Diamond Jubilee of Confederation unintentionally provided civil time and space for various groups in Canadian society to define and display the symbolic frameworks through which they experienced social reality, to explicitly articulate their differences as well as what they held in common. In the process, they succeeded in frustrating the aspirations of pan-Canadian nationalists, while incidentally revealing the limits of ritualisation and manufactured consent as methods of domination and control.[96]

In the historical pageants that enlivened and largely shaped the meaning of the 60th anniversary of Confederation, we can already discern, in embryo, the hardly won, still-contested pluralism of our own, officially multicultural society.

96 Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford, 1996), 193-96, 204-22; Steven Lukes, "Political Ritual and Social Integration," *Sociology* 9, No.2 (1975): 291-305; Paul Connerton, How Societies Remember (Cambridge, 1989), 50-53, 63-64.

The Diamond Jubilee, like all important commemorative festivals, prodded participants into asking themselves: "Who are we?" Canada's continued survival, it might be argued, has at least partly depended on the unwillingness or inability of its fractious and divided political elites to impose a single answer to this supremely loaded question.