

The Office Window

In this year when "century farms" and century buildings" are receiving attention, the age of Bradford's town hall was a great surprise to the majority of residents of the town. Presume there is a corner stone on the hall bearing the date of its erection, but how many ever look at corner stones at home? We may travel far to see the old, and historic, while knowing little about the familiar scenes at home, and so it is with the old town hall, which, though we have never checked for a date, must belong in the century class because the by-law for its building was passed over a century ago. . . . A town hall and market place! And that is exactly what was built. In the memory of many residents, the back of the building was a kitchen, and sort of storage space, and very dingy they were, with the council chamber in front, as it is today, with the remainder of the downstairs space a market room, which, until about a quarter of a century ago, was used for "Christmas markets." . . . The upstairs, until the community centre was built, was the assembly hall for all social and entertainment functions. Tales are told of the carefully planned "balls", to which those attending came in elaborate evening dress, and for which admittance was solely by invitation. Such "balls" were the custom of the times and invitation to them was the mark of social recognition. Believe that kind of snobbery mostly vanished at the time of the first world war, and has not returned, but 'tis said that the old town hall was the scene for many such functions. . . . Amateur theatricals, the practices for which occupied many a long winter evening pleasantly, are reported as highlight occasions during the earlier years of the old hall, and these continued for some years after the first world war, but possibly not on so elaborate a scale. . . . Then came the days when comfort took precedence over style, and also the days when money was scarce, very scarce, during the years of the big depression, following a financial collapse in 1929, which affected this entire continent. It was during this period that we made our first business venture, and which proved to be also our last, when we purchased this newspaper.

Recall our first visit to the town hall auditorium to attend an "amateur contest" and of attention being divided between the performance of the aspiring artists, and the discomfort of the old seats. When shortly afterwards, as was the custom for the "newest" resident, the dubious honour of being made president of the Women's Institute was being thrust upon us, our route of evasion was to say that such honour would be accepted only upon the understanding that the town hall would be given new seats. But we didn't escape. Those ladies said that would be their project and a deputation went to the Hon. Reeve, the late Mr. Dennis Nolan, who promised his whole-hearted co-operation and to bring the subject before council. Within two years, largely by serving suppers at 35 cents, on Saturday evenings, the W.I. had over \$200 and, with the council meeting that money a little more than half-way, new town hall seats were purchased, and most of them were moved to provide the first seating in the community centre. . . . Also in the "hungry '30's" the veterans decided that a memorial to those who had given their lives in the first world war was

past due and they proceeded to raise necessary money by holding "Three Gala Days". They secured fine bands and presented a continuous performance such as possibly was never seen here before or since. They got the money and built the old stone memorial which so long stood on the town hall grounds, and which was unveiled by the late Sir William Mulock. . . . The renovation of the interior of the building came during the term of office of Bradford's first mayor, D. Arthur Evans.
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A new building was considered, but the old hall was structurally sound, and with other municipal improvements then being badly needed, such as sewers, cost was given first consideration and the sorely needed office space was provided by using the big market room for this purpose. And now, on this Centennial year in our country, this Centennial building has received a fine exterior renovation and, with the very attractive new fire hall added to the property, and Bradford firemen assuming

responsibility for the beautifully treed park area at the rear of the buildings, the town's municipal property is possibly enjoying its most attractive period. . . . The downpour of rain on Friday evening and Saturday dampened celebrations in many centres. The ceremony of turning on the new lights in Beeton's ball park was accomplished between showers on Friday evening, and Saturday afternoon the enthusiasm of paraders was the big feature of the well planned parade. The students and school children seemed to be indifferent to the soaking they received as they made an interesting part of the festivities. The beautiful weather of Sunday gave the Tecumseth-Beeton people a chance to make up for the disappointment on the previous days. Aurora's Jay-Cees made memorable the rebellion of 1837

when they re-enacted the rebel march of 1837 from Lloydtown, down Yonge Street, as a part of that town's Centennial celebration. A group of young men so organized do a great deal for a town, as well as provide entertainment and valuable experience for themselves. . . . And, lastly, do not forget the W.I.'s Centennial project tonight.

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